

**THE BUILDERS OF EDINBURGH'S  
NEW TOWN 1767 – 1795**

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**Abbreviations:**

- Edinburgh City Archives ECA**  
**Town Council Minutes TCM**  
**National Library of Scotland NLS**  
**National Archives of Scotland NAS**

I declare that the thesis is the result of my own work, has been composed by myself, and has not been submitted for any degree or professional qualification other than the degree for which I am now a candidate.

Date: 1/06/2006 ..... Signature: Alan's .....

This thesis is dedicated to my father,  
R. G. Lewis, who died of cancer in 2001,  
while I was writing it.

## Introduction

I began this research in 1998, having spent the previous eight years researching the life and work of James Craig, the architect responsible for the New Town plan<sup>1</sup>. This thesis develops that earlier interest by examining the contribution of the builders of the New Town: identifying who these men were and what work they did in the New Town all in the context of the importance of the New Town to Edinburgh's political and economic management in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. This analysis is divided into three sections which consider in turn the builders' administration, work and businesses. At an early stage in the research it became obvious that the main sources of information on the builders resided in archives. Quite simply, there are neither books nor articles that are dedicated to the builders. Consequently, much of this thesis refers to primary archival sources, but this introduction is intended to set the New Town's architectural history into the wider contexts of 18<sup>th</sup> century Scottish and British architectural and urban history as well as political, social and economic history and, to a lesser extent, the history of ideas.

The architectural history of the New Town presents a somewhat a distorted picture of the contribution of the builders, which has not always utilised the research done by historians from other fields. Indeed, some New Town historians have been positively aggressive towards builders, blaming them for tarnishing the ideal they think the New Town represented, such as calling builders' houses "barracks"<sup>2</sup>. Georgian historians of Edinburgh, like Hugo Arnot<sup>3</sup>, and tourists,

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<sup>1</sup> A.Lewis and K.Cruft, *James Craig: A Biographical Sketch, James Craig, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K.Cruft and A. Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995, pp. 1-12; A. Lewis and I.G.Brown, *David Allan's Portrait of James Craig and its Documentary Significance, James Craig, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K.Cruft and A. Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995, pp. 66-77; A. Lewis and K. Cruft and A. Fraser, *Descriptive List of Works and Projects by James Craig, James Craig, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K.Cruft and A. Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995, pp.101-120; A. Lewis and J.Lowrey, *James Craig: Architect of the First New Town of Edinburgh, Journal of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland V*, (ed) J. Lowrey, Edinburgh University Press, 1995, pp. 39-51; A. Lewis, *James Craig and the Moderates, Eighteenth Century Scottish Studies Society Journal*, (ed). R.Sher, Spring, 1997; A. Lewis, *Additions To Descriptive List of Works and Projects by James Craig, The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, New Series, Volume 5, 2002*, (ed). A. Fraser, pp.111-116

<sup>2</sup> A.J.Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh*, Edinburgh University Press, 1966, p.101

<sup>3</sup> H. Arnot, *The History of Edinburgh*, West Port Books, Edinburgh, 1998

like Joseph Farington<sup>4</sup>, had little to say about the builders and their buildings. There are no contemporary illustrations of builders at work in the New Town, or painted portraits of tradesmen there. Only a few printed caricatures by John Kay provide any information on the appearance of some of the builders and tradesmen and the initial prospects for finding biographical details on these men did not look promising. As for the buildings, the only published illustrations show rows of identical houses, an image which supports the bad reputation local historians have given builders and their buildings such as the view given in Lizar's *View, about 1780, looking E from the drained North Loch, and showing Princes Street completed as far W as Frederick Street*, which was published in A. J. Youngson's *The Making of Classical Edinburgh*.<sup>5</sup>

Published criticism of the New Town's builders is something that has continued for centuries. In fact, two important 20<sup>th</sup> century scholars of the New Town have overlooked builders. A.J. Youngson, and Charles McKean have both argued that builders degraded the ideals set out for the New Town in the 1752 pamphlet, "*Proposals for carrying on Certain Public Works in the City of Edinburgh*." They argue that this document shows that the New Town was originally intended to be an exclusive residential area for Scotland's elite to live in, and their arguments will now be discussed. Youngson records how Scottish nobles supported the building proposals set out after the 1752 pamphlet<sup>6</sup>, and McKean refers to the New Town as "Mayfair on Forth"<sup>7</sup> because, in his view, the scheme intended to imitate London's exclusive residential areas.

In 1966 Youngson's book, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh*<sup>8</sup>, was published and immediately became the standard text on the New Town. However, Youngson was not greatly concerned with the builders of the work. In his view, there was "little known"<sup>9</sup> about them, and, in general, they were poor, had little ambition and their houses displayed "poverty of invention and meanness of scale"<sup>10</sup>, to give a "drab and unambitious appearance"<sup>11</sup>, a "monotony"<sup>12</sup>, and "lack of

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<sup>4</sup> A.J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh*, Edinburgh University Press, 1966, p.101

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, pp.62-63

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*, p. 55

<sup>7</sup> C. McKean, *The Incivility of Edinburgh's New Town, The Neo-Classical Town, Scottish Contributions to Urban Design since 1750*, The Rutland Press, 1996, pp.38-39.

<sup>8</sup> A.J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh*, Edinburgh University Press, 1966

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*, pp.100-101

<sup>10</sup> *ibid* p.95

<sup>11</sup> A.J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh*, Edinburgh University Press, 1966, p.95



distinction<sup>13</sup>” to match Farington’s criticism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that the houses in George Street looked like an army barracks. In a chronological narrative of the building of the New Town, Youngson tells the story of the troubled feuing of the New Town. A dispute arose between the Council and feuars over builders’ activities on Canal Street. The builders were presented as the antagonists, and their developments slighted the ideals the New Town had set itself in the 1750s. Youngson did not show builders’ houses and present any facts about their businesses and their work was not taken into a fuller consideration of their importance to Edinburgh Council’s political and economic management of the New Town.

In the *Making of Classical Edinburgh*, the architects of the New Town were the profession worthy of praise for its architectural fame, and the book had far greater scholarship on James Craig and Robert Adam’s buildings in the New Town and championed them as being typical geniuses who flourished there to personify Edinburgh and Scotland’s Enlightenment. The only builders he mentioned were the “exceptional men<sup>14</sup>” William Pirnie, Robert Wright, Edmund Butterworth, Alex Reid and John Young without ever giving an analysis on why they were exceptional in comparison to others.

In 1967 Youngson also published “*The City of Reason and Nature in Edinburgh in the Age of Reason, A Commemoration*”<sup>15</sup>. Again, he rested his argument on the 1752 pamphlet, and stated that - “There were to be no shops in the Town, no markets, no business.” Youngson had been influenced by the Royal Commission of Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland’s report on the New Town which was published in 1951<sup>16</sup>, and his own work influenced a conservation report for the New Town in 1968 which stated that it was “planned as a residential area, with no provision for shops<sup>17</sup>”. For Youngson, the New Town was a not an area of commerce and

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid* p.93

<sup>13</sup> *ibid* p.93

<sup>14</sup> *ibid* pp.100-101

<sup>15</sup> A.J.Youngson, *The City of Reason and Nature, Edinburgh in the age of Reason, A Commemoration, Edinburgh University Press, 1967*

<sup>16</sup> *Inventory of the Ancient and Historical Monuments of the City of Edinburgh*, Ancient and Historical Monuments in the thirteenth report of the Commission, Edinburgh, Royal Commission of Ancient and Historical Monuments (Scotland), HMSO, 1951

<sup>17</sup> *Conservation Report, Zone 1 of the New Town, City and Royal Burgh of Edinburgh*, 1968, p.2 Private property of Professor Angus Macdonald, Architecture Department, University of Edinburgh

business and his publications between 1966 and 1967 influenced the perception of the New Town as being the home of the city's Enlightenment period where Scotland's finest families and leaders lived, and great architects worked. However, this thesis argues that builders made the New Town into a place of commerce.

Charles McKean has published most of his articles on the New Town in the 1990s<sup>18</sup> - thirty years after Youngson, and in 2005 he added another in "*Edinburgh: The Making of a Capital City*<sup>19</sup>". The book title is an echo of Youngson's "*The Making of Classical Edinburgh*", and McKean's articles have repeatedly reinforced Youngson's views towards builders, and their buildings, and added some of his own criticisms of the New Town for good measure, such as an attack on James Craig, the architect of the New Town plan, in alliance with local, amateur historians Stuart Harris<sup>20</sup> and Andrew Fraser<sup>21</sup>. Together they argued that James Craig was not the architect of the original New Town plan at all. This contributed to McKean's overall assessment that the New Town was a failure. Like Youngson, McKean emphasised the importance of architects in planning and building the New Town. But, unlike Youngson, by 1995, he knew that James Craig had originally trained as a mason<sup>22</sup>, but even this knowledge did not lead him to considering the importance of tradesmen to the conception and completion of the plan. This dismissal of the importance of tradesmen meant that his scholarship, though thought provoking, was of limited use to my research for this thesis.

McKean also placed the blame for the New Town's failure at the doors of the builders' tenements. Like Youngson, he also used the 1752 pamphlet as a predictive text which prophesied the New Town's function to provide houses for Scotland's aristocrats. He also contrasted the New Town with Edinburgh's Old Town, and with other New Towns in the north east of Scotland, and with

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<sup>18</sup> C. McKean, *James Craig and Edinburgh's New Town, James Craig, 1744 – 1795, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K. Cruft and A. Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995, pp.48-57; C. McKean, *The Winged Citadel, Rassegna* 64, Edinburgh, 1995, pp.12-18; C. McKean, *The Incivility of Edinburgh's New Town, The Neo-Classical Town, Scottish Contributions to Urban Design since 1750*, The Rutland Press, 1996, pp.36-46.

<sup>19</sup> C. McKean, *Twinning Cities: modernisation versus improvement in the two towns of Edinburgh*, Brian Edwards, Paul Jenkins (ed), *Edinburgh: The Making of a Capital City*, Edinburgh University Press, 2005, pp.42-64

<sup>20</sup> S. Harris, *New Light on the First New Town, Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, New Series, vol.2, 1992, pp.1-13.

<sup>21</sup> A. Fraser, *A Reassessment of Craig's New Town plans, 1766 – 1774, James Craig 1744 – 1795, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K. Cruft and A. Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995, pp.25-48.

Georgian London. The result of these comparative analysis was to argue that Edinburgh's New Town was a failure because it did not become an exclusive residential suburb like London's squares, and because this ambition had been thwarted by altering James Craig's first New Town plan, and by allowing tenements to be built in the area. This argument is repeated in most of his articles on the New Town with constant references to the 1752 pamphlet and an altered New Town plan which the architect, James Craig, had initially intended to represent a Union Jack flag, but which, after amendment, became a grid of streets. He always illustrates this point with John Laurie's depictions of two New Town plans to illustrate this alteration. This argument about Laurie's plans was first presented in 1971 by M.K.Meade<sup>23</sup>, and had adapted in 1992 by Stuart Harris, who added that William Mylne was the real architect of the plan, and that Mylne's plan was depicted by Laurie's grid map of the New Town. In 1995, Andrew Fraser further suggested that Craig had designed a circus plan for the New Town as early as 1766 as a part of his work towards the final New Town plan and that this circus depicted the architect's thwarted, and ultimately failed, plan for the New Town. McKean backed these speculative arguments, but ignored a published response to Harris's theory<sup>24</sup>, by stating that the Union Jack plan was intended to make the New Town project represent Edinburgh as an English inspired translation of what was originally a Jacobite idea to develop Edinburgh; without clarifying whether this 17<sup>th</sup> century idea was an embrace intended for Scotland rather than Great Britain.

He labeled Edinburgh's New Town "Mayfair on Forth<sup>25</sup>" or "London on Forth<sup>26</sup>" because his contention that it was a copy of London's finest squares of terraced houses<sup>27</sup> filled with Scottish aristocratic families. He also frequently adapted the Royal Commission's report of 1951, and

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<sup>22</sup> A.Lewis and K.Cruft, *James Craig: A Biographical Sketch, James Craig, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K.Cruft and A. Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995, pp. 1-12

<sup>23</sup> M.K.Meade, *Plans of the New Town of Edinburgh, Architectural History*, vol 14, 1971, pp.41-44

<sup>24</sup> A.Lewis and J.Lowrey, *James Craig and the New Town of Edinburgh, Architectural Heritage V, The Journal of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland*, Edinburgh University Press, 1995, pp.39-51

<sup>25</sup> C.McKean, *The Incivility of Edinburgh's New Town, The Neo-Classical Town, Scottish Contributions to Urban Design since 1750*, The Rutland Press, 1996, pp.38-39

<sup>26</sup> C.McKean, *James Craig and Edinburgh's New Town, James Craig, 1744 – 1795, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K.Cruft and A. Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995, p.53

<sup>27</sup> C.McKean, *The Incivility of Edinburgh's New Town, The Neo-Classical Town, Scottish Contributions to Urban Design since 1750*, The Rutland Press, 1996, pp.40-41.

Youngson's view, that the New Town was not intended to be a commercial area<sup>28</sup>. But, to McKean, the New Town's ideals faded and failed because commerce, trades and professions moved into the Scottish tenements that were built in the New Town's streets<sup>29</sup>, and also because places of resort like the Theatre Royal and the Assembly Rooms were built. Streets were "infected<sup>30</sup>" with shops and "all economic activity<sup>31</sup>" by the 1780s. In his view the New Town was a failed attempt to kill off the Old Town<sup>32</sup>. But, the dichotomy McKean's analysis presents contrasts Scotland and England, Old Town and New Town, aristocrat and tradesmen and house against tenement has been influential in continuing a published prejudice against New Town builders.

The analysis also contrasts architects and tradesmen, including builders. Like Youngson, McKean has very little to say about builders. Both scholars argued that the New Town was intended to be an exclusive residential area for Scotland's elite, where a static aristocratic social and economic hierarchy was represented in its streets, squares, and houses. The fact that the New Town accommodated tradesmen and tenements at all were failures of this principle as it allowed the "inconvenient social mix of the Old Town<sup>33</sup>" to continue. McKean never names builders of tenements, but they were collectively damned and characterised as "ambitious plasterers<sup>34</sup>" who "infected" George Street's architecture with "decorative fungus<sup>35</sup>" on its houses' facades.

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<sup>28</sup> C.McKean, *James Craig and Edinburgh's New Town, James Craig, 1744 – 1795, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K.Cruft and A. Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995, p.55; C.McKean, *The Incivility of Edinburgh's New Town, The Neo-Classical Town, Scottish Contributions to Urban Design since 1750*, The Rutland Press, 1996, pp.39-40.; C.McKean, *The Winged Citadel, Rassegna 64*, Edinburgh, 1995, p.16; C.McKean, *The Incivility of Edinburgh's New Town, The Neo-Classical Town, Scottish Contributions to Urban Design since 1750*, The Rutland Press, 1996, pp.39-40.

<sup>29</sup> C.McKean, *The Incivility of Edinburgh's New Town, The Neo-Classical Town, Scottish Contributions to Urban Design since 1750*, The Rutland Press, 1996, pp.41-42; C.McKean, *James Craig and Edinburgh's New Town, James Craig, 1744 – 1795, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K.Cruft and A. Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995, p.53

<sup>30</sup> C.McKean, *The Incivility of Edinburgh's New Town, The Neo-Classical Town, Scottish Contributions to Urban Design since 1750*, The Rutland Press, 1996, pp.41-42

<sup>31</sup> C.McKean, *The Winged Citadel, Rassegna 64*, Edinburgh, 1995, p.15

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, pp.12-18

<sup>33</sup> C.McKean, *The Incivility of Edinburgh's New Town, The Neo-Classical Town, Scottish Contributions to Urban Design since 1750*, The Rutland Press, 1996, pp.40-41

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, pp.41-42

<sup>35</sup> C.McKean, *The Incivility of Edinburgh's New Town, The Neo-Classical Town, Scottish Contributions to Urban Design since 1750*, The Rutland Press, 1996, pp.41-42

On the other hand there are other historians who did study builders by discussing the importance of planning and feuing the area. In 1982 Peter Reed had an essay called "*Form and Context: a study of Georgian Edinburgh*" published in the book, "*Order in Space and Society*"<sup>36</sup>. As before, Reed did not name builders, and repeated the criticism of their housing as being like barracks, plain, cheap, and monotonous with every house being "exactly like its neighbour"<sup>37</sup> and classified the area as an "essentially residential development"<sup>38</sup> after citing the 1752 proposals. But, Reed's argument also pointed to different sources of information than Youngson and McKean, and he used it to make different points than them about the New Town. He studied the Council's administration of planning laws as influences on New Town architecture to show that the Council had no explicit wish to have a social and economic hierarchies reflected in its new streets' architecture<sup>39</sup> and that architects had little influence on builders. Reed, like other scholars of Edinburgh's politics of the period in the 1980s, such as Alex Murdoch<sup>40</sup>, inspired me to study Council administration of the New Town further. This interest in the administration of the New Town was helped immeasurably in 2001 by the publication of Richard Rodger's "*The Transformation of Edinburgh: Land, Property and Trust in the Nineteenth Century City*"<sup>41</sup>. The first chapters of this book discussed the administration of feuing in the New Town in more detail, depth and clarity than anyone had attempted before, and developed Reed's interest in planning laws. Rodger was able to demonstrate the importance of feuing, and feuars' rights to the development of the New Town.

But neither Reed nor Rodger focused on Scottish Georgian tradesmen, and those historians who did, like Hamish Fraser<sup>42</sup>, did so without discussing those who worked in building in the New Town. Two hundred years after Charlotte Square was completed there is still no academic

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<sup>36</sup> P.Reed, *Form and Context: a Study of Georgian Edinburgh, Order in Space and Society, Architectural Form and its Context in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. T.A.Markus, Mainstream, 1982, pp.115-155

<sup>37</sup> P.Reed, *Form and Context: a Study of Georgian Edinburgh, Order in Space and Society, Architectural Form and its Context in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. T.A.Markus, Mainstream, 1982, p.115

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*, pp.115-155

<sup>39</sup> *ibid*, p.123

<sup>40</sup> A.Murdoch, *The People Above, Politics and Administration in mid-Eighteenth Century Scotland*, John Donald, 1980; John Dwyer and Alex Murdoch, *Paradigms and Politics: Manners, Morals and the rise of Henry Dundas, 1770 – 1784, New Perspectives on the Politic sand Culture of Early Modern Scotland*, ed. John Dwyer, Roger Mason and Alexander Murdoch, John Donald, 1982, pp.210-249

<sup>41</sup> R.Rodger, *The Transformation of Edinburgh: land, property and trust in the nineteenth century*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp.53-68

publication which discusses who the New Town builders were, what they actually did and what their buildings looked like. Even published detailed descriptions of New Town architecture have not led to examinations of their makers. The Royal Commission<sup>43</sup> on Ancient and Historical Monuments (Scotland) surveyed the New Town in 1951, and this inspired interest in the New Town's architectural history, such as Dr. Anthony Forward's doctoral thesis in 1968<sup>44</sup>, and Youngson's publications two years beforehand. The Royal Commission classified tenements and houses into "main door type", "block type" and "architect's houses" and described corresponding features like cornicing, plasterwork, fireplaces, ceilings, stairs and facades. But these classifications neither identified the tradesmen nor architects who built these types of tenements and houses, and their interior decorations. In 1984, John Gifford, Colin McWilliam, David Walker and Christopher Wilson's book, "*Edinburgh. The Buildings of Scotland*"<sup>45</sup> was published. Like the Commission's report, this also included detailed descriptions of the architecture of the New Town, and read like a mixture of Historic Scotland's descriptive list of listed buildings, and Pevsner's descriptions of buildings in English counties. Like the Royal Commission, these authors did not publish the identities, and discuss the importance of New Town builders and architects' works in the area. But, by the 1990s this vacuum in published knowledge of 18<sup>th</sup> century New Town architecture begun to change through detailed studies of its architects and buildings. James Simpson<sup>46</sup> and Ian Gow, and Sam McKinstry<sup>47</sup> published on Queen Street's houses, and more published essays have appeared by other authors on New Town architects like David Henderson<sup>48</sup> and James Byers<sup>49</sup>, and James Craig<sup>50</sup>. Beyond these studies, in 2005 Connie Byrom had her

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<sup>42</sup> W.H.Fraser, *Conflict and Class, Scottish Workers 1700 – 1838*, John Donald, 1988

<sup>43</sup> *Inventory of the Ancient and Historical Monuments of the City of Edinburgh*, Ancient and Historical Monuments in the thirteenth report of the Commission, Edinburgh, Royal Commission of Ancient and Historical Monuments (Scotland), HMSO, 1951

<sup>44</sup> A. Forward, *The Architecture and Planning of Edinburgh New Town: An Historical and Critical Study*, PhD, 1968, Edinburgh University Library.

<sup>45</sup> J. Gifford, C.McWilliam, D.Walker, C.Wilson, *Edinburgh, The Buildings of Scotland*, National Trust for Scotland, Penguin, 1984

<sup>46</sup> I.Gow and J.Simpson, *8 Queen Street, Edinburgh: Restoring an Adam House, Robert Adam*, *Journal of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland, Architectural Heritage IV*, Edinburgh University Press, 1993, pp.58-66

<sup>47</sup> S.McKinstry, *Twenty Seven Queen Street, Edinburgh, Home of the Scottish Chartered Accountants 1891 – 2000*, Accountants of Scotland, RCAHMS, 2000

<sup>48</sup> I.Gow, *David (or John?) Henderson's Designs for Caprington Castle, Scottish Country Houses 1600 – 1914*, ed. I.Gow and A.Rowan, Edinburgh University Press, 1995, pp. 181-193

<sup>49</sup> H.G.Slade, *James Byers of Tonley: The Architecture of a Scottish Cicerone*, *Journal of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland, Architectural Heritage X*, Edinburgh University Press, 1991

<sup>50</sup> *James Craig and Edinburgh's New Town, James Craig, 1744 – 1795, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K.Cruft and A. Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995,

detailed studies of the New Town's gardens published in a book, *The Edinburgh New Town Gardens, Blessings as well as Beauties*<sup>51</sup>.

With an obvious gap in the scholarship, it became clear that in order to cast light on the builders of the New Town, the methods and findings of scholars like Murdoch, Reed and Rodger and Fleming pointed the way forward for this research. Detailed examination of records in the Edinburgh City Archive and elsewhere made it possible not only to identify the builders but, in researching Edinburgh Town Council's administration it was also possible to examine local political and economic management of the New Town and the way in which administration and building operated together. Further research, through financial and legal archives kept at the National Archives of Scotland, the National Register of Archives (Scotland), the National Library of Scotland, the Royal Bank of Scotland's Archives, the Bank of Scotland's Archives, Edinburgh University Library's Special Collections and Glasgow University's Archives as well as Edinburgh Central Library all helped to elucidate the key areas of research and clarified the difficulties faced by builders.

The aim of this thesis, however, is not simply to trawl through archives for information on a neglected group, important as that is, but to place that within a wider context than New Town scholarship had hitherto provided for. Historians of 18<sup>th</sup> century Scotland, such as Christopher Whatley, provided broad overviews of the history of the century in "*Scottish Society 1707 – 1830*<sup>52</sup>", in which he identified "English-oriented North Britishness"<sup>53</sup> as being an aspect of life in Scotland by the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He argued that Scotland was part of Great Britain, after the union the country became a province called North Britain, and that the loyalty to Hanoverian Britain that this implied increased during the Jacobite wars of 1715 and 1745.

Like his fellow Dundee University colleague, Charles McKean, Whatley recited the argument about the Union Jack New Town plan and street names given in the New Town as evidence of this

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<sup>51</sup> C. Bryom, *The Edinburgh New Town Gardens, Blessings as well as Beauties*, Birlinn, 2005

<sup>52</sup> C.A. Whatley, *Scottish Society 1707 – 1830, Beyond Jacobitism, towards industrialisation*, Manchester University Press, 2000

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, p.121

British nationalism<sup>54</sup>, but also added that many Scottish new towns in this period also had a George Street or Union Street in them which further emphasised North Britain's loyalty to Great Britain. T.C. Smout, also argued that Scots were proud to be British from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century in his essay, *Problems of Nationalism, Identity and Improvement in later Eighteenth-Century Scotland*<sup>55</sup>, with Alex Murdoch ratifying his argument when he clarified that Scots rejected the rebellious image the 1745 Jacobite uprising had given the country in English politics and that Scots were ambitious to show that they were at ease with Hanoverian Great Britain and the Union<sup>56</sup>. How did Scotland, and Scots, show this ambition to the King and Parliament in London? Were street names and Union Jack plans enough?

Whatley argued that loyalty was effectively demonstrated through Scotland's relentless industrialisation and reliance on Parliamentary government<sup>57</sup>. These themes have been developed by other historians, and by studying this in detail, it is possible to pursue the the main aims of the thesis. In *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment*<sup>58</sup> Christopher Berry wrote about the relationship between Scottish local government and property in determining social rank and political order. This argument meant that the fact that Edinburgh's New Town was endorsed by King George III and London's Parliament enabled the New Town to be built, and that the proposals to build a New Town were political overtures from Edinburgh Town Council to serenade those in Westminster and Royal Palaces who doubted the city's loyalty to Hanoverian Great Britain. Although Craig's plan can be understood as an example of Hanoverian patriotic propoganda, the new streets and squares do not simply celebrate a static social order and hierarchy. Both Berry and Smout encouraged the study of property ownership, industry, and political and economic management of difficulties and changes. Using these criteria of assessment for research showed that the New Town was a place where there was a dynamic, changing social order, and many political and economic initiatives. The builders were a part of this process of

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p.118

<sup>55</sup> T.C.Smout, *Problems of Nationalism, Identity and Improvement in later Eighteenth-Century Scotland, Improvment and Enlightenment, Proceedings of the Scottish Historical Studies Seminar, University of Strathclyde 1987-1988*, ed. T.M.Devine, John Donald, 1989, p.19

<sup>56</sup> A.Murdoch, *Scotland and the Idea of Britain, Eighteenth Century Scotland, New Perspectives*, ed. T.M.Devine and J.R.Young, Tuckwell Press, 1999, p.110

<sup>57</sup> C.A.Whatley, *Scottish Society 1707 – 1830, Beyond Jacobitism, towards industrialisation*, Manchester University Press, 2000, pp.116-124

<sup>58</sup> C. Berry, *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment*, Edinburgh University Press, 1997, p.105



change and part of the research presented in this thesis, building on the approach of authors like Whatley, Smout and Berry, is an attempt to cast light on the status of those involved in the building industry in the New Town, and the builders' abilities to own property as an indication of their social importance within the New Town. Berry also added to his analysis Lord Kames's view that good local government emerged by magistrates learning from making mistakes<sup>59</sup>. Considering the troubles Edinburgh Town Council faced in administering the New Town this appeared to be useful social and political philosophy to consider especially since Kames himself was involved in selecting the New Town plan and drafting legislation for its administration. Related to this is the idea that they were also able to learn from the experience, and indeed the mistakes, of others who had pursued similar, though smaller scale projects, in other Scottish new towns. More generally, but more importantly, the detailed work of authors such as those cited here underlies the approach taken here of investigating in great detail the actual business of how the New Town project was administered and how the town as a whole was administered as a method for understanding the wider role and importance of the building trades in eighteenth century Edinburgh.

One problem Edinburgh magistrates had was to convince citizens that Edinburgh needed a New Town at all. R.A.Houston's *Social Change in the Age of the Enlightenment, Edinburgh 1660 – 1760*<sup>60</sup> gave evidence of local resistance in Edinburgh to accept a bigger city, and especially to view London as a model to copy for future development. Big cities were not believed "to make a happy and healthy life." Houston depicts the realities of life in Edinburgh from the years before Union in 1707 to the to mid 18<sup>th</sup> century and his findings do not necessarily indicate that the New Town was perceived as a remedy to opposition to urban development, nor that Edinburgh's magistrates based their thinking for the New Town on either the 1752 proposals, or London.

In fact, a similar suspicion of urban life was something that the historian T.C.Smout had noted in his essay on planned villages in Scotland in the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>61</sup>. The new villages were also often called new towns, and were usually built for industry with a view to revive the local economy for

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<sup>59</sup> *ibid*

<sup>60</sup> R.A.Houston, *Social Change in the Age of the Enlightenment, Edinburgh 1660 – 1760*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994, pp.148-152

<sup>61</sup> T.C.Smout, *The Landowner and the Planned Village in Scotland, 1730 -1830, Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, ed. N.T.Phillipson and R.Mitchison, Edinburgh University Press, 1970, pp. 73-107

the landowner for examples Ormiston in East Lothian and Inveraray in Argyllshire which were begun in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>62</sup>. Smout noted that in most new towns, the key to success to settle new businesses there<sup>63</sup>. Some landowners gave incentives for settlement, such as the Earl of Findlater, who paid Edinburgh linen tradesmen to work in a purpose built factory, and enjoy a seven year interest free loan.

Reading Houston, Whatley, Smout and Berry encouraged deeper critical analysis of published sources and structuring research of primary sources around their work. These historians' interest in relationships between local and national governments in 18<sup>th</sup> century Britain provoked three further questions to ask about the New Town's builders. Did Edinburgh Town Council view the building of the New Town in the same way as earlier new towns whereby they treated building businesses as a principal industry there, and encouraged builders to stay in the New Town by offering tempting financial incentives? Had the magistrates learnt from problems other new towns had faced, and, as a result did they encourage tradesmen to feel part of an improved society and new political order by letting them be property owners and citizens in the New Town? Why have some New Town historians ignored such scholarship on the typical roles of trade and industry in the planning and building of Edinburgh's New Town? It is the purpose of this thesis to explore these questions and to do this it is necessary to identify and study the builders, their products and their businesses.

The historian, David Allan's book, *Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment*<sup>64</sup>, questions the standard account of New Town history, when he argues that the analogy of the Old Town contrasting with the New Town is a false dichotomy which is based on an "untrustworthy" historiography that led to Youngson's scholarship which perpetuated this view of a divided city with Old Town and New Town Edinburgh representing opposite ages, and people<sup>65</sup>. For Allan, the New Town represented both continuity and change for Edinburgh's tradesmen and professions and his argument avoided using the same tools which had set about criticising the New Town's builders, and offered a succinct summary of some influential published scholarship on

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<sup>62</sup> *ibid*, p.93

<sup>63</sup> *ibid*, p.94

<sup>64</sup> D.Allan, *Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment*, Edinburgh University Press, 1993

Enlightenment Edinburgh. This argument, like those presented by Smout, Whatley, Houston and Berry, encouraged research into the realities of life in the New Town. An important source for this area of research is the one published article on the tradesmen's politics in Edinburgh in this period. Alex Murdoch's study of tradesmen in the 1777 elections in Edinburgh, and the tradesmen's Congress party's role in them, opened up fresh questions about New Town scholarship, which encouraged researching tradesmen<sup>66</sup>. Alex Murdoch's established a scholarly context for further studies of the role of tradesmen, including builders, in Edinburgh's turbulent politics and the dynamic development of the city's society.

Such studies reflect relevant ways to study the New Town for this thesis. There follows important contextual points for the interpretation of the archival information on the New Town builders. Firstly, it is clear that the New Town represented Edinburgh Town Council's political ambition, which was to be perceived as a part of Hanoverian Great Britain following the Act of Union, and the Jacobite wars whereby the New Town also offered the opportunity for the city's established social order, and institutions, to survive and grow without necessarily using London as its model to copy. The New Town allowed for political and social traditions as well as modern developments to prosper, such as burgh reform and the workers' rights, and the area was a far more complicated subject to study than the dichotomies presented by New Town historians. Builders contributed to Edinburgh's political order, and changes made to it, and were not disinterested in it.

Using as a starting point the works of Smout, Berry, Murdoch and Whatley, it is possible to argue that the New Town's builders were representatives of Scotland's industrial development, with each New Town house and tenement symbolising both Scotland's North British identity, and the builders' increasing sophistication in political, cultural, artistic and commercial life<sup>67</sup>. Builders have never been believed to be a part of these developments, nor has it been acknowledged that they were encouraged by Edinburgh Town Council's patronage. To put it simply: building was the

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<sup>65</sup> *ibid*, p.7

<sup>66</sup> John Dwyer and Alex Murdoch, *Paradigms and Politics: Manners, Morals and the rise of Henry Dundas, 1770 – 1784, New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland*, ed. John Dwyer, Roger Mason and Alexander Murdoch, John Donald, 1982, pp.210-249

<sup>67</sup> C. Berry, *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment*, Edinburgh University Press, 1997, p.142

New Town's principle industry, and the New Town has to be understood to be significantly different from other Scottish new towns because of its scale and ambition, which, in turn necessitated a system of administration of the project, whereby the New Town did not represent a static and exclusive social hierarchy for Scotland's landed gentry, but a development which included many urban professions, such as builders.

These two contexts, derived from secondary sources, have informed the methodology of this thesis. This approach presents a much more complex picture of life in the New Town than New Town historians had given for builders, and this view corresponded to Ian Whyte's studies of urbanisation of 18<sup>th</sup> century Scotland<sup>68</sup>. Whyte studied the changing hierarchy and ranking of Scotland's cities, and Paul Langford's work on *A Polite and Commercial People, England 1727 – 1783*<sup>69</sup>, acknowledged the rise of the middle classes, or "middling sorts" as they were called at the time. The New Town offered homes and work for merchants, lawyers and bankers and other middle class professions, as well as noble families. Builders worked closely with the middle classes, and aspired to be recognised as respectable professionals. The pictures of New Town society these studies present are more interesting, complicated and dynamic than one portraying a simple contrast of aristocratic living being diminished by tradesmen.

The next stage of this review is to place Edinburgh's New Town into a much wider context than Edinburgh or Scottish history, and place the project, and its builders, into comparative analyses with other new towns in Britain. What, if anything, was unique about Edinburgh's New Town in Great Britain? Just by looking at James Craig's plan, and the buildings in the new streets and squares, would anyone in England, the King's Court and Parliament recognise it as being a typical new town, as well as an attempt to state the city's patriotism and to develop urban industries? To answer these questions Peter Borsay's book, *The English Urban Renaissance, Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660 -1770*<sup>70</sup>, was very useful indeed. Based on Borsay's criteria of assessment Edinburgh's New Town represented the city establishing its credentials to be

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<sup>68</sup> Ian.D. Whyte, *Urbanization in Eighteenth-Century Scotland, Eighteenth Century Scotland New Perspectives*, ed.T.M.Devine and J.R.Young, Tuckwell Press, pp.176-195

<sup>69</sup> P.Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People, England 1727-1783*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989

<sup>70</sup> P.Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance, Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660 -1770*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989

known as the provincial capital of North Britain, as well as maintain its ancient status as Scotland's capital city. This view corresponds to the arguments set out by Scottish historians. In this respect, according to Borsay's study of English urban developments, Edinburgh would be comparable to Bristol, Exeter, York, Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester<sup>71</sup> for whom London was always the metropolis of Great Britain. Set into this British context, Edinburgh is a partner, not rival, to London and to interpret Edinburgh's New Town as being typical of other improvement schemes that were undertaken in Great Britain. Even King James II's charter of 1688 to enlarge the Edinburgh can now be understood in terms of other British towns and cities which set about rebuilding themselves during the Restoration period, such as Northampton<sup>72</sup>, with New London leading the way after the Great Fire of 1666. Borsay, like the Scottish historians, enabled this study to question and move away from simple, static dichotomies, and see the complexities of studying the New Town grow into fresh analyses of its history. Moreover, Borsay's work suggests that it is no longer possible to view London as the sole source of influence on the New Town and that other English cities and towns are also relevant to the discussion. This is directly borne out by detailed archival research of building businesses in Edinburgh, which shows builders' businesses working with businesses in Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and other English towns and cities.

Using Borsay's book as an introduction to English urban history, the planning of New London after 1666 led to town surveys to map and plan new streets and squares to be integrated into them with a devout application of Palladian classicism for their new houses and public buildings as being typical of English cities and towns by the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>73</sup>. Borsay notes that urban architecture from 1666 embraced classical architecture and magistrates often drafted planning laws, and oversaw the creation of new urban spaces<sup>74</sup>. He not only gave many examples of English cities and towns which underwent huge changes in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in these ways, but also identified common designs and buildings used for these by developers and administrators. Some of these comparative analyses are relevant to Edinburgh's New Town, and can be used to further

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<sup>71</sup> *ibid*, pp.8-9

<sup>72</sup> *ibid*, p.46

<sup>73</sup> *ibid*, p.60

<sup>74</sup> *ibid*, p.87

emphasise that Edinburgh's New Town could be regarded by informed viewers in London's Parliament and Royal Palaces as being typical of other modern British cities.

The first reason for this is that the New Town plan was designed by an architect, James Craig, and he presented it in an audience with King George III for royal approval. Royal architects, Sir William Chambers and Robert Adam, undertook major works in the area, designing the city's Member of Parliament's town house there, Sir Laurence Dundas's mansion in St Andrew's Square, and Register House, at the northern end of the new bridge over the Nor Loch, respectively. Having nationally important architects working in the New Town added prestige to the project. Borsay discussed urban regeneration projects in England, which had also received royal patronage and dated from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. King Charles II intended Winchester and London to be the greatest palace and capital in Britain and rival European countries<sup>75</sup>. Wren and Jones were the architects set to translate these projects into plans and buildings, and, in this century, new urban housing took its inspiration from aristocratic country houses<sup>76</sup>. A good town house should appear like a country house, and celebrate wealthy landowners. Looking at Sir William Chambers' design for Sir Laurence Dundas's mansion as its main façade is set into the long, principle street of the New Town, George Street, acts as visual reminders of 17<sup>th</sup> century legacies between country houses, and town houses, and between impressively large urban developments, and palaces.

The taste for Palladian classicism continued into the 18<sup>th</sup> century and could appear in town house proportions, symmetry, facades and decorations. Having architects' plans, and set rules to follow, became common. Many architects published books on architecture for their careers' benefits, such as Colen Campbell, James Gibbs and Isaac Ware<sup>77</sup>, who wrote to find patronage and professional respect from the 1720s. Knowledge on architecture was made more accessible this way more books were also written and published from the 1730s. Some of these were published specifically for tradesmen like those by Batty Langley. Another reason for seeing James Craig's plan as being typical of this love of design and planning is that he himself collected and read books both for

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<sup>75</sup> *ibid*, pp.88-90

<sup>76</sup> *ibid*, p.49

<sup>77</sup> *ibid*, pp.49-50

architects and tradesmen. He was, after all, a tradesmen himself by training before he took up the challenge of being a professional architect. From his library, it is clear he consulted Gwynn's latest published proposals for a new Georgian London which contained plans for new spaces and buildings. Again, this aspect of New Town history shows how typical Edinburgh's tradesmen were of others throughout Great Britain, and that they also wished to increase their professional status, and social importance.

A second reason for interpreting James Craig's New Town as being typically British is the designs he used for it. The New Town plans he produced were dominated by streets, squares and circuses, which contained gardens, temples, obelisks and statues to regard. These proposals were typical of British fashions as well as what was already being used in Edinburgh at that time. In terms of presenting a plan which integrated new streets and squares, the reviewers of Craig's plan in London would have had many examples of squares in the city to compare with this plan. Borsay notes the influences of Covent Garden and St James's Square<sup>78</sup>, with its palatial façade, on other English cities, such as Birmingham, which he classified as a provincial capital - a status that Edinburgh's New Town was trying to secure for the entire city, not just its new extension. However, as John Summerson's *Georgian London*<sup>79</sup> explains, London's St James Square was explicitly designed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to be an aristocratic residential development, but Edinburgh's New Town was not. In fact, the Parliamentary Bill of 1766, which accompanied the plan, stated that the New Town was for "the benefit of trade and commerce"<sup>80</sup>.

Borsay shows that English provincial cities copied London's examples, with squares being designed and built, for examples, in Bristol, Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool<sup>81</sup>. Also following London, many cities wanted to set out their credentials for being centres of administration, and large corporate building programmes which included new Exchanges, Town Halls, Markets, churches, bridges and paved streets and wider roads<sup>82</sup>. In this respect, Edinburgh's proposals for improvement were not solely about housing, but also handed out a

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<sup>78</sup> *ibid*, pp.74-79

<sup>79</sup> J. Summerson, *Georgian London*, Penguin, 1945, p.41

<sup>80</sup> ECA, McLeod Bundles, Bay D, Bundle 43, Shelf 6, Plan of Bill of Parliament, 16/12/1766

<sup>81</sup> P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance, Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660 -1770*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, pp.74-79

menu of public architecture for Parliament to support which was very reminiscent of contemporary English urban improvement acts. Jules Lubbock, in his book, *The Tyranny of Taste, The Politics of Architecture and Design in Britain 1550 – 1960*, argues, in common with many others, that Edinburgh's improvements were called for so that the new city could compete with London<sup>83</sup>. Certainly, the 1752 proposals contrasted Edinburgh with London and made Great Britain's metropolis a point of reference and departure for North Britain's principal provincial capital to emulate, and eclipse in the ambitions of the magistrates to administer the biggest urban town planning development in Great Britain. But such competitiveness, and patriotism, was also enforced in England, where towns and cities copied one another, and had patriotic symbols. Neighbouring Bath and Bristol both had a Queen Square, which had ornamental gardens, and obelisks in them. In Bath, this monument was dedicated to Frederick, the Prince of Wales, in a patriotic search of royal approval and continued political support. Bath and Bristol, like Edinburgh, was not solely inspired by London, but also by local developments. On an even smaller scale, I looked to contrast Craig's New Town plan not only to British Bath, but also earlier, and smaller, developments in Edinburgh during the 1760s such as George Square, and Lady Nicolson's Park, as well as with Georgian Glasgow.

Like Bristol and Bath, James Craig's New Town's squares also had ornamental gardens, and obelisks designed for them. Although his squares were not called Queen Square, but St Andrews and St George's Square, the iconography is similarly patriotic and royalist. The Edinburgh New Town plans continued with these qualities when Craig presented his circus plans for the New Town. In these he planned to have a statue of King George III in the centre. The circus, and statue, recalled John Wood's design for King's Circus in Bath<sup>84</sup>, and, the town continued to develop this political propaganda in its new planning through Royal Crescent. In Edinburgh's New Town, the street names did a similar job, carrying names of the royal household like Frederick and George as well as the Union between Scotland and England. Visiting Liverpudlians to the New Town walking along Hanover and Castle Streets knew that their city had a Hanover Street and

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<sup>82</sup> *ibid*, pp.105-110

<sup>83</sup> J. Lubbock, *The Tyranny of Taste, The Politics of Architecture and Design in Britain 1550-1960*, Paul Mellon Centre for British Art by Yale University Press, 1995, p.42

<sup>84</sup> T.Mowl and B.Earnshaw, *John Wood, Architect of Obsession*, Millstream Books, 1988, p.165-170



Castle Street too<sup>85</sup>. Borsay notes that Bath, Bristol, Manchester and other important English cities had Queen, King and Brunswick Squares, as well as Princes' Streets and other names which celebrated royalty by name<sup>86</sup>.

What is also typical of British urban architecture in James Craig's plan is Edinburgh New Town's integration of streets, squares or circuses with churches. Reading through James Boswell's diaries it is easy to learn that 18<sup>th</sup> century Edinburgh society spent many hours a day in church even if they were not particularly devout, pious Christians. James Craig's provision for churches in the squares, and the 1774 circus plan, would have been seen as both necessary, and typical of modern British cities, such as Manchester's St Ann's Square and St Ann's Church, which were named after Queen Ann<sup>87</sup> and new churches were also built at Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham, Bath, Bristol, Derby and many other English towns and cities.

Of these developments, Bath is probably the best preserved to show architects' planning for a new town, as well as uniform house elevations. The politics of architecture often included magistrates ushering in uniformity through planning laws about building heights, materials and appearance as well as architects. Borsay notes that in the 18<sup>th</sup> century there was a fashion for flat facades, without any projecting fenestration being common<sup>88</sup>. The Councils' proposed to present prestigious new streets and squares, new public buildings and spaces, and stimulate industries through improvement acts. Political leaders, as well as architects, were able to make their own plans for successful careers in the city, and country. New Bath was nationally famous in the 18<sup>th</sup> century not only because of its spa water, but also because of its new architecture and many people came there as tourists. Edinburgh's New Town was also an opportunity for its architects to claim fame, which Craig certainly did, as well as its magistrates and political leaders. Like English towns and cities, Edinburgh Town Council also passed laws about New Town house elevations, such as trying to stop stormont windows, although it was unable to demand palatial facades to copy St James Square in London and Bristol, or Bath's King's Circus and Royal Crescent until

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<sup>85</sup> H.Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600 – 1840*, Yale University Press, 1995, pp.511,94, 921

<sup>86</sup> P.Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance, Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660 -1770*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, pp.74-79

<sup>87</sup> *ibid*, p.78

Charlotte Square was being designed and built in the 1790s. Nevertheless, the Council used the rhetoric of architectural modernity and uniformity.

English New Towns shared common characteristics, with Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham and Bristol, and, of course, London, each having new squares, streets and circuses as well as major new public buildings to support administration, trade and industries. Towns and cities became famous for these such as textiles, or metalwork, for examples, or for their ports<sup>89</sup>. As cities encouraged more industries populations increased, and the demands for new housing increased. Manchester and Liverpool were both good examples of this pattern of expansion in Langford's analysis of English society in *Polite and Commercial People, England 1727 – 1783*<sup>90</sup>. To compliment this industrial development, many new developments in English cities, such as Newcastle<sup>91</sup>, Manchester, Leeds and Bristol also incorporated new markets for this trade and commerce as well as public buildings such as Town halls, Colleges, Courts and Merchant Exchanges which added to their political and economic power and prestige.

Again, Edinburgh's programme to develop the New Town was broadly similar to this pattern whereby it enabled architecture, and its related trades and industries to expand and it also provided for new public buildings, and, not least, linked with the redevelopment of Leith and Leith Harbour. This argument supported Smout's study of Scottish planned villages and new towns, and placing the building industry at the heart of my analysis of builders was sensible not only in terms of Scottish history, but also British history. Using Borsay's analysis of English cities in the 18<sup>th</sup> century enables Edinburgh's New Town to be seen not simply as an imitation of London, but as a member of a group of cities which had surveyed, mapped, planned and built new areas for housing, commerce, administration and industries to develop. King George III, as well as those in Court, and Parliament, taking an interest in the Edinburgh improvement act and plan of 1767, would have seen Craig's plan, and the Council's Bill, as being typical of what had been done before, and was being done at present throughout Great Britain. The New Town was Edinburgh's

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<sup>88</sup> *ibid*, pp.50-60

<sup>89</sup> *ibid*, pp.40-46

<sup>90</sup> P.Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People, England 1727-1783*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, p.673-675

<sup>91</sup> P.Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance, Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660 -1770*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, p.109

contribution to a modern Georgian nation as well as its claim to be recognised as North Britain's provincial capital city.

This presents an impression that the New Town was the ideal, modern Georgian development, and, on paper, this exactly the impression that Edinburgh Council wanted to give its peers. But, in reality, the New Town's houses were often tenements, and, like Georgian Bath, what appeared to be a high class residential area for wealthy tourists and residents, was in fact a place where there was a mix of classes and functions. Bath Council had planned new markets<sup>92</sup> to serve these new houses with provisions. The wealthy had servants living in the houses, and the servants had shops in the new developments to provide necessities and luxuries for the households. Edinburgh New Town was also like this, with a mixture of nobles, middle classes, tradesmen, servants and tourists living side by side, and walking together around houses, tenements and New Town shops providing for their needs. Edinburgh's wealthiest residents did not have private streets and squares in the New Town where only millionaires could walk, and where their servants could not be seen. Unlike Glasgow's Palladian mansions to the western suburbs of the city, like Shawfield Mansion, which was an outstandingly important example of Palladian architecture in a Scottish city, Edinburgh's New Town was planned to integrate spaces and houses, and people together whereas Glasgow's great mansions were conceived not as streets, circuses and squares but as individual houses. Edinburgh's Mayfair on Forth did not set out to separate social classes as definitively as has been suggested in either then 1750s, or in 20<sup>th</sup> century New Town scholarship.

Borsay gives further reasons for believing that Edinburgh's New Town was a typical Georgian development, but these do not correspond to architectural, commercial and political ideals but practical responses to complete such a large scale development. Sometimes, new developments turned sour for developers and builders. This was because, Borsay argues, large development projects took a lot of time, money and effort to succeed, which led to them being abandoned and or alterations being made to the agreed plans and proposals. To support these points, Howard Colvin's *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600 – 1840*, tells the story of Cuthbert Bisbrown's building business in Liverpool which was ruined by 1776 for his undertaking of the

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<sup>92</sup> *ibid*,p.68

Harrington new town in Toxteth Park<sup>93</sup>. In Harrington, only St James's Church, and a few houses were completed. What Borsay highlights is that the ideals of architects' first plans was not always translated into buildings<sup>94</sup>, and Lubbocks' narrative of the building of Covent Garden and Leicester Square gives a similar impression for 17<sup>th</sup> century London<sup>95</sup>. There, plans for uniform facades, royal statues, churches, paving, and wide roads were not always adhered to, and, disputes between landowners, and property developers arose. Edinburgh Town Council also had a number of disputes to settle in the Court of Session, and developed an administrative system and structure which enforced laws and completed the building of the New Town. Builders found themselves caught in these disputes, and had to comply with Council administration, even at the risk of going bankrupt. Many builders shared the same fate as Cuthbert Bisbrown between 1772 and 1795, and this thesis places these business failures into the context of council administration, Edinburgh's economy and the variety of building businesses present in the New Town and their abilities to survive there.

Again, Borsay's analysis of these aspects of English urban history provides a context for understanding Edinburgh's New Town. An important point can now be made about the New Town and relationships between the landowners of site intended to be absorbed by the extended royalty and Edinburgh Council causing problems for the completion of the project. As Borsay noted this was common in England<sup>96</sup>, Edinburgh's New Town was also subject to intense political and economic pressures, where champions of private property rights in Parliament nearly prevented the project from progressing in 1767. The administrative system that the Council developed enabled the project to be completed. But, despite Craig's plan, and this system, the New Town was built in a piecemeal way in much the same way as towns like Plymouth and Portsmouth<sup>97</sup>, even though, it had Craig's formal plan to guide developments, which was lacking in these English towns. As with 17<sup>th</sup> century London petitioners, who complained about the lack of

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<sup>93</sup> H.Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600 – 1840*, Yale University Press, 1995, p.127

<sup>94</sup> P.Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance, Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660 -1770*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, pp.85-90

<sup>95</sup> J. Lubbock, *The Tyranny of Taste, The Politics of Architecture and Design in Britain 1550-1960*, Paul Mellon Centre for British Art by Yale University Press, 1995, p.35

<sup>96</sup> P.Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance, Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660 -1770*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, pp.88-90

<sup>97</sup> *ibid*, p.97

adherence to the architects' plans for new squares, Edinburgh's New Town was also the centre for similar petitions and complaints. Was Craig's New Town plan a presentation of what was going to be built? Despite James Craig's plan, the traditional gridiron plan which was provided for feuing, which Borsay noted was used to give land values since medieval times<sup>98</sup>, did not end building traditions and house designs<sup>99</sup>. Builders did not copy one masterplan for housing provided by an architect, but planned out their own developments along the new streets. This led to a variety rather than a uniform type of domestic architecture being built in the area. Borsay's example of the development of Georgian York shows that this aspect of building Edinburgh was common. In York, new properties on the same streets often had differing facades and functions, with developers often taking lots big enough for 6 to 9 houses, but deciding not to develop an entire street with one palatial façade<sup>100</sup>. In Edinburgh's New Town there was a very similar pattern of development where builders and developers did not build one façade along entire streets, but built small sections of streets year after year and frequently used different elevations for them.

Borsay's arguments were useful for placing Edinburgh's New Town in a wider context of English urban developments, but his book did not specifically discuss builders, and tradesmen. On the other hand, Edinburgh's builders could be understood better by placing them into the context of studies of English house builders in Georgian Britain which have been published in recent years. One book which was particularly useful was James Ayres' *Building the Georgian City*<sup>101</sup>. This book contained detailed studies of the professional organisation of property developers, excellent illustrations of men at work, tools and new streets and house types, and good examples of how these developments were built. Ayres found that the need to rebuild London after the Great Fire of 1666 led to standardised house building practises being developed because new properties had to be built quickly. Large house building schemes led to Georgian tradesmen mass producing new house types, but with tradesmen following architects' designs. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century London's new terraced houses influenced other English cities and towns, such as Bath, and by the 19<sup>th</sup> century,

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<sup>98</sup> *ibid*, p. 87.

<sup>99</sup> *ibid*, pp. 53-60

<sup>100</sup> *ibid*, pp. 60-61

<sup>101</sup> J. Ayres, *Building the Georgian City*, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, 1998

Ayres found that the craftsmen were not producing plans for properties but following architects' designs.

However, useful as Ayres' book undoubtedly is, the experience he describes is not transferable wholesale to Edinburgh. Archival research of builders in Edinburgh's New Town showed that it did not follow London's lead; it did have tenements, and its builders also provided designs, and encouraged apprentices to do so too. There was no approved masterplan of a house that the Council insisted builders had to copy in the New Town. There were other books that concentrated on individual cities and tradesmen in more detail, such as *An Insular Rococo* by Timothy Mowl and Brian Earnshaw<sup>102</sup>, where, as in their book on Bath's architect, John Wood<sup>103</sup>, it offered a detailed study. In *An Insular Rococo* the authors studied Irish tradesmen, such as plasterers, who found work in England's west country, and cities like Bristol. Authors like Ayres, Mowl and Earnshaw looked to study tradesmen and celebrate their products, and this was further inspiration to take a similar approach in the study of Edinburgh New Town's builders.

Despite the fact that there has never been a book, or article, published on the New Town's builders, the secondary sources show that the focus on builders, and treating building as the New Town's principle industry, was sensible and followed established studies of local and national histories in Edinburgh, Scotland and Great Britain. These studies showed that Edinburgh's New Town was typical of English civic improvement programmes, but that it was also one of the largest urban improvement schemes to be proposed in Great Britain, and the biggest in North Britain. Furthermore, although the builders of the New Town had not received any scholarly attention, and, had, in fact, been consistently criticised by New Town scholars, there had been studies of tradesmen in England which in some ways validated the methodology and viewpoint of the current study. The detailed archival research on which this is based creates the opportunity to give the New Town's builders more scholarly attention than they had ever had. Although this thesis is not a definitive study of builders it establishes that they were more important to the New Town than has hitherto been acknowledged, and that the term "builders" refers to well trained, and organised

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<sup>102</sup> T.Mowl and B.Earnshaw, *An Insular Rococo, Architecture, Politics and Society in Ireland and England, 1710 – 1770*, Reaktion Books, 1999

<sup>103</sup> T.Mowl and B.Earnshaw, *John Wood, Architect of Obsession*, Millstream Books, 1988

professional designers, tradesmen, labourers and investors who kept businesses alive and prospering in what was a very difficult economic period for Edinburgh. The builders were far more sophisticated and complicated than their name suggests. For the first time, the builders' professional history in the New Town will have been discussed in a scholarly way in which builders such as James Nesbit, William Smith, Robert Wright, John Baxter, John Hay, John Young, to name but a few, are seen to have contributed towards the design and completion of the New Town's housing. Builders are classified into groups, and housing into types. Case studies of architects like Robert Adam, James Craig, Sir James Clerk, William Keys, Robert Robinson and David Henderson are joined in case studies of builders like John Brough, Andrew Neal, the Chrystie family, William Morrison and others in which individual developers, family businesses and partnership businesses are studied to show that builders saw themselves as an emerging, unified profession. The Society of Master Builders of Edinburgh symbolised this rise.

In this study tradesmen are classified according to their membership of Incorporations of Wrights and Masons, and affiliations to architects, such as a group of tradesmen who worked for the architects John and Robert Adam and James Craig, or the mason John Chrystie. Other tradesmen and builders have also been identified through their links to financial, legal, political and mercantile leaders and families. Builders worked in harmony with these other professions to create property investment and development groups. Land was built upon for profit and political power. Like their influential backers in these development groups, builders established contacts with merchants and industrialists in England, colonies and Europe as well as extending their influence beyond Edinburgh. To pursue this point, this thesis examines the builders' activities throughout Edinburgh, such as along the South Bridge, and also in lowland Scotland's churches, and country houses to show that their influence was not restricted to the New Town but expanded beyond those streets and squares. Once again, analysis of the building industry and its professions allow us to see its dynamic influence on Scottish urban and rural architecture.

Gathering information to do these things is difficult. Unlike noble families, builders rarely left large personal archives. But, details about their businesses were commonly available by researching financial and legal archives. Since many of these gave details of building businesses

which were in trouble, this was cross-checked in the context of Edinburgh Town Council's administration of the New Town, and its builders. This particular study uses quantitative data which was taken from audits, and accounts as well as considering planning laws. In this respect, the first section follows the scholarship Reed, Murdoch and Rodger have provided Edinburgh historians. The second section argues that the builders established standard construction methods for house building, which complements Ayres' findings in Georgian London, and the third section is a study of the builders' businesses. All three sections set out an argument that the New Town's architectural history is better understood for studying its builders. The fact that most of the data for this thesis is based on archival research was not found by luck but hard work, and sound historical research, method, practice and publications and the advice of professional historians.



## Section One: Edinburgh Town Council's administration of the New Town

This section of the thesis is about Edinburgh Town Council's administration of building the New Town. The first chapter examines administrative structures and systems given in laws, procedures and jobs done by Overseers of public works. The second chapter offers an analysis of political leaders' relationships with builders in the New Town, and the third chapter focuses on the Council's economic management of the New Town. Together they clarify the Council's administration of the New Town within explicit political and economic contexts to emphasise the importance of builders to the completion of the project.

Edinburgh's New Town was the largest urban development project in 18<sup>th</sup> century Scotland. Earlier New Towns in Scotland, like Ormiston, Letham and Inveraray all had noble patronage, but were far smaller in their ambitions<sup>1</sup>. Though sometimes called New Towns, they are small villages in comparison to the scale of James Craig's plan, and the ambitious proposals to locate Scotland's Register House in the New Town. Here, Edinburgh was asserting its credentials to be seen to be as a patriotic Hanoverian British city, the provincial capital of North Britain, and more than equal for expanding English cities like Bristol, York, Birmingham and Liverpool, who all shared architectural ambitions to plan and build squares, churches and new public buildings and markets<sup>2</sup>. The New Town was also different from English cities and towns with large building programmes which included squares, and circuses, such as John Wood's Bath<sup>3</sup>, and new streets, squares and circuses in London<sup>4</sup>, because the Magistrates were the administrators of the project instead of wealthy noblemen (Plate 1). This meant that the New Town was to become very important to the Council's political leaders' careers and business interests. Secondly, this fact meant that the Council developed building controls, protected property, and devoted itself to the political and economic management of the project. This difference also allowed Edinburgh Town Council to present itself as the champion of the New Town's British credentials, such as its street names, and

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<sup>1</sup> T.C.Smout, *The Landowner and the Planned Village in Scotland, 1730 – 1830, Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, ed. N.T.Phillipson and R.Mitchison, Edinburgh University Press, 1970, pp.93-94

<sup>2</sup> P.Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance, Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660 - 1770*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, pp.40-110

<sup>3</sup> J. Ayres, *Building the Georgian City*, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, 1998

as a leading modern city in Great Britain – moving away from its old reputation as an overcrowded, and unhealthy place to live. Whereas English squares could be built on private land, and follow an approved architectural housing plan by the land owner, Edinburgh's New Town was not built on private property. St Andrew's Square was impressive in scale, but it was not a mirror of London's Hanover Square, Bedford Square, St James's Square, Golden Square because it was not built to celebrate and house aristocratic residents<sup>5</sup>. Although the New Town was to house nobles, it was not an exclusive network of squares and streets only for them. Closer to the New Town's history, were the facts that many of London's squares were built by speculative builders, and that they were supported by a grid of streets, markets, shops, inns and less ambitious houses than those built for nobles, where the "middling people" lived<sup>6</sup>. In a local context, the New Town was a statement by Edinburgh Town Council that it was determined to be respected as a landowner, and manager of such an important improvement scheme. Contemporary architectural developments for new houses in Edinburgh, as at George Square and Lady Nicolson's Park, were built on private land, and, though influential in plan, estate management, and sharing the same builders and architects, they did not offer the same scope for changing Edinburgh's appearance, administration of building, feuing and property that the New Town did.

The builders' businesses in Edinburgh's New Town shall be discussed in the 3rd section of this thesis, but they were also able to invest private money into the building of the New Town as well as join Edinburgh's very own "middling people", its bankers, lawyers and merchants, in living there and adding commerce and consumerism to the area in ways which embraced free trade. New Town house building businesses were integrated into commerce, free trade and the support of the urban middle classes. In this chapter, the New Town's building laws and their enforcement will be examined, as well as the genesis of the New Town plan and the overseeing of its conversion into buildings. House builders in the New Town began to develop fame, wealth and successful reputations, even the notorious William Brodie (Plate 115).

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<sup>4</sup> ibid

<sup>5</sup> G.Rude, *Hanoverian London*, Sutton History Classics, 1971, p.41

<sup>6</sup> ibid, pp.13-14

## **CHAPTER 1: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS**

The administrative history of the New Town can be divided into two periods: 1767 - 1779 and 1780 - 1795. Sir Laurence Dundas dominated the first period, and the second was led by Henry Dundas and the Duke of Buccleuch. In both periods administering feuing applications developed professional architectural services and a skilled workforce for building residential housing, surveying land and bookkeeping. These administrative systems were similar to other British improvement schemes where maps, plans, accounts and books of feuars were kept and marked up as the area was built. The first period was defined by easy feuing terms and unregulated building practices, but the later period saw the enforcement of a new system of administration which emphasized building controls through new laws, plans and ideas for housing. There is also a contrast between levels of public money being invested in the New Town, as well as the amount of money the New Town made for the Council. These provide specific political and economic contexts for the New Town's construction history, and careers builders carved out for themselves. In this period a new administrative system and structure emerged with the Lord Provost, Council Committees and Overseers managing conflicts and construction issues in the New Town. Although the Dean of Guild Court had jurisdiction there, the 1767 Act of Parliament to extend the royalty, the Council's own building Acts for this area, political leaders, and Council Committees partially took over the Court's traditional role as a mechanism for settling building disputes, and enforcing laws and supplemented the Dean of Guild Court's work. In fact, Dean of Guild Robert Miller wrote in 1891 that the "Dean of Guild Court of Edinburgh originally had jurisdiction over all matters relating to building within the old Royalty of the City, Leith, Canongate, West Port, Potterow and Pleasance. This jurisdiction, which came subsequently to include the extended Royalty (sic), was thus very limited; and down to the year 1879 the buildings within only a comparatively small area of the City came under the regulation of the court."<sup>1</sup> This chapter will see how the administration of the New Town developed traditional Council administration of building issues which had been covered by the Dean of Guild Court.

This chapter on laws gives a chronological narrative on the Council's legislation for building in the New Town from the 1760s to the 1780s. It also highlights laws on house design, and the

administrative team the Council created to oversee applications to build in the New Town in tandem with the encouragement of property development businesses. Building controls were developed as mechanisms to reduce conflicts between neighbours, control architectural plans and the New Town's appearance and functions. These mechanisms supported the completion of the New Town and manage its construction industry.

### Housing legislation

King James II's charter of 1688<sup>2</sup> encouraged the Town Council to enlarge Edinburgh<sup>3</sup>. The Council pursued the idea after 1707. Continual petitions to Parliament from the 1720s onwards finally resulted in the first Edinburgh Improvement Act in 1753<sup>4</sup> and led the way to the 1767 Act of Parliament, which created the New Town<sup>5</sup>. It is from 1767 that the building Acts for the New Town shall be discussed in terms of the Council's administration, and effects on builders' businesses and house designs.

During the drafting of the 1767 Act, James Coutts, Edinburgh's Member of Parliament, met with the architect, Robert Mylne, in London in February 1767 to discuss a clause in the bill for extending the royalty "with regard to the Building of Houses which seems to me necessary, unless the town are already possessed of powers within themselves, to make proper restrictions."<sup>6</sup> Provost Laurie thought there was "no need"<sup>7</sup> for such a clause, but later conceded: "I fancy objection shall be observed that a considerable part of it is a hill in which...any Building can be erected, and that it is proposed every house should have a garden or court for office houses both for convenience and health of the Inhabitants which now suffers so greatly by such vast numbers being confined within so narrow a space. Besides it is proposed that the streets should be very broad and have several walks particularly on both sides of the North Loch to be...a Canal & it is

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<sup>1</sup> R.Miller, *Guide to the Procedure of the Dean of Guild Court of Edinburgh with a Short History of the Guildry*, H&J Pillans & Wilson, Edinburgh, 1891, pp.27-28

<sup>2</sup> *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh 1681 – 1689*, Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1954, p.243

<sup>3</sup> ECA, TCM 21/10/1687

<sup>4</sup> ECA, *An Act for Erecting several Public Buildings in the city of Edinburgh; and to empower the Trustees therein to be mentioned to purchase lands for that purpose; and also for widening and enlarging the streets of the said city, and certain avenues leading thereunto*, 26 George II, 1753

<sup>5</sup> ECA, *An Act for extending the Royalty of the City of Edinburgh over certain adjoining lands; and for giving powers to the Magistrates of Edinburgh for the Benefit of said city*, 27 George III, 1767

<sup>6</sup> ECA, Mr Coutts to Lord Provost, 5/2/1767, McLeod Bundle 118, Bay D, Bundle 125, Correspondence between Lord Provost, Lord Privy Seal, James Coutts on Extended Royalty, 1767.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, 10/2/1767

likewise proposed to have large areas for public buildings all these particulars being considered the quantity of ground cannot(sic) be suppose'd to be great.<sup>8</sup>”

Insisting on gardens and offices created a healthy and mobile city; the “offices” were coachhouses, stables and haylofts for carriages wheeling along wide, well made roads. These roads joined a new, larger transport system being planned and built in Edinburgh from the 1760s through to the 1790s joining the New Town with the Old Town and other new areas Edinburgh reached out to such as South Bridge, Laurieston, the Grassmarket and Leith. Laurie refused to have restrictions on house designs to encourage the Council’s management of free trade, as well as its management of the 1767 Act through Parliament, where debates were held over property rights in the area. Imposing a masterplan for elevations and house types may have increased criticism of the Act, and enflame fears that the Council was going to insist that feuars develop property in specific functions and styles of buildings. Provost Laurie allowed the Council to promote the New Town as a place where economic incentives for competitive businesses were available and where feuars’ rights were respected.

Provost Laurie thought there was no need for any clause on house design and building, and this view was carried through into the Town Council’s first building Acts for the New Town. In this period both Parliament and Council gave both builders and feuars the freedom to design and build the houses they wanted to have, and this later resulted in tenements being built in the New Town. The first building Acts for the New Town were passed in 1767<sup>9</sup> and 1768<sup>10</sup> and encouraged quick feuing and building. Magistrates wanted to feu quickly and provide new services for houses like a reservoir, water pipes, drains and sewers. Incentives for feuing were included in the provisions of the Acts, such as being able to feu three lots in a row, and take the middle lot back to create “additional beauty<sup>11</sup>”. This development highlighted how the Council promoted the New Town as a place which encouraged new developments, and where feuars and developers, such as builders, were asked to exploit legislation to design, and build freely without the Council imposing

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<sup>8</sup>ECA, Mr Coutts to Lord Provost, 19/2/1767, McLeod Bundle 118, Bay D, Bundle 125, Correspondence between Lord Provost, Lord Privy Seal, James Coutts on Extended Royalty, 1767.

<sup>9</sup>ECA, TCM, 29/7/1767

<sup>10</sup>ibid, 24/2/1768

<sup>11</sup>ibid, 29/7/1767

elevations on for them to follow. Already, it was clear that the New Town was not a copy of an aristocratic London square, but a place where practical building and business decisions could be taken, and where Craig's New Town plan was open to alteration to suit developers' needs. This management style influenced relationships between neighbouring feuars, Council Committees and the Dean of Guild Court as well as between architects and builders.

The 1767 building Act allowed alterations to the authorised plan. This was duly exploited by developers, and it was clear that Craig's plan was not going to be adhered to rigidly, and that the administration of the plan was done with some fluidity and practicality. This encouraged a piecemeal development of the New Town by a variety of house builders. In 1767 the wright, John Young, took three lots on George Street<sup>12</sup> for £450 and set the central one back (plate 4). He began building without a master plan for house design being imposed on him by the Council, or an architect. This enabled him to create Thistle Court. He did not have to submit elevations to build it. He then faced the normal mechanisms for renting and selling property to others by disposing and resigning his feu so they could apply for a feu charter for themselves. If a house was sold, the new owner wanted a feu charter. If he rented a property, then a feu charter was not required. Designing and building houses in small units, such as two and three feus or houses, influenced builders far more than New Town architects' visions of elevations for entire streets and squares. This pragmatic, piecemeal approach to developing Georgian cities was entirely typical. York was built in a similar way, where no architect imposed a single New Town plan, and elevation, which was to be followed by every builder.<sup>13</sup>

The building Acts set up an administrative system. In order to feu and build a house, applications were sent to the Council clerks and Chamberlain. They then presented them to the Bailie of the Chamberlain and Tradesmen's Accounts Committee for approval. City Clerks and the Chamberlain kept this correspondence and Committee minutes about feuing and building. They booked people into the record and account books and sent the Overseer of public buildings to survey the building sites, and mark these feus onto the feuing map using its lettering and

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<sup>12</sup>ECA, Purchase money of lots of ground in the New Town, Chamberlain's Accounts, 1766 - 1768, p27

<sup>13</sup> P.Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance, Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660 - 1770*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, pp.60-61

numbering system. (plate 2) The freedom to build what you wanted was an incentive for feuars and builders to go to the New Town. Council minutes for July and August 1767 record the price of lots in the New Town<sup>14</sup> Applications for lots by Robert Murray, David Smith, John Fordyce and Patrick Crawford were given first refusal until these feus were measured and their values worked out<sup>15</sup>. The Council wanted to make money by selling lots quickly and people wanted the best places to live, with the eastern square ( St Andrew's Square) proving to be the most popular area at first. The laws supported this aim and the demand for new housing. The laws also gave the impression of stability and tradition. At first sight, St Andrew's Square was the biggest square in Edinburgh, and, if it followed Edinburgh's George Square, or London's Hanover Square, or Bristol and Bath's Queen Square<sup>16</sup>, then it would be home to wealthy aristocrats. Edinburgh's George Square, and Lady Nicolson's Park, had shown the Council that there was a demand by wealthy families for new squares, streets, and new housing. The system of administration that the Council initially used did not imply an immediate restructuring of Council services and its Committees, but a continuation of the work the Chamberlain and Tradesmen's Accounts Committee had done. The Council had anticipated that tradesmen were going to be important to the building of the New Town, and the builders were classified as tradesmen who specialised in house building.

But, there were difficulties administering laws, which encouraged freedom to do and build what you liked, and go where you wanted to on the feuing map. The laws created problems for the Council, feuars and builders. The banker, Sir Adam Ferguson, gives one example. In June 1768 he wrote a letter of complaint to the Council about being forced to keep two feus in the New Town against his wishes. In summer 1767 he had taken 40 feet on Queen Street, though still "under corn". Later he chose a larger site on St Andrew's Square instead. Ferguson noted that Sir William Forbes had also been denied the right to exchange his George Street feu for one in the square and wondered if the issue of feuing would prove that the New Town was "too great a plan

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<sup>14</sup>ECA, TCM, 29/7/1767

<sup>15</sup>ibid, 5/8/1767

<sup>16</sup> P.Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance, Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660 - 1770*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, pp.65-80

to succeed”<sup>17</sup>. (plate 3). Traditionally, the Dean of Guild court would hear complaints between neighbours and try to resolve them. Other Council Committees, such as the first Bailie's Committee and the New Bridge Committee also tried to resolve arguments but major problems were dealt with by the Court of Session. In the 1770s, building in Canal Street led to a Court of Session case, and hearings in the House of Lords. Political and economic problems surrounding the building of the New Town were resolved with more laws and tighter controls on feuing and building. Sir Adam Ferguson's case highlights the fact that although the Council had not set up a new administrative structure to administer the New Town it was encountering new administrative problems to resolve conflicts. The Dean of Guild had jurisdiction over the New Town, but the 1767 Parliament Act, the Council's own building Act, and the decision not to impose an elevation, and to encourage free trade and development, made it difficult for the Council to protect property that had been feued, and, at the same time, indicated that Chamberlains, Bailies and Provosts were also interested in collecting feu duty from the New Town's feuars.

Between 1767 and 1780, builders worked freely in the New Town, and it was not until after 1781 that building Acts determined its house designs. The system of administration changed little except that now responsibility for approving plans fell directly to the Lord Provost, Chamberlain and Clerks. Planning and building Acts from 1781 to 1785 set up a code of practice for builders to follow. They formed tighter procedures to follow, and if they ignored them, they would answer to the Provost directly and face a refusal of planning permission. Builders had to have their house foundations checked and approved by the Council<sup>18</sup>, and, once they got planning permission, they had to have the building roofed within 12 months or face a £30 fine<sup>19</sup>. By 1785, this instruction to build was emphasised with a new regulation, that if the feuar had not begun building within a year of getting planning permission then the feuar would forfeit the plot, and be fined £30<sup>20</sup>. In 1787 the plasterer, James Nesbit, faced prosecution, for delaying building<sup>21</sup>. In the 1780s the Council established tighter controls over builders, and encouraged them to work quickly. In this decade there were now 3 stages of assessment: initially, as before, either the Chamberlain, the Town

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<sup>17</sup>ECA, Petitions and Miscellaneous Papers 1768 - 1779, D 15R, Box 2 of 2, Miscellaneous Council Papers 1768 - 1775, Adam Ferguson, 15/6/1768

<sup>18</sup> ECA, TCM, 10/9/1784,

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*, 17/7/1782, New Town Building Act, article 4.

<sup>20</sup> ECA, New Town Building Regulations, 29/6/1785, McLeod Bundle D0129, item 106



Clerks and Deputy Clerks, or the Overseer of public works would receive plans, with written applications for permission from builders to feu plots and begin building. These applications were then recorded in the Town Council minutes as remits. Compared to the conflicts between feuars and the Council between 1767 and the 1770s, this new system shows the Council learnt from its previous mistakes, and now had tighter political control over the building of the New Town.

Once submitted the Chamberlain, Clerks and Overseer would pass them to one another with the Overseers' signature of recommendation. In the third and last stage the application would be passed to the Lord Provost's Committee for final approval and the feu would be recognised in an Act of Council. The differences to the system used in the 1760s and 1770s was that the first Bailie was replaced by the Lord Provost as the approver of designs, and that now designs had to be approved before being built. The planning processes of the 1760s and 1790s represented formal administrative systems and structures. Building permission was given on application, and in the 1780s and 1790s the Council enforced planning consent. From 1781 to 1785 the Council passed laws to strengthen its controls over New Town builders and architecture. The laws established an administrative team for the New Town. The men in the team were the Chamberlain, Clerks and Overseer. Of these, the Overseer became the man builders knew best. Since 1767 an Overseer had plotted feus on maps, dug and staked out areas in the New Town and checked building practices. When a feu was granted the new feuar's name was recorded in the Council's minutes and its feuing records.

The Council's laws impacted in two ways on the manner in which builders got land in the New Town. The first method was for future inhabitants like Sir Adam Ferguson and Robert Murray to contract a house builder and then negotiate the purchase money of the building site and feu rent with the Council. The second way was for the builder himself to feu plots, build and then sell and rent property which was called "speculative building". This term was not one of abuse, but matched the contemporary term given to "speculative banking", whereby credit accounts and cash money was being developed. The New Town became home to speculative bankers from the Ayr Bank, and they hired and supported building businesses. This meant that builders had a vested

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<sup>21</sup>ECA, TCM, 14/2/1787

interest in property and land prices and often they had business relationships with bankers, lawyers and merchants who invested in their annual speculative business plans. The builders looked to forecast profits and needed to get credit and build houses quickly to stay in business. Both ways required a builder to have his designs approved. For example, the lawyer, and property developer, Alex Wight, found out that his contracted builder, the wright, John Brough, did not submit an elevation to the Council for approval, then his ability to manage his property on Hanover Street could be damaged by the Council enforcing its laws<sup>22</sup>.

In the second period of the New Town's history, the Council established guidelines for house design and feuing to generate more income. These laws made the Council's administration stronger, and correlated with architects' ideals of town planning with unified street designs. The 1781 Building Act<sup>23</sup> decreed that main street buildings should have 3 storey elevations, and minor streets 2, exclusive of garret and sunk storeys at top and bottom levels. For both types of building no roof windows (stormont windows) other than sky lights were allowed. The meuse lanes were for stabling, coachhouses and offices of main street houses.

Of these regulations, the stormont window rule was to have important implications for house building. The stormont window was a window in the roof of a tenement and had been built in Scotland for many years. New Town builders had been designing houses with stormont windows, and renting out the garret flats which increased income from properties. Building tenements had become integral to the builders' businesses. The "stormont rule" was a clear statement by the Council that it wanted to stop builders developing tenements, and build single houses. In 1787 the mason, John Veitch, was instructed that he could have roof windows, but that they must not project from the roof<sup>24</sup>. The Council intended to stop tenement properties carrying garret flats with dormers build into the roof. But, there was a demand for garret flats to house servants, and tradesmen. The stormont rule tried to protect the Council's interest in collecting feu duty, but also showed that it was unable to protect property over its future use once a feu had been granted for development. Provost Laurie's decision not to impose an elevation, or function, for housing had

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<sup>22</sup>ibid, 10/2/1790

<sup>23</sup>ibid, 14/2/1781

<sup>24</sup>ibid, 31/10/1787

managed to protect the 1767 Parliament Act from failure, but this pragmatism also caused difficulties in administering the feuing of the New Town, and his solution did not offer a resolution to conflicts that builders, and feuars had either with one another, or with the Council's administrative team.

Another New Town Act was passed in 1782<sup>25</sup> to increase the speed of feuing and building in the area. Building work had to begin within 12 months of the feu being granted or the feu would be forfeit and a £30 fine imposed. This rule made the Council's ambition to maximise income from duties on feus and properties more explicit. In 1784 and 1785 the Council passed further building Acts<sup>26</sup> to manage a boom in feuing and building. The 1784 Act followed the Dean of Guild's view that builders "pay little regard<sup>27</sup>" to laws. The Council wanted builders' plans and proposals for its advantage rather than for that of the builders' businesses. Now all new applications for feuing had to be made on the back of a 1785 Council Act about building in the New Town<sup>28</sup>. These applications, together with plans, were then submitted to the Council and followed the established administrative system and structure. If the Overseer saw building work commencing without Council consent, the Council could stop it immediately with the Dean of Guild, and Procurator Fiscal, getting involved. The Dean of Guild was integrated into enforcing these Acts, alongside the Lord Provost. Builders had to answer to him, but, often, without a case being judged by the court's jury, where tradesmen sat. Builders were more involved in the administrative system, but they were not represented in it.

The 1785 Act was passed on 29 June 1785<sup>29</sup> and broadly followed the guidelines set out in 1784, adding that the sidewalls of 3 storey buildings could be up to 48 feet high and 2 storey buildings 33 feet high. From 1781 the Council imposed design regulations on builders. The laws of 1781, 1782, 1784 and 1785 represented a concerted effort to alter builders' behaviour and their buildings' appearance and functions from the 1760s and 1770s. Law enforcement was an issue which was resolved by an administrative structure and system. The most obvious examples of this

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<sup>25</sup>ibid, 17/7/1782

<sup>26</sup>ibid, 15/9/1784

<sup>27</sup>ibid, 15/9/1784

<sup>28</sup>ECA, New Town Building Regulations, 29/6/1785, McLeod Bundle D0129, item. 106

<sup>29</sup>ibid

were restrictions on building heights and types in major and minor streets, with the demand that meuse lanes be reserved for stabling and coachhouses, the “stormont rule”, and ensuring builders read the law on application. The success of this enforcement was indicated by the practice adopted by some feuars of writing out their applications for feus on copies of the 1785 Act, and then enclosing their plans inside, such as Alex Crawford’s application for a house in Queen Street in 1791(Plate 99)<sup>30</sup>.

In summary, Magistrates developed regulative laws for the New Town, but these had no control over the functions that buildings had in the New Town, and the effect these had on neighbours there. Some feuars disliked having to live beside commercial property, and tenements, whilst others celebrated the New Town as a place of free trade, commerce and industry. At first the Council encouraged freedom for both builders and rich men to work and live in the new city. The New Town was a symbol that Edinburgh was ready to take its place in modern Britain as the thoroughly modern provincial capital city, and was the equal of Bristol, Bath, York, Manchester, Liverpool or Birmingham, and a partner of the metropolis of London. The New Town was to be both an exclusive residential and financial quarter where speculative business would flourish and encourage income generation.

In the 1760s many feuars built single houses, but soon builders put up tenements. The laws passed in the 1780s implied that the New Town was for single houses. Banning stormont windows from applications reveals that the Council wanted builders to design and build houses, not tenements. These laws allowed Charlotte Square to be built and this symbolised the Council's professional administrative and planning services in the New Town and its law enforcement. Provosts, Treasurers and Chamberlains knew Robert Adam's designs would yield more revenue from duties than tenements, and satisfy their desire to see the completion of the New Town. These points open specific political and economic contexts by which to understand the builders of the New Town, as well as administrative issues of building control, property rights and learning from experience in law enforcement and industrial management in Scottish New Towns<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup>ECA, McLeod Bundle, Edinburgh Town Council 1636 – 1845, D0002R

<sup>31</sup>T.C.Smout, *The Landowner and the Planned Village in Scotland, 1730 – 1830, Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, ed. N.T.Phillipson and R.Mitchison, Edinburgh University Press, 1970, pp.93-94

## **Law enforcement**

The Council had to find ways to enforce its housing laws. This chapter examines the ways the Council enforced its laws in the New Town. It emphasises the strong leadership Sir James Hunter Blair gave the Council in its administration of the New Town. The builders themselves are given case studies, and their tenements in the New Town are discussed in terms of stormont windows. Some builders tried to avoid complying with building laws to pursue their own business interests. Legislative issues about stormont windows and height were often ignored. The New Town was intended to improve Edinburgh's political importance, economy, society, health and remove the bad reputation the city had for its Old Town with its poor living conditions. However, the Council saw that builders recreated elements of the Old Town in the New Town. Case studies of New Town tenements show that builders included garret flats in their new buildings. They also built high, and used traditional building methods for heating and lighting. The New Town tenements also incorporated shops, and examples are discussed in the thesis's last section in terms of a "tenement business plan". By 1786 these tenements became symbols of defiance of Council laws and to enforce legislation the response needed strong leadership.

The Magistrate who was responsible for New Town building laws was Sir James Hunter Blair. He knew that to make the New Town successful the Council had to feu ground to builders and encourage people to live there. The Council needed good administrators, politicians and financiers for this work. It set about organising an administration to make this huge undertaking a success. Hunter Blair was the outstanding New Town administrator for both the 1770s and 1780s. In the 1770s he was the first Bailie, and in the 1780s he was the Member of Parliament and Lord Provost. From 1767 he lived in the New Town's George Street. In April 1778 Sir Alexander Dick, President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, wrote to Hunter Blair, addressing him as the president of the Committee "who regulates the buildings of the new town."<sup>32</sup> The only senior administrative post Hunter Blair had not held in Council was Dean of Guild, and his place of the chair of the Committee showed that there was stability in Council administration, without inter agency conflict with the Dean of Guild, whose Court enforced Council policy and the

decisions Hunter Blair's Committee may have taken over proposed New Town buildings as will be seen in case studies of law enforcement which concerned the builders Robert Burns and John Brough.

Law enforcement began in earnest in the 1780s. The first period saw innovations to the official plan: Register House, the Royal College of Physicians, the Theatre Royal, Shakespeare Square, Canal Street, Thistle Court and Sir Laurence Dundas's house changed the appearance of the New Town plan but there were no laws on houses. Builders were free to build what they wanted. In the 1780s, Hunter Blair oversaw further alterations to the New Town plan such as St Andrew's Church, the Assembly Rooms and Charlotte Square. But, there were now tighter controls over feuing, house design and building. The 1781 Act heralded a concerted aim to manage builders and house design in the New Town. For their part, builders resisted the Council's attempts to tell them what to build.

Case studies of builders' disputes demonstrate law enforcement in the second period concerned tenement building. There are three common issues in these disputes: stormont windows<sup>33</sup>, vents and building heights. All three will now be discussed in that order, with each issue showing that builders would work outside the law to protect their businesses. The first case studies of law enforcement for builders touch upon stormont windows, and the effect of the 1781 Act on builders Robert Burns' and John Brough's plans of buildings constructed on Queen Street between 1785 and 1787. The Act banned stormont windows in New Town houses. As yet, scholars have not asked why the Act was intended to do this. An explanation will now be given using court cases, and contemporary drawings.

In 1787, the mason, Robert Burns, proposed to build a house in Queen Street neighbouring the house he had already built there for Dr. Walker. This application was recorded as a remit in the Town Council minutes for 28 February 1787. Dean of Guild Court records<sup>34</sup> show Burns first applied to the Chamberlain on 28 February 1787 (plate 6) for a plot of ground adjoining the

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<sup>32</sup>ECA, Petitions and Miscellaneous Papers 1768 - 1779, D 15R, Box 2 of 2, Miscellaneous Council Papers 1778, Sir Alexander Dick to James Hunter Blair, 24/4/1778

<sup>33</sup>G. Pride, *Dictionary of Scottish Building*, Rutland Press, 1996, p.76

<sup>34</sup>ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Unextracted Processes, 1787, 27/6/1787, SL91/18

corner house on Queen Street and Hanover Street. This corner house had been built by Alexander Fleming, but was owned by the wright, William McConochie<sup>35</sup>. On 25 April 1788 he submitted an altered plan to the Council for approval (plate 5). The story of his application illustrates the process by which ground was feued to builders, and the necessity for them to comply with the Council's laws. The reasons for Burns's success and failure to build lay with laws, and building practices. He faced administrative hurdles that the wright, John Young, did not face when he was building Thistle Court twenty years earlier. The Burns case represented a conflict between the Council and builders in which the Council wanted builders to obey laws and stop building tenements with garret flats.

In 1787 Burns made repeated requests to the Town Clerks to grant him the feu but to no avail. The delay in confirming his feu had cost him £180 and lost time<sup>36</sup>. He protested to the Dean of Guild court and Council that he had already lost money building Dr Walker's house<sup>37</sup>, which was also on Queen Street. Dr Walker<sup>38</sup> had contracted Burns to build this house. Its design was approved in June 1785 and Burns laid foundations in April 1786, but a dispute between the Council and William McConochie about paving the street in front of the wright's house meant that there was a delay in completing the house. According to the contract between Dr Walker and Burns, the delay meant the mason was fined. Bearing this in mind, the 1787 application was an attempt by Burns to recover his losses. The delay in processing his application had cost him an entire building season<sup>39</sup> and therefore lost him yet more money.

The first mistake Burns made was to assume he would be granted an "indulgence". He had presumed a successful application and already dug out house foundations, built the garden wall at the back of the area, cellars to the front, and a mutual gable wall beside Dr Walker's house<sup>40</sup>. Indulgences will be discussed later in terms of builders' businesses. They were a means for builders to pay for feus, and were common in the early 1780s. Things had changed after 1785 and Burns and Brough suffered for assuming indulgences would be given. The Council was keeping

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<sup>35</sup>NAS, Bill Chamber, William McConochie v William Jameson, 1776, CS271/28482

<sup>36</sup>ECA, Miscellaneous Council Petitions, 1761 - 1794, D0012R

<sup>37</sup>ibid

<sup>38</sup>ibid

<sup>39</sup>ibid

tighter controls on administrative procedures. The work cost him £180 but he claimed the area in stone before the overseer had even checked the plan and elevation, and then chalked and staked out the area as the Council building laws demanded. It appeared to the Council, as it had agreed in 1784, that builders paid “little regard<sup>41</sup>” to building regulations. The Council was about to make an example of Burns for ignoring its laws and staff.

In June 1787 Burns’ Dean of Guild Court case collapsed. He reapplied for the same area on 25 April 1788<sup>42</sup> with a new plan. Again, the Council delayed granting the feu. It was finally sent to Committee for approval on 18 May 1790. The feu charter was granted the next day<sup>43</sup> after the Overseer, William Sibbald, had measured the area. On 1st September 1790 Burns also received a feu charter for an area to the back of his new Queen Street house, with the consent of the mason, Robert Inglis, who had originally feued a strip of 113 feet of this back court area for building coachhouses, haylofts and stables. Burns completed the house by 2 February 1791. A feu charter was issued to Colonel Alexander Livingston of Banaskine for the house formerly owned by Mrs McDonald of Glengerry<sup>44</sup>. It had taken Burns four years (1787 - 1791) to finally build and sell the house. Ultimately, this outcome relied upon a plan that complied with the regulations. The story of Colonel Livingston’s house was a lesson for others that the Council enforced its laws.

The law the Council enforced was the 1781 building Act. The 1787 elevation had stormont windows (Plate 6). Burns should have known there were problems with the application when his feu charter was not forthcoming within 8 days after his application, since that was the time the Council promised to process applications by that Act. The “stormont rule” in the 1781 Act indicated the Council’s desire to have single lodgings in the New Town. A stormont window was a window in the roof, which had come to symbolise tenements and garret flats.

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<sup>40</sup>ECA, Miscellaneous Council Petitions, 1761 - 1794, D0012R

<sup>41</sup>ECA, TCM, 15/9 /1784

<sup>42</sup>ECA, Miscellaneous Council Petitions 1761 - 1794, D0012R

<sup>43</sup>ECA, TCM, 19/5/1790

<sup>44</sup>ibid, 2/2/1791



A second example of law enforcement against stormont windows and garret flats can be seen in John Brough's Queen Street building. Brough, the wright, took out Bills of Suspension. A Bill of Suspension halted all building work in the New Town. He did this in 1785<sup>45</sup> and in 1786<sup>46</sup> when the Overseer and the Dean of Guild stopped him completing his building for Mr McConochie on Queen Street. The reasons for this were that Brough had not submitted an elevation for approval and that the house included stormont windows<sup>47</sup> in its roof. The Magistrates believed that Brough wanted to build a garret storey room<sup>48</sup> to rent, but Brough said that they were roof windows<sup>49</sup> for the house. He demanded to be allowed to complete his buildings. Like Robert Burns, he was aware that delays cost him money and he pleaded for working practices to prevail over recent laws: "The Honble(sic) Council must be very sensible the great disadvantage it brings me under for if I put away my men as they are so scarce at present they cannot be replaced, and the hardship of paying them, and the work not going on, is obvious to everyone - It seems strange to your Petitioner how he should (sic) be singled out, when others are going on committing the same offences(sic), if any - Mr John Young is carrying a complete fifth storey eight four feet long Messrs Murrays Messrs Hill and Co, Mr Pirnie and many others that got off their Ground after the Act of Council was made whereas my Ground was taken off by Act of Council in my favor long before that Act was made, and where no laws subsisted it is humbly presumed there is no transgression - May it therefore please the Honorable Council to order a stop to all the buildings that is now going on in the same state with mine, and, noted they are worse as their Ground is got off since that Act of Council passed and till it be seen the Law is transgressed your petitioner shall cheerfully make his building agreeable to the Law when said Law becomes universal - John Brough<sup>50</sup>,"

Brough argued that James Hunter Blair and the Chamberlain had endorsed his business plan. He added that, "At the time... it was perfectly well known to every one who had built in the New Town, that there existed no Act of Council or other Regulation obliging the feuars to give into the Magistrates the elevation of their proposed buildings, it being then considered that the general plan

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<sup>45</sup>ibid, 7/12/1785

<sup>46</sup>ibid, 18/8/1786

<sup>47</sup>ibid, 9/11/1785

<sup>48</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 152, 396, 1774 - 1779, Daniel Davidson v Greenhill and Meikelbraes, 28/3/1775.

<sup>49</sup>NAS, CS271/4628, Bill Chamber, Petition of John Brough, 24/12/1785

of the New Town was the only rule to which feuers were tied.<sup>51</sup>”Brough had been contracted to build houses for Alex Wight and William McConochie, and, having completed masons' work, was about to begin garret flat when the Procurator Fiscal complained to the Dean of Guild, who then stopped the work.

Brough now faced claims for damages from both Wight and McConochie, and argued that the stormont windows were an ornament to the houses and the street as was demonstrated by the houses at the other end of Hanover Street. Unsurprisingly, the Dean of Guild and Council took the opposite view. They argued that no other house in the area followed his design and that the overall symmetry of the New Town would be damaged if Brough completed his building. Furthermore, his right to build could not be found in Council records so Brough had no formal permission to build. Brough argued that in the past ground was simply chalked out by the Overseer and once building was completed a feu charter was applied for from the Council. Behind these arguments lay some conflicting facts. On one hand, builders like Brough knew that there was a demand for rented accommodation, as well as servants' accommodation and that garret flats, lit by stormont windows, supplied this demand. On the other hand, in the 1780s the Council's laws formed tighter controls on builders and Brough had been caught by them by assuming an indulgence to build without written consent and an approved elevation. He may well have felt singled out, and it was as if the Council wanted to make an example of some builders to show others that the new laws were not to be ignored and that the Council's consent was needed. Brough and Burns learnt that the Council enforced its laws.

Brough's Bill of Suspension failed to stop all building in the New Town. The Council did not reply to his case for 2 years<sup>52</sup>. This delay in responding to a claim was exactly the same tactic that the Council had used against Robert Burns. It was meant to interrupt the builder's business and make him submit and accept the laws quickly lest he face ruin and sequestration. Although the Treasurer argued in court that different builders' plans and work practices affected the levels and lines of the streets and that Brough's building works blocked streets, caused rubbish to gather and was a

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<sup>50</sup>ECA, TCM, 18/8/1786

<sup>51</sup>NAS, Bill Chamber, CS 271/42628, Petition of John Brough, 24/12/1785

nuisance to others, he did not answer Brough's complaints. To the Treasurer, keeping the roads and streets clear enabled the Council to record feuing, lay pipes and build sewers, pave streets and allow builders to put up houses quickly. However, the case was abandoned as Brough went bankrupt and trustees for his creditors acted on his behalf.

A third example of enforcing the stormont rule concerns the builders, Messrs. Smith and Wright. They also challenged the stormont rule, but this time in Hanover Street. They wrote to the Council on 25 January 1786 to complain about the "stormont rule"<sup>53</sup>. They had feued one of the stances on the southeastern corner of George Street and Hanover Street and presumed it was safe to build a stormont window as the houses on the other three other corners had them. Just as they were carrying up the chimney vents to the stormont a message was sent to them to stop building. In reply, they requested the same privilege given to other, earlier builders, to finish off their building with stormont windows. It was granted but the dispute indicated the Council's thinking at that time. Between 1786 and 1787 Brough, Burns, Smith and Wright, and builders of Frederick Street all wanted to build stormont windows and had assumed they could do so. Builders continued to submit plans with stormonts - perhaps in sympathy with others to state their independence.

In March 1786 the feuars and builders of Frederick Street petitioned the Council about stormont windows to ask for the same rights as those given to builders on Princes Street, where such windows were commonplace. Builders, Robert Calder and William Murray, had applications for feus in Frederick Street refused since their plans showed stormonts<sup>54</sup>. This case shall be discussed in terms of the "tenement business plan" in section 3 of this thesis, but in Frederick Street at this time builders offered a compromise while the Council enforced its laws, administrative structure and system for planning and building in the New Town.

Faced with concerted communal opposition to its stormont rule the Council accepted plans with stormont windows after 1787 but asked builders not to build them because Magistrates did not want to constantly refuse builders at the first stage of application. This is what happened to John

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<sup>52</sup>NAS, Bill Chamber, CS271/29912, Answers for the City Treasurer of Edinburgh to Bill of Suspension for John Brough, 24/4/1787

<sup>53</sup>ECA, TCM, 25/1/1786

Wilkie's petition for a feu and his elevation for a house on both Princes Street and Frederick Street. He submitted plans on 24 July 1787 (plate 28), which were accepted. There are numerous examples of other builders submitting plans with stormont windows in them during the 1780s. Plans by John Clerk and George Winton (George Street, 1784) (plate 7), John Marshall (Rose Street and George Street, 1784 - 1786) (plates 13 and 14), John Baxter and John Hay (George Street, 1786) (plate 10), Robert Wright (Queen Street, 1787 and 1788) (plates 11 and 12), John Hay (Queen Street, 1790) (plate 16), and John Paterson (Princes Street, 1791) (plate 17) all show that there were a great variety of elevations in the New Town's main streets, and that stormonts were commonly seen in them from the mid 1780s to the 1790s. Meanwhile, plans by Robert Wemyss (Frederick Street, 1785) (plate 8), William Romanes and John Dickson (Castle Street, 1786) (plate 9), and Peter Logan (Frederick Street, 1790) (plate 15) also clearly indicate stormonts were also commonly seen in the New Town's cross streets at the same time. In fact, from these examples of plans of New Town housing from the 1780s to the 1790s which have stormont windows in them most belong to the New Town's main streets, and these celebrated the social mix of the New Town either through houses' being home to servants, or through tenements holding garret flats.

Why were stormonts so popular? The answer is that the roof windows were a part of Edinburgh's building tradition, and builders were following it. The stormonts provided extra rental income, as well as servants' rooms. Builders were not trying to build fine town houses based on London's mansions and terraces, but fancy tenement flats. There was clearly a demand for these buildings or the builders would not have built them. Builders argued that stormonts were windows in the roof with several uses. Firstly, stormonts could light houses. In St Andrew's Square, the wright, John Young, built the house immediately to the south of Sir Laurence Dundas's mansion. To get the feu the Council forced him to copy Andrew Crosbie's house – the Baronet's neighbour to the north of his great house – so it appeared that the Dundas house had matching wings. In 1782 Young offered to copy Crosbie's roof if he could convert the north most door into a window and have a stormont window to light the house's stairs<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup>ECA, Petitions and Miscellaneous Council Papers 1784 - 1786, Box 2 of 2, D0021R

Secondly, stormont windows gave access to roofs to clean chimneys. In Queen Street, Robert Burns's neighbour, the wright, William McConochie, had a legal dispute with the wright, James Rankine, about methods to clean chimneys and their vents.<sup>56</sup> Dean of Guild Court records show that venting and gabling were common areas for disputes between neighbours. Several New Town petitioners submitted drawings of venting systems and gable ends. Often the gable end would mark out both house boundaries and the place where chimneys and their vents fed fireplaces. Drawings for David Smith and James Brown in St Andrew's Square and Robert Hunter, Baron Ord and Sir Adam Ferguson in Queen Street clearly show houses planned with vents and gables between 1768 and 1772 (plates 18 - 22). The earliest surviving example of a venting system in the court records is for Gilbert Laurie's property from 1760, so it was normal to make these drawings by the time the New Town was being built (plate 23).

In 1776 William McConochie wanted a modern house, but James Rankine supported traditional building practice. Rankine believed that a tenement's top floor had stormonts or roof windows to clean vents and fireplaces. Chimney cleaners lowered their ball and chain down perpendicular vent shafts after climbing onto the roof through the stormont windows and then climbing up the chimneystack. McConochie wanted modern methods of vent cleaning and chimney construction. He argued that traditional chimney cleaning damaged rooms and vent linings. It was easier to send boys down chimneys to clean the modern crooked vents. The boys climbed ladders to get onto roofs and did not use stormont windows at all. McConochie argued these points in 1776 – five years before the 1781 Act.

The reason why venting was an important issue was that it guaranteed hygiene, safety and warmth. Robert Fergusson's poems, like *Auld Reikie*, publicly commented on Edinburgh's smoke and filth<sup>57</sup>. Many houses had what were called "smoking chimneys". This meant that chimneys and vents allowed smoke to enter rooms. At a time when respiratory complaints, such as consumption, were killers, smoking chimneys were to be avoided in modern homes and the New Town's appeal to inhabitants was its fresh air and clean streets - a healthier place to live and work. The quality of

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<sup>55</sup>ECA, Petitions and Miscellaneous Council Papers 1781 – 1782, D0020R

<sup>56</sup>NAS, William McConochie v James Rankine, 1776, CS271/31905

<sup>57</sup>Robert Fergusson, *Selected Poems*, ed. James Robertson, Birlinn, 2000

air and healthier living through avoiding chimney fires and “smoking chimneys” were attractions of living in the New Town, but stormont windows indicate that Old Town tenement building customs were used in the New Town.

The Council wanted the New Town to have a good quality of light. Good light and air had been of concern to the Council since the late 17th century. Regulated heights of buildings and gardens prevented the huge tenements of old Edinburgh emerging from the fresh soil and cornfields of Barefoot’s Park, Multreeshill and Lord Alva’s ground. St Andrew’s Square was always intended to be green and spacious, ornamental and have monuments like obelisks and statues in them like Bath and Bristol’s Queen Square. In this respect, the New Town’s plan’s intentions were typical of other British cities. Healthy living conditions in the area were attractions for New Town residents. The Council wanted to avoid overcrowding and the associated problems of the Old Town, such as disease and increased fire risks because of so many fireplaces in large tenements. It wanted modern building practice and design such as a sewage system, water supplies, street cleaning and including better chimney building and cleaning.

In the 1780s problems with smoking chimneys persisted. New Town architects and builders were aware of this problem and tackled it by employing “chimney doctors”, reading books, and trying new building methods. For example, the architect, David Henderson, invited the London chimney doctor and “architect”, Robert Nesbit, to work at his own flat in St David’s Lane. If he cured the architect’s smoking chimney, Henderson promised to introduce him to his New Town clients to get more work. Nesbit failed and Henderson turned to his Edinburgh mason and New Town builder on Canal Street<sup>58</sup>, James Robertson<sup>59</sup>, to remedy this common problem for his houses in town<sup>60</sup>. Faced with this perpetual problem, it is perhaps no surprise that even in the 1780s and 1790s builders planned traditional houses with stormont windows to light the house, so that vents could be cleaned, and that, if need be, a garret flat could be let for rent to make the property more profitable.

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<sup>58</sup>ECA, TCM, 1/9/1773

<sup>59</sup>NAS, David Henderson v Robert Nesbit, 1786, CS271/15084; Robert Nesbit v David Henderson.23/11/1785, SC39/17/384, N.

Wallhead gabled garret flats were also a part of Edinburgh's building tradition. There are many examples of wallhead gabled garret flats in Edinburgh from the mid 1750s onwards such as at Chessell's Court tenements in Canongate (1742) (plate 24), and John Yatts's tenement on the High Street (1755) (plate 25). The wall headed dormer windows on John Sharps's flats in Pleasance (1768) (plate 26), and the wallhead gable garret on Robert Inglis's design (1789) (plate 27) for Dr Alex Monro's property show that builders still sought to maximize light, height and roof space.

The tradition continued in the New Town, especially on corner houses, when a gable end faced onto the street. The New Town was a continuation of this tradition and seeing designs such as Winton and Clerk's wallhead gabled house in George Street (plate 7) or gable ends on corner houses would not surprise builders. They had been trained to design and build in this way. When Messrs. Smith and Wright challenged the stormont rule in 1786<sup>61</sup> it was about the southeastern corner of George Street and Hanover Street. Their stormont window was to match the other houses on the three other corner houses which had them. They were building the chimney vents to the stormont, when they stopped building. Stormonts represented traditional tenement building techniques and property management that builders knew from the Old Town. The windows were used in gable ends, and for garret flats as well as for chimney cleaning. The importance of rents to builders who were proprietors in the New Town shall be discussed in the last section of this thesis.

Another Old Town tenement building tradition to survive in the New Town was to try and build high to find air, light and space. As with stormonts, this led to the Council enforcing its laws. In 1790 the mason, John Hay, wanted to build his house on Queen Street to a height of 50 feet, which was 2 feet over the maximum allowed. He applied on 2 March and was approved on 24 March<sup>62</sup>. Another example of a builder building 2 feet over the regulated limits on Queen Street in 1790 was Alex Peacock's house for Lord Rockville<sup>63</sup> (Plate 98). As with Hay's building, this was allowed. Most examples of builders testing legislation about height include the meuse streets and lanes, where buildings had to be only two storeys high.

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<sup>60</sup>ibid

<sup>61</sup>ECA, TCM, 25/1/1786

<sup>62</sup>ibid, 24/3/1790

In 1781 the mason, Andrew Neal, feued ground in Thistle Street to the west of Lady Glenorchy's ground<sup>64</sup>. The height of his building (plate 29) concerned the Council. It was believed that its height would hurt buildings on Queen Street. They asked Neal to keep his building to the same height as Lady Glenorchy's building. Later, in 1786, on Rose Street, east of the Assembly Rooms, John Marshall wanted to build on the west end of his intended plot<sup>65</sup>. The Overseer, Thomas Stevenson, stopped him because his sidewalls were 3 feet higher than his neighbour's house. In fact, in August 1786<sup>66</sup> John Marshall was prosecuted for building a 5th storey in Rose Street. Fellow builder, the wright, Adam Russell, really did want to push the rules when he intended to build 45 feet high on the south side of Thistle Street<sup>67</sup>. The 1785 Act allowed for 33 feet high buildings on this street. The administration at this time pursued a policy for uniformity and order in the New Town.

In 1786 the Council urged the Procurator Fiscal to prosecute all other builders who broke its laws<sup>68</sup>. The Dean of Guild prosecuted John Brough and Andrew Neal on 31 August 1786 for the excessive height of buildings on the south side of George Street<sup>69</sup>. Much later, in 1792, the mason, George Winton, one time partner of Robert Burns, was prosecuted for the excessive height of a tenement on the corner of Frederick Street and Princes Street<sup>70</sup>, and a case was prepared against the wright, Alex Young, for the roofs on his houses in Rose Street<sup>71</sup>. But in all these later cases the court did not pursue them further.

Burns, Brough and others were made examples between 1785 and 1788 so that others would see that the Council gave planning permission and controlled feuing, planning and building regulations. There was an administrative structure and system to enforce legislation on building in the New Town, which meant requests to develop property there had to be approved by the Lord

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<sup>63</sup>ibid, 17/2/1790

<sup>64</sup>ECA, Petitions and Miscellaneous Council Papers, 1781-1782, D0020R

<sup>65</sup>ECA, TCM, 2/8/1786

<sup>66</sup>ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Unextracted Processes, 17/8/1786, John Robertson v John Marshall.

<sup>67</sup>ECA, Petitions and Miscellaneous Council Papers, 1784 -1786, Box 1 of 2, D0021R

<sup>68</sup>ECA, TCM, 18/8/1786

<sup>69</sup>ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Extracted Processes, 31/8/1786, John Robertson v John Brough and Andrew Neal.

<sup>70</sup>ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Unextracted Processes, 7/6/1792, James Lindsay, Carnegie and Robert Fullerton.



Provost, as well as the Overseer. The laws the Council passed in the 1780s led to tighter controls on planning permission and building practices. But, stormont windows, wallhead gablegarret flats, building heights and chimney vents all show that builders continued to build and design tenements according to Edinburgh's Old Town's traditions. These builders, and Old Edinburgh's tenement architecture, shaped the New Town's appearance. The indulgences and freedoms builders had enjoyed in the 1760s and 1770s were now curtailed and the Overseers of public building, and the administrative team working with New Town planning applications had more work to do to keep the New Town's buildings in order. But, whereas the New Town was divided into major and minor streets, which denoted social status<sup>72</sup>, the builders' tenements were reestablishing the rich social mix of the Old Town in Edinburgh's new streets and squares and these were to be seen in both the major and minor streets. On plan, St Andrew's Square appeared to be an exclusive area, following precedents in English cities, but in practice, the necessity to provide housing for servants, as well as lodgers in tenements, led to a piecemeal architecture, featuring houses and tenements, which was equally typical of English urban developments, such as at York or Portsmouth. In comparison to these cities' unplanned expansions, the context for the New Town's appearance of orderly development was its administrative system to enforce legislation and resolve disputes.

### **Overseers of Public Works**

The previous discussion of builders' attempts to avoid laws demonstrates why the Council had to enforce laws. To help them do this it set up a department of public work with an Overseer. This is a discussion of this department's Overseers. It discusses the work they did. From 1767 the Council developed a new administrative system and department to manage planning and building the New Town. The Overseer led this department.

In some ways being Overseer revived the post of Council architect that Alex McGill had held in the 1720s and demonstrated that architecture was at the forefront of the Council's administration

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<sup>71</sup>ibid, 14/11/1792, James Clark.

<sup>72</sup> P.Reed, *Form and Context: a Study of Georgian Edinburgh, Order in Space and Society, Architectural Form and its Context in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. T.A.Markus, Mainstream, 1982, pp. 115-155.

of Edinburgh. The post of Overseer was maintained from the 1760s to the 1790s and in that time the salary, duties and demands placed upon the Overseer increased. The Overseer worked with the Clerks, Chamberlain, Dean of Guild and Council's Committees - most notably the North Bridge Committee, Tradesmen Committee and Lord Provost's Committee. The Chamberlain and Clerks kept books and plans in their offices to record and administer feuing. As applications became more numerous and complicated so the amount of book keeping increased. Although John Brough complained that builders were simply shown a copy of the feuing map prior to their applications being processed through the Committees and their plans being checked, dealing with an application led to making many more records such as accounts, remits, Council minutes, and plotting feus onto maps.

The Clerks and Chamberlain's offices had books of feu charters granted in the extended royalty<sup>73</sup>, feu duty ledgers<sup>74</sup>, Town Council minutes, the Chamberlain's accounts<sup>75</sup>, books of feus, feuars and vassals<sup>76</sup>, books of feu and tack duties<sup>77</sup> and volumes of incomes from the vassals, compositions and bygone feus in the ancient and extended royalties<sup>78</sup>. All these lay by their hands; so too did all the builders' and Council's correspondence about their applications and plans. There were also Council meeting remits, Committee minutes and the overseers' reports on plots being measured out, chalked, staked out and mapped onto the feuing plan.

The Overseer's office would also have had books and plans such as letters of application awaiting inspection and comment, account books of tradesmen at work on the Council's behalf laying drains, water pipes, causeways and other public works, feuing and building maps, plans, books and files for legal cases for the Dean of Guild and Court of Session awaiting evidence and comment. The offices showed that both architects and builders were important to the New Town's administration, and that they were sometimes involved in its work. Equipment like chains and

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<sup>73</sup>ECA, Feu Charters Granted in Extended Royalty, 1771 - 1832, 1775 - 1815, Bay D, shelf 32

<sup>74</sup>ECA, Feu Duty Ledgers vol. 1 (1734 - 1779), vol.2 1734 - 1792, vol.3 1767 - 1769, vol.4 1768 - 1802, vol.5 1769 - 1771, vol.6 1773 - 1775, vol. 7(1777-1781), vol.8 (1781-1785),vol.9 1785-1789, vol.10 1789 - 1793, vol. 11 1793 - 1794. Bay D, shelf 32.

<sup>75</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts, 1767 - 1795, shelf 81

<sup>76</sup>ECA, Book of feus, feuars and vassals, 1769 -1852, Bay D, shelf 32(now missing)

<sup>77</sup>ECA, Feu and Tack Duties, Martinmas 1781 - 1785, Shelf 89

<sup>78</sup>ECA, Vassals, compositions and bygone feus in the Antient and Extended Royalty of the City of Edinburgh, Martinmas 1734 - 1779, shelf 89

posts for surveying, theodolites, mathematical measuring sets, desks, pens and paper would all have been to hand, and architects and builders had the training, knowledge and skills to use them both to their own benefits in measuring out feus, as well as the Overseers' office. Unfortunately, there are no surviving archives of the surveying work Overseers did in the New Town. The best account of such work belongs to the surveyor John Laurie who worked in the New Town in the 1760s. His work shows that the Overseers were involved in estate management and surveying and mapping – a skill Laurie had demonstrated he had in his two plans of 1766 showing proposed New Town plans set into the context of Edinburgh's surrounding countryside.

The first Overseer of the New Town was John Wilson. He was partner to mason and architect, David Henderson. He worked as Overseer between 1770 and 1784, for a salary of £50 per year<sup>79</sup>. He was hired initially to repair the new bridge over the Nor Loch after its collapse in 1769 but took over the work that the surveyor, John Laurie, did. John Laurie's accounts for 1768 to 1769 provided an example for Wilson to follow<sup>80</sup>. Laurie was the surveyor who mapped the New Town, made a feuing plan, and worked on levelling<sup>81</sup> the heights of the streets and squares and making the streets run straight<sup>82</sup>. Early in 1769 he worked on a new plan, which showed alterations and amendments, identifying feuing ground, which was to be finished upon vellum<sup>83</sup>. He also met with feuars such as William Key<sup>84</sup>, William Pirmie<sup>85</sup>, and Chief Baron Ord<sup>86</sup> about their chosen ground for houses and gardens, measuring their areas, staking them out<sup>87</sup> and marking them with a spade<sup>88</sup>, as well as marking the areas onto the official feuing map in the Council chambers. The work Laurie did as Overseer included surveying, mapping and was typical of estate management.

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<sup>79</sup>ECA, TCM, 13/6/1781

<sup>80</sup>ECA, Macleod Bundle 108, Shelf 8 u

<sup>81</sup>ECA, Macleod Bundle 108, Shelf 8, Bay D, 28/2/1769; 27/3/1769

<sup>82</sup>ibid, 7/4/1769; 8/4/1769

<sup>83</sup>ibid, 10/1/1769; 13/1/1769; 31/1/1769; 26/2/1769

<sup>84</sup>ibid, 15/2/1769

<sup>85</sup>ibid, 15/2/1769

<sup>86</sup>ibid, 1/3/1769; 9-15/3/1769; 5/4/1769

<sup>87</sup>ibid, 29/3/1769; 30/3/1769; 1/4/1769; 3/4/1769; 4/4/1769; 15/4/1769

<sup>88</sup>ibid, 17/4/1769

An account of 1777 showed that Wilson was working with feuing maps of the New Town, measuring and staking out feus and marking them on maps – just as Laurie had done earlier<sup>89</sup>. By 1778 Wilson, who was also called “architect”<sup>90</sup>, supervised the building of the sewers in Princes Street and three years later he spent two years fixing the levels of Hanover Street and establishing the declivity for its paving. Whilst he did this, he enforced street cleaning laws to fine stone masons 10 shillings every time they were caught hewing stone in the streets, instead of working under cover, in a hut, called a shade<sup>91</sup>.

After 1784, Thomas Stevenson was Overseer. He followed Wilson’s duties but also had to enforce the building regulations of 1781, 1782 and 1784. These included the rule given in the 1782 Act, which made every builder submit plans and elevations for approval. This meant he had to check for stormont windows and building heights. With the help of the architect, John Baxter,<sup>92</sup> he mapped every house location and recorded street levels as well as checking that each house foundation was safe, in line, level and that the building site was not an obstruction to pedestrians and coaches. Like a Clerk, he kept a feuing book and map in his office, and used them to record new feus<sup>93</sup>. Fittingly, both Stevenson and John Laurie surveyed Lord Alva’s land for the creation of Charlotte Square and the anticipated completion of the New Town.

But before Charlotte Square was planned and built Stevenson was replaced by James Gordon. He was the Overseer between 1787 and 1789, continuing the work Wilson and Stevenson had done. Gordon began work realigning Castle Street<sup>94</sup> and enforcing the laws. It is no surprise that his successor, William Sibbald, also surveyed the New Town. In 1794 he worked with the builder, Robert Burns, to chain survey the area and realign streets<sup>95</sup> - no doubt using the theodolite he had purchased for £21 the year before<sup>96</sup>. By the 1790s, with the New Town nearly completed, the vexatious Burns had faced over his stormont windows in 1786 had passed and he was reconciled

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<sup>89</sup>ECA, TCM, 2/4/1777

<sup>90</sup>ibid, 21/1/1778

<sup>91</sup>ibid, 10/1/1770

<sup>92</sup>ibid, 5/3/1783

<sup>93</sup>ibid, 20/4/1784

<sup>94</sup>ibid, 17/10/1787

<sup>95</sup>ibid, 22/1/1794

<sup>96</sup>ibid, 27/3/1793

to Council administration. The once angry builder was now the Council Deacon of Masons, and fully integrated in the Council's administrative system for the New Town.

By 1795 the Overseer was paid £100 per year<sup>97</sup> - twice what John Wilson was paid. However, although some duties were the same, the job of Overseer had changed from the 1760s to the 1790s. Like Stevenson and Gordon, William Sibbald checked plans for illegalities such as stormonts and wall heights. He then oversaw the builders' site management and inspected the foundations for every house, ensuring there were no encroachments and nuisances. Once the Council was satisfied that the application was acceptable, Sibbald marked out feus into the ground and onto maps. He ensured that accurate records and surveys were kept, as builders were adept at complaining that they were denied the full area of their feu through bad surveying and administration.

Stevenson, Gordon and Sibbald's duties represented a change to the way ground was feued out. The 1780s enforced laws encouraging a system of administration to feu, plan and build. The system raised standards of work by architects, builders and administrators. As well as being shown Craig's general plan of the New Town prior to the agreement to feu there, builders now had to be aware that they needed planning permission before building. Delays in building cost builders money. In order to be profitable they had to keep the Council's laws, and feu ground and design houses to the department of public work's satisfaction.

The boom in feuing and building in the New Town from 1783 onwards led to more feuing plans and books being prepared. Architects, John Baxter junior and Robert Kay and the surveyor, John Laurie, surveyed and measured feus accurately between 1783 and 1789 to help the Overseer's men stake out the areas in preparation for the march west when the completion of the New Town looked to the Charlotte Square project. Laws passed between 1784 and 1785 made the Council's aims explicit and gave Overseers more work to do. The system for booking foundations in 1786 was linked to the system Dr Webster had made some 20 years beforehand for feuing.

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<sup>97</sup>ibid, 27/1/1790

This system was not necessarily sympathetic to the builders. John Brough complained that it was "inconvenient for Builders <sup>98</sup>". What the Council reacted to was builders ignoring legislation. But the lack of good maps and measurements hampered effective administration and the builders' confidence in the administrators. This caused complaints and conflicts which shall be discussed in the analysis of the builders' businesses. But despite law suits against the Council, the Overseer and the administrative team were not replaced or deleted from existence.

The Council's administrative structure and system was robust and effective after passing of the 1780s legislation for New Town housing. The "public works" department consolidated the Council's laws. In 30 years the department developed considerable expertise, archives and confidence in administering large town planning projects. An aspect of this expertise was to enforce laws as well as offer compromises with property developers. The laws did not stipulate what a building's function had to be once a feu had been granted, but the Overseers were encouraged to limit a proliferation of stormont windows in applications as they hindered the collection of duties. Property laws sometimes conflicted with building codes, and politicians sought solutions by creating the public works department, and allowing law enforcers such as the Overseer, Dean of Guild and the Procurator Fiscal to suppress clear transgressions to building Acts, but still encourage builders to take up new feus. It is then perhaps no surprise that men like William Sibbald, and the plan and map stores he had access to, went on to influence planning the second New Town in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A trademark of the second New Town is the uniformity of the houses along its streets, crescents and circuses on private property developments. Although the town planning was influenced by ideas of the first New Town, did the 18<sup>th</sup> century's builders and architects also plan uniform street designs?

### **Uniformity in the New Town**

Architects and builders were involved in planning the New Town. Ideas of the architects Sir James Clerk, James Craig and Robert and John Adam will be discussed first. I will consider plans given by the builders James Nesbit, William Smith, Robert Wright, John Baxter, John Hay and John Young to show that builders also understood architectural concepts of uniformity and symmetry and contributed these to the actual building of the New Town, whereas Clerk and Craig

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<sup>98</sup>ibid, 5/5/1784

provided plans and theories in proposals. Together, architects and builders shaped the New Town's architecture. Both parties also relied upon Magistrates to approve their buildings and plans. The previous discussions on laws, law enforcement and Overseers have shown that the Council had laws, an administrative system and team for feuing and building in the New Town. Feuars were shown Craig's plan of the New Town prior to taking their plots and the Council's building Acts influenced the way streets and houses looked. If Craig's plan of the New Town represented a masterplan of the New Town's new streets and squares, did the Council also have a materplan for the houses it wanted for the area? If so, who produced these plans and what influence did they have on builders ? This discussion will now demonstrate that builders planned many houses in the New Town and were more influential in this than important New Town architects and that these buildings reflect the social mix the New Town had, which has been discussed earlier in this chapter. To answer these two questions, this section will examine the thoughts, plans and buildings of three New Town architects: Sir James Clerk, James Craig and Robert and John Adam. Their influence on builders shall be examined through discussions of builders John Young, John Hay and John Baxter as well as William Smith and Robert Wright's bow fronted tenements, and James Nesbit's plans for Charlotte Square. These discussions can then be placed into the general context of the Council's building controls, administrative systems and the practicalities of enforcing laws which Overseers faced.

There were many architects living in Edinburgh from the late 1760s onwards. Since the passing of the 1753 Improvement Act and the Council's commitment to extending the royalty and improving the city's buildings, the business prospects for an architect were bright. The New Town was home and a workplace for many of these men - Robert Robinson, William Keys, Sir William Chambers, George Paterson, David Henderson, Robert Hunter, the Adam brothers, and William Mylne.

Sir James Clerk, James Craig and Robert and John Adam were all involved in the early stages of planning and building the New Town.<sup>99</sup> Did their designs directly influence New Town house design, and Council administration of builders? In 1764 the Lord Provost directed the North Bridge Committee to get the best plan for the new bridge over Nor Loch. Following Lord Kames's

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<sup>99</sup>ECA, North Bridge Committee Minutes 1764 – 1770, 2/7/1766

initiative and subscriptions scheme for it in 1763, the Provost stated bleak facts about the scarcity of modern housing in Edinburgh, and how the New Town would honour the Council and city. By 1765 the Council was offering the winning designer of the competition for the new bridge either thirty guineas or a gold medal<sup>100</sup>. In January that year Sir James Clerk and John Adam were invited to help judging the plans<sup>101</sup>. This was a continuation of the partnership Sir John Clerk had previously had with William Adam.<sup>102</sup>

Sir James Clerk had followed his father's interest in architecture and building. He saw himself as an educated and trained architect and a noble gentleman who had taste and good skills as a designer. The letter he wrote to the Committee in March 1765 gives an impression of the influence he must have had over the Magistrates as they mulled over the 22 plans that had been submitted in the competition. Clerk said, " I think it is the duty of everyone, more particularly of those who by birth and Education are nearly connected with it at least to endeavour to contribute their mite(sic) towards the completion of a work, so necessary and at the same time so very ornamental to the City....The Gentlemen Candidates....have overlookt(sic) the state of building, proper for such a work, which the ancient Greeks and Romans still point out to us, in remains of their aquaducts, Buildings...The best if the moderns here likewise made use of this stile(sic)..I have taken the liberty to send your Lordship a sketch of this stile for the intended communication."<sup>103</sup>

He wrote another note in which he announced that, " It would in my opinion add much more Lustre to the intended communication, were a piece of ground on the north extremity of it and on the height of Moultrass(sic) hill, allotted for a Church and spire or perhaps for the Library the College of Physicians intend to build with its Portico fronting towards the Centre of the communication. Buildings when properly situated redouble their effects..<sup>104</sup>".

The President of the Royal College of Physicians, Sir Alexander Dick, was already a supporter of Edinburgh's improvement and was a trustee of the programme set out in the 1753 Act. He joined

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<sup>100</sup>ibid, 2/1/1765

<sup>101</sup>ibid, 29/1/1765

<sup>102</sup> J. Gifford, *William Adam 1689 – 1748, A Life and Times of Scotland's Universal Architect*, Mainstream Publishing, 1989, pp 81 - 84

<sup>103</sup>ECA, North Bridge Committee Minutes 1764 -1770, 6/3/1765



Sir James in February 1765 to judge plans<sup>105</sup>. Both men joined forces to plan and build the College's new Library (plate 30). The Physicians were to petition the Council for the plot at the north end of the new bridge in August and they asked Sir James to design it. The drawings survive, although they have been mistakenly identified as a bagnio scheme for Sir James's own house<sup>106</sup> at Penicuik. The descriptions for the plans are given in the College's successful petition for this feu plot and in Town Council minutes which quote Dr Boswell's description of the librarian's apartment, a consulting room, reading and waiting rooms and a room for under officers<sup>107</sup>. All these are marked on Clerk's plan, which the doctors thought elegant and magnificent and comparable to the Pantheon. Certainly, the elevation shows that Clerk was inspired by this Roman building, and the College was prepared to build the New Town's first public building on the site Clerk wanted most in the New Town. This was the building that was replaced on the site by Robert Adam's Register House, which was also a domed design.

The Physicians thought Clerk was a "worthy and Ingenious<sup>108</sup>" architect, and in 1771 they sought out Sir John Pringle to see if the King would give money to build Clerk's building. Pringle noted that "I was glad to hear that you had so good an Architect as Sir James Clerk, both for taste, solidity and economy<sup>109</sup>", but he was unable to secure the King's consent and purse to pay for the building. What is quite clear is that the new College was designed to resemble Rome's Pantheon and it was Clerk's opinion that Roman architecture was the best model for the New Town to follow. Not only did this Roman aesthetic apply to The Physicians' Library, but also the new bridge over Nor Loch. In the first few months of 1765 Clerk's designs for a Roman aqueduct and Pantheon like College of Physicians represented his vision of what the New Town should look like and that it should be based upon Roman architecture.

Between two and four years later, the College proposal was removed from its site at the north end of the bridge to make way for Register House. It was relocated on the south side of Princes Street,

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<sup>104</sup>ibid

<sup>105</sup>ECA, North Bridge Committee Minutes 1764 – 1770, 2/2/1765

<sup>106</sup> I.G.Brown, *A Bibliophile's Bagnio, Sir James Clerk's Pantheon for Penicuik, Scottish Country Houses 1600 - 1914*, ed. I.Gow and A. Rowan, Edinburgh University Press, 1995, pp. 135 - 151

<sup>107</sup>ECA, TCM, 8/5/1771

<sup>108</sup>Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Library, Muniment 192, August 1765

<sup>109</sup>ibid, Sir John Pringle's letters, 1771

to the west of Canal Street. Clerk and the architect, John Baxter junior, took on the College project until 1772 and the Leith carver, John Thomson, was set to task by Baxter to make a wooden model of Clerk's plans, including its rotunda<sup>110</sup>. The doctors finally abandoned the project in 1774 once Baxter had made it clear to them that he was too busy to take on this work. The College then looked for another New Town site and set of designs from a new architect. James Craig took up the project in 1775 and begun building in George Street.

Did Clerk's liking for Roman architecture influence builders? Returning to 1765 and the work of the North Bridge Committee, it was accepted that Clerk's sketch for the new bridge was the best one. It was listed plan number eight in the competition entries and shown to competing architects and tradesmen to prepare estimates for constructing it. The architect, David Henderson, won this competition with an estimate of £21,800<sup>111</sup>. The Physicians' Hall and the new aqueduct-like bridge were an ace away from being built.

However a month later the vision was swept away as Henderson and the Council were unable to raise the money to build it<sup>112</sup>. Undeterred, Clerk continued to take an interest in the New Town. He wrote to the Council that, "As we Architects, like lawyers and Physicians, are found in difficult and remarkable cases, such as this is, to have the advice and assistance of our Brethren, I propose....to have the affair Consulted by the most able in their Profession....the advice of the most able Architects ought to be obtained who I am persuaded will cheerfully give it...<sup>113</sup>". Among the men Clerk consulted about the bridge were Robert Adam and Robert Mylne<sup>114</sup>, both from Edinburgh's foremost families in professional architecture, but who had settled in London after their tours of Italy. It is unknown what Messrs Adam and Mylne thought of Clerk's plan, but Sir James went on to help judge the New Town plan competition<sup>115</sup> and work with the New Town plan Committee<sup>116</sup>, which first picked and then adjusted James Craig's winning plan to its final form for Provost Gilbert Laurie's approval in July 1767 (plate 31).

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<sup>110</sup>ibid, Muniment 265, John Thomson, 3/8/1773

<sup>111</sup>ECA, North Bridge Committee Minutes, 1764- 1770, 2/4/1765

<sup>112</sup>ibid, 21/5/1765

<sup>113</sup>ibid, 21/5/1765

<sup>114</sup>ibid, 26/4/1765

<sup>115</sup>ibid, 2/7/1766

<sup>116</sup>ibid, 29/10/1766

The fact that the New Town plan Committee's minutes are missing means that Clerk's thoughts about the New Town's planning for housing are not known, nor their influence over Craig and the others on this important Committee's business. However, his notes to the bridge Committee do show that he had some influential thoughts. Although the aqueduct plan is now missing and the College of Physicians' plan has been identified here, Clerk did say he wanted to see a church, spire or important public building on Multrees hill. He also wanted to plan the new bridge and first public building in the New Town in a Roman style of architecture. This was a grand vision and one laced with the benefits of his own tour, his father's influence, and that of the "Brethren" Architects of Edinburgh, London and Rome. Yet, despite obviously enjoying planning and working in Committees towards a coherent, classical style of architecture, Clerk's plans came to nothing, and he made no attempt to build houses in the new streets and squares. He had no direct influence on builders and their houses. Consequently, he had little influence on builders and their house designs. He would not have considered them "Brethren". He primarily concerned himself with the academic problems of town planning, great public works but his own building, the Physicians Hall, was never built. He left planning and building New Town houses to others without pushing a Roman villa or town house model for Committees to follow.

But, did the other architects whom the Council met over the New Town plans make house designs for builders to follow? What did the New Town architect, James Craig, intend the New Town to look like? He had won the New Town plan competition in December 1766<sup>117</sup>, but like the New Town plan Committee minutes, this plan, together with the other plans Craig made at this time, and later billed the Council for twenty guineas for in 1770<sup>118</sup>, are now missing. This account would show if Craig made house designs at the same time as his plan for the New Town. But, this account's details are now missing, and there is no evidence of Craig preparing house plans and elevations for the New Town which would be a masterplan for builders to follow. An analysis of Craig's thoughts and plans suggests that even if he did promote such planning, the arguments had little effect on what actually happened in the New Town until the 1780s. Ironically, this was a time when Craig's reputation sunk in the Council chambers and debtors' courts.

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<sup>117</sup>ibid, 26/8/1766

Craig held an exhibition in 1769 to celebrate his prize-winning plan. A wooden model of the entire design was made and displayed at St Andrew's Masonic Lodge at the foot of Carrubber's Close in Edinburgh<sup>119</sup>. It showed visitors what the New Town would look like once it had been fully built. They were treated to a talk and tour about the model by George Ogilvie, the model's maker, and caretaker of the lodge. No doubt Ogilvie and Craig met and discussed the plan, the model and the vision of the New Town several times. Reviews of the exhibition noted that "plans and estimates of buildings ... done in the most exact manner, with complete models of the same" were also displayed. Were these the fruits of Craig and Ogilvie's meetings? Were these designs for New Town houses? There is no answer to these questions as the models, plans and estimates are now missing. This evidence, like the missing evidence of Craig's Council account for his New Town plans, does not clearly show that Craig made New Town house plans from 1767 to 1769. These "plans and estimates" could also have been made by builders.

Craig's star was rising. The month before the exhibition opened, prints of his authorised plan were readvertised for sale in newspapers, were seen in Edinburgh's booksellers and printmakers' shops<sup>120</sup>, and reviewers of the exhibition marvelled at the model's ability to "display the ingenuity of the artist in an eminent degree", adding that the "artist deserves the highest encouragement."<sup>121</sup> (plate 1). This ability for an architect to publish and sell a plan as a commercial venture was typical of British artisan and middle class commercial and cultural behaviour<sup>122</sup>. But, Craig lacked the business connections and healthy bank account required to build his houses in the New Town. Like David Henderson in 1765, Craig had no heritable security with which to guarantee a bank loan and credit account. Even when he did prepare to build on Princes Street in 1777, he did so on behalf of a patron and not for himself<sup>123</sup>. He failed to secure the feuing ground and again the plans are lost. Hunting for Craig's plans for New Town houses provides many possibilities of designs

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<sup>118</sup>ECA, TCM, 1/8/1770

<sup>119</sup>*Edinburgh Courant*, 18/3/1769

<sup>120</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 18/2/1769

<sup>121</sup>*Edinburgh Weekly Magazine*, Volumes 3-4, January - June 1769, Thursday, 2/3/1769

<sup>122</sup>J. Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination, English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, HarperCollins, 1997, pp.92-93

<sup>123</sup>ECA, Miscellaneous Council Papers 1777, James Craig, 8/9/1777, Petitions and miscellaneous papers if Edinburgh Town Council, 1/1/1776 - 31/12/1777, D0018

and sketches being made without any houses being found, either as drawings or buildings. Nevertheless, some ideas about what Craig wanted to see built in the New Town can still be gleaned from his other plans and correspondence.

The plans which reveal what Craig wanted to see in his New Town are not the authorised plans of 1767 and published plans of 1769, but the unauthorised plans he made between 1770 and 1781 which introduced a circus into the centre of the New Town. It has been argued that the circus plan was among the plans Craig made for the North Bridge Committee in 1767, as one of the "plans in two different views", he made for inspection, and that this was in fact probably a version of his prize-winning plan from the previous year<sup>124</sup>.

There is neither documentary nor graphic evidence to support this argument, and the plan that has been used to demonstrate its validity has a number of anachronisms for a plan said to be made in 1766<sup>125</sup> or 1767, such as the Physicians Hall being in George Street or Shakespeare's Square, and Canal Street being fully developed (plate 32). None of these happened until after 1767, and the George Street hall did not stand on its site until 1775. The plan therefore dates to after 1775, and it was most likely made by Craig in 1781, when both Craig and Lord Provost David Steuart sought to place the circus in the New Town. One of the compelling and yet fatal traps in debates about the chronology and content of Craig's New Town plans is the lack of evidence about them. It is easy to speculate, but without any evidence who can say the guesses are wrong? But, in the case of the circus plans, although the "plans in different views" are missing, there is evidence to offer a chronology which gives the dates for three separate periods that Craig promoted his circus variant to the Council, and even to the royal court in London. He made out circus plans between 1770 and

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<sup>124</sup> S. Harris, *New Light on the First New Town, Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, New Series*, vol.2, 1992, pp.1-13  
 A. Fraser, *A Reassessment of Craig's New Town plans, 1766 – 1774, James Craig 1744 –1795, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K.Cruft and A. Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995, pp.25-48; A. Lewis and J. Lowrey, *James Craig and the New Town of Edinburgh, Architectural Heritage V, The Journal of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland*, Edinburgh University Press, 1995, pp. 39-51; C. McKean, *James Craig and Edinburgh's New Town, James Craig 1744 –1795, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K.Cruft and A. Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995, pp 48-57; V.W.Welter, *An Undocumented Plan for Edinburgh's First New Town by James Craig*, Reekiana, *The Book of the of Edinburgh Club New Series*, Volume 5, 2002, pp 107-109

<sup>125</sup> A. Fraser, *A Reassessment of Craig's New Town plans, 1766 – 1774, James Craig 1744 –1795, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K.Cruft and A. Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995, pp.25-48

1771<sup>126</sup>, 1774<sup>127</sup> and 1781<sup>128</sup>. Although Craig was encouraged these plans were never actually built.

The circuses suggest that Craig was advocating a single palace front for New Town houses, like John Wood's King's Circus in Bath. Craig had devised a house plan to be accepted and followed from at least 1770 onwards, and pushed it into the circus. The circus plan for 1781 (plate 34) shows Craig intended streets to be bounded together by blocks standing in the middle of the western end of George Street, after Castle Street, and at the western entrance to the circus itself. These buildings would stand out from the streets' other buildings, and Craig uses them in the western square, and St Andrew's Square – even though in reality, St Andrew's Square's northern and southern sides had not been built like this. The circus plan was the variant on the authorised plan that Craig made at least three times. Within these there are further variations. The earlier circus schemes are not like the 1781 plan. The later plan drops the churches at the polar ends of the circus, and drops one of the outer concentric circle of houses in which Craig intended to encase the centre of the New Town (plates 33 - 34). Building circuses were exercises in uniformity and symmetry.

There was a plan that an architect had for a single house type to be built throughout the New Town, but what did it look like and how influential was it on others? Alas, as with Sir James Clerk's plan of his aqueduct, Craig's New Town house plans have not survived. But, there is documentary evidence that he made some. Those attending the meeting at Princes Street Coffeehouse in April 1781 probably saw Craig's circus plan and the sections and elevations intended for it. These were later given to the Town Council<sup>129</sup>. The Council endorsed the plans and held a competition to design a circus in the middle of the New Town. The Princes Street Coffeehouse meeting was to hear this proposal in April when feuars “unanimously approved of the proposed variations<sup>130</sup>”.

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<sup>126</sup>Yale University Library, Beinecke Library, Sir John Pringle, 11/1/1771, L391

<sup>127</sup>Edinburgh City Art Centre, 1978/526

<sup>128</sup>Edinburgh City Museum, Huntly House, HH 418/1905

<sup>129</sup>ECA, Register of Plans of the City, 1784 - 1785, Plan 10, New town with a circus by James Craig, Plan 14, Another plan of the extended royalty with a circus - with sections and elevations, 006B

Although the elevations and sections are now missing, it is clear that Craig would have intended the house design to be repeated throughout the circus. Although there is no evidence that he had already done similar work in 1767 for the authorised plan, it is clear that he did provide elevations for other town planning exercises. He made elevations for Merchant Street in 1774, and also for the South Bridge twelve years later. It is likely that he also drew out elevations for his other squares at St James Square in 1773 and a projected square for Robert Hope in 1788, and in 1792 in town planning for Colonel Campbell of Blythswood<sup>131</sup> and Glasgow's Town Council (plate 35). By doing this Craig was demonstrating to his clients how the new squares and streets should look, and how much money they would make from proceeding with the development through sales and rents. Of all of these schemes only the plans for the South Bridge houses survive (plate 36). They were intended to be built around an octagon, as further triumphs of uniformity and symmetry.

Correspondence between himself, the Council and the Royal College of Physicians reveal his attitudes to New Town architecture and planning. After the College had failed to build Sir James Clerk's plans for the new Hall in 1775, the doctors found another site on the south side of George Street. Craig was chosen as architect to plan the building and in 1776 he was contracted to build it. He designed octagonal wings for the hall between 1777 and 1779 when the Hall itself was being built. The design was depicted by David Allan in the portrait he made of Craig in 1781: the wings adjoin the Physicians' Hall, and the plans lie on the studio floor as the architect works on another 1770s type of New Town circus plan with its double row of buildings and public buildings or churches at the southern and northern entrances to the circus. These wings were given octagonal bow fronts (plates 37- 38), and between 1775 and 1779 he also planned an octagonal building with bow fronts on Calton Hill. This was the Observatory, which he had planned for Professor John Robison at Edinburgh's College. Another octagonal design Craig made at this time, in 1777, was a seat intended for the refurbishment of Dr Hugh Blair's New Church. These plans show Craig liked to use octagonal plans.

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<sup>130</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 14/4/1781

<sup>131</sup>Glasgow City Archives, TCM, 9/8/1792; F.A.Walker, *The Glasgow Grid, Order in Space and Society, Architectural Form and its Context in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. A. Markus, Mainstream, 1982, pp. 176-178.

The circus plans implied that Craig wanted a single elevation to dominate a new vista, which broke up the straight lines and rows of streets the authorised plan was to create. He looked for uniformity. The College of Physicians followed Lord Provost John Dalrymple's lead in this matter and in February 1777 petitioned for areas to the east and west of the Hall on which to build the wings<sup>132</sup>. Craig enthused about his plans and wrote to Provost Dalrymple that they would find the approval from men of "first taste"<sup>133</sup> and the first Bailie, James Hunter, later James Hunter Blair, who was himself a New Town resident, that the design would be "thought an ornament to your neighborhood"<sup>134</sup>. Meanwhile, Dr Cullen assured the Council that the design would be "a great ornament"<sup>135</sup> and that the architect could execute what he had planned. The College sent the Council another note stating that, "Mr Craig their architect having applied for the areas on each side made out a Design which would in their opinion if executed tend to the ornament not only of the Hall but of the New Town...nobody is more anxious or can be so much interested as Mr Craig for the Beauty both of the Hall and of the New Town"<sup>136</sup>.

James Craig's circus plans, Hall and wings demonstrated his vision for a New Town built on a sublime scale, where public buildings and private houses had one uniform style. In May 1779, the College of Physicians continued to press the Council to build the wings, and believed in its architects' arguments that the wings and circus enhanced the "uniformity as well as to the beauty of the town"<sup>137</sup>, and Craig wrote to the Council, "My Lord, I am sorry your Lordship & Council should have any objections to the Projection of the three sides of the octagon I designed for wings to the Physicians' Hall. I can assure your Lordship that a Break of the straight Line in the street especially such a small one as 5 ft is a real ornament when introduced in the centre between Two Cross streets as is the Case here by taking off that sameness which a Straight Line produces. What I would beg of your Lordship and Council at the Desire of the Royal College is that you will permit the octagons I designed to project as far as Mr Crosbie's Pillars do from the Front Line of the Houses or as far as the Pillars in the Front of Princes Street Coffee House do from the Line of

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<sup>132</sup>Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Library, Muniments, Charter 12/2/1777

<sup>133</sup>ECA, Miscellaneous Council Papers 1778, Petitions and Miscellaneous Council Papers 1/1/1768 - 31/12/1779, D0015R

<sup>134</sup>ibid

<sup>135</sup>ibid

<sup>136</sup>ibid

<sup>137</sup>Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Library, Muniment, 18/5/1779



the Street<sup>138</sup>." Here Craig was promoting the idea that the New Town's streets should have breaks in its straight lines. The great circuses, and his later palace block projections in its squares, and George Street, would do this. In fact, the monotonous architecture that Craig's New Town plan has been criticized for was something that the architect himself was trying to break with his own building and town plans. Did these thoughts influence builders? In 1767 the Council encouraged feuars to break these same straight lines when they were given permission to pull the centre of their building plots back from the street if they wanted to. This allowed John Young to create Thistle Court - a mini square in Thistle Street. There were similar breaks in the parts of George Street and St Andrew's Square where buildings had been set back, such as Craig's own Physicians' Hall on the south side of George Street. Craig may well have been advocating this provision in 1767 and pursued the argument himself in the 1770s through his circus schemes and building plans for the Physicians' Hall. It is possible that he himself promoted this idea in order to break up the straight street fronts. The wings for the Hall represented a design which included an east wing, west wing and Hall in the center. This design for three units, which would break up the street frontage, was akin to the idea for Thistle Court. Building on small units of two to three feus was common among builders of the New Town, and whereas Craig may have envisaged palatial fronts for the street, he himself could not manage such large operations. He, like builders, worked on a smaller scale, which gave the New Town's buildings a piecemeal effect, and made the contrast of Craig's famous plan of the New Town contrast the practicalities of building there.

The fact that Craig continually advocated change to his own authorised plan of 1767 through numerous circus plans indicates his own belief in the principles of uniformity, symmetry and planning and building on a large, sublime scale. Information about the circuses is still being found and working drawings<sup>139</sup> and correspondence have recently been discovered. Craig's variations to his plan suggests that he was responding to set backs that he befallen the New Town's administration, and the scheme's popularity. However, enforcing rigid palatial frontages would have been very difficult to make popular with builders, and property developers.

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<sup>138</sup>ECA, Miscellaneous Council Papers 1779, Petitions and Miscellaneous Council Papers 1/1/1768 - 31/12/1779, D0015R

But, Craig was also busy as the architect of the Physicians Hall in George Street. His idealism increased the costs of completion beyond the terms of his contract. This information is in the College's accounts and the ones for extra work are especially interesting. By 1778 the College was worried about ever higher construction costs: John Adam arbitrated a dispute between the College and Craig about the accounts in February that year<sup>140</sup>. The extra work accounts for 1777 to 1778 show a dispute about plans for the Hall's portico. Craig made a wooden model of the architrave he intended for it, but the College's Building Committee could not see the point of the architect's argument. Craig added a note to his account that, "The Royal College of Physicians should pay some regard to the advice of their Architect, as he would do, and always does, when he asks their advice as Physicians<sup>141</sup>". At the same time Craig was prepared to pay his building team increased wages to finish off the building. Work continued during the tradesmens' strikes of 1777 and Craig tried to recover his outlay for this. His vexation at the situation was clear when he wrote in November 1779, "I shall repent the day I ever laid a stone of their building - The Royal College are all Gentlemen as individuals, how far they will behave genteely as a Society time must soon determine<sup>142</sup>".

The College was not the only client that faced Craig's zeal and arguments for his plans and advice on New Town architecture to be followed. Chairing the Tradesmen's Accounts Committee, James Hunter had to cope with Craig's lobbying for his octagonal wings for the Physicians' Hall, and also no doubt knew the arguments for the circus plans. By 1779 Hunter noted that "Mr Craig has already been very tedious<sup>143</sup>", but by then, Craig's vision for his New Town was not taken up in building contracts, octagons and circuses. In 1780 he failed to get the Physicians' contract to build the Hall's gates and railings despite modelling his design on Sir Laurence Dundas's house in St Andrew's Square<sup>144</sup>. The Hall remained unfinished, and in 1781 the College demanded that Craig remove his materials from about their new building<sup>145</sup>. The architect tried to place the balustrade

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<sup>139</sup>V.W.Welter, *An Undocumented Plan for Edinburgh's First New Town by James Craig*, Reekiana, *The Book of the of Edinburgh Club New Series*, Volume 5, 2002, pp 107-109

<sup>140</sup>Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Library, Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Minutes, 3/2/1778

<sup>141</sup>ibid, Accounts 1777 - 1778

<sup>142</sup>ibid, Account, November 1779

<sup>143</sup>ECA, Miscellaneous petitions to Edinburgh Town Council, 1/1/1779 - 31/12/1780, D0019R

<sup>144</sup>ECA, TCM, 14/6/1780

<sup>145</sup>Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Library, Muniment, 17/4/1781

and statues on the Hall, but they fell in an accident. By November 1782 Craig begged to be allowed to finish the balustrade, stating he would be "blamed" for designing a "squatt" building<sup>146</sup>. He was refused permission to do this, and was never to work on the building of the Hall again, although the College turned to him, and the architects, John Baxter and John Adam to design wings two years later<sup>147</sup>.

The disputes over accounts, designs and Craig's idealism caused unhappiness. Craig did not approve of the neighbouring builders at work beside the Hall. He felt thwarted that he could not build the Hall's wings to the east and west of the building. These feus had been taken by the masons, John Sutter (12/11/1777<sup>148</sup>) and William Smith, (1/10/1777<sup>149</sup>) for a coachhouse and house respectively with Smith's plans (plates 39 - 40), being "agreed" by the Council Committee. Craig rejected building a west gable to suit Smith's house. He had already asked to see Smith's gable plan to see, as he wrote to Chamberlain, James Tait, on 4 March 1778 "whether it will in any degree suit the design I wish to put into execution<sup>150</sup>". Six days later he wrote to Tait again, having seen Smith's plans:" Sir, I flatter myself that the Magistrates will not impose any hardships upon me which other fewers (sic) of the new Town are not subjected to, but that I shall have liberty to design my own Building to the west of the Physicians' Hall, and not to be oblig'd to adopt a design which I would be asham'd to put into execution. I beg leave likewise to inform you, that the building Mr Smith intends to erect is not agreeable to the Royal College of Physicians. Therefore subjecting me to adopt the same design is doing no favour to that respectable body. The Lord Provost informed me the other day that Smith was to be ordered to make out an Elevation of his front to the streets it will then appear what a ridiculous design he means to execute which will be a very great deformity to the Physicians' Hall....."<sup>151</sup> Not everybody was convinced by Craig's arguments. Dr William Cullen correctly prophesied to the Council, "if the Builders do not get fair play it will retard finishing the plan<sup>152</sup>". Although Craig was awarded a feu of 50 feet to the west

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<sup>146</sup>ibid, Muniment 275, 4/11/1782

<sup>147</sup>ibid, Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Minutes, 8/6/1784 - 3/8/1784

<sup>148</sup>ECA, Miscellaneous Council Papers 1778, Petitions and Miscellaneous Council Papers 1/1/1768 - 31/12/1779, D0015R

<sup>149</sup>ibid

<sup>150</sup>ibid

<sup>151</sup>ibid

<sup>152</sup>ibid

of the Physicians' Hall in August 1779 he abandoned his scheme to build on it. It was clear that the Council had realised that builders were more important than Craig the architect, and that its concern was to feu and get the New Town built. Conflicts Craig faced with the Council, and builders, contrasted the limited influence of his own plans for the New Town with property laws, and the Council's own building controls.

The aim of the administration was to proceed with the plan until it was completely built. However, although the hall was partially built to Craig's specifications, and its wings and circus scheme abandoned altogether, Craig's arguments for uniformity were not entirely ineffectual. Craig's houses for the New Town would have been to a uniform design, and been single lodgings, intended for wealthy families. Although neither the circus nor the Physicians' Hall's wings were built, Craig's plans and thinking for that building can be seen in St Andrew's Square. Here, the Council insisted that John Young copy Andrew Crosbie's house on the south side of Sir Laurence Dundas's house to give the impression of wings (plate 41). There is uniformity on a small scale, as at Thistle Court, which also broke the street's line.

James Craig's vision for uniform New Town architecture was not like Sir James Clerk's Roman one. Craig was concerned with urban design, but was only able to manage comparatively small scale building projects. Working with small areas was closer to the ways builders worked, but Craig did not provide builders with house designs for the New Town. The ones he gave the Council and feuars to consider were applauded but never used. Like Clerk, Craig was more influential as a theorist or planner for the Council than in the practical duties of its administration system and team's work in the New Town or for builders at work there. He mistakenly thought that his status as the architect of the New Town plan, and of the Royal College of Physicians Hall, would win him favour in Council Committees for New Town buildings and plans. However, the Council's administrative structure and systems meant that builders' proposals were also given consideration. The Council was clearly interested in supporting what it considered was buildable, and in this respect, it influenced building businesses. James Craig was unable to emulate John Wood of Bath's King's Circus as he was not able to develop his circus plan on private property.

On the other hand, Craig's Physicians' Hall was an influential building not least because it employed a number of builders through the Chrystie family who worked there.

Unlike Craig and Clerk, Robert Adam did have experience in designing and building large scale town planning projects and seeing his visions and plans for New Town houses being built. His work at London's Adelphi scheme shows that he was eager for such work in the 1760s. He had been involved in planning and building in the Edinburgh New Town from the 1760s onwards and made his marks there with Register House, Baron Ord's house and later at Charlotte Square. But, the Magistrates had not asked him to produce a masterplan for houses in the New Town, which is something they reflected on in 1790 when they were planning Charlotte Square. He had an indirect influence on builders through his Register House and Baron Robert Ord's house in Queen Street, which he had designed between 1768 and 1772<sup>153</sup> (plates 42 - 43). Builders copied decorative motifs, doors and windows for their own houses. Charlotte Square's elevations were Robert Adam's largest contribution to uniform house building in the New Town. Here, builders had no choice but to adopt his plans. But, did Robert Adam's palatial street plans like the Adelphi or Charlotte Square influence administration of builders? The answer is that although Adam's individual buildings influenced builders, his street plans did not. This influence will be discussed later in the thesis in terms of what buildings looked like, and Robert Adam's house for Baron Ord's influence on builders in Queen Street, and the Adam family's business.

An inspiration for a popular house design among builders in the New Town lay not only with Robert Adam's buildings, but also with his elder brother, John. He was also an influential architect in the New Town. He sat on the North Bridge and New Town Plan Committees and, like Craig and Clerk, was involved in these administrative Committees. Although the builders of the New Town had not the careers and education that the Adam brothers or Sir James Clerk received, they did study architecture and architectural principles. The builders could demonstrate symmetry and uniformity in their own buildings such as adopting bow window facades for the front elevations of their buildings. These were inspired by John Adam's Adam Square houses, which were designed

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<sup>153</sup> I. Gow and J. Simpson, *8 Queen Street, Edinburgh: Restoring an Adam House, Robert Adam, Architectural Heritage IV*, Edinburgh University Press, 1993, pp. 58-66

and built in the early 1760s<sup>154</sup> (plate 44). This effect for single houses was often repeated in the New Town, and especially in Frederick Street and Castle Street (plates 125 – 126). The decision to have bow fronts was made because there was a demand for them, and builders were able to sell or rent properties with this feature. As with stormont windows, this design feature had both an economic context as well as one reflected the builders' ability to control the functions their properties had. Bow fronted properties were not exclusively made for houses, but also tenements. Despite the fact that builders' views were not represented at Council Committees through architects' letters, their small scale developments were successfully shaping the appearance of the New Town.

Unlike Robert Adam, builders conceived New Town streets in terms of single house units, or two to three units at a time, but not in terms of entire streets and squares. This feature was entirely typical of British urban architecture in this period, such as at York, which was built in small, piecemeal developments. Grand schemes, such as Harrington New Town in Liverpool, or the Adelphi scheme in London, could lead to disaster for builders, and Edinburgh's New Town's builders preferred to work in a small scale. Enforcing the laws of the 1780s meant that they had to have properties roofed after 12 months of the application being approved. They had to work efficiently, and some met with success, and challenged architects for developing remaining spaces to the west end of the New Town. Correspondence from John Paterson, Robert Adam's Overseer when building the College, reveals the Council contrasted Robert Adam's designs for Charlotte Square with plans by the builder, James Nesbit, which were well received by the Provost. The reality was that builders like Nesbit were important men in the planning and building houses. It is clear that the Lord Provost favoured single lodgings with uniform facades: "Mr Elder joined us at this time having one of the fronts of the square at the west end of the New Town drawn by Nesbit plaisterer(sic). I confess I hardly looked at it, but as the provost paid you several very handsom (sic) compliments in the course of this conversation I took the liberty of saying it was misfortunate that there had been so little attention paid to the Building in the New Town, had a front been drawn by you of the New Town it would have had a very different effect.."155

<sup>154</sup>Ian.R.M.Mowat, *Adam Square: An Edinburgh Architectural First, Reekiana, The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, New Series, Volume 5, 2002, pp 93-101

<sup>155</sup>NLS, MS19992,f26, John Paterson to Robert Adam,30/101790

This view complements Adam's own views on the New Town's houses. He himself favoured a uniform house design and deplored the individualism of the houses that had been built, since he believed it gave an incoherent effect. Both Charlotte Square and Adam's plans for the South Bridge illustrate his conception of large urban developments. This view contrasts the developments builders had made in the New Town, over small areas, and the freedoms developers had been given to take control of feus and develop them for "additional beauty" from 1767, which had resulted in Thistle Court, and numerous types of tenements and houses being built.

Soon Paterson met the Provost again and reported that he had seen Nesbit's fronts of Charlotte Square and that they were copies of his houses in George Street<sup>156</sup>. Two examples were Lady Balcarras's house on the north side of George Street (Plate 46), and the Tontine Hotel on the same street. He had to persuade the Provost not to pursue Nesbit's plans, adding later that, "I begd (sic) of him to turn his eyes to Nisbet's buildings, the design he had made was the same line by line, & every person as a judge of the effect these house (sic) has, & every person of Taste must give their opinion against them. Had you been the designer of three houses of equal size to Nesbits(sic), I am sure you would have made them produce a quite diff't (sic) effect, with less expence; yet there was some people that would condemn them for being extravagant, & would be so ready as pretended architects that had no other means of supporting themselves but by preaching up the expence of your designs. Though I condemn Mr Nesbit as an architect, I was obliged to give him great praise for his publick(sic) spirit, & what he had done was a proof of what could be done at a less expence than the publick(sic)ever had any Idea of, & I hoped such exertions in a private Builder as Mr N had shown would soon open the minds of the publick(sic) to receive works of real taste & genius.<sup>157</sup>"

By 1791 Nesbit's plans had been copied by Paterson's draughtsman, Joseph, and sent to Adam with measurements for the square<sup>158</sup>. He continued to acknowledge he was indebted to Nesbit's plan, building practice and his praised his studies, " Sir, Inclosed I have sent you Several sections

<sup>156</sup>ibid,f.32, John Paterson to Robert Adam,30/11/1790

<sup>157</sup>ibid, f.34, John Paterson to Robert Adam, 23/11/1790

<sup>158</sup>ibid,f.62, John Paterson to Robert Adam,22/3/1791

of streets in the Newtoun(sic), particularly those of the west & East sides of Charlotte Squair(sic), the North & south Frounts(sic) is meant Level, as I had no way of Obtaining the measures of this squair(sic) but by measuring the Desines(sic) made out for it by Mr James Nesbit. I thought it best to take Copys(sic) of the whole to send you to show you the productions of this Gentleman, who is so much flattered by his abilitys(sic) in Architecture, that he is given up the most of his plaistering(sic) Business to follow after his favourite study. I could get but little (sic) information from the Lord Provost what sort of Houses would suit best for this squair (sic), he only says that they must be all lodgeings (sic) not houses to set in flates(sic), in my inquires about what length (sic) of houses is best for the market in the New toun (sic), I find that Houses at 30 feet in length within walls is thought most advantageous, some there is at 26 others at 28 feet within, Nesbits Houses is 32 feet those in this Desine (sic) of his is 34 feet and his Corner Houses 45 feet within from those different lenth's may be able to compleat(sic) you Desine(sic).<sup>159</sup>”

Between 1790 and 1791 Paterson also mentioned other New Town builders to Adam. Alex Reid<sup>160</sup>, John Young<sup>161</sup>, Francis Braidwood (Broadwood)<sup>162</sup>, Alex Laing<sup>163</sup>, William Jamieson<sup>164</sup>, Robert Burns<sup>165</sup>, John Hay<sup>166</sup>, and Robert Inglis<sup>167</sup> were all mentioned in dispatches about building Edinburgh's College, Bridewell and projects at Dunbar, Glasgow and Ninewells House, Berwickshire. Indeed, it is clear that these men, as well as James Tait, James Nesbit and others in Queen Street and near Charlotte Square, were offering a competitive professional house planning and building service. It is also clear that there was a tension between a vision of the New Town built with lodgings and flats. There is a contrast of views of New Town architecture between Robert Adam's street plans and the builders' house plans just as there was between Sir James Clerk's vision of a Roman New Town and the realities of working there or James Craig's plans of streets, squares and circuses and allusions to palatial street architecture.

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<sup>159</sup> *ibid*, f.66, John Paterson to Robert Adam, 23/3/1791

<sup>160</sup> *ibid*, f.1, John Paterson to Robert Adam, 1/12/1789

<sup>161</sup> *ibid*, f.2, John Paterson to Robert Adam, 1/2/1790

<sup>162</sup> *ibid*

<sup>163</sup> *ibid*, f.35, John Paterson to Robert Adam, 4/12/1790

<sup>164</sup> *ibid*

<sup>165</sup> *ibid*

<sup>166</sup> *ibid*

<sup>167</sup> *ibid*, f.71, John Paterson to Robert Adam, 28/3/1791



Far more builders were feuing and putting up houses than architects. The Council had to respond to their plans, and so builders shaped New Town house architecture with much smaller visions and plans than Clerk, Craig and Adam. Bow fronted tenements did not show an interest in uniformity, but only in repeating similar facades. The explanation for the contrast between New Town architects' plans and the realities of building houses in the area lie with the Council's administration of house building. In reality, builders wanted to build tall tenements, have stormont windows, wallhead gables and create courts, just had been done in the Old Town. But, that is not to say the builders did not design good housing, or lacked training in architectural theory and practice.

New Town builders, the wright, John Young and the mason, Deacon William Jameson, had been trained in the Mary Chapel. They used bows in their house facades. The most important bow building in the New Town was John Young's "Bows" flats in Princes Street. By 1780 Young had taken 157 feet of ground for houses<sup>168</sup>, having taken 92 feet in 1778<sup>169</sup> and another 60 feet the next year<sup>170</sup>. He designed two huge bow windows to stand at both ends of his facade onto the street. This was a precedent for Craig to follow with his proposed octagonal wings for the Physicians' Hall on George Street in 1779, as well as to inspire the mason, William Jameson, to give his new houses on the south side of Princes Street bow windows<sup>171</sup>. In November 1779 Jameson applied to feu an area 30 feet wide and 142 feet deep on the south side of Princes Street for a road linking Old and New Towns, with bow fronted houses on both northern and eastern sides<sup>172</sup>. Indeed, Young retained his signature New Town flat feature and repeated the bow window formula in Hanover Street in 1785 on the northeastern side of the street. Though nigh on 12 years old, bows remained popular with fellow builders. On 20 January 1790 one time partner of the mason, William Smith, Robert Wright submitted a bow design to the Council for the north side of North Frederick Street - the Council agreed, "Act allowing Robert Wright liberty to have a front to his building similar to that by John Young on Princes Street. and Hanover Street...The feu being a cross street the Petitioner finds it necessary to adopt a plan that will he thinks strike the attention

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<sup>168</sup>ECA, TCM, 23/2/1780

<sup>169</sup>ibid, 11/3/1778

<sup>170</sup>ibid, 23/2/1780

<sup>171</sup>ibid, 5/7/1780

<sup>172</sup>ibid,10/11/1779

of the public, as the Houses of these streets often stand empty long after they are finished, which is not only a loss to the Petitioner but also to the Town of Edinburgh. The Petitioner can assure the Honourable Council that the ground plan has given universal satisfaction to people of Taste - and now he has produced an Elevation representing the Circle intended on each corner in Shades.<sup>173</sup>” These builders had previously demonstrated a commitment to building symmetrical and uniform buildings in their petition to build corner houses with stormont windows as has been discussed earlier in this section.

Along Castle Street, builders like John Hay and John Baxter, who worked with John Young, also submitted plans for bow flats<sup>174</sup> (plate 45). Indeed, bow flats mirrored one another along the cross streets on Frederick and Castle Streets as if to demonstrate to the Council, and to architects, that builders could design and build handsome buildings which reflected uniformity, and symmetry whilst also meeting the shared, communal aims of the builders' businesses. Members of the Society of Master Builders of Edinburgh no doubt took some pride in these streets, which reflected the strength of their society and their importance in the New Town because the reason the New Town looked the way it did was not down to one architect's plan and elevation, but because house builders had set to work to develop their businesses there, sometimes as individuals, and often as partners. Scholars have noted that bow windowed tenements are a feature of the New Town<sup>175</sup>, but they have not discussed them in terms of their builders, and their original designs, nor acknowledged that although builders supplied these types of tenement that there must have been a demand for them to be built. From the frequency that this feature appears it is clear that the builders' designs were popular.

Bow windows were not the only variant employed upon the plain front. Pilasters were also used on facades. Again John Young influenced this through his partnership with the slater, John Baxter, and the mason, John Hay. In April 1786 Baxter and Hay proposed an elevation for a house on the north side of George Street (plate 10) since “at that time it was proposed that the Lodging on the opposite side of the street was to have a similar front - But now that the proprietor of the house on

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<sup>173</sup>ibid, 20/1/1790

<sup>174</sup> I believe that the phrase on the plan “not intended to be executed” refers to the stormont windows.

the opposite side has given up the idea of introducing pilasters, the Petitioners now humbly propose to build their House with a plain front similar to the other Houses there <sup>176</sup>". Young's involvement with Baxter and Hay was further minuted at Town Council meetings in February<sup>177</sup> and December<sup>178</sup> the following year. The designer of the "Bows" flats and planner of Thistle Court probably influenced Baxter and Hay's intention to have their facade reflect the opposing building for the symmetry, uniformity and overall beauty of the New Town. The pilastered fronts of Lady Balcarras's house on the north side of George Street by James Nesbit, and houses of nearby Castle Street complemented one another (plate 46). These houses and flats of the late 1780s and early 1790s carried the same intentions as earlier builders' houses. The principles of uniformity and symmetry were carried into public buildings too. The Corinthian capitals of the portico of St Andrew's Church were to copy Craig's capitals on the Physicians' Hall directly opposite the new church (plates 47 - 48).

The principle of symmetry was obvious in both the plan and building of the New Town. The principle of uniformity was also obvious. Bows, pilasters, rustication, fenestration, and external decorations were to be seen on grand houses and tenements giving both types of houses an extra lustre. However uniformity was intended to contribute not only to the aesthetic beauty of the New Town, but also to its intended functions as a new district of the city. Despite the fact that not every house in the New Town was the same and built by one man or one building company, the builders of the New Town could demonstrate a common, collective aim to make the new streets beautiful.

Despite the lack of an architectural masterplan for house fronts in the New Town some uniformity was provided through gardens, stabling, coachhouses, roads, paved streets, accurately surveyed streets and squares and some repetitive house fronts with bows, pilasters, windows, doors and finishings. These things captured the imagination and the city produced propaganda about the New Town. Mason James Tait wrote to the Council about his house on Charlotte Street, " the view of the houses North side of the square which when finished will be one of the finest pieces of

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<sup>175</sup> C. McKean, *The Incivility of Edinburgh's New Town, The Neo-Classical Town, Scottish Contributions to Urban Design since 1750*, The Rutland Press, 1996, pp.42-43

<sup>176</sup>ECA, TCM, 5/4/1786

<sup>177</sup>ibid, 14/2/1787

<sup>178</sup>ibid, 19/12/1787

architecture in the known world for regularity and uniformity, much to your Lordship and Council's honour and this country.<sup>179</sup>" The *Caledonian Mercury* published "two finer streets than Princes Street and George Street are not in Europe<sup>180</sup>". Privately, feuars like Sir Robert Murray also supported the New Town:" there is not a Keith amonst(sic) you all who is half so keen about the new town as I am.<sup>181</sup>" he boasted though he thought new Dresden was "light, straight(sic), while, tidy, and every single home has more ornament than a whole Parish with you.<sup>182</sup>"

He wrote this in 1769, but had he lived to see the houses being designed and built in the New Town by the 1790s he may well have remarked favourably on their uniformity, symmetry and beauty as well as the innovative and virtuoso designs builders had produced for different streets and clients. In 1790 the Stenhouse family thought that houses in London were "not half so Elegant, nor the architecture half so substantial or handsome as the houses in the New Town of Edinburgh.<sup>183</sup>"

These studies of architects and builders in the New Town have shown that men like James Nesbit, William Smith and Robert Wright, John Baxter, John Hay and John Young worked together to produce buildings that actually appeared in the streets and squares of the New Town. Although they were known as builders they were capable of producing work that was based upon architectural theory. Of the architects who have been discussed, only Robert and John Adam's buildings influenced the builders of the New Town.

The Stenhouse family's praise recalls the optimism of the 1752 proposals, but in reality this housing was not the product of an architect's masterplan for houses to compliment Craig's plan of the New Town. The builders supplied the demand for housing with houses and tenements which frequently incorporated bow fronted facades, and stormont windows. These windows often denoted that the property held servants or lodgers, but these functions, be they servile or commercial, did not fragment the function of the New Town. This chapter has discussed the

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<sup>179</sup>ibid, 22/2/1792

<sup>180</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, Aedilis, 10/5/1787

<sup>181</sup>NLS, Acc9769/22/3/1-63, 22/10/1769

<sup>182</sup>ibid

<sup>183</sup>NAS, GD113/5/85a, 27/8/1790

administrative systems and structures which the Council developed to enforce its laws on building in the New Town, and to establish building controls. This integrated an administrative system which included the Overseer to work with builders, and with traditional administrators of building like the Dean of Guild. These are aspects of building the New Town which New Town scholars have overlooked, just as they have also failed to place the New Town within wider Scottish and British contexts. The New Town was not necessarily exclusive to other Georgian urban improvement schemes, but it did generate some innovations for Council administration of architectural projects. Although builders were influential to the construction of the New Town they were not directly represented on Council Committees and departments which administered building there. The plan had not been completely built with terraced houses or mansions for nobles after London, but a mixture of houses and tenements for a mixture of people – some noble, but many professionals and tradesmen. The architecture reflected this social complexity of the New Town, and this complexity was typical of British urban architectural programmes at this time. What was happening in Edinburgh was also happening in English cities, where ambitious public building programmes were matched with private housing developments. The key difference with Edinburgh's New Town was that it was administered by the Council, and not a nobleman. Sir James Clerk's ideas had very limited appeal to Lord Provost Laurie, who preferred to have a pragmatic approach to building and planning, and avoid a masterplan, or one dominant style of architecture being imposed on feuars. This, however, was a means of combating criticism of the New Town imposing on private property rights. Indeed, the Council found itself unable to control the function of a building once a feu had been granted, and this chapter has given discussion of case studies of alterations to plans, defending rights and enforcing laws which tested and developed professional administrative systems and structures.

Builders were a vital part in this process of making the New Town plan a reality of stone buildings. In this process, architects' ideals were important but not dominant as the builders themselves used established practices in tenement architecture, as well as those of architectural theory, to complete the streets and squares set out in the authorised plans. These properties were mostly designed and built by builders but not by feuing out entire streets, or by providing large palatial elevations for streets and squares. The builders' concept of uniformity was to build single

house and tenement elevations. Builders offered to repeat elevations, on a square, like James Nesbit's plans for Charlotte Square, or on streets, like the bow flats on Frederick and Castle Streets. The piecemeal building of the New Town contrasts the criticisms of its housing being monotonous.

The architects' demands for uniformity were not met. The Council did not adopt one plan for uniformity until it decided to build Charlotte Square to Robert Adam's plan in the 1790s. If they had adopted James Nesbit's plan then the square would have been made up of repetitive house units rather than unified palatial street designs with a central block. Prior to that time no New Town architect, such as Sir James Clerk or James Craig, planned to influence the Council's administration of builders. But, architects did influence builders through their professional relationships with them as will be seen when James Craig's relationship with the Chrystie family will be examined later in this thesis.

The Council's laws against stormont windows and excessive height were attempts to stop builders overcrowding the New Town and reducing fire risks, but they did not stop the builders putting up tenements, and making the New Town a commercial area. There was no legislation for uniformity, as Robert Adam understood it. The laws allowed builders to design what they wanted to and to feu where they wanted to, with the department of public works overseeing the completion of the New Town plan within the Council's laws. In this section's discussion of administrative structures and systems it is now clear that builders as well as architects and Overseers helped to create and construct the New Town's houses and make it look the way it did between 1767 and 1795. In this time, Council leaders and officials created the department of public works, passed laws and enforced them to control the emerging professional builders in the New Town, but, at the same time, offered them encouragement to continue in business through "indulgences" and patronage in public works. These incentives and administrators settled the construction industry as the major one for concern in the New Town between 1767 and the mid 1790s, but in doing so, the administration had to manage conflicts, building controls, property ownership rights and the difficulties of doing these things within the contexts of political and economic struggles for building businesses to survive in the New Town.

## CHAPTER 2: BUILDERS AND EDINBURGH'S POLITICS

This chapter builds upon the sources of information set out in the first chapter. Studying administrative systems, laws, architects and builders contributes to understanding the history of the New Town. In this analysis, the importance of the builders is emphasised, but architects Sir James Clerk, Robert and John Adam and James Craig are discussed again not only in terms of their plans, such as Craig's circus plans, or plans for Merchant Street, which was outside the New Town, but also in terms of the city's politics and economics. Builders were also involved in elections and the city's economics. They represented free trade and played an important part in completing the New Town and shaping its appearance with their buildings. Peter Reed's study of the New Town showed that the lack of financial security, and Scottish feudal law, prevented it being built using a uniform plan like London or Bath<sup>1</sup>. He argued that cautious builders and residents did not want to build houses and tenements that would cost too much and bankrupt them and that the sheer scale of the New Town, together with the fact that Robert Adam's Adelphi scheme had failed in London, deterred them from spending the money it would take to build using palatial plans for entire streets. This led to Craig's austere plan being completed bit by bit with piecemeal development. Builders were left to do the best they could over small areas of streets and, for Reed, this explains why the New Town was built in a piecemeal way, and why its buildings were plain and dreary. But, he does not examine the city's economic and political history to support his views. Youngson, on the other hand, argued that the New Town was built when the economy was booming<sup>2</sup>. Does either analysis present useful information on the way builders were administered?

This contrast of the economic and political ideals and realities of building the New Town will now be discussed in terms of the builders' importance to the New Town's administrative systems, and its political and economic history. It is presented as a chronological narrative with a discussion of sources of income and expenditure. The role of the New Town in raising money from taxation,

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<sup>1</sup> P. Reed, *Form and Context: a Study of Georgian Edinburgh, Order in Space and Society, Architectural Form and its Context in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. T. Markus, Mainstream, 1982, pp.121-123

<sup>2</sup> A.J. Youngson, *The City of Reason and Nature, Edinburgh in the age of Reason, A Commemoration*, Edinburgh University Press, 1967

and its effect on the political climate will also be considered, and the importance of the builders in these respects made clear.

### **Political background: 1759 – 1767**

This study is an introduction to the political background for when James Craig's plan of the New Town was accepted in 1767. Issues such as political leadership, order and administration were important to the decision to proceed with the New Town from the 1720s. Whereas the Provosts and Parliament considered these points the ordinary master craftsmen in Edinburgh were more concerned with the development of free trade, and impact this could have on their own businesses and political power in their city.

The link between planning the New Town and drafting laws for the area has already been set out in the first chapter. The New Town's houses had to make the Council money. After 1707, successive Treasurers and Chamberlains of Edinburgh lamented the loss of revenues through lost taxes and toll revenues because nobles had moved to London. In November 1720, the Council set out ideas to dam the Nor Loch and open a communication with the north of the city. This included planning new housing for a "number of persons of note and character<sup>3</sup>". The Council's petition to the Duke of Hamilton in 1728<sup>4</sup> complained about daily increase in poverty. It championed improvements including rebuilding Leith Pier, making Nor Loch a canal, bridging Nor Loch to the fields to the north, building the Register House, "instituting several necessary professions of Liberal Arts and Sciences" and increasing College Professors' salaries. These ideas indicate what new Edinburgh was to become and George Drummond pursued these ideas.

Traditionally, public works were funded by the Ale Tax. This taxed beer and had been in existence since King James II had passed the charter in 1688, which had initiated the extension of the royalty of Edinburgh<sup>5</sup>. Although the Council had repeatedly managed to get Parliament to allow it to continue collecting Ale Tax, by the 1750s and 1760s the revenue from it was not enough to pay for the vast public works programme for improving Edinburgh that had been set out in the 1752 Proposals. Magistrates had to find money from other sources. The solution was to

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<sup>3</sup>ECA, TCM, 2/11/1720

<sup>4</sup>Historical Manuscripts Commission, MSS of Duke of Hamilton, 21, p.174

<sup>5</sup>*Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh 1681-1689*, 12/10/1688, Oliver and Boyd, 1954, p.243



supplement tax revenues with bank loans and negotiate advantageous deals to acquire land. George Heriot's Hospital was an important landowner and its Governors were often Magistrates. They feued land to the Council. In 1759 the Hospital feued land in Broughton for the New Town<sup>6</sup>. By 1766 the Council had 79 acres, and borrowed £24,000 from the Hospital<sup>7</sup>. There were never any wealthy nobles or merchants to buy the land set aside for the New Town for the Council to build a "London on Forth", as McKean called it, and which was referred to in the beginning of this thesis, with uniform houses. The Council sought its leaders from bankers who could encourage business and raise funds to build the New Town. Building businesses were a vital part of this strategy.

Building the New Town forced the Council to implement political and economic strategies to make Edinburgh richer. The 1752 pamphlet proposing the New Town did not just look to nobles to provide this money, but also predicted that the New Town would improve trade to make the city money. By 1767, the Council had set up administrative systems to make money through feuing and building properties. These systems were described in the first chapter of this section of the thesis. They made feuing and building quicker to generate revenue for the Council. These systems included laws, Dr Webster's tables of calculations and the books and maps that the department of public works used. In the 1770s they gave feuars and builders freedoms. The 1767 Building Act gave builders freedom to design what they wanted, freedom to break up the straight lines of the streets for "additional beauty"<sup>8</sup>, and the 1768 Building Act allowed builders to take as much of lot as they liked<sup>9</sup>, and to pay for this land later, since "Tradesmen...need money for building"<sup>10</sup>. This was a deliberate "free feuing", and "free design" policy for builders to encouraged speculative building. The system of processing applications for feuing and building in the 1760s and 1770s was equally easy and also encouraged building. These laws and administrative systems were meant to make builders believe that they could work successfully in the New Town. The builders were meant to build first and then pay for their land later. This emphasises the point that the Council had identified building businesses as being a means for making the New Town a reality,

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<sup>6</sup>George Heriots Hospital Minutes, 26/11/1759;10/12/1759;14/12/1759

<sup>7</sup>ibid, 6/2/1766

<sup>8</sup>ECA, TCM, 29/7/1767, article 5 of the Act.

<sup>9</sup>ibid, 24/2/1768, article 4 of the Act.

<sup>10</sup>ibid, 24/2/1768, article 5 of the Act.

and, because of this, backed small scale building programmes ahead of grand schemes for palatial streets by architects because the builders' plans could be built comparatively quickly year after year.

But, in fact, building businesses had to be courted into accepting the New Town. Incorporated master tradesmen were already cautious about becoming involved with the scheme. This was because they thought it would actually deny them freedom and reduce their own wealth. A brief discussion of Provost George Drummond's attempt to build the bridge over the Nor Loch and plan the New Town in 1759 gives a background to understanding an administrative struggle between builders and Magistrates which was concerned with political freedom, free trade and the Council's desire to have tradesmen working for its aims as opposed to builders who wanted to work for themselves. This polarised a debate between working for the public good, and liberty to work freely.

Free trade is an important concept and reality for the history of building the New Town. It links George Drummond's intentions for the project in the 1750s, with the realities of administering it for political leaders like Sir Laurence Dundas, and Sir James Hunter Blair. It was also an issue, which had concerned the generation previous to Drummond's time as Lord Provost. In May 1737 an anonymous author wrote an essay called "*Some Reasonable Overturs(sic) for the Good Toun's (sic) Interest Humbly offerd to the Consideration of all Concernd (sic)*". It was about free trade in the New Town. Free trade would make Edinburgh richer: "...in a far smaller era than 30 years time, There are a great many large and Statly (sic) Teniments(sic) Built, and possessed, than before, The number of Inhabitants, shop, Trades, and Traders multiplyd(sic)<sup>11</sup>"

George Drummond knew these arguments. Fewer tolls benefited the city's tradesmen. The author of the pamphlet also argued that the creation of more burgesses would increase public funds. Drummond took up these ideas in 1759. The 1753 Improvement Act had initiated building the Exchange. The 1759 Act was to ensure that phase two of the building programme provided by the 1753 Act became a reality for Edinburgh. This was to build a new bridge over the drained Nor

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<sup>11</sup>Private papers, Mrs Lee, Bridge of Allan

Loch. Article seven of the 1759 Bill allowed New Town residents to become burgesses and freemen on payment of £1<sup>12</sup>. Every inhabitant could work as a builder without being either a member or apprentice of the incorporation of wrights and masons of Edinburgh (known as the Mary Chapel). The Chapel opposed the bill. Opposition was not reduced by Drummond's offer that Mary Chapel's men could keep their rights and privileges in the New Town, whilst the new tradesmen in the New Town would have no rights in Old Edinburgh<sup>13</sup>. The Chapel thought that Drummond was attacking its political standing and the wealth of its members. It was determined to protect its members' businesses. The administrative structure the Council had for tradesmen included Deacons was mentioned in chapter one of this section. The structure shall now be explained in greater detail.

Maintaining the political status quo in Council meant that the Mary Chapel elected 2 Deacons to the Council through a voting system known as leeting. This allowed the Chapel to hand a list of many candidates, known as the long leet, to a Council dominated by merchants. The merchants then shortened the long leet to a short list of 3 candidates. This new list was called the short leet. From the short leet the merchants selected one man to represent the masons and another the wrights. If the winner was asked to sit in Council he was a Council Deacon. If he was not asked to sit in Council he was called an Extraordinary Deacon. Both types of Deacon could sit in Council, but only a Council Deacon could vote. Successful Council Deacons could be voted to lead other Council Deacons. These leaders were called Conveners of the Council Deacons. In the 1770s and 1780s builders became involved in arguments over burgh reform and free trade, which threatened this structure.

The next level that a successful Convener of Council Deacons could occupy in the Council structure was as one of 2 Trades Councillors. Council Deacons, the Convener and Trades Councillors voted on Council legislation as well as the election of Edinburgh's Member of Parliament. Outwith the Council, the Deacons also led a confederation of other organisations of wrights and masons, such as those based in Portsburgh, Edinburgh's Society of Journeymen, and they organized apprenticeships in the Chapel's crafts. Arguments for free trade implied that

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<sup>12</sup>ECA, TCM, 30/7/1759, article 7

Council Deacons stopped representing the city's building professions and businesses, as not every builder had to join the Chapel. Free trade would damage the Chapel's political power and threaten the training programme it ran for apprentices. When the New Town was being built every builder was not a member of the Chapel, and men who were not members worked there freely and independently with their buildings and businesses asserting their independence from the Chapel, and its Deacons. This led to court cases in struggles between Chapel Deacons and free traders.

The glazier, Deacon William Govan, wrote a paper for a meeting of the Chapel to oppose the 1759 Bill<sup>14</sup>. The Chapel wanted its rights and privileges in Old and New Edinburgh. Govan warned that the New Town threatened the Chapel's members' wealth. Tax records from 1748 clearly show that builders were often proprietors of property. Examples recorded then included entries for the architect, John Douglas, who had a tenement in Fore Street, the wright, Francis Brodie, who owned a warehouse and workhouse in a garden in Liberton, and fellow wrights Thomas Heriot and Charles Butter who owned tenements in Carruber's Close<sup>15</sup>. Govan believed that an increase in Edinburgh's population would harm proprietors' and heritors' profits from building and land, because when people moved into the New Town rent revenue and business profits would decline. Govan, and the Chapel's clerk, Andrew Chalmers, won the day and the Bill was rejected. But, Govan and Chalmers did not say that builders could not become proprietors there, and that the New Town was going to be a residential area for nobles.

Drummond was furious. He hated this opposition and called the Goldsmiths, and others, like the Chapel, Jacobites<sup>16</sup>. Drummond and his supporters still persisted and Councillors appeased tradesmens' suspicious minds. The 1767 Parliamentary and Council acts for the New Town, which set out the scheme to build the New Town, dropped any reference to free trade and burgesships whilst insisting that the incorporations' rights and privileges would be kept intact. Other ways in which the promotion of the New Town gained political support included patronage

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<sup>13</sup>ibid, 30/7/ 1759, article 7

<sup>14</sup>NLS, Dep 302/1, 24/7/1759

<sup>15</sup>ECA, Extent Tax 1748, SL35/ 1

<sup>16</sup>NLS, MS16680, f.186

of the Mary Chapel as opposed to directing work to free trading men like architects in Edinburgh. This was to have implications for the architecture of the New Town.

In the 1750s John Adam was Edinburgh's leading architect. He has already been introduced to the thesis in chapter one of this section. He designed the Exchange (**plate 61**) and made a plan for the new bridge. It was imperative that the 1767 Extension of the Royalty Act passed through Parliament. Without it, plans remained ideas rather than realities in stone. Rather than turn to John Adam or his younger brother, Robert, or even to some other professional architect to plan the New Town, the Council held competitions. John Adam's plan for the bridge was placed in an archive on a shelf in Council Chambers.

The winners of the competitions to design the bridge and New Town plan would appeal to the Mary Chapel. William Mylne, a Council Deacon mason, won the bridge contract, and former apprentice boy, James Craig, won the New Town plan prize. Both men had training and family connections with the Council and Mary Chapel. Mylne was a member of a famous family of Edinburgh masons and a Council Deacon, and James Craig was the only surviving son of William Craig<sup>17</sup>, the city's mace and swordbearer, and grandson of a former Councilor and Dean of Guild, Robert Craig. From 1759 he was also the apprentice of Council Deacon Patrick Jamieson, builder of the Exchange. After his father's death in 1762 James Craig declared his intentions to become an architect with his plans for the new bridge in 1763 (**Plate 67**), and 2 years later he planned the south Canongate road to link Leith with the new bridge via Abbeyhill and Canongate (**plate 70**). He already knew that the extended Royalty was to generate income before he entered the competition to plan the New Town. Craig has also been mentioned before in the first chapter of the thesis.

Mylne sat on many Committees and was fully involved in planning the New Town. Such recognition of the Chapel's importance to the Council's planning of New Town kept its members' worries about their businesses quiet. Craig adorned his plan with a quotation from *Liberty*, a poem

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<sup>17</sup>ECA, Miscellaneous papers 1759 - 1761, Petitions 1760, D0011

by his famous poet uncle, James Thomson. The quotation referred to both the Council's liking for free trade in the New Town, which will be discussed later, his family and his plan (plate 62).

Both Mylne and Craig adjusted the plan for the Council's final approval<sup>18</sup>. The Chapel was given its place by the Council, who may have feared that their proposed bill would be defeated again in Council before it was sent to Parliament. The Council had learnt its lessons from the 1759 bill which had been defeated. From 1765 it now kept Chapel men fully involved in Committee, and competition selection together, with refining the plan to a form which would finally be accepted and presented to the King for his consent. Secondly, the Council continued to accept that Chapel men and tradesmen could be builders and proprietors of property in the New Town. This amounted to an acceptance that tenements would be permitted in the New Town as they were the houses that tradesmen knew best how to build from the Old Town experience. This endorsement was something that builders expressed in their buildings and which were discussed in chapter one of this section.

In the 1767 Parliament, the Extension of the Royalty bill was also nearly defeated, but this time, because of its threat to private property, and Earl Morton's insistence on building Register House at the expense of any housing at all – the New Town was nearly not built at all and the aim of the 1752 proposals to improve Edinburgh's residential architecture was virtually dismissed altogether. Magistrates therefore had to find supporters in Parliament since the Bill had powerful opponents. Correspondence between Lord Provost Gilbert Laurie and Parliament concerning the Bill and Act show that the most powerful adversary was Lord Morton. He demanded that the New Town be solely for Register House, and published a pamphlet to propose a timber bridge for foot passengers to cross from Warriston's Close to Barefoot's Parks, where the Registry Offices would be built<sup>19</sup>. He coveted the Royal College of Physicians' site at the north end of the new bridge for

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<sup>18</sup> S. Harris, *New Light on the First New Town*, *Book of Old Edinburgh Club*, New Series, vol.2, 1992, pp.1-13; A.Lewis and J.Lowrey, *James Craig and the New Town of Edinburgh*, *Architectural Heritage V*, *The Journal of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland*, Edinburgh University Press, 1995, pp.39-51; A. Fraser, *A Reassessment of Craig's New Town Plans, 1766 – 1774*, *James Craig 1744-1795, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K.Cruft and A.Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995, pp.25-48; C. McKean, *James Craig and Edinburgh's New Town, James Craig 1744 – 1795, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K.Cruft and A.Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995, pp.48-57

<sup>19</sup>ECA, Mcleod Bundle 118, Bay D, 125. Correspondence between Lord Provost, Lord Privy Seal, James Coutts on Extended Royalty, 1767

Register House. Although Morton's Register House, as designed by Robert Mylne, was not built (plate 66), he can be credited for its situation. An onlooker commented that "Lord Morton has a dispute with the College of Physicians, the occasion of which was this - it seems they propose to sell their Hall and Gardens near the Cowgate Port and to build a new Hall and Library in the New Town, the place for which they have fixed to be opposite (sic) to the Bridge, the very place which his L<sup>p</sup> says he chuses (sic) for the Publick (sic) Offices; so ther (sic) will be a pretty squabble about it!<sup>20</sup>".

Coutts and Sir Alexander Gilmour, Member for Midlothian, were left to present the bill to the Commons, Lords and its Committees while the opportunist architect, Robert Mylne, was available to explain the advantages of the scheme to them too. Morton had servitude over the ground belonging to Heriot's Hospital, which prevented any building on the ground<sup>21</sup>. He was defending the rights of private property owners in the area and allied with Mr Dickson of Kilbucho, and the sons of George Drummond, who also had land which was to be annexed in the extension.<sup>22</sup> "The smallest trifle [sic] of property out of them may lose our Bill" Provost Laurie was told in January 1767, and he would have been aware of the need to get the consent of these feuars to be able to extend the royalty. The Council set about appeasing Dickson and the Drummond brothers.

Not only did Morton want to protect property, he also wanted to be Lord Registrar. His plan and argument for Register House were to support his claim to this post. Morton questioned the Council's ability to pay for the New Town. Provost Laurie was told, " he fights the bil (sic) and to account to the two penny tax<sup>23</sup> ever since the first Act...as well as for the £9000 subscribed for beautifying (sic) the Town.<sup>24</sup>". Later Laurie knew that Morton's proposition for the Ale Tax to raise revenue "is very strong in his favour."<sup>25</sup> The problem facing the supporters of the New Town

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<sup>20</sup>NAS, GD26/13/659, No date, 1768

<sup>21</sup>ECA, Bundle 118, Bay D, 125, Correspondence between Lord Provost, Lord Privy Seal, James Coutts on Extended Royalty, 3/2/1763

<sup>22</sup>ibid, 22/1/1767

<sup>23</sup> this refers to the ale tax

<sup>24</sup>ECA, Bundle 118, Bay D, 125, Correspondence between Lord Provost, Lord Privy Seal, James Coutts on Extended Royalty, 19/2/1767

<sup>25</sup>ibid, 26/2/1767

revolved around political and financial support for the scheme. The solution they found was to support speculative builders, banking and borrowing money.

Opposition would delay the Bill until another session of Parliament. Morton was "indefatigable in interesting every man of business in both Houses of Parliament for his proposition: The fruits of his Industry have met me in several places, and I am sorry to tell your lordship that the general impression at present seems to be in favour of the Earl's proposition....he has been singularly attentive to all the leading men of this part of the Island in both houses of Parliament."<sup>26</sup>

The Council countered and petitioned Scottish Lords. Lord Marchmont was told by Provost Laurie that "the Town are already so overburdened with debt, that the building of the Bridge must in all probability be stopped, and the whole scheme so beneficial to the Publick (sic) and of such importance to the Trade of this Ancient City prove abortive, but they flatter themselves these unhappy consequences will be prevented by your Lordship's friendly will"<sup>27</sup>. Others who received similar letters asking for support were Sir Gilbert Elliot, George Demspter, Lord Frederick Campbell, Earl Fife, Earl Eglington, Earl March, Earl Laudon, the Duke of Queensberry, Earl Bute, Sir Hugh Dalrymple, Sir Laurence Dundas, the Duke of Athol, Earl Panmure, Lord Dunmore and the Duke of Roxburgh, the Duke of Argyll, the Duke of Buccleuch, Earl Abercorn, Earl Abercorn and Earl Hyndford<sup>28</sup>.

Sir Laurence Dundas and the Duke of Buccleuch supported the Bill and were political leaders in the New Town. Opponents to the New Town were concerned about private property, wealth, employment and building programmes. But the Council was committed to the project and encouraged tradesmen ahead of architects to take on the proprietorship of property, and backed speculative building, banking and borrowing to complete the plans they had chosen. This is the background to the decision Provost Laurie took when he decided not to pursue Robert Mylne's suggestion to impose a masterplan for houses in the New Town in the New Town Bill. To have placed a clause like this into the Bill may well have inflamed opposition in Parliament and delayed the Act from passing.

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<sup>26</sup>ibid,3/3/1767

<sup>27</sup>ECA, Bundle 118, Bay D, 125, Correspondence between Lord Provost, Lord Privy Seal, James Coutts on Extended Royalty, 23/3/1767



### **Sir Laurence Dundas's Edinburgh: 1768 – 1769**

This discussion of the early years of the New Town's building history examines political, economic and fiscal systems which made possible the realisation of James Craig's plan. The influence of Sir Laurence Dundas, Chief Baron Robert Ord, as well as other important residents, the Ayr Bank, Lord Kames, architects and Council Deacons of masons and wrights shall be seen to drive the initial building programme on.

In 1767 the banker, James Coutts, was the city's Member of Parliament. He delivered the Parliamentary Extension Act and intended to live in Queen Street<sup>29</sup>. But, Magistrates swiftly replaced him in 1768 with Scotland's leading industrialist and financier - Sir Laurence Dundas of Kerse. He had also supported the New Town, and he was the man the Council believed would be able to manage its construction.

In 1763 he subscribed £500 towards Lord Kames's proposal to build the north bridge<sup>30</sup> - a proposal for which which James Craig had a plan published in *The Scots Magazine* (plate 67). In Parliament, the Council had his support to defeat Morton. "Sir Lawrence Dundas's influence will help in both Houses<sup>31</sup>", Provost Laurie was told in a letter. By 1768 he was Scotland's most successful businessman: an industrialist and landowner with a vast fortune. He was so wealthy that he bought Orkney and had estates in Stirlingshire (Kerse) and Yorkshire. Dundas was the ideal man to advocate investment and to back new businesses in Edinburgh. A key component of his wealth was the fact that he was the Governor of the Royal Bank of Scotland. He could help manage Edinburgh Council's administration of the New Town, and encourage building businesses there. He could organise loans from the Royal Bank to the Council to allow it to fulfill its obligations in building the New Town. The 1767 Building Act had committed the Council to building a common sewer<sup>32</sup>, and the next year, the Council began to supply water to the area and drains, which also cost money. Other common Council expenses included building the bridge, street cleaning, paving, quarrying stone and paying men to do this work.

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<sup>28</sup>ibid, 5/3/1767

<sup>29</sup>ECA, TCM, Chamberlain's Accounts 1766-1768, Purchase money of lots of ground in the New Town, 4/9/1767

<sup>30</sup>NAS, GD24/3/99

<sup>31</sup>ECA, Bundle 118, Bay D, 125, Correspondence between Lord Provost, Lord Privy Seal, James Coutts on Extended Royalty, 3/3/1767

To symbolise his leadership, Sir Laurence decided to live in St Andrew's Square. His idea was to make his mansion a new Council chamber and home for the Lord Provost. This was an illustration of his power and influence over the Magistrates, his status as the Member of Parliament for Edinburgh and Governor of the Royal Bank of Scotland. It was a potent symbol of the importance of his financial and political power. Building it appealed to the architect, John Baxter junior. In August 1771 he wrote: " Sir Lawrence Dundas had at last resolved on building his house in the New Town, and, has fixed on the present Deacons for his operatives as mason and carpenter he likesways(sic) designs making a present of this house to the Town to serve as Lord provost's house.<sup>33</sup>" (plate 49)

Both Dundas and the Council worked together to build the house. Dr Alexander Webster, of the Bridge Committee, helped Dundas get land for the building."Dr Webster has got the management and oversight of Sir L.Dundas's house, which is to be began with all convenient speed as so on proper estimates of the expense are made up - <sup>34</sup>" noted an onlooker in November that year. Another man from the Bridge Committee's circle of consultants gathered by Sir James Clerk of Penicuik to consider his ideas and plans for the new bridge<sup>35</sup>, and, no doubt, the new Royal College of Physicians' Hall, was the architect, James Byres of Tonley. Clerk's ideas have already been discussed in chapter one. Although based in Rome, Byers had already made plans for the new Physicians' Hall, and had made a design for Dundas's house in 1768<sup>36</sup>. This was to be built at the centre of the east end of St Andrew's Square, where James Craig had planned a church. The house was set back from the street, and occupied a central space in the eastern side of the square. In a way, it was a magnificent embodiment of the intentions set out in the Council's New Town Act of 1767. It was also statement of secular power in the area where political and financial power could facilitate the removal of a planned church. The site for Dundas's mansion was given over by the Council and the Bridge Committee via Dr Webster in 1767. He bought "an area" on the eastern square for £450 in September at the same time as the bankers James Coutts, James Hunter

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<sup>32</sup>ECA, TCM, 29/7/1767, article 8 of the Act.

<sup>33</sup>NAS, GD44/43/47

<sup>34</sup>NAS, GD 26/13/659,2/11/1768

<sup>35</sup>ECA, North Bridge Committee Minutes, 26/4/1765

and Sir William Forbes also took their lots in the New Town<sup>37</sup>. This "area" was the site for the house that Royal Architect, Sir William Chambers, was later asked to design. It is hard not to conclude that Sir Laurence was an anointed leader of Edinburgh before 1768.

Choosing Chambers, and employing Council Deacons to build the house, such as mason William Jamieson, and wright William Butter, emphasised Sir Laurence's patronage and ability to tie bonds between local and national finance. He also set high architectural standards. Old ambitions to attract noble families back home to the New Town through public buildings and prestigious homes designed by nationally famous architects were now given fresh hope. If everyone joined and matched him, then the New Town was really going to become an exclusive area for millionaires. For the supporters of the New Town, Sir Laurence was the ideal leader in an ideal building. His presence and actions opened up the exciting prospect of managing more building projects using the building Acts which freed feuars and builders from restrictions to encourage building.

Sir Laurence set up a party of supporters around his patronage. Several Edinburgh Magistrates were appointed as directors of the Royal Bank. In 1767 Lord Provost Gilbert Laurie was an Ordinary Director<sup>38</sup>. He was joined by James Guthrie, who was first Bailie in 1768<sup>39</sup>, and who attended the Bridge Committee a year later<sup>40</sup>. In the 1770s Provost John Dalrymple and Councillor Gilbert Meason were also directors<sup>41</sup>. More Magistrates and merchants held accounts with the bank. Sir Laurence Dundas totally controlled the Council's finances. He and his fellow directors could advance the Council more and more money and run Council affairs. The Dundas house in St Andrew's Square was becoming the centre of political power in the city. He controlled tradesmen through his patronage of building operations, such as work on his own building.

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<sup>36</sup>Harry Gordon Slade, *James Byres of Tonley (1734-1817): the Architecture of a Scottish Cicerone*, *Journal of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland, Architectural Heritage II*, Edinburgh University Press, 1991, pp18-28

<sup>37</sup>ECA, Chamberlains Accounts 1766 - 1768, Purchase money for lots of ground in the new town, f.27

<sup>38</sup> N. Munro, *History of the Royal Bank of Scotland 1727 - 1927*, R & R Clark, Edinburgh, 1928

<sup>39</sup>ECA, TCM, 4/10/1768

<sup>40</sup>ibid, 11/10/1769

<sup>41</sup> N. Munro, *History of the Royal Bank of Scotland 1727 - 1927*, R & R Clark, Edinburgh, 1928

Sir Laurence Dundas also had Court of Session judges, Lord Alesmere and Lord Ellick, as his Deputy Governors at the bank<sup>42</sup>. He could unite the Royal Court (where he was a member of the Privy Council), Parliament, the Court of Session, the Council and the Royal Bank of Scotland together to support the New Town. Through his financial and political power and positions Dundas could influence many people. Senior New Town architect, John Adam, borrowed money from him from 1767<sup>43</sup>, and a New Town neighbour, Mr Callender of Craigforth, was also in his personal debt 3 years later<sup>44</sup>.

Ties between national and local governments were strengthened by Chief Baron Robert Ord's decision to move to the New Town. He led the Court of Exchequer and had direct contact with the Treasury. Ord had another Royal Architect, Robert Adam, design his Queen Street house. It has been discussed in chapter one, and this highly influential building on Queen Street will be discussed again in terms of the "Adam Group" of builders in the third section of the thesis. Other bankers and financiers moved into the New Town including James Coultts, James Hunter (north side, George Street<sup>45</sup>), Sir William Forbes ( south side, St Andrew's Square<sup>46</sup> and north side George Street<sup>47</sup>) and the Ayr Bank's investors, Sir John Whitefoord<sup>48</sup> (Queen Street<sup>49</sup>), Sir Adam Ferguson of Kilkerran<sup>50</sup>( east end, St Andrew's Square<sup>51</sup>), Alex Ferguson of Craigdarroch<sup>52</sup>, Alex Gray<sup>53</sup> (south side, St Andrew's Square<sup>54</sup>), Alex Wight<sup>55</sup> (south side, St Andrew's Square<sup>56</sup>), Andrew Crosbie<sup>57</sup> (east end, St Andrew's Square<sup>58</sup>), and Hugh Maxwell<sup>59</sup> (Princes Street<sup>60</sup>) . The

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<sup>42</sup> *ibid*

<sup>43</sup> NAS, GD282/4/8, 22/1/1767; GD282/4/8, 4/5/1767

<sup>44</sup> NAS, GD282/4/7, 18/12/1770

<sup>45</sup> ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1766-1768, Purchase Money of lots of ground in the New Town, 4/9/1767

<sup>46</sup> *ibid*

<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, 12/1/1768

<sup>48</sup> NAS, GD224/178/1/9

<sup>49</sup> ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1768 - 1770, Purchase Money of lots in the New Town, 24/4/1769

<sup>50</sup> NAS, GD224/178/1/3

<sup>51</sup> ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1766-1768, Purchase Money of lots of ground in the New Town, 6/8/1767

<sup>52</sup> Glasgow University Archives, UGD129/4/4/2

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>54</sup> ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1766-1768, Purchase Money of lots of ground in the New Town, 17/8/1767

<sup>55</sup> Glasgow University Archives, UGD129/4/4/2

<sup>56</sup> *ibid*

<sup>57</sup> Glasgow University Archives, UGD129/4/4/2

<sup>58</sup> ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1766-1768, Purchase Money of lots of ground in the New Town, 24/3/1768 and 7/7/1768

<sup>59</sup> Glasgow University Archives, UGD129/4/4/2

New Town was the city's new financial centre where big business decisions were taken. The Ayr Bank settled there, and its speculative business suited the builders there.

The scale of the New Town's squares and streets, the proposed Register House and Royal College of Physicians' Hall made these men believe that their new homes were within a grand modern British city like Bath, Bristol, York, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle or even London itself. In these cities, large public building programmes were matched with housing developments incorporating new squares, streets and circuses<sup>61</sup>. Nobles like Earl Northesk, and Countess Leven, government diplomats like Sir Robert Murray, and the philosopher, David Hume, made it a fashionable residential area not only in Edinburgh, where the New Town dwarfed George Square and Lady Nicolson's Park, but in Great Britain. Other financiers lived there, like Fordyce of Ayton (north St Andrew's Square<sup>62</sup> Queen Street<sup>63</sup>), James Stirling (east side St Andrew's Square<sup>64</sup>, Queen Street<sup>65</sup>) and American merchants, like John Deas<sup>66</sup>. Consulting architects like James Clerk of Penicuik, John and Robert Adam to plan the New Town and getting Sir William Chambers to work in the New Town attracted more attention. Ideas to have a new College and new College of Physicians, and a Register House, as drawn by architects David Henderson<sup>67</sup> and Sir James Clerk respectively, added to the place's popularity, this time not because of its attractive houses, but because of its importance to the administration and education of Edinburgh and Scotland. In this light, Youngson's view that the New Town represented a financial boom, and McKean's view that the New Town was built for residential use, appears to be justified, but this is just at first sight. Deeper studies of the facts reveal that the New Town was not a residential and political utopia at all.

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<sup>60</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1768 -1770, Purchase Money of lots in the New Town, 31/5/1769

<sup>61</sup>P.Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance, Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660 – 1770*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, pp.80-113

<sup>62</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1766 - 1768, Purchase Money of lots in the New Town, 15/8/1767

<sup>63</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1768 - 1770, Purchase Money of lots in the New Town, 23/1/1769

<sup>64</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1772 - 1774, Purchase Money of lots in the New Town, 10/9/1772

<sup>65</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1770 - 1772, Purchase Money of lots in the New Town, 19/5/1772

<sup>66</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1768 - 1770, Purchase Money of lots in the New Town, 26/10/1769

<sup>67</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1766-1768, Acts of Council, 21/5/1767

The College was the training ground for Scotland's future leaders<sup>68</sup>. This, the Physicians' Hall, Register House and Sir Laurence Dundas's house would have added to the land values and given the impression of academic and architectural excellence<sup>69</sup>. Higher land values would provided the Council with money to fund building the New Town. Dundas and Ord held parties for the Council. "The Magistrates are to dine at the Chief Baron's on Friday, as they do always once a year..."<sup>70</sup> wrote one correspondent. Another letter noted that, "Sir L.Dundas gave a most elegant Dinner on Monday to the Magistrates, Council and Members of our Corporations. It was to be the finest thing ever seen here, above 70 people were to be there, among them were the Chief Baron, Sir Alexr Gilmour, and many other persons of distinction. Dr Webster was there too."<sup>71</sup> These parties showed who led Edinburgh.

Although the Treasury itself only intended to pay for Register House, and, from 1771 the Inverkeithing Lazaretto (which would have increased imported trade to the city) through the Board of Customs and Excise, the Court of Exchequer, the Treasury and the King's Minister all wanted the New Town to succeed. The higher the number of residents and houses in the New Town the higher would be the tax revenues collected by the Customs through its tolls, and by the tax collectors from national taxes. Edinburgh had to make money for Great Britain. The issue of tax collection was important to the Council's administration of builders. With the King's approval of the street plan in 1767, the New Town became an official symbol of the Hanoverian improvement of an old town using modern architecture, and banking, as endorsed by the Ayr Bank's men who gathered around St Andrew's Square to support speculative businesses and leading financiers like Sir Laurence, the Royal Bank's men, Chief Baron Ord.

The Ayr Bank's presence represented the belief in speculative businesses, like building. The Ayr Bank (Douglas Heron and Company) used a new banking system. It raised money through credit. The bank issued notes or cash, instead of gold and silver coins. Investors pledged estates as securities on loans. These were heritable securities, and they were important to builders because

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<sup>68</sup>T.C.Smout, *Where had the Scottish economy got to by the Third Quarter of the Eighteenth Century?*, pp 45 - 73, Hunt and M.Ignatieff (ed), *Wealth and Virtue, The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, Cambridge University Press, 1983

<sup>69</sup>Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Library, Muniment 192, August 1765

<sup>70</sup>NAS, GD 26/13/659, no date

they helped them raise loans. The system was very popular. By 1772 the Ayr Bank had liabilities of over £1,000,000<sup>72</sup>. Heritable securities were also used to advance money to builders. The New Town was the home of new businesses, and these included house building businesses, which meant that the New Town was to be home to organised speculative building. The importance of heritable security to building businesses, and financial management to Council administration will both be discussed later.

These businesses included building businesses. Though nothing new, James Craig's New Town plan was an essay in modern town planning based on Edinburgh's recent property developments. In the 1750s the north end of Calton was being mapped and feued out for building<sup>73</sup>. These plans used an alphabetical mapping system. This system survived into the next decade. James Brown's George Square and Lady Nicolson's Park also used it. Before 1767 George Square was the largest square in Edinburgh (plate 68) whilst Nicholson Park nearby was another new development which was built upon a grid (plate 69). The New Town plan resembles a combination of George Square and Nicholson Park - if Craig gave the Park main roads flanking either side, topped and tailed it with a large square like George Square then a plan resembling the New Town plan emerges. All these plans made administering building, and calculating income from feuing, easier. The grid plan, and developing plots to build upon from it, managed by an Overseer, were well established styles of estate management in both Scotland and England<sup>74</sup>.

Craig had provided a tried and tested template of feuing ground on which to make money. The plan matched Dr Webster's administrative system for booking feus and together they provided the Council with accounts. In 1767 the Council's representative at the King's court, the Royal Physician, Sir John Pringle, noted that Sir Laurence Dundas liked the plan<sup>75</sup>. To a financier's eye the plan was full of possibilities - there were vast open spaces for feuing and for new public

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<sup>71</sup>ibid

<sup>72</sup>I.S.Checkland, *Scottish Banking: A History 1695 - 1973*, pp131-134, Collins, Glasgow and London, 1975

<sup>73</sup>ECA, Petitions and Miscellaneous papers 1735 - 1765, Archive Box Location 284B

<sup>74</sup>P.Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance, Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660 - 1770*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, p.87

<sup>75</sup>ECA, TCM, 23/12/1767

buildings. There were huge new squares and streets to feu out and make money in the same ways as feuing Nicolson Park and George Square had made money for private landowners.

James Craig's decision to ornament the squares with monuments and a church were typical. Many urban squares had churches in them<sup>76</sup>, and the monuments at the end of the street vista were also well established. The churches and monuments intended for the squares were to remind privileged onlookers of their visits to Rome or great country houses. Tours to Italy and visits to noble estates were to reinforce the Council's wish to accommodate wealthy families in Edinburgh and to maintain high standards in urban architecture. Robert Adam's recent successful tour and publication following his tour to Italy, together with the presence of his brother John, Sir James Clerk and James Byers on the Bridge and New Town plan Committees would have ensured that tastes for Italian and Roman architecture would have been mentioned in debates about what the New Town should look like.

Joining these architects, the administrator, Dr Webster, and the banker and judge, Lord Alesford, on the planning Committee was Lord Kames. Like John Adam, Kames had been involved in the planning and administration of the extended royalty since the 1753 Improvement Act. The feuing expert could advise on selling land to make money. He would be an ally to the bankers who supported the New Town and who saw tradesmen who needed their loans to buy plots and start building.

As well as being an administrator and an enthusiast for the New Town and architecture, Kames was a judge who supported splitting up estates into small parcels to allow people to be land and property owners. He was an expert in feuing<sup>77</sup>. He would have advised on the New Town's feuing plan and welcomed builders as feuars and proprietors, urging them to set up businesses there. Lord Kames's thinking allowed building businesses to flourish and develop a strong presence in modern Edinburgh. This ambition for success followed Kames's knowledge of other New Towns

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<sup>76</sup>P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance, Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660 - 1770*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, p.78

<sup>77</sup> D. Lieberman, *Legal Needs of a Commercial Society: the jurisprudence of Lord Kames*, chapter 8, *Wealth and Virtue, The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. I.Hont, and M.Ignatieff, Cambridge University Press, 1983



in Scotland, where the key to their success, or failure, was to secure successful businesses in them<sup>78</sup>. Lord Kames advised Edinburgh Town Council to learn about administering the New Town from the what other magistrates had done elsewhere<sup>79</sup>, which had not always met with success<sup>80</sup>. In England, cities and towns became famous for their industries<sup>81</sup>, and in Edinburgh the principal industry was building. Kames would have encouraged investment and financial support for this. With this general support for providing Edinburgh with improved estates, and housing in mind, as well as developing its political and economic power lawyers, bankers and merchants all invested in house building with a view to making themselves richer as well as establishing Edinburgh as being the provincial capital of Scotland, and a modern British city which was the equal of any other English provincial city with large and conspicuous building programmes such as Bristol, Bath and Whitehaven<sup>82</sup>.

Feuing was also helped by Dr Webster's system of recording the buying of lots. Together, they planned for strong fiscal control over the administration of the New Town. Laws and a system of administration helped to sell feus in what was described in the early 1770s as a "complete system of improvement<sup>83</sup>" which helped the public works department. The Council matched a logical system of administration with a plan. The team, which checked accounts and audits, also worked together in feuing and building. The Lord Provost, Chamberlain, clerks, overseer, Dean of Guild, the first Bailie and Lord Provost's Committees could call upon maps, surveys, plans and records of feus taken, their measurements, values and outstanding payments due to the Council as a result of this administration.

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<sup>78</sup> T.C.Smout, *The Landowner and the Planned Village in Scotland, 1730 – 1830, Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, ed. N.T.Phillipson and R.Mitchison, Edinburgh University Press, 1970, pp.93-94

<sup>79</sup> C.Berry, *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment*, Edinburgh University Press, 1997, p.105

<sup>80</sup> T.C.Smout, *The Landowner and the Planned Village in Scotland, 1730 – 1830, Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, ed. N.T.Phillipson and R.Mitchison, Edinburgh University Press, 1970, pp.93-94

<sup>81</sup> P.Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance, Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660 – 1770*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, pp.43 - 46

<sup>82</sup> J. Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination, English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, HarperCollins, 1997, p.495

<sup>83</sup> Advocates Library, Court of Session Papers, Appeals, fol.58, Respondents Case, 1770 - 1772

Accountancy grew more sophisticated and after 1773<sup>84</sup> accounts were kept in three distinct columns to show money spent, firstly, for the new bridge, secondly, for street paving, water pipes and sewers and thirdly, for purchase money for lots in the New Town. The man who devised and managed this system was the Minister of the Tron Church, Dr Alexander Webster. From 1767 he devised a scheme, set out as a mathematical table, to sell feus and collect feu duty. This fixed values for feus in August 1767<sup>85</sup> and a table appeared in April the following year. No doubt this system was set out in conjunction with making drafts of Craig's plan in 1767 for final approval in July that year, and this feuing plan took on an alphabetical system, which had been in use in Edinburgh from at least the 1750s onwards. Applications for plots were assessed and the cost of plots priced according to the table.

Dr Webster's system was used into the late 1780s and it helped complete feuing through annexing Lord Moray and Lord Alva's lands to the west after 1780, and east, in 1770, when Dr Webster took the lettering system and table to George Heriot's Hospital's land by Queen Street, which he calculated was worth £3045 after feuing<sup>86</sup>. In November 1784<sup>87</sup> newly bought feus were shown as tables with separate columns to show if purchase money and feu duty had been paid - and Dr Webster's system survived another decade. This system was allied to a need for clear accounts to be given to Magistrates and bankers to see and assess.

Active feuing in 1767 meant that income from purchase money touched £4000 (plate 72) - a sum unsurpassed for over 14 years. Bankers and builders used Dr Webster's system. The lettering system, tables, and books of feu payments worked harmoniously in both busy and slack times of business. Builders were not only involved in buying feus, but also recording and collecting taxes in the New Town. Tradesmen were integral to the administration of its construction.

Audits and statements helped the team to manage builders. Although extent tax was not the Council's only source of revenue, its records show how many houses were located in each street of the New Town and provide a history of occupancy and proprietorship. They supplement

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<sup>84</sup>ECA, TCM, 8/9/1773

<sup>85</sup>ibid, 5/8/1767

<sup>86</sup>ibid, 31/1/1770

information in other property records such as sazines, feuing records, dispositions, resignations and charters, which identify builders, proprietors and occupiers. Local financial records like excise surveys, water pipe duty records, and national tax records, such as inhabited house tax and window tax, name people who worked and lived in the New Town. National tax rolls do not identify proprietors and possessors of individual properties but do show that the New Town contributed to Great Britain's wealth. Builders had a pivotal role in the Council's economic and political strategies. Politically, the decision to extend the royalty of the city was taken with a view to provide the city with greater wealth. Audits and accounts show the importance of builders to the Council. They reveal both investment in architecture and debts. From these a picture of Edinburgh's economy and the Council's management of the New Town emerges.

The administrative team which assessed audits and accounts included the Lord Provost, Treasurer, Dean of Guild and Bailies. They led Committees and courts and collected accounts. These were then organised by the Chamberlain, clerks and accountants. Tradesmen also did this work. Council measurers and overseers checked work and handed accounts to clerks. Mary Chapel Council Deacons were both auditors and tax collectors. They assessed a Council tax on property called stent, or extent tax. They were called stentmasters. Since they knew rents and land values through businesses, stentmasters gave advice about property values. They also had to know these to be able to run both their own businesses, and represent other Chapel members' causes in Council.

Discussion of the early years of the New Town's building history with stresses political, economic and fiscal administration. Leading figures such as Sir Laurence Dundas, Chief Baron Ord and Lord Kames helped the Council to run the project. There was a strong grip on patronage of tradesmen and Sir Laurence and his allies were important residents in the New Town. Members of the Mary Chapel were also important tradesmen at work in the area, and they too also belong to Sir Laurence's party.

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<sup>87</sup>ibid 10/11/1784

Guided on feuing by Lord Kames and Lord Alesmere, on architecture by John Adam and Sir James Clerk, on banking by Sir Laurence Dundas and the Ayr Bank, and on taxation and property values by Dr Webster, and stentmasters, prospective property developers were encouraged to work and live in the New Town. The political lesson of the 1759 bill had been learnt, and in 1767 the Mary Chapel were fully involved in the Council's planning, and as members of Sir Laurence's party. In this respect, Youngson's view that the New Town represented the City of the Enlightenment seems justified. But, his view did not touch upon the importance of builders to the ideology and politics of completing the New Town.

Sir Laurence Dundas's party included local master craftsmen as well as famous architects. The banker Baronet kept tight control of Edinburgh's Council and led it with a "nod"<sup>88</sup>. Around him in St Andrew's Square were his fellow bankers and representatives of national government, as well as fellow Councillors. They chose the same architects and builders. The royal architect, Sir William Chambers, designed both Sir Laurence Dundas's house, Councillor Gilbert Meason's house and Sir Robert Murray Keith's house in St Andrew's Square. William Jamieson and William Butter feued and built in St Andrew's Square<sup>89</sup> and Princes Street<sup>90</sup>. They were members of Sir Laurence's party, with shared intentions to make a career working in the New Town.

It is clear that the Mary Chapel kept power in the New Town at this time. Certainly Deacons were big feuars and builders. The most important house was the home of the Sir Laurence Dundas. Council Deacons like the mason, William Jamieson, the wright, William Butter, and the slater, George Syme, worked there. Jamieson was also favoured with the contract to build the New Town's drains and sewers and he went on to dominate this work (plate 63). He often won other contracts. In 1777 he had a decision to employ James Craig to build Leith's Ballast Quay overturned<sup>91</sup>. In return he voted for Sir Laurence and his Council. Sir Laurence wanted him in Council, even if he was to represent the wrong trade as the Deacon of Surgeons<sup>92</sup>.

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<sup>88</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, Nota Bene, 10/10/1774

<sup>89</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1766 – 1768, Purchase of lots of ground in the New Town 20/8/1767; 2/11/1767; Chamberlain's Accounts 1768 -1770, Purchase of lots of ground in the New Town, 25/9/1770, 1/6/1770

<sup>90</sup>ECA, TCM, 30/10/1776; 10/11/1779(aborted)

<sup>91</sup>ibid, 31/5/1777

Back in 1767, Sir Laurence led Edinburgh's administration of the New Town with a dedicated and loyal team of bankers, lawyers, Magistrates, and administrators. He also had architects and tradesmen work for him, some of whom represented his interests in Council politics, and in building the New Town – not least at the building he intended to for himself as Member of Parliament, Governor of the Royal Bank of Scotland, and for the Lord Provost and his Council, in the centre of the eastern square of the New Town. There were few builders, masons and wrights outside the control of the Chapel, who built in the New Town between 1767 and 1780. But Town Council minutes and Chamberlain's accounts show Alex Fleming<sup>93</sup> from Fountainbridge, wrights John Brough<sup>94</sup>, John Souttar<sup>95</sup> and David Inverarity<sup>96</sup> and masons John Wilkie<sup>97</sup>, William Smith<sup>98</sup> and Richard Thomson<sup>99</sup> at work. These men feued land and developed the New Town plan by building tenements on Shakespeare's Square, the Theatre Royal and Canal Street, which were all on the south side of Princes Street, at the far eastern end of the street. These tenements were full of other tradesmen who were living and working in the New Town. Soon, Sir Laurence and the Council would have to contend with the realities of building the New Town.

In 1767 Sir Laurence Dundas represented an ideal leader for this vast town planning project. But the history of building the New Town was chequered with events outwith his control. There were setbacks with the collapse of the new bridge, the Ayr bank, and a long running legal and political dispute with New Town feuars. Together these factors undermined him and his party. The elections of 1774, 1777 and 1780 set about removing him from power. These points will now be discussed, and, once again, builders will be seen to be deeply involved in the realities of building the New Town. The scholars, McKean, Youngson and Reed, do not touch upon Edinburgh's political history in this period to analyse the New Town's architecture and builders, and discuss the relationships between politics, economics, architecture and speculative building businesses.

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<sup>92</sup>ibid, 19/9/1781

<sup>93</sup>ibid, 10/2/1773;9/6/1773;12/1/1774

<sup>94</sup>ibid, 9/8/1775

<sup>95</sup>ibid, 10/9/1777

<sup>96</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1768 - 1770, Purchase of lots of ground in the New Town, 29/5/1770

<sup>97</sup>ECA, TCM 5/3/1770

<sup>98</sup>ibid, 5/3/1777

<sup>99</sup>ECA, Extent Tax 1782 – 1783, SL35/14

The ideals and wealth Sir Laurence represented were tempered by political and economic realities. For example, the Council could not afford to build the "best" plans it received in competitions. Dr Webster's note to the architect, John Adam, in 1768 about New Town sewers demonstrates the same problem the Council had for the new bridge plan when Sir James Clerk's plan was not constructed because it was too expensive:

“ Mr Webster's best Compliments to Mr Adams(sic). The Bearer will Deliver to him the several plans that were presented to the Town Council of the common sewers. Mr Adams will see that the large one Describing Drains to run along bothe(sic) the Front & back of the Houses is very Elegantly Drawn but the Expence Mr Webster is afraid would far Exceed the Finances of the Town. The plan mark'd (sic) C Describing a Drain thro' (sic) the meus Lanes & c (sic) is liable to an unanswerable objection arising from the Declivity of Ground both to the South & North for Example to give the Drain a sufficient Declivity from the Houses in prince's (sic) Street to the Meuse Lane on the Parallelogram mark'd EFGH would Require Digging 16 or 18 Feet Deep from the five Houses & the great Drains to be Digg'd (sic) proportionately Deep thro' (sic) this whole course which its apprehended could not be Executed under a Sum equal to the whole Few (sic)Duty & purchase money which the Town are to receive. The plan which appear'd to the Committee of Council to be most proper all Circumstances consider'd (sic) & easiest carry'd into Execution is that drawn by David Henderson; But all these plans are submitted to Mr Adam's better judgement...<sup>100</sup>”

Mr Adam concurred and drew out Henderson's design in his reply to Webster. This was built throughout the New Town (plate 50). The following discussion shall now look at problems Sir Laurence Dundas's party faced.

The most important difficulties which contributed to the fall of Sir Laurence Dundas were the collapse of the new bridge in 1769, a legal dispute with the feuars of the New Town which ran from 1772 to 1776 about the administration of building in the area, and the crisis in the city's economy which was the result of the fall of the Ayr Bank in 1772. All these things contributed to

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<sup>100</sup>ECA, Bay D, Bundle 106, item 87

political opposition to Sir Laurence in elections of 1774, 1777 and 1780 in which the New Town, and its builders, were important issues for the Council to consider.

William Mein's poem, *"The Contract on the Land Bridge at Edinburgh in Answer to the Question that do you think your Plan can obtain over those already approved of by the Great, the Learned and the Architects in the place - Answer, yes, I do while it shews a far better and incomparable Cheaper, and profitable a way to accomplish it"* offered a satirical commentary on the predicament the Council faced in the 1760s wanting important modern building projects to be designed and built, but cheaply. Mein commented on the ideal of what was wanted and the reality of what was affordable. The first verse sets the tone of the poem as Mein sets about the Bridge Committee's choices of plans:

"The plans cal'd five or six or seven,  
Eats up all that to them is given.  
Wasting the Blessings of the kind Heaven,  
that nothing does remain  
Whereas this plan procures the Wealth,  
That shews how it maintain itself  
Returns all the advanced  
and pays the whole again<sup>101</sup>"

Mein said that architects' plans cost too much. He predicted thousands of pounds being spent to follow Roman or Greek architecture, and criticised the need to find an architect and builder with enough heritable security to be offered the construction contract. "Let us frugality imbrace" and "Extravagence be made to fly", he appealed to his readers. He was writing in the mid 1760s, and was attacking Sir James Clerk's plans for the New Town. In a way, his words reflect how ordinary men, outside the magic circle of architects working on the New Town, may have felt about these Roman plans. The builders of the New Town built tenements which Edinburgh's citizens could recognise as affordable urban domestic architecture. The case against extravagance would have

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<sup>101</sup>Private Archive, Mrs Lee, Bridge of Allan, Stirlingshire

been stronger in the 1770s in the light of Scotland's economic difficulties. The crisis in confidence in the New Town started with the collapse of the south abutment of the new bridge in 1769, an accident, which killed five people. William Mylne began building in 1765, but cracks had been noticed by passersby within three years when in November 1768 a correspondent wrote that, "our poor Bridge is certainly to come down, or least it must.... and besides one of the main pillars is cracked and all the walls are of insufficient work and too thin: with regard to the declivity I leave (sic) you to judge whether that could be a blunder of ignorance to of willfulness (sic), if of either it reflects great dishonor upon the architect; it looks as if he had Thought it would not have been discovered till after it was taken off his hands as it probably would not if the unfortunate affairs had not happened."<sup>102</sup>"

By late 1768 there was common mistrust of the architect of one of the major projects of the New Town. When the bridge did collapse the banker, Sir William Forbes, commented that the "times are out of joint"<sup>103</sup>" as if the dream the New Town represented had become a nightmare. The draining of confidence in the New Town is perceptible and tangible. Writing in August 1769, James Hay reported that "The Bridge's falling has been a melancholy accident, and I am just not told that the north end of the Bridge is likely to give the same way, occasioned by the great quantity of earth put upon it. It is Suspected there are six or seven persons buried in the ruins, three of whom have been dug out and interred the rest not yet found, being now late."<sup>104</sup>" (plate 56)

The horror of the bridge's collapse in 1769 was out of Sir Laurence Dundas's direct control, but it was to help crush and bury his political career in the 1774, 1777 and 1780 elections since he was the leader of the city who was so closely associated with the Council, and New Town. The ideal the New Town promised had been reduced to rubble as it was plain that the neither Sir Laurence nor the Council had the money to pay for the plans their Committees selected. Furthermore, there was even a public perception that some plans were acts of extravagance, when the town could ill afford them. Sir Laurence's leadership began to seem to represent such profligate spending.

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<sup>102</sup>NAS, GD26/13/659, 11/11/1768

<sup>103</sup>NLS, Acc4796/216, 4/8/1769

<sup>104</sup>NLS, MS14434, f.118



The bridge disaster was quickly followed by a bitter dispute between the feuars of the New Town, and the Council. This dispute has been discussed at some length in Youngson's *Making of Classical Edinburgh*<sup>105</sup>, and Rodger's *Transformation of Edinburgh*<sup>106</sup>. This feuing dispute is very important to the history of the New Town as it touches upon issues about the New Town's plan, its architecture and administration. But, scholars have not analysed the dispute's implications for builders, and Sir Laurence's party in Edinburgh. The following discussion will now show that there was a direct link between the builders of the New Town and the dispute and Sir Laurence Dundas's political career, and builders' businesses to establish an explicit political context for this study of the builders of the New Town.

The Bill of Suspension<sup>107</sup>, drawn up in late 1771 and delivered to the Court of Session in 1772, effectively froze feuing and building business from 1772 to 1776. This increased economic pressure on Magistrates to make the New Town profitable. It also put political pressure on Sir Laurence to deliver the New Town as a successful project. The people who wanted the bill were the feuars of the extended royalty. They were resident bankers and lawyers rather than builders and tradesmen, but the complaints the feuars made were not about the builders and tradesmen's commercial properties in the New Town, but the Council's administration of feuing, and, in particular, building Canal Street on the south side of Princes Street. The Council's free feuing policy had, in the feuars' opinion, defaced the plan of the New Town they had agreed to feu, build and live in because Craig's authorised plan, which they had been shown prior to agreeing to feu, did not show any buildings on the south side of Princes Street.

Once feuing began in the New Town, the Mary Chapel made its presence felt. Chamberlain accounts show that between 1767 and 1780 Deacons feued intensively. The wright, John Young<sup>108</sup>, and the mason, William Jamieson<sup>109</sup>, had properties in St Andrew's Square. Whereas

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<sup>105</sup> A.J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh*, Edinburgh University Press, pp. 85 - 92

<sup>106</sup> R. Rodger, *The Transformation of Edinburgh: Land, Property and Trust in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp.53-68

<sup>107</sup>ECA, Mcleod Bundle 118, Bay D, item 125, Correspondence between Lord Provost, Lord Privy Seal, James Coutts on Extended Royalty, 1767

<sup>108</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1766 - 1768, Purchase of lots of ground in the New Town, 3/8/1767; 21/6/1768; 21/11/1768

Jamieson sold his properties, Young rented his out. Other Mary Chapel feuars included Charles Robertson<sup>110</sup>, Thomas Heriot<sup>111</sup>, Alex Reid<sup>112</sup>, Thomas Hill<sup>113</sup> and William Butter<sup>114</sup>. Some other builders were from nearby incorporations which relied upon Edinburgh Council and the Chapel, such as Calton's wrights and masons like the partnership of William Pirnie<sup>115</sup> (mason) and John Horn<sup>116</sup> (wright), Canongate's wrights, Duncan Drummond<sup>117</sup> and Alex Young<sup>118</sup>, and the masons, Robert Wright<sup>119</sup> and James Reddie<sup>120</sup>.

Among the other house builders in the New Town was coach builder John Home. He feued and built along the south side of Princes Street, and by 1771 he had 152 feet there on a street which became known as Canal Street<sup>121</sup>. It was his buildings there, alongside mason Richard Thomson's property on Canal Street, which were the targets for the feuars' complaints because these developments were not marked on Craig's New Town plan. The legal dispute between the feuars and the Council was resolved in 1776 with an agreement that there would be no further building on the south side of Princes Street: in that four years, Sir Laurence's Council's "free feuing" policy was criticised by political opponents to the Baronet. Innovations to Craig's plan such as Register House, the Theatre Royal and Shakespeare's Square, as well as the Royal College of Physicians' Hall were not mentioned as grievances in the petition papers, but, builders doing as they liked where they liked, were. The process of feuing out the New Town had altered its plan, and the 1767 plan was considered to be a part of the administration of feuing, but it was, in reality, ineffectual in determining the architecture of the area. Although by law feuars were important to the development of the New Town, and far more politically powerful than tradesmen hired to put up housing and public buildings, the builders who both feued and built there became

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<sup>109</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1766 -1768, Purchase of lots of ground in the New Town, 20/8/1767, 11/2/1767; Chamberlain's Accounts 1768 - 1770, Purchase of lots of ground in the New Town, 25/9/1770, 10/8/1772

<sup>110</sup>ECA, TCM, 28/12/1768; 8/11/1769

<sup>111</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1766 -1768, Purchase of lots of ground in the New Town, 3/8/1767

<sup>112</sup>ECA, TCM, 11/2/1778

<sup>113</sup>ECA, Extent Tax 1784 - 1785, SL35/15

<sup>114</sup>ECA, TCM, 30/10/1776

<sup>115</sup>ibid, 30/3/1774

<sup>116</sup>ibid, 19/7/1768

<sup>117</sup>ibid, 15/11/1769

<sup>118</sup>ibid, 18/3/1778

<sup>119</sup>ibid, 11/3/1778

<sup>120</sup>ibid, 4/3/1778

<sup>121</sup>ibid, 24/4/1771

part of the process of converting the New Town plan into buildings. What was more, these builders were not Mary Chapel Council Deacons and were outside Sir Laurence's party. Although feuing made the Council money, the administration faced a real problem in trying to make the New Town profitable and to do this it needed feuars who wanted to live in the New Town and also have successful building businesses.

Like neighbouring Shakespeare's Square, Canal Street was both workplace and home to builders. Builders lived and worked together in this area of the New Town. Furniture workshops for journeymen, cabinetmakers and upholsterers were located here, and resident masons, painters, wrights, tool makers and architects all lived on this side of the street - ready to get up early and work on the other side at Register House, Princes Street, St Andrew's Square and George Street. But, the home owners of the New Town, who were not builders, objected to Canal Street, and fought against it in the Court of Session and House of Lords. To these inhabitants the process of feuing included crucially being shown the plan of the New Town. It did not show Canal Street. They argued that the Council was bound to build according to its authorised plan. The social divisions that were implied in the plans with squares and fine principal streets for an elite were not born out with architectural realities. The social mix the New Town had represented through its legislation was reflected in its actual building history.

As well as not complaining about public buildings in the New Town, the feuars did not complain about builders trying to run successful businesses. One of the ways both Mary Chapel men and those outside it did this was to build tenements and have shops in them. Deacons John Young, William Jamieson, Thomas Heriot, Alex Reid, Thomas Hill and William Butter all built tenements. They did not build houses. The New Town quickly resembled the Old Town with tenements and shops being built. This was the traditional way builders knew how to stay in business in Edinburgh. Tax records show that in 1774, builder John Horn was the proprietor of a tenement in Princes Street which accommodated William Park's public house in the sunk floor, whilst nearby on the same street, Mrs Robb was proprietor to Peter Leith's taylor shop. On Hanover Street, John Horn was also collecting rent from watchmaker William Downie, and upholsterer Alex Bruce<sup>122</sup>.

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<sup>122</sup>ECA, Extent Tax 1774-1775, SL35/8

This accommodation of trades and shops in tenements continued to develop in the 1770s. In 1776 John Thomson's flats in St Andrew's Street held William Richardson's public house in the sunk storey, Alex Macdougall's public house, the grocer, Henry Johnstone's, the baker, James Thomson, and John Brough's wright's shop<sup>123</sup>. Later, bakeries, groceries, public houses, hotels, and tradesmen's businesses would be even more prominent in the New Town. No wonder John Brough's bill of Suspension in the mid 1780s, which was mentioned in chapter one, complained at the Council's opposition to tenements or flats since in the 1760s and 1770s they were a part of common life and business in the New Town. To a builder like Brough, the New Town was a combination of tenements, warehousing, factories and a quarry - an industrial complex with masons' yards, a timber yard, wrights' saw pits, quarries with roads to and from it. Canal Street implied further building along the south side of Princes Street. The relocation of Sir James Clerk's Royal College of Physicians' hall was planned to go there, opposite south St David's Street. This planned development gave Canal Street and tenement and commercial development added respectability and value.

The relationship between the Bill of Suspension and the subsequent court case between the Council and the feuars, which ran for 4 years, was that both led to direct criticism of the administration of the New Town. This in turn led to indirect criticism of builders living and working in the New Town. Whereas Sir Laurence had control over Deacons, he had less control over builders who developed the south side of Princes Street. He had no control over the appearance of their buildings, although his free feuing policy had allowed commercial architecture to thrive and the New Town accommodated businesses and shops. This put pressure on the Overseer, and for tougher laws for New Town architecture.

The reality of administering the New Town was that the Council had to complete the New Town. To do this it needed building businesses to thrive, and allowing Canal Street and Shakespeare's Square to be built was an aspect of this support. This decision encouraged tenements to be built. Conversely, these developments also harmed other feuars' support for the New Town, albeit those

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<sup>123</sup>ibid, 1776 – 1777, SL35/10

who were not artisans. The feuars of the New Town who opposed the Council quickly found further causes to complain about the management of the New Town through the Ayr Bank crash of 1772, and this economic disaster, joined with architectural disaster of the bridge collapse and the legal fight over feuing to make issues for opponents to Sir Laurence's party to attack it with during elections with a view to removing Sir Laurence from political power in Edinburgh.

After the 1769 bridge disaster, and the feuars dispute, another disaster fell upon the administration of the New Town. The bridge's collapse and the feuars' dispute had damaged confidence in the New Town. Between 1770 and 1776 feuing was especially low (Plate 72). This problem was made worse by the Ayr bank crash in 1772. When the Ayr Bank crashed many Edinburgh banks folded too<sup>124</sup>. Money was very scarce and the Council's economy suffered. Alex Gray, Alex White, Andrew Crosbie and Alexander Fergusson of Craigdarrock in St Andrew's Square, and Hugh Maxwell in Princes Street all lost money through the Ayr Bank collapse.<sup>125</sup>

Sir Laurence Dundas had refused to help the Ayr Bank and had reduced extended credit to it in 1771<sup>126</sup>. This was to anger the beleaguered investors in the bank like the Duke of Buccleuch. The Duke wanted to make good his losses and wanted to take the Royal Bank from Sir Laurence. The elections of 1774 and 1777 were the means the Duke had at his disposal to remove Sir Laurence from Edinburgh's politics and economics. As will be discussed, builders found themselves caught up in these elections.

In the immediate aftermath of the crash, and Bill of Suspension, everyone stopped feuing and building in the New Town at the same rate as they had done in the 1760s. Levels of borrowing by the Council from the Royal Bank to the Council increased after 1772 (plates 51 - 55) and the Council was under acute pressure to increase income to repay its debts. The New Town's economic performance got worse with low incomes from purchase money and feu duty, since few people had money to invest in new houses. The success of the New Town depended on sound

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<sup>124</sup>I.S.Checkland, *Scottish Banking: A History 1695 - 1973, Part 2, The Formative Years 1746 - 1810*, pp131-134, Glasgow and London, 1975

<sup>125</sup>Glasgow University Archives, Douglas Heron & Company, UGD 129/4/4/2

<sup>126</sup>I.S.Checkland, *Scottish Banking: A History 1695 - 1973, Part Two, The Formative years 1746 -1810*, p127, Collins, Glasgow and London, 1975

administration of public funds and debt management. There was a crisis of confidence in the speculative banking system, and the new men like Sir Laurence Dundas felt an immediate political backlash to their mission to deliver the New Town to Edinburgh. Such troubles had an impact on the builders themselves. This economic collapse and political unrest spelt trouble for building businesses. Builders turned away from house building to make money in other ways. The Calton wright, John Horn, having built in Princes Street<sup>127</sup>, started to make brushes to make good his losses. In 1775 he wrote to the Council about his poor circumstances: “ But finding the demand for houses lessened, so that the profits thence ariseing (sic) became trifflin(sic) had for sometime past in order to sustain his family Employed himself in making Brushes<sup>128</sup>.”

The Bailies must have already known about the builders’ plight. They heard many cases for outstanding accounts. Again, in 1775 the painter, Daniel Davidson, faced the mason, John Greenhill, over payment for a garret flat built in the New Town.<sup>129</sup> Some men appeared frequently, like the wright, James Tait<sup>130</sup>, who also took up brushmaking<sup>131</sup>, and a family of New Town smiths in Canal Street, William<sup>132</sup>, George<sup>133</sup> and John Hastie<sup>134</sup>. William Hastie even had to sell off his bellows, vices and unfinished work to pay his rent on his flat in Canal Street<sup>135</sup>. The wright, John Hamilton had a rent of £10 due between 1778 and 1779 on a flat in Princes Street. The case recorded his “ parcel of drawings, frames and wood”, and with creditors threatening to take him to prison Hamilton wrote:“ Gentlemen, This is to inform you that as I found myself unable any longer

<sup>127</sup>ECA, TCM, 19/7/1768;5/8/1772;18/5/1786

<sup>128</sup>ibid, 11/1/1775

<sup>129</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 152, 396, Daniel Davidson v John Greenhill and Meikelbraes, 28/3/1775

<sup>130</sup>ibid, Box 150, 389, James Loch v James Tait, 25/2/1773; Alex Storie v James Tait, 14/1/1773; Box 131, 70, George Boyd v James Tait, 22/3/1773; Peter Forrester v James Tait, 15/11/1773; Thomas Hutchison v James Tait, 9/7/1772; William Govan v James Hay & James Tait, 18/11/1772; William Govan v James Tait, James Hay and David Inverarity, 15/6/1772; Sam Watson v James Tait, 5/7/1772; Pillans & Co v James Tait, 26/7/1772; John Peat & Co v James Tait, 27/8/1774; Alex Nicolson v James Tait, 4/7/1772; Box 153, 400, Archibald Campbell v James Tait, 27/4/1775; Alex Brown v James Tait, 2/5/1775; Thomas Blaikie v James Tait, 23/3/1775; Box 154, 405, William Jameson v James Tait, 21/11/1776; Wilson & Deas v James Tait, 14/11/1776; Janet Chrystie v James Tait, 31/10/1776; Box 154, 401, William Good v James Tait, 29/8/1776; David Fleming v James Tait, 7/12/1775

<sup>131</sup>ibid, Box 154, 401, William Good v James Tait, 29/8/1776.

<sup>132</sup>ibid, Box 150, 391, William Hastie, prisoner in Tolbooth, 15/2/1774; 390, James Robertson v William Hastie, 19/10/1773; Box 313, 70, William Borthwick v William Hastie, 1/11/1773; Alex Young v William Hastie, 17/9/1772; John Simpson v William Hastie, 12/10/1774; Box 145, 7/3/1774, David Inverarity v William Hastie

<sup>133</sup>ibid, Box 150, 392, Mary and Barbara Ponto v George Hastie, 25/1/1774.

<sup>134</sup>ibid, Box 150, 391, John Hastie v Lewis Gordon & Charles Grant, 11/7/1774; 390, James Robertson v John Hastie, 12/10/1773

<sup>135</sup>ibid, Box 154, 402, David Inverarity v William Hastie, 25/3/1776

to keep my credit and as some of my creditors was threatening to prosecute and put me in prison what was still making it was because was Both (sic) keeping more Expenses on me and keeping me from my Business of therefore thought my Best way to Dispose of some of my goods to help to carry me out of the place when I intend of it please God to spare me my health and providence to smile Better upon me than it is Done in this place that if ever I be worth as much in the world as pay my Debt that not one of you shall lose one farthing<sup>136</sup>”

In August 1778 he had tried to raise money through a court case against a New Town architect, Robert Robinson, in the Sheriff Court. Hamilton presented an outstanding account for fenestration work done in 1775 at Sir William Cuninghams house in Livingston<sup>137</sup>. Unpaid bills were an insurance of money in lean times.

Other businesses simply collapsed. In 1775 the family painting firm, Robert Norrie & Co, left a hundred debts to pay off<sup>138</sup>. Earlier in 1773 the upholstery firm, Young and Trotter, outlined the problems Norrie's faced, in a case heard by the Court of Session: “ Our Situation as Feuars and Builders in the new town has been so often and fully explained to your Lordship and Council that it is unnecessary to enter again into particulars on the subject...that we are deprived of all the most important accomodation for carrying on our Trade and are every day losing a great deal of Business thro(sic) want of time - and are loseing (sic) not only our Business at present but forfeiting our Character and reputation in the Trade we profess to carry on.<sup>139</sup>”

Architects also suffered, such as, David Henderson, who had his goods sold off in a sequestration for outstanding rent in 1776<sup>140</sup> and lost his backroom furniture and foreroom bedlinen because George Henderson, a painter, demanded his £13 rent for a room in the New Town. Great New Town building projects were affected too. The architect, Sir William Chambers, was engaged to design Sir Laurence Dundas's mansion in St Andrew's Square. In February 1774 he wrote to

<sup>136</sup>ibid, Box 154,402, Thomas Elder v John Hamilton, 1779

<sup>137</sup>NAS, SC39/17/335, John Hamilton v Robert Robinson, 12/8/1778

<sup>138</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 153, 399, John Robertson as factor for Robert Norrie & Co, 16/5/1775

<sup>139</sup>ECA, Processes, Sessions 1726 - 1824, Justiciary 1832 - 1852, Young and Trotter, 13/1/1773, Bundle 30, shelf 090.

<sup>140</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 154,402, George Hutchison v David Henderson, 25/3/1776

William Hay, “master Builder at new town Edinburgh”, that he was “sorry to hear your Business in Edinburgh is slack..for money is very scarce.<sup>141</sup>”

Sir Laurence also had problems finishing his New Town house. His lawyer wrote that Deacon slater, George Syme, who roofed the building, was “very needy<sup>142</sup>” for payment. Deacon mason, William Jamieson, asked for £967. He was “ urgent to have payment as he said he was much shortened for money which I believe is true.<sup>143</sup>” Sir Laurence could not rely upon recovering his costs by selling the house. For, as Sir John Pringle was told in 1775 when he tried to sell in St Andrew’s Square, the market had collapsed:“Nobody has asked the price of it, and I have heard of few that have taken the trouble to look at it. In short we have no money to play with, thanks to the Ayr Bank.<sup>144</sup>”

Powerful men in London and Edinburgh knew that New Town builders faced hard times. Besides the Bailie Court, the Sheriff Court, Burgh Court and Court of Session all told similar stories after the Ayr Bank crash in 1772. Again, James Tait<sup>145</sup>, the Hasties<sup>146</sup> and Robert Robinson,<sup>147</sup> as well as many others appeared in these courts over cases of outstanding debts and accounts. There can be no doubt that these court cases, collapsed businesses and hard times were difficult for builders to bear, and consequently, it was easy for opponents to Sir Laurence Dundas to recruit builders to their cause to remove him from Edinburgh. The doubts about Sir Laurence revolved about his ability to run Edinburgh successfully, and make it money. The New Town was meant to be a money maker, but its administrative system, laws, buildings, such as the bridge and Canal Street had all been criticised. People could also see that it was not being built, and feued, quickly and this poor economic performance added to the pressures on Sir Laurence.

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<sup>141</sup>British Library, Sir William Chambers Letter Book, ADD 41133, f.123

<sup>142</sup>NAS, GD282/4/10, 10/12/1774

<sup>143</sup>ibid, 25/6/1774

<sup>144</sup>ibid, 7/3/1775

<sup>145</sup>NAS, SC39/17/311, James Crichton v James Tait, 6/12/1775; SC39/17/323, William Mitchell v James Tait, 29/3/1776;

<sup>146</sup>NAS, SC39/17/305, William McConochie v William Hastie, 23/3/1774; SC39/17/335, John Hastie v Archibald Brown, 21/1/1778; SC39/17/298, Robert Shortried v William Hastie, 23/6/1773; SC39/17/344, Thomas Stevenson v William Hastie, 3/12/1779; B22/8/148, Alex Young v William Hastie, 29/4/1773; B22/8/149, Alex Young v William Hastie, 3/8/1773; B22/8/151, Walter Scott v William Hastie, 29/1/1774; B22/8/152, Jane Norrie v William Hastie, 17/5/1774



The Ayr Bank collapse was the trigger to the poor economic climate Edinburgh endured the 1770s and 1780s. It tipped the Council into a period of prolonged debt, and its levels of borrowing rose. Building businesses responses to the bank crash were to try to keep in profit, and find alternative sources of income, or face bankruptcy. John Horn was forced to make brushes, but many people planned properties that could be sold or rented profitably. Commercial and tenement architecture offered many businesses a means of surviving these difficult times. The builders' business plans will be discussed in the last section of the thesis. Sir Laurence Dundas also found himself looking to survive political opposition in elections.

The New Town was at the heart of Edinburgh's political well being. As will be seen in the examination of Council spending, it absorbed impressive amounts of money. Given the high levels of expenditure and low levels of income which was a feature of the history of the New Town in the 1770s, it is easy enough to understand why the extended royalty became a battlefield for supporters and opponents of Sir Laurence Dundas and his Council. In the elections of 1774, 1777 and 1780 the New Town, and its feuars and builders were in the middle of fierce struggles for control over the Council and the Royal Bank of Scotland.

There were concerted efforts to gather support from people outside Sir Laurence's party and his Council Deacons. The most numerous examples of professionals who were outside the Chapel's control were architects. They were freelance workmen who would go where work was, just like journeymen. Men like Robert Hunter (Theatre Royal<sup>148</sup>), David Henderson (Register House<sup>149</sup>, Assembly Rooms<sup>150</sup>, Canal Street<sup>151</sup>), Sir James Clerk (new bridge<sup>152</sup> and Royal College of Physicians<sup>153</sup>), John Baxter junior (Royal College of Physicians<sup>154</sup>), John Paterson (St Andrew's

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<sup>147</sup>NAS, SC39/17/323, Hugh McGregor v Robert Robinson, 1/3/1776; SC39/17/298, Roderick McCraw v Robert Robinson, 5/2/1773; SC39/17/340, Mrs Mary Hart V Robert Robinson, 12/3/1779.

<sup>148</sup>ECA, Mcleod Bundle D0103, item 123

<sup>149</sup> NAS, RH4/1

<sup>150</sup>NAS, GD1/377

<sup>151</sup>NAS, Pamphlets, Duplies for Home, Young and Trotter to Replies for Sir William Forbes, February 1772, pp.35

<sup>152</sup>ECA, North Bridge Committee Minutes 1764 – 1770, 6/3/1765, 20/3/1765, 21/4/1765, 21/5/1765

<sup>153</sup>Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Library, Muniment 192, 28/8/1765

<sup>154</sup>ibid, Muniment 265, 15/2/1772, 24/10/1772

Square<sup>155</sup>), James Craig (College of Physicians<sup>156</sup>, and abortive schemes to build on Princes Street<sup>157</sup> and George Street<sup>158</sup>), Robert Adam (Register House<sup>159</sup>, Queen Street<sup>160</sup>, Charlotte Square<sup>161</sup>), John Adam (St Andrew's Square<sup>162</sup>), Robert Robinson (St Andrew's Square<sup>163</sup>), Sir William Chambers ( St Andrew's Square<sup>164</sup>), and William Keys (St Andrew's Square<sup>165</sup>) in the 1760s and 1770s and Robert Kay and Major Andrew Fraser (St Andrew's Church<sup>166</sup>), Alex Steven (St Andrew's Church<sup>167</sup>, Charlotte Square<sup>168</sup>) and George Gowan (George Street<sup>169</sup>) in the 1780s and 1790s were all New Town architects.

As has been discussed, the architect, James Craig, proposed circus plans for the New Town in 1770, 1774 and 1781. These were opportunistic appeals to politicians to return to the ideals of the scheme's early years. A letter from Sir John Pringle to Craig dates the plan and makes it the earliest known, though Fraser<sup>170</sup> argued Craig made one in 1766 without convincing documentary and graphic evidence. The 1770 circus plan appeals for a fresh start for the New Town's builders and residents after the bridge disaster. It also shows Craig trying to break the straight lines of the 1767 authorised plan, just as he advocated during the building of the Physicians' Halls wings. But, Pringle rejected Craig's plan and states his preference for straight streets. He wrote to Craig on the 11th January 1771: "..... I was glad to hear of that improvement in your Plan of the new Town, I mean the Circus, having seen what a fine effect that at Bath had, not only with regard to the Eye, but the conveniency seeing there was no Corner Houses, which in Square suffer from the obstruction of Light, and Prospect by their neighbours. But tho' an entire Circle or an Octagon, as

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<sup>155</sup>NAS, GD109/3736

<sup>156</sup>Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Library, Royal College of Physicians Minutes, 6/2/1776

<sup>157</sup>ECA, Mcleod Bundle D0018, Miscellaneous Town Council Papers, 11/1/1776 -31/12/1777, 9/8/1777

<sup>158</sup>ECA, TCM, 11/8/1779

<sup>159</sup>NAS, RH4/1

<sup>160</sup>I. Gow and J. Simpson, *8 Queen Street, Edinburgh: Restoring an Adam House, Robert Adam, Architectural Heritage IV*, Edinburgh University Press, 1993, pp. 58-66

<sup>161</sup>NLS, MS 19992

<sup>162</sup>ECA, TCM, 3/9/1777

<sup>163</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1770 -1772, Lots of ground purchased in the New Town, 10/6/1772

<sup>164</sup>British Library, Sir William Chambers letter book, ADD 41133

<sup>165</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1768 -1770, Lots of ground purchased in the New Town, 28/2/1769

<sup>166</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1794 -1795, pp. 105 -106

<sup>167</sup>ECA, TCM, 2/1/1788

<sup>168</sup>ibid, 12/8/1795

<sup>169</sup>ibid, 11/4/1792

in one of the Place de - at Paris may be no small ornament in the way of architecture yet it does not follow that a Segment is proper as I found in the Crescent at Bath, which to my eye had half the beauty that a straight (sic) line wols (sic) have had, and therefore I hope to see no such figure on our Capital of Scotland - I must likewise take the liberty to express my difficulty's (sic) about an obelisk, in the center of your Square instead if a Statue. That ornament I should think were more fitted for the termination of a Vista in a Garden, than for any situation in a Town, unless like the monument here; it should be erected in commemoration of some great event, tho' that in Grace Church Street -But perhaps taking conveniency and ornament together, the most proper object for the center of a Square and Circus, would be a Bason of water to serve in case of Fire and at all times in Summer for watering the Pavement, and laying the dust - Pardon my freedom - If you come again here, and want to show to his Majesty your new Plan, I will endeavour to recommend you to some more proper person than the last one, for Introducing you, as the last time ther(sic) was something omitted on the King's part perhaps for want of one who could officially put him in mind of what is usually done, or ought to be done, on such an occassion, I mean something more than a verbal approbation - I am

Dear Sir, your most obedient, humble Servant, John Pringle<sup>171</sup>"

By the time the 1774 election was held, architects and builders were needy, feuing was low and the administration of the New Town debated in the Court of Session. Writing to the *Caledonian Mercury*, "An Acquaintance with a Wellwisher" had concerns with the New Town<sup>172</sup>. The public was invited to inspect a model of Paris on display in Princes Street. Viewers were to consider alternative plans and views of a new city<sup>173</sup> with the octagons that Pringle had mentioned to Craig. The feuars in the Court of Session accused Sir Laurence himself and his Council of breaking the plans and laws of the New Town by erecting his house where James Craig had intended a church<sup>174</sup>. In 1774, Craig added 2 more churches to the New Town at the southern and northern ends of the circus (Plate 33). When Craig gave the plan to the Council to consider, it was dated 1774.

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<sup>170</sup> A. Fraser, *A Reassessment of Craig's New Town Plans, 1766–1774, James Craig 1744–1795, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K. Cruft and A. Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995, pp.25-48.

<sup>171</sup> Yale University Library, Beinecke Library, Sir John Pringle, 11/1/1771, L391

<sup>172</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 11/1/1774

<sup>173</sup> *ibid*, 19/2/1774

Another circus plan was presented to the Council, and feuars in 1781(Plate 34). Craig's portrait of that year shows him preparing another circus plan (Plate 38), as a variant to the 1774 plan. Fraser has dated this plan to 1766<sup>175</sup>, but the fact that it shows Register House, Shakespeare's Square and the Royal College of Physicians' Hall in George Street (Plate 32) surely gives it a later date since all these buildings were built after 1766, and the Physicians did not move to George Street until 1775<sup>176</sup> - to a building which Craig himself designed (Plate 47), but declined to include in his 1774 circus plan. In 1781 the Lord Provost decided to have a competition to design a circus for the New Town, and this would appear to be inspired by Craig, and was to be his entry. The plan will be discussed later.

With banks, bridges, businesses and house prices collapsing, Sir Laurence's wealth, mansion and powerful patronage system were targets for opponents. David Loch was his opponent in the 1774 election. He promised a plan to recover lost trade, commerce, manufactures and corn prices, and had a building plan to promote his campaign, which was to rebuild Trinity House in Leith to John Young's<sup>177</sup> and Robert Robinson's<sup>178</sup> designs. John Young was to play an active role in other elections, but he was a master craftsman, a Deacon of wrights, who worked with builders. Robert Robinson and James Craig were architects, and they did not participate as much as Young in elections. They did, however, provide alternative plans of the New Town, and plans to help revive the city's economy for rival politicians to Sir Laurence Dundas. They were able to do this because they were not bound by the Council Deacons, Convener of Council Deacons and Trades Councillors, as members of the city's incorporations were. In this respect, architects inspired tradesmen to work for themselves and be free of Sir Laurence's party's patronage.

Dundas was able to call upon Deacons like Jamieson and Butter to win him the elections. Opponents complained about his gastronomic diplomacy through "good dinners" and "intoxicate

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<sup>174</sup>ECA, *Replies for the feuars upon the extended royalty to answer for Lord Provost*, 20/4/1774, Pamphlets, p.7

<sup>175</sup>A. Fraser, *A Reassessment of Craig's New Town Plans, 1766 –1774, James Craig 1744 – 1795, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K.Cruft and A.Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995, pp.25-48.

<sup>176</sup>ECA, TCM, 15/2/1775

<sup>177</sup>NAS, GD226/1/6, 15/5/1773

<sup>178</sup>NAS, GD226/4/7, 27/4/1775

with liquor<sup>179</sup>". The Deacons were accused of "dropping liberty<sup>180</sup>" by correspondent Mum Budget in favour of keeping the man who gave them investment and employment. However, the collapse of the building industry in the 1770s was further exploited by Sir Laurence's opponents in the next election in 1777, something he himself was aware of in 1776 when he wrote of a plot: ".....for taking this City out of my hands by turning every friend I had out of the majistracy and common Council<sup>181</sup>."

The plot was a proposal by Lord Provost James Stodart to reform the Council by abolishing the leet system. It allowed incorporations to vote for whom they wanted as Council Deacons instead of merchants. In 1776 the Mary Chapel supported Stodart. Deacon Francis Brodie<sup>182</sup> supported the reform again in 1777<sup>183</sup>; only Deacons Jamieson and Butter opposed. Arguments for free trade were being used to undermine Sir Laurence's party in Council. To Brodie a Council Deacon had to be solvent, independent and liberal minded<sup>184</sup>. This argument irritated Sir Laurence's Council. Brodie was denied the office of Convener of Council Deacons<sup>185</sup>. There was popular sympathy for Brodie. The *Caledonian Mercury* noted him as a "respectable worthy citizen<sup>186</sup>".

A party of tradesmen called the Congress also made demands for reform. This was led by Delegates who assumed names of leading colonists in America fighting for their liberty and independence<sup>187</sup>. They framed resolutions to be approved by the Incorporations. These influenced Deacon Brodie<sup>188</sup> and Congress supported the Brodie-Stodart alliance of merchants and trades. Sir Laurence Dundas faced opposition from tradesmen and builders. This affected the building of the New Town and Sir Laurence's popularity.

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<sup>179</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 15/10/1774

<sup>180</sup>*ibid*, 24/10/1774

<sup>181</sup>North Riding Record Office, Zetland Archive, X1/2/235, Sir Laurence Dundas, 5/10/1776

<sup>182</sup>NLS, Dep 302/2, 28/9/1776

<sup>183</sup>*ibid*, 16/5/1777

<sup>184</sup>*ibid*, 23/8/1777

<sup>185</sup>*ibid*, 21/9/1776

<sup>186</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 30/8/1777

<sup>187</sup> John Dwyer and Alex Murdoch, *Paradigms and Politics: Manners, Morals and the rise of Henry Dundas 1770 - 1784, New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland*, ed John Dwyer, Roger Mason and Alexander Murdoch, pp 210 - 249, John Donald, 1982

<sup>188</sup>NLS, Dep 302/2, 18/2/1777;23/8/1777

Behind Stodart, the Delegates and Congress were the Duke of Buccleuch and his Midlothian political ally Henry Dundas. Buccleuch wanted to recover his losses from the Ayr Bank and to remove Sir Laurence. Over dinners at Dalkeith Palace in 1776 and 1777 the Duke, Henry Dundas, Stodart and other Councillors met<sup>189</sup>. It would be surprising if the election and Congress were not mentioned. Newspapers reported that Congress was “recognised by a noble Duke, and one of the first lawyers in this or any other country”, and gave “sumptuous entertainments to the whole group.<sup>190</sup>”. The Duke also entertained fourteen new Deacons. “Impartial” wrote to the *Caledonian Mercury* that “ingenious artists and craftsmen” were equal to merchants in education and liberality, through their care of labourers and apprentices,<sup>191</sup>. Henry Dundas and the Duke of Buccleuch held good parties to create their own patronage group.

Although Stodart’s burgh reform failed, the Duke of Buccleuch gained control of the Royal Bank. He encouraged tradesmen and builders to enter politics. Reformist Deacons and Delegates influenced another political group called Unity<sup>192</sup>. Between 1778 and 1779<sup>193</sup> journeymen builders went on strike. The men were called Unity. The dispute was over wages, cost of living and tools and their masters’ profits. Unity challenged the Mary Chapel’s authority and its members’ profits<sup>194</sup>. The Journeymen advertised in the press, asking “country brethren<sup>195</sup>” for their support. “A Friend to Honest Industry” wrote in the *Caledonian Mercury* that the journeymen wanted to avoid debt and be masters of their own businesses<sup>196</sup>. Another man, Scotus, added that architects and Mary Chapel men “infringed on the free market<sup>197</sup>.” Though ultimately unsuccessful, the strike, highlighted the same concerns set out by Congress and Deacon Brodie - that the Council, or Sir Laurence loyalists, like Jamieson and Butter, did not represent building businesses well.

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<sup>189</sup>NAS, GD224/1085/1

<sup>190</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, One of Neither Side, 25/8/1777

<sup>191</sup>ibid, Impartial, 6/9/1777

<sup>192</sup>ibid, Detector, 20/5/1778

<sup>193</sup>ibid, Masonry, 17/4/1779

<sup>194</sup>NLS, Dep 302/2, 29/5/1778

<sup>195</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, Masonry, 9/5/1778

<sup>196</sup>ibid, A Friend to Honest Industry, 25/5/1778

<sup>197</sup>ibid, Scotus, 27/5/1778

The unrest between 1777 and 1779 also reflected the Duke of Buccleuch's use of contemporary economic theory to oust Sir Laurence Dundas, and promised a remedy to the Council's economic crisis. The Duke's tutor was Adam Smith. He was also a regular dinner guest at Dalkeith Palace and met Provost Stodart and Henry Dundas there. In 1776 he published *The Wealth of Nations*. In it he promoted free trade and criticised building businesses for their costs, apprenticeships and monopoly of wages and profits. In many ways the same arguments were rehearsed by Unity and by Congress, which wanted to overhaul a corrupt political system run by Sir Laurence Dundas's Council. The Duke of Buccleuch, Henry Dundas, James Stodart, Francis Brodie and the men in Congress and Unity were able to use modern arguments for free trade and free votes to undermine Sir Laurence.

Although Sir Laurence hung on as Member of Parliament in 1777, his stock with the Council, as with the Royal Bank, was diminished. The 1780 election was to be another battle for him, which once again involved builders and New Town architecture. One of the consequences of the strikes was that builders' profits fell. James Craig had to pay increased wages to finish the Physicians' Hall, and John Young represented other feuars (builders) in a petition to reduce feu duty. Both wages and duties were damaging profits. Young was refused, since a concession would "leave open a door for demands of a similar nature whenever any unfortunate circumstances may happen to Builders, and render the Contract betwixt them and the City elusory (sic)<sup>198</sup>." Young had been denied political office, and had worked for Loch in the 1774 election. He was not one of Sir Laurence's men, having fallen in with Brodie and the radical wrights in the March Chapel, with Brodie still backing voting reform in 1780<sup>199</sup>.

The election of 1780 split the Council into two: one Council backing Sir Laurence and another William Miller - the candidate backed by Buccleuch and Henry Dundas<sup>200</sup>. As in 1777 the tradesmen's voting rights were debated. This time the issue was the right of Extraordinary Deacons to vote in the elections. The final result of the election was that Sir Laurence took up his

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<sup>198</sup>ECA, TCM, 16/8/1780

<sup>199</sup>ibid, 13/9/1780

<sup>200</sup>ibid, 7/10/1780

seat<sup>201</sup>, but his patronage system in the Council was ruined. Replacing Sir Laurence's Magistrates was a new party known as "the Independents". The merchant bankers, David Steuart and James Hunter Blair, led them in Council. When Sir Laurence sought to feu more ground on the east side of St Andrew's Square<sup>202</sup>, for an unspecified architectural project, David Steuart proposed to build a Bridewell<sup>203</sup>(plate 64) in Pleasance.

They were rival politicians and bankers with rival architectural projects for Edinburgh except Steuart's was for the public good, and soon his ally, Sir James Hunter Blair was advocating building a church in the New Town, which was St Andrew's Church in George Street (Plate 48). The Independents were seen to stand for public good and virtue in contrast to Sir Laurence's decadence. Soon, Sir Laurence was removed from power altogether, and the Independents, under the patronage of Henry Dundas and the Duke of Buccleuch ran Edinburgh in the 1780s and 1790s. Given such political unrest, and the importance of architectural projects to winning and keeping power, the new building laws and Overseers enforcement of them in the New Town, which were discussed in the previous chapter, are less hard to understand.

In conclusion to this long discussion of setbacks it is clear that the 1770s was a cruel decade for Sir Laurence. The bridge disaster, the feuing dispute and the Ayr bank crash all helped to weaken his position in the elections of 1774, 1777 and 1780 until he was finally removed from Edinburgh's politics. Deacons, master craftsmen, journeymen and architects and builders were directly involved and affected by his administration of the New Town, and Edinburgh's economy. The Congress and Unity groups were involved in the elections as protest groups. Of these two, the Unity group was a direct challenge to the control Deacons had over wages and work. Later, it will be argued that journeymen were quick to call themselves builders. Out of these troubled times new plans for the New Town, like the circus, and arguments for new buildings, like a church, emerged. Adam Smith's arguments for free trade influenced political arguments, and with these a new party of politicians took over from Sir Laurence's party in Council, and they gathered their

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<sup>201</sup>ibid, 7/10/1780

<sup>202</sup>ibid, 30/8/1780; 20/12/1780

<sup>203</sup>ibid, 29/11/1780



own group of architects, and tradesmen around them to work in the New Town. This party was called the Independents, and they were good patrons to builders.

### **Independent Edinburgh: 1780 – 1795**

The Independent party took control of Edinburgh after 1781. The Council tried to manage the completion of the New Town at the same time as managing large levels of debt and borrowing. Although economic conditions for building businesses did not improve dramatically, the Council dismantled Sir Laurence Dundas's patronage group of Deacons and replaced it with new men. The management of tradesmen became less centralised, and reliant upon the Deacons of Edinburgh's Incorporation of Wrights and Masons. Tradesmen themselves became more independent not just in Edinburgh but in areas like Portsburgh and Leith where Edinburgh had traditionally dictated working practices. Among these new men were the builders of the New Town. These tradesmen and builders will be discussed, and John Young, Robert Burns, Robert Kay, James Nesbit and shall be seen to succeed. But, that is not to say that they worked alone, and without the help of lawyers, bankers, merchants and other journeymen. Furthermore, although builders often worked together and rallied to each other in the 1780s, businesses still failed and managing property development and building was still risky. These new men can be understood in terms of new Deacons and builders.

Both Sir Laurence's party and the Independents used property as symbols of political power. The new church in the New Town<sup>204</sup>, St Andrew's Church, stood for frugality (being built for an estimated £3000) and public virtue in comparison to Sir Laurence's mansion of luxury and self interest, otherwise popularly known for his corruption, and for leading an economically and politically damaged Council.

Smarting from the rebuke by the Council to his fellow wright, Deacon Francis Brodie, Deacon John Young rallied to the Independents. He encroached upon the Baronet's land in St Andrew's Square while building the house immediately to the south of Sir Laurence's house. The men clashed and went to the Court of Session in yet another politically embarrassing case which was fought to hurt Sir Laurence. Writing to the ailing man his lawyer stated: "Young makes a great

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<sup>204</sup>ECA, TCM, 31/1/1781

noise at stopping the work and because I understand he is an opposition man to you but he ascribes what is done to political resentment.<sup>205</sup>” Later, Sir Laurence was told that Young was “very obstinate and I see plainly wants to give every possible trouble if he can<sup>206</sup>”. Young went into the Court of Session to take on Dundas<sup>207</sup> and his builders, Jamieson and Butter.<sup>208</sup> At the same time, Craig was proposing the circus plan for the New Town which Independent Lord Provost David Steuart took up, holding an open competition for all architects and builders to participate in for a prize of 5 guineas<sup>209</sup>. Meanwhile, William Brodie, son of Francis, who had helped in the fight against Sir Laurence, was made the Council Deacon of wrights<sup>210</sup> and attacked Deacon William Jamieson at once in a complaint that he was sitting in Council as the Deacon of Surgeons<sup>211</sup>. Sir Laurence, and his supporters in Council, were being politically attacked by tradesmen.

Architects and builders were looking for patronage and position as they sensed Sir Laurence was going to fall. The wright, John Young, for example, flourished under the Independents, and worked with free trading builders, where Sir Laurence’s men never would. The Independents ushered in another phase of political life for builders in the New Town which resulted in a new patronage group. It favoured free traders, and cheap estimates for public works. Lord Provosts and Members of Parliament like Sir James Hunter Blair, Sir Adam Fergusson, John Grieve and Sir James Stirling worked together as the rebuilding of Edinburgh was continued. But, the Independents placed a greater emphasis on accountancy, income generation through higher taxation and tighter administration of builders in the New Town. As if to emphasise a break with the past, examples of false accounting were cited in the Council’s minutes and the the architect, James Craig, working at Leith Gun Battery<sup>212</sup> and, the wright, Thomas Hill, at St Andrew’s Church<sup>213</sup> were criticised in Council meetings for this.

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<sup>205</sup>NAS, GD282/4/12, 17/4/1781

<sup>206</sup>ibid, 21/4/1781

<sup>207</sup>ibid, 12/5/1781

<sup>208</sup>ibid, 4/6/1781

<sup>209</sup>ECA, TCM, 20/6/1781

<sup>210</sup>ibid, 14/9/1781

<sup>211</sup>ECA, TCM, 19/9/1781

<sup>212</sup>ibid, 23/5/1781

<sup>213</sup>ibid, 23/5/1781

Later, after the 1785 building Act, the Council also challenged successful builders from the 1770s such as John Brough over designs and practices. Despite actively promoting burgh reform and better representation, neither Buccleuch nor Dundas, who led the Independents, did anything more about it after Sir Laurence died. The issue had done its job and power had been secured. Burgh reform remained a political issue in the 1780s and 1790s with groups, such as the Friends of the People, holding meetings in Edinburgh in the 1790s but the Mary Chapel opposed these ideas<sup>214</sup>. But, free trade remained a political issue after 1780. Public architecture was paid for through competitions and subscriptions. In contests the tradesmen with the lowest estimate won work, such as the mason, Robert Burns, who won the contract to do wright work at St Andrew's Church<sup>215</sup>. Burns was not a member of the Mary Chapel. He had been awarded an important building contract, just as the designers of the church, Robert Kay and Captain Andrew Fraser, also represented a break with past favourite architects. Also, the Mary Chapel's power in Council was controlled not through handing out such contracts but by reducing its hold on feuing in the New Town. The feuing boom was led by journeymen and sympathisers with the Council's free trade policy, such as John Young - a Deacon, but one who was prepared to work in partnership with men outside the Chapel's membership (with Messrs. Hay and Baxter). Furthermore, the Council no longer turned to Mary Chapel men for its own work - Robert Kay planned St Andrew's Church, James Nesbit advised the Provost on Charlotte Square, and Deacons did not become Overseers of public works.

Free trade also affected training and working practices. In the 1770s the Mary Chapel and the Incorporation of Wrights and Masons of Leith fought far fewer legal battles over "encroachments" into trades than in the 1780s and 1790s. The idea that wrights should work also as painters and glaziers was an anathema to Deacons, but made good business sense to builders. Although the Mary Chapel allowed incoming tradesmen to buy membership and the right to work in Edinburgh, the principle that new men had to serve an apprenticeship with the Chapel to work in the city was now threatened. This weakened the Chapel's wealth, and ability to influence neighbouring Incorporations, such as Portsburgh's masons and wrights who consistently refused

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<sup>214</sup>NLS, Dep 302/2, 6/12/1784

<sup>215</sup>ECA, TCM, 6/2/1782

to acknowledge the Chapel as a superior authority<sup>216</sup>. The Mary Chapel now no longer necessarily controlled the confederation of incorporations of Calton, Canongate, Leith and Portsburgh. Men who worked as builders in the New Town did not necessarily belong to these incorporations or live in Edinburgh. They lived in Dean, Stockbridge, Bunkershill and other suburbs. The Duke of Buccleuch's free trade politics and election campaigns changed Edinburgh's building industry between 1776 and 1795: it appeared that the best assets a builder had to impress a client with were good plans, healthy accounts and contacts. The Council needed private money and businesses to complete the New Town and encouraged both to flourish in the New Town, but not without regulations and checks, as the discussion of laws, law enforcement and administrative systems in chapter one made clear.

The Independents established new laws, and employed a different group of architects and tradesmen to those Sir Laurence Dundas lent on to stay in power. The builders of the New Town emerged as a powerful group during the late 1770s to the 1780s and beyond. The Council exploited the popularity of political and economic arguments for free trade. These, in turn, had always been associated with the New Town since the 1730s and 1750s. The Council needed men who could design and build houses to work in the New Town, and the builders did this. Their growing professional confidence was expressed through their own houses, tenements and shops and their ability to manage their affairs successfully. During the 1780s the Council encouraged and controlled builders through its administrative system, laws and patronage. Whereas the New Town was meant to herald economic revival for Edinburgh, many Magistrates and builders looked to economic survival as being their first objective. Interestingly, the Independent Council did not stop builders building in the manner that they had done in the 1770s, although it did impose tighter building regulations.

This chapter has discussed the rise of the builders in Edinburgh's New Town in terms of the area's political history. From the 1750s, Edinburgh's political leaders had seen the New Town as a place where free trade could flourish. In the 1760s Sir Laurence Dundas led Edinburgh into creating the New Town and installed his allies around him in St Andrews Square and the Royal

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<sup>216</sup>NLS, Dep302/2, 18/9/1784; 24/9/1785; 23/9/1786; 22/9/1787; 20/9/1788; 18/9/1790; 24/9/1791; 22/9/1792; 21/9/1793; 2

Bank of Scotland. However, such was his grip on political power, that free trade did not flourish, although speculative banking did.

Crises soon engulfed the politics of the New Town as the bridge collapse, Ayr bank crash, and feuing dispute conspired together over the elections to remove Sir Laurence from power. The New Town had to keep businesses alive, and for three decades most Provosts and building businesses worked together to manage the Council, and the construction of new Edinburgh. There was a delicate balancing act between the need for the Council to regulate buildings in order to avoid disputes with politically powerful feuars, and, at the same time, to back building businesses so that they did not fail. The builders turned to tenement architecture as being a way to survive hard times. The New Town's political history does not reflect a City of the Enlightenment that Youngson writes about in his history of the area. Furthermore, this chapter's studies show that the builders were at the heart of the New Town's political thinking, and that their buildings are of greater significance to debates than they have been given credit for.

Removing Sir Laurence Dundas was achieved with the help of tradesmen and journeymen in the Congress and Unity groups. The victorious Independent party, led by merchant bankers, such as Sir James Hunter Blair, was a patron to free trading building businesses. Soon new names, independent of the Council Incorporations, emerged as principal feuars and contractors. In the period after 1780, the builders of the New Town came to the fore with the help of political patronage.

## **CHAPTER 3: BUILDERS AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Business management was an important skill for both politicians and builders to have. This chapter will discuss ways in which the Council generated income in the New Town through taxation, and administrative systems. These incorporated managing debt, book keeping, and free trade. The Council's audits of income and expenditure will be used to examine the importance of the New Town, and the consequences of its financial management on building businesses will be considered for the period when the Independent Council was in power. Completing the New Town combined the fortunes of both public and private money. The Council needed to complete the New Town to raise public money, and had to rely on private building businesses to achieve this aim. This economic relationship resulted in some administrative practices which were not set out in New Town legislation.

Two important sources of income for the Council in the administration of the New Town were purchase money and feu duty. Purchase money was the income received from buying plots of land to build on. Feu duty was an annual tax placed on land and property like a rent. In order to encourage quick building the Council gave property developers "indulgences" on paying purchase money whereby they could build immediately and pay the money later. Meanwhile, the developers themselves also looked to retain money by transferring feus from their own names, as recorded when plots were purchased, to their clients' names, in order to avoid paying feu duties. Indulgences and transfers were two ways the Council could help building businesses in the New Town. These ways, as well as the importance of managing building businesses in the contexts of the Council's economy, and advisors on the New Town, like Lord Kames, will now be discussed

### **Debt management**

The Ayr Bank crash of 1772 plunged Edinburgh into debt. Both the Council and building businesses suffered great losses. Council leaders had to find ways to manage the debts which were ever-increasing with the Royal Bank of Scotland, and, at the same time, allow building businesses to survive in the New Town. It is, perhaps, in consideration of the difficulties of running successful businesses that the the Council granted "indulgences". These gave builders incentives to feu and build properties, which would yield the Council some much needed income. The discussion of debt management establishes something that New Town scholars have

overlooked, which is that building businesses suffered in the light of the Ayr Bank crash, and that their buildings were made to make money. The bad economic situation ran long after 1772, despite the new Independent Council regime, and the problems Robert Burns and John Brough faced as builders were not unique. New political leaders had to manage a persistent economic problem. In doing this builders were not just understood to be ambitious planners and designers, but also specialists in house building.

As the builders began to feu and build more in the mid 1780s, the Council was determined to proceed with the system as laid out by Dr Webster. This was agreed in February 1783: “ ...that there were several applications for feuing the Buildings plot bounded by Hanover Street on the east, Frederick Street on the west, Princes Street on the south and George Street on the north, which plot of Ground is not marked upon the Plan as building ground, nor rated in the Book as to what purchase money and feu duty is to be paid for the same, and therefore they were of opinion that the aforesaid plot should be delineated and lettered in the same manner as the building plot lying immediately to the west of Hanover Street, and that the purchase money and feu duty of the different lots of building Ground therein should be the same with that contained in the feuing Book for the plot to the eastward of Hanover Street above mentioned.....and further appoint the plot opposite bounded on the north and south by George Street and Queen Street, and also the building ground on the south side of Princes Street to be delineated upon the foresaid plan and lettered as above, the purchase money and feu duty to be the same both the corresponding lots.<sup>1</sup>” The system made recording and collecting income easy. As has been mentioned with regard to the New Town plan’s feuing, accurate maps and plans helped to make accurate audits and accounts of what money was made in the New Town. This allowed the income and spending on the area to be examined. Allied to this commitment to good book keeping was another commitment to monitor builders better through the department of public works, and building laws.

The economic situation did not radically improve in the 1780s and 1790s, and the Independent Council had to manage persistent debts. Between 1786 and 1787 there were few repayments of debts due to the Royal Bank, even when booming feuing income boomed between 1784 and 1786

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<sup>1</sup>ECA, TCM, 26/2/1783

(plates 57 - 59). The Council opted against picking Robert Adam's plans for the South Bridge because it could not afford to buy land for such plans, and builders and house buyers could not afford to buy or build Robert Adam's architecture. Hunter Blair left its management to Trustees, and its planning and building to local men he knew, like Robert Kay, Alex Laing and builders from the New Town. When the Provost was overlooking plans for houses on Charlotte Square (plate 60) James Nesbit's awareness of the need to save public money won praise. By the 1790s the Council accepted bonds and loans from private individuals to repay the Royal Bank. As in the 1770s, courts were full of familiar tradesmen: David Henderson<sup>2</sup>, and his son John<sup>3</sup>, as well as the smith, John Hastie<sup>4</sup>, once his brother William had left for Russia to become an imperial architect<sup>5</sup>, and brushmaking wrights, James Tait<sup>6</sup> and John Horn<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 172,454, James Orr v David Henderson,24/6/1784;449, Andrew Fairbairn v David Henderson,24/8/1784;Box 173, 7/8/1785, William Lamb v David Henderson, 7/8/1785; 457, Thomas Young v David Henderson, 2/8/1785; Box 290, James Mitchel v David Henderson, 6/1/1781; Box 169, 446, Messrs Spottiswood v David Henderson, 20/3/1783; Box 157, June 1785, Thomas Bryson v David Henderson; Box 163, 430, John Buchanan v David Henderson, 12/4/1781; Box 165, 436, Thomas Smith v David Henderson, 9/6/1786; Box 176, 465, John Hume v David Henderson, 23/3/1786;Box 174, 461, Thomas Smith v David Henderson, 15/8/1786; Box 178, 470, Adam Begbie v David Henderson,30/5/1787, David Cunningham v David Henderson, 14/8/1787;Box 184,492, Thomas Clayton v David Henderson, 27/1/1784; NAS, SC39/17/384, Robert Nesbit v David Henderson, 23/11/1785; SC39/17/358, Andrew Williamson v Alex Young and David Henderson, 11/7/1781; SC39/17/362, John Nicoll v David Henderson; SC39/17/381, John Baxter v David Henderson, 6/12/1786

<sup>3</sup>ibid, Box 171, 453, Messrs Masters and Kerr v John Henderson, August 1785; NAS, B22/8/178, Sam Brown v John Henderson, 10/3/1785

<sup>4</sup>ibid, Box 172, 447, John Aitchison v John Hastie; 449, Donald McDonald v John Hastie, April 1783; Box 141, John HArdie v John Hastie, 30/8/1781, Fraser Forrester v John Hastie, 8/2/1781; Box 169, 445, William Scott v John Brough and John Hastie, 31/7/1783; Box 163, 430, John Aitchison v debtors, 20/2/1781; Box 165, 436, Donald McDonald v John Hastie, 29/7/1783;Box 184, 492, James Stormouth v Joh Hastie, 19/2/1784; NAS, SC39/17/365, James Dun v John Hastie, 18/6/1783;SC39/17/359, Alex Bailie v John Hastie, 27/11/1782; SC39/17/377, P & F Forrester v John Hastie, 16/12/1785; B22/8/169, James Linton v John Hastie, 26/3/1782, James Robertson v John Hastie, 22/5/1782, Daniel Murray v John Hastie, 6/5/1782

<sup>5</sup> T. Ruchinskaya, *William Hastie and the Reconstruction of Moscow after the 1812 Fire, Architectural Heritage V, The Journal of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland*, Edinburgh University Press, 1995, pp. 66-73

<sup>6</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 172, 449, James Tait junior v Debtors, 28/10/1784; Box 176, 465, James Tait v William Scott, 14/2/1786; NAS, SC39/17/363, James Tait v Joseph Kay and others, 1/2/1782.

<sup>7</sup>ibid, Box 152, 397, William Peat v John Horn; Box 290, Saunders v John Horn, 23/12/1788; Box 169, 446, Margaret Mitchell v John Horn, 25/2/1783; Box 176, 465, Malcolm Stewart v John Horn, 21/3/1786;Box 186, 496, John McLean v John Horn, 3/5/1790, William Stark v John Horn, 18/3/1790; Box 186, 498, William Hunter v John Horn, 14/2/1790; Box 183, 490, James Black v John Horn, 17/12/1789Box 182, 484, William Cooper v John Horn, 18/8/1789; NAS, SC39/17/365, John Elliot v John Horn, 17/12/1783; SC39/17/370, Messrs Anderson & Condell v John Horn, 5/5/1784; SC39/17/377, William Cooper v John Horn, 23/11/1785; SC39/17/383, Alex Gowans v John Horn, 18/1/1786



Others who had escaped debts in the 1770s also fell into trouble, such as James Craig<sup>8</sup>. Although he staved off bankruptcy through loans, his business credit was diminished. Other builders, like John Brough<sup>9</sup>, his foreman, Andrew Neal<sup>10</sup> and the lawyer and wright, William Morrison<sup>11</sup>, went bankrupt. These casualties in building businesses throughout the 1770s and 1780s led to architects and builders defending their interests against the Council and against those who owed them money. The debtors' courts were often full of builders chasing after outstanding bills and accounts from one another and their clients. Building businesses did what they knew would make them money, such as build tenements with garret flats for rent; even if this meant incorporating stormont windows into designs. By the mid 1780s it is clear the Council welcomed the builders' increased feuing and building activity and needed the builders for their income. At the same time, the Council also had to control the builders to ensure taxes were gathered, and that the administrative system did not lead to feuing disputes as it had done so in the 1770s.

Free trade was popular in the New Town, and the boom in feuing from 1783 was a rallying point for hard pressed builders. They found solace amongst themselves in family businesses, partnerships and forming societies as well as falling behind property investment groups, like bankers David Steuart and Robert Allan, the lawyers, Robert Brown and James Jollie, and the partnership of the writing master<sup>12</sup>, Edmund Butterworth, and the lawyer, John Watson. The builders and their backers were themselves attempting to be "independent". Builders were becoming a professional group in their own right. It is hard to define exactly what a builder knew, but it was a combination of the skills and duties of architect and tradesman. There were other architectural specialists appearing through the New Town who developed skills and business plans. For example, the architect, James Craig became a town planning specialist. The lawyer,

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<sup>8</sup>NAS, Court of Session, John Laurie v James Craig, 9/2/1787; Bill Chmaber John Laurie v James Craig, 28/8/1786; William Thomson v James Craig, 1/8/1787; John Thomson v James Craig, 8/7/1790; Andrew McKerras v James Craig, 22/7/1784; SC39/35/15, John Eiston, Cautioner for James Craig, 20/11/1780; SC39/17/365, James Craig v John Paris & others, 21/3/1783, Alex Fraser v Kincaid's Trustees, 6/8/1783; B22/8/211, Pitcairn v Craig, 1/5/1794; B22/8/175, William Wright v James Craig, 25/6/1784.; B22/8/184, James Craig v John Laurie, 1/4/1786; B22/8/185, Shand & Miller v James Craig, 15/11/1786; ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 165,434, Alex Whyte v James Craig, 1781; 436, James Craig v Alex Smith, 1784; Box 178, James Kirkwood v James Craig, 28/8/1787; Box 186, 496, James Anderson v James Craig, 29/6/1790; Box 185, 494, Robert Tennent v James Craig, 1790.

<sup>9</sup>NAS, CS231/Seq/B1/7; CS238/B/7/27; CS238/B/7/28; CS238/B/7/32; CS238/B/7/46; CS238/B/7/56SC231/B5/10

<sup>10</sup>NAS, CS96/726/1-4

<sup>11</sup>NAS, CS96/704/1-2

<sup>12</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 5/1/1774; ECA, TCM, 23/8/1780

Walter Ferguson, who had also supported Kames' bridge scheme in 1763<sup>13</sup>, hired Craig to plan St James's Square, to the east of St Andrew's Square, in late 1772 and early 1773 (plate 71). A year later The Merchant Company of Edinburgh also looked to Craig to plan out their new street, Merchant Street, looking on to the Excise Office in the Old Town. Ferguson and Craig listed the economic advantages of living in St James's Square to potential investors and the architect also set out a business plan for Merchant Street. The Company's Building Committee wanted to value the annual ground rent for each stance Craig had proposed to build upon in his plan, and the architect calculated this to be £80.16.3 per year for stances S1 to S13<sup>14</sup>. Craig then surveyed the area and staked every stance<sup>15</sup> for builders to feu. Speculative builders in the New Town also prepared plans which would be used to calculate revenues made from rents and sales. These will be discussed in the third section of the thesis.

Council spending on architecture between 1767 and 1795 was high. Low feuing income from the New Town meant that the project ran at a loss, but the Council's strategy was to look to the future and a time when purchase money, feu and water duty incomes would help balance the books. Once again, the Council looked to private help to help it fund public architecture. Magistrates turned to other banks, and private individuals for help. The bank, Sir William Forbes, James Hunter & Co, helped to pay for building St Andrew's Church<sup>16</sup> which had run over its budget of £3000; and the Council also borrowed from George Heriot's Hospital in 1781<sup>17</sup> with an additional £500 from the Hospital 4 years later<sup>18</sup>. By the 1790s private individuals were lending the Council money to repay Sir William Forbes, James Hunter & Co's loans. In 1793 Schadrach Moyes, a resident in the New Town, lent £2000<sup>19</sup>, and a year later John Grieve, former Provost, gave £1000 to help cover a loan to open the communication between the Lawnmarket and Princes Street<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup>NAS, GD24/3/99

<sup>14</sup>ECA, Merchant Company of Edinburgh Minutes, 21/4/1774

<sup>15</sup>ibid, 8/6/1774

<sup>16</sup>ECA, TCM, 2/7/1783

<sup>17</sup>ibid, 16/5/1781

<sup>18</sup>ibid, 18/5/1785

<sup>19</sup>ibid, 13/11/1793

<sup>20</sup>ibid, 9/4/1794

Finishing the New Town was the Council's principal administrative priority because it had to make money from four main sources of income from the development: purchase money, feu duty, water pipe duty and feu duty arrears. Of these purchase money and feu duty contributed the most to the money the Council made in the New Town from 1767 to 1795 - 59% and 21% respectively (Plate 73). This discussion has established that the Council's administration of a weak economy also looked to supporting builders in order to generate income.

New Town scholars Reed, Youngson and McKean have overlooked the information about the ways the New Town made money for the Council, and the effect this had on its administration of builders. Accountancy, accurate surveys to increase feuing, and feu duty income, marked the later period of building history from 1781 to the 1790s. Information about the Council's debt management is to be found in archival sources, but it is also clear from these sources that building businesses had to manage debts too, and, despite utopian town planning exercises by architects, these businesses tempered such ideals with realistic building proposals, and business partnerships. The struggle to survive bad debts, and a poor economy, gave builders' businesses resolve and an identity. The Council's "indulgences" allowed businesses to build without the Council appearing to have formally passed a new law which lessened control on buildings, and income generation.

The sources of income the Council had from building the New Town were from duties such as feu duty and water pipe duty. Feu duty was an paid annually for a plot of land that had been bought for building upon. When the plot was bought purchase money was paid for its value, and then the feu duty would follow. Another tax which was paid was for water. Water pipe duty was also paid every year so New Town properties could be served by the Council's reservoirs. These duties, together with levels of expenditure and investment in the New Town, will now be examined.

#### **Purchase money and feu duty**

Purchase money and feu duty represented two ways of raising money in the New Town. The quicker builders of the New Town built then the more revenue the Council could collect from residents and proprietors. The examination of these revenues includes setting out what these payments were for, and how the Council sought to increase them at the same time as manage the building of the New Town.

Purchase money was income from selling plots for building. The significance of purchase money reflects the important relationship between feuing and the builders. It was the single largest payment a feuar made to the Council. In the 1780s most feus were sold to builders and property development consortia. But, because purchase money was a heavy expense, the 1768 Building Act allowed tradesmen to pay it in stages together with feu duty payments.

The expectation that the New Town was going to be successful was not fulfilled by positive results. The New Town rendered little purchase money revenue throughout the 1770s and early 1780s. But, there was a rally after 1782 to feu, build and make the New Town more profitable in the mid 1780s as the new bridge was finally completed, work on Register House had resumed, and plans were drawn up to begin building the South Bridge - a scheme first devised in 1775 but archived in safe boxes. It was to be a property development which threw a lifeline to New Town building businesses as well as allowing the Independent Council to extend its patronage over modern Edinburgh.

Feu duty was an annual levy on building plots in the New Town. Feuing flourished between 1783 and 1784. Correspondence between Lord Provost John Grieve and Member of Parliament, James Hunter Blair, former Bailie of the Chamberlain's accounts and master of building and feuing in the New Town, bear this out. Grieve wrote to Hunter Blair in March 1783, " We have granted more Few(sic) in the new Town this Season, than at any one period since the new Town Commenced which in time will bring in sumes (sic) of money as will make the Chamberlain smile. The number of them I cannot at present condescend on but by my next, you shall have an account of their extent.<sup>21</sup>"

The following year was just as good. In February 1784 Provost Grieve told Hunter Blair that " ....a great many fews(sic)in the new Town has been taken this season, on the last Council day, no less than 207 feet was apply'd for on the north side of Georges Street opposite the Assembly

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<sup>21</sup>National Register of Archives(Scotland), 0017, Blair of Blairquhan, Provost Grieve to Hunter Blair, 12/3/1783

Rooms.<sup>22</sup> The next month he reported with fresh figures, “ I at the same time informed you, that the Town had fewed (sic) 207 feet of the ground on the north side of George Street for building upon, and since my writing your last, the Town has fewed (sic) as much more, on George Street, Princes Street, as makes up in all 637 feet as to the extent of fewing (sic) this year, it has exceeded by much any former year.<sup>23</sup>”The *Caledonian Mercury* reported in March that year: “...building in the New Town of Edinburgh goes on with astonishing rapidity. Foundations are digging upward of thirty new houses, besides those now building.<sup>24</sup>”

If the Chamberlain did smile at the income from the New Town in 1783, he must have been radiant in the following years. The 1780s and 1790s represented a change in fortune for the city’s income from purchase money (Plate 72). Between 1783 and 1784 the Council made £1,213 from purchase money and £3,958 the following year. The figures continued with £3517 for 1786-1787, and £4,605 and £4,311 (1787-1788 and 1788-1789). These figures represent a turn around in income generation from purchase money from previous years when a mere £359 was collected in 1782, and the highest account for the entire 1770s was £1,457 for 1778-1779, following figures of under £400 between 1773 and 1776. Backing builders had worked and confidence returned to the New Town and the improvement of Edinburgh.

The Council had always tried to encourage feuing to get as much purchase money and feu duty revenues as possible so that land and property values remained constantly high. The New Town Acts of 29 July 1767 and 24 February 1768 made feuing easy. Lord Kames' believed in breaking up large estates so that they could hold many small property owners instead. This idea influenced the Council's administration of feuing in the New Town. Builders were encouraged to develop parts of the extended royalty for themselves. The 1768 Act made provision for feuars to take as much of a lot as they wanted, but pay purchase money and feu duty rates either directly or as an additional feu duty over ten years .This was intended to help foster building.

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<sup>22</sup>ibid, Provost Grieve to Hunter Blair, 28/2/1784

<sup>23</sup>ibid, Provost Grieve to Hunter Blair, 8/3/1784

<sup>24</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 29/3/1784

The Council encouraged feuing through "indulgences" to builders. These were mentioned in the first chapter with regard to Robert Burns' houses on Queen Street. It was common for builders to take extra land to complete their buildings. In August 1785, masons, John Burns and George Veitch, took an extra 20 feet on the east side of Hanover Street to complete their building on the north side of George Street<sup>25</sup>. This practice was acceptable only upon a formal application for extra land and was often granted, since it allowed a house to be completed. If a builder simply took the land without a warrant then the Council would act. Builders could not assume that indulgences would be given and that the Council would not enforce its laws. In 1785 the Council stopped the mason, Alex Reid, from doing this after complaints from the masons, James Reddie and John Wilkie, as well as the wright, William Butter. Reid was guilty of a "high misdemeanour" and "the community by such proceedings might be subject to great Damages"<sup>26</sup> - the greatest being the loss of purchase money. Indulgences represented deviations from the formal administrative system that had been set in place. They often benefited the builders, and will be discussed in terms of their businesses later in the thesis.

In March 1784 builders were listed and the Council specified its "usual conditions" of payment of purchase money through its New Town Act of July 1782<sup>27</sup>. The "usual arrangement" of paying purchase money upon application for a plot of land for building on, and then charging feu duty on it, was not meeting the Council's needs. The Provost decided to review the system of feuing in the New Town, as purchase money had but "barely answered the expence of leveling and paving streets, common sewers & c<sup>28</sup>", let alone repay the "great expence" the Council met in paying for ground and building the new bridge over Nor Loch. The result of the review in April that year was to increase feu duty. As had occurred in 1768, after 1782 it became Council policy to allow speculative builders to pay purchase money after their application for a feu had been accepted.

But in 1784 the Council needed revenue to pay for its infrastructural work in the New Town to match the boom in feuing and building. The Provost reported, "...to measure the feus in the extended royalty whereof the purchase money is not yet paid, and in comparing the measurements

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<sup>25</sup>ECA, TCM, 24/8/1785

<sup>26</sup>ibid, 6/4/1785

<sup>27</sup>ibid, 3/3/1784

with Acts of Council and application still lying before the Lord Provost's Committee he found in several instances that they did not agree - In order therefore to avoid confusion, and also that these Feuars who have as yet not got Acts of Council may obtain the same he had made up a scheme of all Acts of Council and application for feus prior to the fifteenth day of October last distinguishing in columns when the purchase money is payable, and the extent of the same conform to Thomas Stevenson's present measurement, and who also distinguishing what part of the feu duty was payable conform to the feuing Book, and what was payable in terms of the Council's Act of the fourteenth day of April last, by which fifty per cent of feu duty is added - That all the feuars had signed this scheme.<sup>29</sup>

This rise of 50% was to generate money income. The Council also intended to be more robust in enforcing laws. In September 1784 the Dean of Guild attacked builders for not seeking planning permission and having "little regard<sup>30</sup>" for building regulations in the New Town. The administration of purchase money and feu duty collection in the mid 1780s shows that the Council intended to combine its support for builders with its strategy to make money from them through easy feuing terms, improved accountancy, better mapping, and higher feu duties. The recording system the Provost set up in November 1784 was to help other Provosts after Grieve benefit from the latest accounts from the New Town feuing applications. This improved administrative system established clearer information systems and knowledge of Council laws and the work its employees and office bearers did. The improvements were needed to collect income, and administer building businesses which decided to develop tenements to rent out, and incorporate stormont windows into the designs for them. Both duty income, and rental income, were hugely important to the Council and builders respectively, and this importance was illustrated with stressful conflicts which were resolved in law courts beyond the Dean of Guild Court's traditional role as the place to settle disputes over building developments.

Feu duty was dependent upon house building. The duty was transferred to a proprietor by the builder once a feu charter had been issued by the Council, or once the builder had disposed or

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<sup>28</sup>ibid, 3/3/1784

<sup>29</sup>ibid, 10/11/1784

<sup>30</sup>ibid, 15/9/1784

resigned the feu to the client who had bought the property. On top of feu duty, the new feuar often had to pay composition. This was paid to the feu superior to obtain the Council's recognition of a vassal. Though less than purchase money income, feu duty enabled the Council, as the superior, to enforce the law. Most builders moved payment of feu duty to lodgers and purchasers through rental payments, or prices for buying the properties, unless they themselves were proprietors.

In 1771 John Home's feu of 152 feet along Canal Street was set at a duty of £9 for the next 25 years<sup>31</sup>, which would guarantee £225 for the Council. Similar deals were offered in the 1780s. In April 1782 James Ranken paid £5.4.10 as eight years' feu duty for his second storey flat in Alex Fleming's tenement on Queen Street<sup>32</sup>. This was a typical rather than exceptional way of paying feu duty. In 1793 the Council offered feuars the chance to pay the duty in lump sums at 25 year intervals so one payment would be made in 1793 and the next in 1818 and so on, but this offer was made in response to poor income from the duty, because of "irregular payment" by proprietors<sup>33</sup>. This, and other factors, have to be discussed in order to clearly understand the payment of feu duty and to show the Council's need for this branch of revenue.

An example of a complication in collecting feu duty through the transfer of a feu charter from a builder to a new proprietor is the mason, William Smith's dealings with the minister, Dr. Abernethy Drummond, in 1783 for a flat in the tenement on the corner of the south side of George Street and St Andrew's Square. Drummond bought the house for himself and sister Anne, and received dispositions from Smith in 1777 and 1780. The minister claimed that the feu duties due to the Council were debts due by Smith and his partner, Robert Wright. Although Drummond had tried to get feu charters for himself and Anne, he was denied until the debts were settled. He wrote to the Council in January 1783 that Smith and Wright were the debtors and stated his case: "...to have a falsehood cram'd down his throat, & lose his money, or else be involved in a litigious law plan for the recovery of it & expose himself to the insults of a man who is disposed to be rude. For tho' William Smith acknowledged...only a few days ago, that he was resting a year's feu duty prior to your Petitioner's entry to his own house....yet he has since affirmed, contrary to the words

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<sup>31</sup>ibid, 24/4/1771

<sup>32</sup>ibid, 3/4/1782

<sup>33</sup>ibid, 11/9/1793



of his own disposition & contrary to truth also, that your Petitioner's entry was at martinmas 1776, and has sent your Petitioner a most impertinent letter & as false as impertinent, relative to the same subject. That things standing thus between your Petitioner & William Smith. The Lord Provost & Council are too Reasonable to insist upon ye petitioner's paying the feu duties prior to his own and his sister's entries, and too equitable to refuse to sign the desired Charters, because the said feu duties are unpaid through the fault of other people<sup>34</sup>."

The Council kept records of feuars and feu charters in the New Town from 1768<sup>35</sup> to 1781<sup>36</sup> which helped calculate outstanding dues payable on charters<sup>37</sup>. The more houses that were built the greater the feu duty income would be. It was in the Council's interests to encourage rapid feuing and building. This is why the feuing regulations of 1784 and 1785<sup>38</sup> insisted that once a feu had been purchased the property had to be roofed in a year. The Overseer helped the Council and builders to work quickly and safely. This both made and saved money. In June 1784 Provost Grieve reported that the Council needed to increase its income to pay for its proposed building programme to improve the city<sup>39</sup>. There were two solutions. The first was to save money through better mapping. After 1785 Lord Alva's and Lord Moray's grounds were feued to enable the western end of Craig's plan to be built<sup>40</sup>. Information on vacant areas was collected through repeated surveys by the Overseer and others after 1783 which allowed "considerable savings<sup>41</sup>" to be made through keeping street declivities consistent and their levels and lines straight: allowing drains, pipes, sewers, roads, paving and houses to be built more quickly to realise income faster.

Records of measured feus and accounts for feu duties were kept in tabular form after 1784<sup>42</sup>. By 1790 mapped and written records of feuing, together with records of vacant areas, allowed further income from feu duty to be calculated. By 1792 the feu duties from Lord Alva's ground were

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<sup>34</sup>ECA, Moses Bundle 167, item 6540

<sup>35</sup>ECA, Moses Bundle 169, item 6617

<sup>36</sup>ECA, Moses Bundle 171, item 6721

<sup>37</sup>ibid

<sup>38</sup>ECA, Bay D, Bundle 129, item 106

<sup>39</sup>ECA, TCM, 16/6/1784

<sup>40</sup>ECA, Moses Bundle 168, item 6550

<sup>41</sup>ECA, TCM, 15/2/1786

<sup>42</sup>ibid, 10/11/1784

calculated and listed<sup>43</sup>. This money, together with outstanding feu duty, which was in arrears because of the Council's feuing policy and indulgences to builders, meant more money was due to the Council. It contrasted with the unsatisfactory position on feu duty arrears reported to the Council in January 1785<sup>44</sup>.

The second method by which extra income was generated was to increase the rate of feu duty. The 50% rise was effective and income from feu duty rose year on year thereafter, reaching a maximum of £2159 between 1793 and 1794 (Plate 74). These figures reflect the success of the 1784 Act as well as the recording and management system. But the minutes for January 1785 highlight the problems in collecting feu duty arrears, which stood at £1231, as well as the fragmentation of the duty through tenements holding four to five different proprietors: "the arear....chiefly owing to this circumstance that Builders of tenements offer takeing[sic] out their charters sold the houses so that one Tenement in most cases belongs to four or five different Proprietors and the feu duty payable for the whole Tenement is apportioned among them by the Builder but as these Proprietors cannot be obliged to take out a charter while the Builder is alive, the proportion of feu duty payable by them respectively is not known to the Chamberlain<sup>45</sup>."

This was a serious problem. One remedy was to urge single lodgings to be built instead of tenements, leading to arguments for uniformity. This sentiment began to appear from 1770 and 1771 through Craig's circus plan and from 1772 to 1773 when Gilbert Meason<sup>46</sup> favoured houses over tenements, and then Bailie Kid<sup>47</sup> highlighted the problem that tenements caused when builders sold to different purchasers so that inhabitants paid fractions of total feu duties. Little wonder Craig submitted another circus plan to Magistrates for consideration the following year. Nothing happened to solve the problem even after the admission about this issue made in January 1785. A year later, in an attempt to deter tenement building, the Council decided to charge feu duty for the ground and first floors only, of properties built on Lord Alva's ground, which abolished apportioned payments and made buying a flat less attractive. This attack was followed

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<sup>43</sup>ECA, Bay D, Bundle 129, item 194

<sup>44</sup>ECA, TCM, 26/1/1785

<sup>45</sup>ibid, 26/1/1785

<sup>46</sup>ibid, 6/5/1772

<sup>47</sup>ibid, 24/3/1773

by the Council's determination to have only lodgings in Charlotte Square as it was being planned between 1789 and 1791; nevertheless the problem persisted and in 1793 the Council's other remedy was to revert back to block payments<sup>48</sup>.

In April 1777 the Overseer, John Wilson, was paid for making plans of feus that were wanted and for ensuring that they corresponded with the feuing plan and book<sup>49</sup>. Builders' feuing and building habits could damage the Council's administrative system for accounting for and predicting income from feu revenue. Feuing income was directly related to the building industry, and its abilities to build, sell or rent properties. Through feuing, builders could protect their business interests, and the Council's need to complete the New Town, and these things empowered them. After 1772 and the Council's court battle with the feuars and the 1770s elections, the builders were aware of their political and economic importance to Edinburgh.

It was from the mid 1780s to 1790s that feu duty arrears also began to contribute towards Council income. Between 1767 and 1795, feu duty and feu duty arrears gave 21% and 15% respectively to the total income generated by the extended royalty (plate 73). Feu duties in the extended royalty gradually increased as the area was being built. Income was negligible from 1767 to 1771, and was modest thereafter, until the mid 1780s. In the midst of this building boom the feu duties increased, and by 1790 touched over £1,000 (plate 74). These figures were poor compared to the feu duties in the old town. Here the Council regularly raised over £1,000 (plate 75). These results were because the Old Town was already built and the feus were ready to be collected. Income from feu duty arrears complements the pattern set by the history of the lots bought. Between 1789 and 1791 the Council made over £1,000 every year (plate 76). In comparison, feu duty arrears in the Old Town did not ever match these figures at any time between 1767 and 1795 (plate 77).

By creating better records of income that was due through new taxes, maps and plans in the New Town the Council was able to enforce its new laws on building in the area. As in the discussion of the New Town's administration in chapter one, here, when builders are examined in terms of the

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<sup>48</sup>ibid, 11/9/1793

<sup>49</sup>ibid, 2/4/1777

city's economy and politics, they can be seen again to be central to the successful completion of the New Town.

### **Water Pipe Duty**

Good water, like good air and ground, was an attraction to prospective house buyers. In 1768 work for a reservoir to serve the New Town began on Castlehill, served by springs at Swanston and Comiston.<sup>50</sup> It culminated three years later<sup>51</sup>. A great pipe<sup>52</sup> ran downhill to smaller pipes and then to houses. James Craig's statues of Hercules and Hygeia in his plans of the Physicians' Hall were acknowledgments of the labours required to make the city healthy and prosperous again. Allied to this effort, common drains and sewers, built by William Jamieson to David Henderson's design, and good streets and causeways were also built.

Although the formal process of feuing land in the New Town involved being shown Craig's plan, one of the few conditions the Council insisted upon was joining the new property onto the drains and pipes it provided. In 1772<sup>53</sup> and 1780<sup>54</sup> surveyors made plans of the New Town which marked the water pipe connections. Just as feuing maps showed life above ground, with streets, squares, roads, lanes, gardens and buildings, these maps showed life underground with the New Town's pipes, drains and sewers. The water connections guaranteed income. It was agreed that the Council should pay for the expense of building this underground world and would charge a duty for it. Proprietors paid half the costs for paving and railing streets and squares and they had to pay water pipe duty. This income shared some common characteristics with feu duty.

Firstly, surveys allowed drains to be built quickly and prevented flooded cellars, foundations and pools at the foot of streets. Accurate surveys helped solve problems and the income from the duty to be calculated. Initially, in 1771, it sought 20 shillings per house per year, and 10 shillings per floor of a tenement<sup>55</sup>. This rate tended to discourage the building of tenements, since it was more expensive for a proprietor to pay 40 or 30 shillings for a tenement than 20 shillings for a single house. It also provided an incentive for the builder to feu out his house quickly. In 1773 the rate

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<sup>50</sup>ibid, 24/2/1768;28/3/1768;6/6/1770;4/7/1770

<sup>51</sup>ibid, 12/6/1771

<sup>52</sup>ibid, 11/2/1778

<sup>53</sup>ibid, 21/10/1772

<sup>54</sup>ibid, 22/11/1780

increased to 20 shillings per floor<sup>56</sup>, but returned to 10 shillings again in 1779<sup>57</sup>. Meanwhile in 1775 the duty was allowed to be paid proportionally among a tenement's proprietors<sup>58</sup>.

This caused a familiar problem. The duty was split and the whole sum frittered away to small payments. The Council attempted to be scrupulous on feu duty collection and linked water pipe duty to it. Continuing from the measures for collecting feu duty, in January 1785 the Council decided to disconnect the supply if no payment was made and also make a charge for reconnection: " His Lordship also represented that there are some benefit(sic) of a water pipe, and do not pay the water duty - To remedy which particulars(sic) his Lordship proposed that a poinding of the ground shall be raised against all such Proprietors of Tenements and others who are in arear for feu dutys in the extended Royalty who shall not betwixt and first day of March next pay into the City's Chamberlain their arears and that the overseer of the City's water be directed to cut off the pipes of such Tenements whereof the water duty of £2 from Whitsunday 1785 to Whitsunday 1786 is not paid within two months of the term of Whitsunday next.<sup>59</sup>"

The street network of pipes, drains and sewers was directly related to the feuing, economy and planning of the New Town. Pipes were laid according to need. As each house was completed so the city's drains would be built to reach them. House followed house and streets were built until the New Town was complete. Because it was a public work, the Council paid the builders of the drains and sewers. The Chamberlain's accounts clearly show that Deacon William Jamieson dominated the building of the sewers. He won contract after contract to do so. He was a Council Deacon of Masons, Convener of Council Deacons and Trades Councillor, a builder in the New Town and the owner of a large and successful brick factory near Musselburgh. These things helped him submit the lowest estimates. Successfully undertaking this work underground was no mean achievement considering the economic and political backgrounds to the building of the New Town.

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<sup>55</sup>ibid, 14/8/1771

<sup>56</sup>ibid, 24/3/1773

<sup>57</sup>ibid, 1/12/1779

<sup>58</sup>ibid, 24/5/1775

<sup>59</sup>ibid, 26/1/1785

The imposition of water pipe duty, together with the Council's collection of purchase money and feu duty showed that by the 1780s the Independent Council raising higher duties on builders, and trying to curb their liking for building tenements. This was not because the Council did not approve of the commercial environment they had, nor the society of the New Town, but because tenements damaged the speed with which it could collect money.

### **Investment**

As scholars of the New Town, Reed and Youngson, have considered Edinburgh's expenditure on the New Town. Both acknowledge economic hardships, but present alternative arguments. This discussion on investments will examine these, and the Council's audits on the costs of building the New Town. By giving the figures reported in audits, and discussing case studies of political and economic strategies in investment in architecture, and building businesses, a clear picture of the financial management of the New Town will be seen.

The annual audits of Council expenditure show levels of investment on architectural projects. Accounts clearly show that the Council was constantly in debt to the Royal Bank of Scotland from the 1770s onwards. After 1772 the debts mounted. Magistrates had large debts to manage and tried to address the situation by encouraging feuing, and raising taxes in the New Town. Do the Council's audits give information about the way builders were administered which complements the scholars Reed or Youngson's views on the builders of the New Town?

Reed argues that builders were careful not to go bankrupt and deliberately worked on a small scale, while Youngson argues that the New Town represents a boom in Edinburgh's economy. When the audits are examined in relation to the Council's income and levels of debt then both arguments can be understood better. The levels of debt, and poor revenues, allied with what has been found about tradesmen going out of business, gives Reed's points strength, although he himself does not support his argument with facts, and case studies. On the other hand, the audits support Youngson's argument because they reveal the inconsistent levels of spending on the New Town between 1767 and 1795. In this period the Council spent £29, 574 on the new extension. Sir Laurence Dundas's Council spent £12,706 between 1768 and 1779 out of a total expenditure of £76,449, which makes the new extension take up 16.6% of all Council spending, and between

1780 and 1788 the Independents spent £16,868 on the new extension out of a total spending of £67,528 which accounted for 24.9% of its income.

The figures show that some periods of investment were higher than others. Sir Laurence Dundas's Councils spent more in election years than in others. Between 1774 and 1775 it spent £1,494 out of a total of £6,869<sup>60</sup>, which was £21.7% - a rise of 9% from the previous year. He also invested in the New Town in times of crisis by spending his own money on his New Town house - a place which was meant to be the new headquarters of the Lord Provost, Royal Bank of Scotland and the Member of Parliament for Edinburgh. In 1772 the Council spent £1,612 out of £6,935<sup>61</sup>, which is 23.2% of Council income on the New Town. These figures contrast with the low feuing and purchase of lots incomes as the Council invested in its commitments to the New Town, such as the bridge, water supplies, paving and drains. The beneficiaries of these investments were not only the feuars, but also the builders and labourers who could anticipate selling or renting properties and keeping employment in these hard times.

The Independents also invested heavily in the New Town. The Council supported the boom in feuing as it built the New Town's drains, pipes and pavements. In 1783<sup>62</sup> it spent £1,287 out of £8,147 on the New Town which was 15.7% of its income, and the next year<sup>63</sup> £2,320 out of £7,925 which was 29.2%. Levels of investment increased year on year thereafter with 1785 to 1786<sup>64</sup> seeing £2,919 out of £8136(35.8%), and 1786 to 1787<sup>65</sup> seeing £5,004 from £9,339 (53.5%) spent on the New Town.

The Council spent even more money on architecture at this time. These figures are only for money spent on the new extension. They do not take into account engineering works such as public works, road building, Leith Harbour, water pipes, building St Andrew's Church spire and repairing the Tron Church. What is clear is that architecture and the New Town were significant costs to the Council, and its political leaders. The financial management of the New Town had to

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<sup>60</sup>ibid, 7/9/1774

<sup>61</sup>ibid, 13/9/1775

<sup>62</sup>ibid, 6/9/1786

<sup>63</sup>ibid, 19/9/1787

<sup>64</sup>ibid, 17/9/1788

take into account that builders were important men too since tradesmen were needed to carry out the necessary work.

This chapter has discussed the importance of the New Town to Edinburgh's economy. It follows some of the themes which were set out in the first chapter, with links to New Town scholarship, administrative systems, court cases and law enforcement, and the architects Sir James Clerk, James Craig's circus plans for the New Town, and John and Robert Adam and builders, including the mason, William Jamieson, and the wright, John Young and their tenements.

Buildings and builders were directly involved in the city's administration, and spending plans. These plans were responsive to political struggles, such as elections, and they could also account for the importance of building the New Town. Building businesses were required to feu and build houses, keep laws and help build public works in the New Town. By building houses and completing the plan builders helped to pay for the New Town. They were also able to influence elections and, though without a vote themselves, participate in campaigns both to remove and to create patronage groups within the city's leaders. These points have not been established by New Town scholars, and this chapter has established links between the financial management of the New Town and its political management which was examined in the previous chapter.

Speculative building, banking and free trade and easy feuing, together with the amount of money the Council spent on the New Town, did not necessarily make the extension of the royalty a reflection of Enlightenment ideals for builders and administrators. This study of builders and Edinburgh's politics has shown how builders were involved in their own struggles to stay in business, and politicians' struggles to stay in power. However, research for this thesis has not shown that the great men of Edinburgh's Enlightenment had a direct influence on the way builders designed and built houses. But, men such as Adam Smith and Lord Kames did indirectly influence ways building businesses were managed by the Council. In this respect, Youngson's study has revealed little useful information about builders, but Reed was right to highlight that builders were

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<sup>65</sup>ibid, 16/9/1789



cautious, especially in difficult economic and political periods even if he did not state why this was the case, and this means that he too gives little useful information about how builders were administered. His analysis has not given information about who builders were and why they were important to the history of the New Town. This study of the financial management of building businesses shows that builders were vital to the ways the New Town could generate income for the Council with Overseers and Provosts administering laws, as well as indulgences, free trade and tenement architecture.

## **CONCLUSION TO SECTION ONE**

This section has studied builders in terms of Council administration, Edinburgh's political leadership and the Council's financial management of the New Town. In all three areas, builders have been seen to be vital to the completion of the New Town. Far from being of no importance, research into builders has shed new light on Edinburgh's architectural, political and economic history. These studies have not followed the work of other New Town scholars, but rather look into the very areas they have overlooked, the administrative structures and systems the Council had put in place, and contemporary political and economic debates and policies on architecture.

This thesis studies builders in terms of the realities of being a professional builder in the New Town. This section has established that builders were not prevented from building tenements and making the New Town into a commercial area, and that caution in building houses was based on a real need to survive as businessmen. Furthermore, the social mix that legislation had provided for was reflected in New Town architecture. Builders were responsible both for this social mix, and New Town tenements and shops. When it became politically expedient to be seen to control builders and buildings, following the 1770s troubles, the Council did not stop allowing indulgences, or tenements, and had to balance the trouble of collecting tax revenue with keeping building businesses alive during continuously difficult times.

Studying Edinburgh's political and economic history in relation to its architectural project management shows building businesses were represented by groups like Unity and Congress, as well as the incorporations. Tradesmen articulated their professional concerns to political leaders and knew the administrative structures and systems the Council had put in place. It is argued that the political and economic history of the New Town shows that it was far from being an area where architectural harmony reflected a peaceful and settled city. The New Town was in fact built in difficult political and economic times, with bitterly fought elections and bad debts prevailing and without an architect's masterplan for its houses prevailing over builders' own plans. New Town architecture does not entirely reflect the influence of architects like Robert Adam, and James Craig, nor Enlightenment philosophers like Adam Smith and Lord Kames. It is argued that

builders were of critical importance to the successful administration, planning and completion of the New Town, and that the building industry was the most important one in the New Town.

The builders' tenements made the New Town a commercial area. These buildings responded to their business needs and the economic conditions in which they were working. There is no evidence that builders read Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, or knew Kames's thoughts on entailed estates, but it is clear that they were willing to adapt to politicians who did know these theories and applied them in their administration of New Town politics, like Henry Dundas, the Duke of Buccleuch and David Steuart. In this sense the tenements may not be direct responses to Enlightenment philosophy, or even, Enlightenment architects, but pragmatic and practical responses to opportunities politicians presented building businesses to complete the New Town and stay in business to enhance their status as emerging professionals in Edinburgh. The ways builders organised their businesses will be examined in sections two and three of the thesis.

The New Town plan itself was an example of modern local town planning, but done on an unprecedented scale. The Council was the administrator and adopted an accountancy system from Dr Webster to ensure the New Town's accounts for feuing could be followed. New laws, and men working as professional Overseers of public works, and on Council Committees supported the system. The Council encouraged feuing and building, and especially tradesmen through its "indulgences" over purchase money for them to buy land to build on, even though this was not an aspect laid down in New Town laws. The creation of the department of public works, administrative processes for granting feus, maps, plans, surveys and account books created a professional administration for converting Craig's authorised plan of building for the extended royalty into a reality. This led to balancing architects' plans with building practices. In a sense this mirrored the balancing of the New Town's ideals and ideologies with the political, economic and practical realities of building it.

Leaders in the New Town, like Sir Laurence Dundas and Sir James Hunter Blair, ensured that public money was invested to complete it. Although important architects, like Sir James Clerk and James Craig, tried to influence decision making, the administrative processes and systems meant

that their thoughts and plans became secondary to making the New Town a reality, and the process of examining and accepting planning applications. The builder, William Smith, was given no lesser consideration than his neighbour, the architect, James Craig, when he built his house on George Street.

The New Town also became an area where political contests were fought out and careers were made or broken. It is clear that the Council had a building programme which had been developed since the 1720s. As well as wanting public buildings like Register House, from 1767 the Council backed tradesmen to feu land and build houses. These were not just grand houses for Scotland's first families, but tenements for professionals, and shops. Architects designed plans, buildings and houses to find patronage from private residents and political leaders, but these plans often contrasted with the realities of house building businesses after 1772. Builders offered practical solutions to completing the New Town, but these solutions were sometimes controversial. Free trade not only created a bigger workforce, but also leverage for creating new patronage groups that were not based upon Council Deacons.

The New Town was built to raise Edinburgh's status as a city and to make money. The cost of building it was very high, and new administrative structures and systems were put in place to increase tax returns, tighten planning procedures and encourage trade to make money. These measures also caused conflicts with builders and master craftsmen, most notably with regard to building tenements and stormonts, managing incorporations and holding elections. As a consequence of these conflicts, and through their managing the building of the New Town, builders became better known and more important.

Although they were collectively called "builders" what they were not were gentlemen architects like Sir James Clerk, or professional architects like Robert Adam. They designed buildings without the training these architects had, but clearly understood architectural concepts like symmetry and uniformity and entered architectural competitions. Rows of bow fronted tenements contrasted Robert Adam and James Craig's liking for palatial fronted streets, squares and circuses. The Society of Master Builders understood their profession. Like master craftsmen in

incorporations, builders were often trained masons and wrights, who worked in the speculative building business. It is from this business, and their training in trades, that they were given their name. But, the term “master builder” is first used in the New Town in 1774 by Sir William Chambers to describe William Hay, even though the term “builder” had been frequently used before and is even more common after 1776 to the Congress and Unity groups. The social status builders enjoyed was linked to their professional importance and their integration in the administration of completing the New Town. The fact that the Council depended on builders to complete the New Town meant that builders established themselves in almost every layer of the Council's new administrative structures and systems to manage the project. The study of the Council's administration, politics and finances with regards to builders reveals a lot of useful information which deepens an understanding and of the architectural history of Edinburgh's New Town.

## Section Two: Building Houses

This section focuses on ways builders built houses, and the tradesmen they hired to complete this work in three analyses of how houses were built, who built them and what they looked like with references to archival sources, and New Town buildings themselves. These analyses extend the argument set out in the first section of the thesis, which was that the Council managed builders carefully to complete the New Town. Builders joined the administration of the New Town, and oversaw building design and construction, and their sources of knowledge of architecture were reflected in their buildings. Among these sources included knowing Edinburgh's architectural community which consisted of contemporary tradesmen, as well as architects like Robert Adam, attending lectures, and knowing architectural sources like Edinburgh's tenements, Adam buildings and architecture books. The builders' New Town properties showed that worked methodically and systematically, and developed skills to be successful professionals.

After 1785 applicants for building provisions submitted their written requests for plots on the back of Council New Town building regulations. In this section, the builders' abilities to foster their own identity is explored through their own buildings represented by the society, The Master Builders of Edinburgh. The builders' new teams of workmen, ways of working and the speed with which they had to work, show them to be like architects because they designed houses, ordered materials and hired men to build. This section identifies a group of builders who are connected with John, Robert and James Adam. Builders were not totally dependent on architects to find work, did not design any major public building like Register House, and generally operated on a comparatively small scale building small groups of houses or tenements.

The Adam buildings have received scholarly attention, but the builders' original house designs, and house building techniques, have never been analysed in depth by scholars to identify who the builders were, and why they built the houses they did. The most thorough studies of individual buildings have been by the Royal Commission of Ancient of Historical Monuments (Scotland)<sup>1</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> *Inventory of the Ancient and Historical Monuments of the City of Edinburgh*, Ancient and Historical Monuments in the thirteenth report of the Commission, Edinburgh, Royal Commission of Ancient and Historical Monuments(Scotland), HMSO, 1951

John Gifford<sup>2</sup>, Historic Scotland<sup>3</sup> and, recently, James Simpson<sup>4</sup>. Unfortunately, The Royal Commission, Gifford and Historic Scotland's list describe what was observable at the time of writing, and not the original buildings of the New Town, while James Simpson, and later studies of individual buildings in the area, are concerned with studying great architects like Robert Adam, and not builders. Through archival research this thesis presents several original elevations by builders of the New Town, and attempts to classify some buildings and builders by design type, and organization, so, for example, an "Adam Group" of builders can be identified. New Town builders were far more sophisticated, efficient and skilled professionals than has been hitherto thought. Some of their designs were linked to the Council's administration of the area, as well as to the study and practice of architecture.

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<sup>2</sup> J.Gifford, D.Walker, C.McWilliam, C.Wilson, *Buildings of Scotland: Edinburgh*, National Trust for Scotland/Penguin, 1984

<sup>3</sup> ECA, *Historic Scotland, List of Buildings of Architectural and Historic Importance, New Town*, 2003

<sup>4</sup> I. Gow and J. Simpson, *8 Queen Street, Edinburgh: Restoring an Adam House, Robert Adam, Architectural Heritage IV, The Journal of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland*, Edinburgh University Press, 1993, pp. 58-66.

## CHAPTER 4: HOW WERE HOUSES BUILT?

This chapter examines stages of house building, delivering supplies and site management. It looks at how builders commonly constructed New Town houses and argues that builders had a system of house building which allowed them to put up houses quickly. Council legislation demanded quick construction methods. The 1782 building Act demanded that houses be roofed within 12 months of building permission being given or a £30 fine would be charged<sup>1</sup>. From the Council's point of view this allowed it to collect taxes quicker, but for builders it meant that house building had to be efficient.

### Stages of building

This examination of the stages of house building argues that builders had methods of house building which allowed them to work safely and quickly. The Council and the builders both needed to make money quickly in order to complete the New Town and take on new property developments. Business, politics, economics and laws were all factors in putting up houses, but were architecture books and training in trades also influential? How did builders build their houses? A New Town house had a substructure and superstructure. The substructure was built first and consisted of foundations, cellars, kitchens and service pipes and drains. The superstructure was the rest of the house - the walls, the roof and the interior with the internal services like vents, stairs, pipes and fireplaces built into it.

One of the first concerns a builder had before beginning to work on his house was to ensure that the Council and the overseer knew where and when work was about to commence. In September 1784 the Council first decided to check designs once foundations had began to be built<sup>2</sup>. After April 1786<sup>3</sup>, by law, the first thing the overseer had to check were foundations. He had to ensure that the new house did not alter the line and level of the street since " of late some houses...have been improperly founded.<sup>4</sup>" These foundations could be extensive. The mason, Alex Reid, dug a trench on the southwest corner of Frederick Street, which was 30 to 40 feet long, 25 feet wide and 10 feet deep, but which had been left to collect water<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>ECA, TCM, 17/7/1782

<sup>2</sup>ibid, 10/9/1784

<sup>3</sup>ibid, 19/4/1786

<sup>4</sup>ibid, 19/4/1786

<sup>5</sup>ibid, 21/10/1789



But what was a proper foundation? The substructure had to be designed and built in an orderly way and this became a hallmark of a New Town house. The overseer was to give the builder this information, and the builder had to obey his instructions or face dismantling his building. The builders could not "pretend ignorance<sup>6</sup>" of the law and the Overseer's right to check and direct work, but no examples of the overseers' directions, nor original drawings of foundations have been found. It was sensible for builders to file their permission slips and instructions from the Overseer and Provost's Committee for their buildings' designs and foundations safely and have them to hand if requested to present them to the Overseer or Dean of Guild Court.

The best documentary evidence for digging a foundation out in the New Town is James Craig's Royal College of Physicians' Hall in George Street. In 1775 he presented an account to the doctors for laying the foundations for the new building. Some of the costs were to be expected, such as quarrying, transportation, lime, and the wages of labourers who dug out the soil and masons for hewing and laying inscribed stones and some bread and drink for the men. But, some costs are not so self explanatory such as the wages of labourers lining the foundation pit with timber and charcoal dust<sup>7</sup>. This was done, presumably, to soak up moisture from the ground.

To understand what influenced Craig can be found in influential architectural treatises by Vitruvius and Palladio. These describe how to make a buildings' foundations by digging a pit, lining it with timber and charcoal, though without specifying what the charcoal was for. It has still to be established how common this type of foundation was in both the New Town, and the Old Town, but it does give an example of a foundation that can be followed in treatises that were known and read at this time. Book three, chapter four of Vitruvius asked builders to dig out ground, and place piles of charred wood to be driven down closely together. Gaps between them were filled in with charcoal, and then foundations laid on top until brought to the level for building to start. Palladio followed this method in chapters 7 and 8 of the first book of his "*Four Books of Architecture*<sup>8</sup>". A cage of oak wood was to be made around the pit. Oak was driven down until

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<sup>6</sup>ibid, 15/9/1784

<sup>7</sup>Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Library, Accounts, 27/11/1775

<sup>8</sup> A. Palladio, *The Four Books of Architecture*, Dover, New York, 1965, pp 5-7

solid ground was found. Foundations were to be dug out to a ratio of a depth of over a sixth of the intended building's overall height and had to be twice as thick as the walls intended to be built on top of them. A deep trench was dug around the wooden cage. It was then levelled out with a mallet and layered with yet more wood. This gave the foundations greater strength, and was building the wooden cage was known as pallification<sup>9</sup>.

Although public buildings had foundation ceremonies which were reported in newspapers, few houses were recorded this way. From Vitruvius and Palladio's treatises, the Council's own laws on foundations, as well as Craig's experience <sup>10</sup> it was clear that laying foundations was an important and specialised skill in architecture. Craig hired masons and labourers to lay the College of Physicians' Hall's foundations, but, later, in the early 1790s, builders hired "founders" who were specialists in this work.

Three examples were George Stephen<sup>11</sup>, Henry Smith<sup>12</sup> and Alex Black. George Stephen worked for both John Hay, along Castle Street, and John Brough<sup>13</sup> in the New Town, while the builder, James Hill, hired Smith and Black, who probably worked on Hill's houses in Queen Street, including Lord Provost James Stirling's home<sup>14</sup>. The founders and builders knew one another well as James Hill was a member of John Brough's own team of tradesmen which worked on Hanover Street. Hill decided to use founders himself when he was working as an independent builder in his own right. Alex Black was called a "found digger", which denotes his specialist skill – one which was vital for the house to be built successfully. Founders moved into the New Town, and one, Robert Taylor, moved into the New Town and rented rooms in Alex Reid's house in Rose Street<sup>15</sup>.

Alex Black paid 3 labourers 3 shillings, 6 pence a day while the house's foundations were being dug<sup>16</sup>. The account does not specify what they were doing. It is unlikely that these labourers learnt

<sup>9</sup> T.M. Russell, *The Encyclopaedic Dictionary in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Architecture, Arts and Crafts*, Volume Two, Ephraim Chambers Cyclopaedia, Ashgate, 1997, p. 173

<sup>10</sup>ECA, Bay D, shelf 18, bundle 119, no.35

<sup>11</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 200, 550, George Stephen v John Hay, 20/2/1795

<sup>12</sup>ibid, Henry Smith v James Hill, 3/2/1794

<sup>13</sup>NAS, CS231/Sq/B1/7

<sup>14</sup>ECA, TCM, 25/1/1792

<sup>15</sup>ibid, 2/12/1795

<sup>16</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 194, 532, Alex Black v James Hill, 22/1/1793

how to dig foundations by reading Vitruvius and Palladio, but through Black's own practical experience. However, this knowledge may be indirectly linked to the examples given in these treatises. John Brough paid George Stephen for wright work<sup>17</sup> as well as foundation work to cover the costs of digging the pit, and lining it with a wooden cage. It is clear that he was a skilled man who was doing a specific job which involved wright work, and had links with a long established architectural practice and theory. These professional standards were maintained not only through specialist founders but also by law. An Edinburgh New Town founder was someone who had skills that a labourer in Georgian Bath did not have. There John Wood, and other builders, did not dig foundations at all to save money<sup>18</sup>. The Council's laws, and the builders' methods of construction, ensured that specialist professions were encouraged to develop.

Cellars were built on top of foundations and helped give the overall building stability and strength. The mason, Alex Laing, hesitated in building cellars for James Hunter Blair's house in Queen Street until he had completed the foundations<sup>19</sup>. As with foundations, there is little documentary and graphic evidence to show how they were usually built in the New Town. But, one example of a New Town builders' plans have been found. John Brough's plan for cellars shows he meant to build them with thick walls (**Plate 78**) which emphasised the strength of the foundations below. This plan is part of a book of plans which show the property's floors and elevation<sup>20</sup> (**Plates 78 – 82**). It is not known when Brough made this plan and if he even intended this building to be in the New Town, but the plans are for a tenement which a New Town builder had designed for construction.

Using the plan's scale, and looking at the plan, it can be seen that the cellar wall thicknesses varied considerably. One side wall is 2 feet thick and the other opposite side was 4 feet thick so it could hold up gable ends. The back wall was 2 feet thick and the front wall, marked with openings, was 2½ feet thick. It is not clear why Brough planned the cellars' walls like this in this case, but it is clear that the walls were thicker than those above them in the superstructure (**Plates 80-81**). For both New Town houses and tenements, cellars were at the front of the house, situated

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<sup>17</sup>NAS, CS231/Seq/B1/7

<sup>18</sup>Information supplied by Ms Cathryn Spence, Curator, Building of Bath Museum, 24/3/2005.

<sup>19</sup>National Register of Archives(Scotland), Blair of Blairquhan, 0017, Alex Laing, 19/2/1782

below the pavement and used for storage. Strong walls, like the ones Brough planned, formed a central space which was subdivided into smaller ones by thinner walls. In Brough's plans three cellars were made to the right and left, served by narrow passageways which had doors.

It is unclear how Brough wanted the cellars to be built, but other builders indicated how this was done. The architect, David Henderson, produced accounts for houses on Canongate's New Street from the 1760s which show that he built cellars with rubble walls and then lined these with brick walls to give them added solidity<sup>21</sup> and because it was cheaper to fill with rubble than cut stone. As in Brough's plans, Henderson was establishing his building's strength with the substructure, and the thick, strong cellar walls were enabling him to build upwards. Another account of cellar construction comes from Council minutes when in August 1786 the mason, Robert Ferguson, proposed to build vaulted cellars on the south-west corner of Rose Street, which he said were common<sup>22</sup>.

If Ferguson was right then New Town house cellars were also given extra strength through their vaulting. It is not clear what vaults they were, and Brough's plan gives no indication of vaulting ribs. Further physical examination of New Town cellars by Historic Scotland, the Royal Commission of Ancient and Historical Monuments (Scotland), and scholars may reveal original vaulted spaces and the types of cellarage given to New Town houses and tenements can be classified. From, Brough's plans, Henderson's accounts and Ferguson's petition it is clear that cellars were built with strong exterior walls built in rubble and lined with brick, and that the interior walls and spaces were partitioned and vaulted to give passageways and doors to each cellar. Brough's plan also shows that the property's stairs began from the cellars and these were built into the wall. This type of stair was called a hanging stair and tradesmen learnt how to build these in their training and were common in Edinburgh's houses and tenements. Walking up the cellar stairs would have led most people into what was intended to be a kitchen area in houses, and a shop or flats to let in tenements. This floor is what is what was commonly called the "sunk storey". Returning to John Brough's property floor plan for the sunk storey shows that wall

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<sup>20</sup>ECA, McLeod Bundle D0012R, Edinburgh Town Council 1761 - 1794

<sup>21</sup>ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Extracted Processes, James Dunbar, 11/2/1779

<sup>22</sup>ECA, TCM, 23/8/1786

thickness has been reduced (**plate 79**). The side walls were 1 foot thick and the front and back walls were 2 foot thick. This means he halved one side wall's thickness, and reduced the front wall by a half foot.

It is hard to interpret Brough's plan for the sunk storey, but the dotted lines he uses at the entrance to the sunk storey could indicate doorways to the left, right and straight ahead. If he divided the storey into three separate spaces, then he gave each separate rooms, windows and a niched space for fireplaces. These three areas also have dotted rectangles made in them which are Brough's symbol for beds. If so, this would indicate that he planned the sunk storey for accommodation. Brough was familiar with sunk storey flats since he himself lived and worked in one in a tenement on St Andrew's Street<sup>23</sup>.

The first, second and third floors were all connected by the same common, hanging stair. The elevation to the property shows Brough intended two doorways (**Plate 82**). Visitors entering the property through the front door would come up the steps and entered the first storey. On plan, Brough has drawn entrances, and divided them by the common stair. It would be impossible to visit the neighbour's house without going through the other front door, or go downstairs and get through the sunk storey door. Access to the second and third floors (**Plate 81**) came from the common stair, and both these floors had one door as an entrance to them and had not been divided into two or three spaces like the sunk storey and first floor.

Returning to the elevation (**Plate 82**), Brough intended a stormont window for the roof, but the plans for this level have not survived. The fact that Brough intended stormonts, and a common stair for two entrances, and floors and rooms which were divided from one another throughout every level, indicates this property was to be a tenement. The plan of the sunk storey (**Plate 79**) is an example of a New Town builder's tenement. This system contrasts that employed by builder William Smith for his property in George Street (**Plate 40**), which has one entrance and one hanging stair and no obvious separation of spaces and floors from one another throughout the five floors he built (**Plate 39**).

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<sup>23</sup>ECA, Extent Tax 1783 - 1786, SL35/ 15

As well as accommodation, the variety of commercial premises in the sunk storeys of the New Town is impressive. Street directories, extent tax, and trade extent tax records show bakeries, grocers, candle shops, watchmakers, tailors and others settled in rented spaces and rooms from year to year. Some designs for shop fronts show a variety of eye-catching designs such as Thomas Heriot's Gothic tracery for a Bridge Street shop<sup>24</sup>. Meanwhile it was suggested by *Caledonian Mercury* correspondent Anglo-Britannus, that the whole of the south side of Princes Street be converted into a street-long shopping mall<sup>25</sup> in 1784 whose elevation was to copy Young and Trotter's shop, which had been built in the 1760s at the east end of the street. This idea was to design shops specifically for the New Town, and the Princes Street mall project would have also given rain cover. It was an adaption of the tenements of the Old Town, with arcades and shops at ground floor level (Plate 25). These Old Town tenements show that innovations in the New Town were inspired by Edinburgh itself – in this case a purpose designed New Town shop was the model.

Shops and trades were a part of the New Town's reality and they showed that it was a part of the city, and not a quaint, elitist residential suburb for nobles<sup>26</sup>. It is not yet clear if builders designed their tenements specifically to have shops in them as part of their applications to the Council, or if they adapted the bedrooms to accommodate them after they had been built. There is no documentary evidence amongst the builders' petition papers for this. Chapter one of the thesis discussed how petitions did not have to reveal to the Council what a building's function was to be. It is clear that builders were prepared to design and build shops for the New Town, both as warehouses, like Young and Trotter's shop, and in tenements.

Sunk storey levels for houses were different from those in tenements. There are no surviving plans for kitchens intended for the New Town. However David Henderson's house on New Street shows

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<sup>24</sup> ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Extracted Processes, Thomas Heriot v Steele, Bridge Street, 6/3/1783

<sup>25</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 29/10/1784

<sup>26</sup> C. McKean, *James Craig and Edinburgh's New Town, James Craig, 1744 – 1795, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, ed. K. Cruft and A. Fraser, Mercat Press, 1995, p.49, p 55; C. McKean, *The Winged Citadel, Rassegna 64*, Edinburgh, 1995, p.16; C. McKean, *The Incivility of Edinburgh's New Town, The Neo-Classical Town, Scottish contributions to urban design since 1750*, The Rutland Press, 1996, pp.39-40

what must have been common in the New Town <sup>27</sup>(plate 83). The kitchen was a series of separated spaces which had been given specific functions. There was a scullery, pantry, larder and extra cellarage. The house-keeper also lived here in a separate room with a hall and two closets for a chambermaid and two more small boxbeds for servants. In Gilbert Meason's house on St Andrew's Square<sup>28</sup>, William Keys intended to give the kitchen a stone pavement which may have been the normal flooring.

Keys intended to link the kitchen with a three bay vaulted, clay-covered cellar, and drains and pipes for fresh water and to join the common sewer. These service pipes were the last part of the substructure of the house. Builders had to build them by law<sup>29</sup>, not only so that the Council made money but also to protect properties and people from harm. Without drains, pools of water collected around buildings and on streets and cellars flooded. It was a common problem throughout Edinburgh.

In 1790 feuars in Princes Street complained that the meuse lane between Hanover and Frederick Streets had no drains to carry off water from the lane and the sunk storeys<sup>30</sup>. The mason, Lockhart McPherson, made plans of the New Town's water pipes and sewers for builders and overseers to follow<sup>31</sup>, whilst men like David Wilson were hired by the Council to lay the pipes<sup>32</sup>. The New Town's underground world was linked together by a network of water pipes and the great sewer drain running along the middle of every street and square. Builders and overseers of public works collaborated to ensure that every house had service pipes built into the substructures.

A study of plans, petitions and accounts show that New Town substructures had to be well built, level and aligned, and that they had to be joined with the sewer and water supply. Within the substructures could be a myriad of rooms for activities, which could supplement the welfare of a tradesman, shopkeeper, servants and residents in a house or a tenement. Cellarage was common

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<sup>27</sup>National Register of Archives (Scotland),0017, Blair of Blairquhan, David Henderson, "Plan, Mr Hunter's House, 1767".

<sup>28</sup>NAS, SC39/17/306, William Keys v Gilbert Meason, 30/3/1774

<sup>29</sup>ECA, TCM, 29/7/1767, New Town Building Act, article.8

<sup>30</sup>ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Extracted Processes, Lord Swinton and others, 2/9/1790

<sup>31</sup>ECA, TCM, 22/11/1780

<sup>32</sup>ibid, 19/12/1787

to both, and its strong walls and vaulted spaces supplemented the strength foundations gave to the rest of the house above it.

Above the sunk storey was the superstructure into walls rising upwards. There were many kinds of walls used in house building. These were commonly ashlar, brick, and rubble. Windows and doors were also obvious exterior parts of the buildings, and all these elements will be discussed as well as the house's interior's stairs, woodwork and gable construction.

Ashlar walls were made from precut and polished stone and assembled on site. It was the most expensive kind of wall, and made from the best cut stone. Masons found and cut stone at quarries and transported them to the building site to be made into walls. James Craig paid an account for quarried stone from Ravelston to be used at the Physicians' Hall which included lintels and cut stone blocks<sup>33</sup>. The architect, David Henderson, also left clear instructions for masons carving the stone for his houses on New Street<sup>34</sup>. In both cases, ready- to- assemble parts and easy- to -follow instructions speeded up building. Henderson's instructions make it clear that the house had other walls made from cheaper materials of rubble and bricks.

An example of a rubble walled house is Gilbert Meason's home in St Andrew's Square (**plate 84**). There are also many other examples of rubble walls in the first New Town. Rose Street, Thistle Street, the meuse lanes and the backs of main street houses all used rubble walling. The major virtue of this type of wall was that it was quick to build, and allowed speculative builders to complete a house, and maintained a builder's cash flow unimpaired by the need to find and play for expensive stone.

Rubble walls were also common in the Old Town, and in modern developments to the south of the city, such as in George Square. Here, both tenements and houses were built with rubble walls, and only doors and windows were given ashlar stone pieces. In this respect, houses like Gilbert

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<sup>33</sup>NAS, SC35/17/365, James Craig v John Paris and others, 21/3/1783

<sup>34</sup>National Register of Archives ( Scotland), 0017, Blair of Blairquhan, David Henderson, " Plan, Mr Hunter's House, 1767"



Meason's house, though designed by Sir William Chambers, fitted into a traditional, and commonly used method of construction.

Brick walls were commonly used in substructures like cellars or the walls for pipes and cisterns, as in the property of the plumber, John Humble, on Princes Street<sup>35</sup>. There is less evidence that superstructures were entirely made of brick walls, for example, there were no houses in the New Town whose exterior walls are made of brick. This made Edinburgh's New Town houses differ to modern English houses where brick was commonly used for exterior walls. Aristocratic squares, like Cavendish Square<sup>36</sup> and Bedford Square<sup>37</sup> in London, used brick built houses, as did Bristol's Queen Square<sup>38</sup>, and other streets and new civic spaces in other leading cities like Manchester<sup>39</sup>, and Exeter<sup>40</sup>. Interior spaces in Edinburgh's New Town's properties, on the other hand, were shaped with brick or lath and plaster partition walls. The elliptical arches of the Physicians' Hall library were built in brick and not stone as originally intended<sup>41</sup>.

Some parts of the wall exteriors were harled, which was a very traditional wall treatment to protect the building from rain water damage when external renders were given in two coats of cement and sand, and then gravel, or crushed stone<sup>42</sup>. The mason, James Gosman, worked at the house of the lawyer, Hugh Maxwell, in Princes Street in 1772 where he erected a mutual chimney stack between Maxwell and his neighbour, Lady Maxwell,<sup>43</sup> and harled it. Further research may show whether harling was a common wall treatment for New Town houses. It can certainly, be found in Old Town tenements, where harled walls were whitewashed. Alex Leitch whitened Charles Thomson's property in Kinloch's Close<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Bailie Court Processes, Box 170, 447, Young and Trotter v Trustees of John Humble, June 1782

<sup>36</sup>J. Ayres, *Building the Georgian City*, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, 1998, p.101

<sup>37</sup>ibid, p.110

<sup>38</sup> P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance, Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660 – 1770*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p.57

<sup>39</sup> ibid, p.55

<sup>40</sup>J. Ayres, *Building the Georgian City*, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, 1998, p.110

<sup>41</sup>Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Library, Accounts 1778 - 1779

<sup>42</sup> J. Fleming, H. Honour, N. Pevsner, *The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture*, Penguin, 1966, see Roughcast, p271

<sup>43</sup>NAS, SC17/35/308, David Salmond v Hugh Maxwell, 31/8/1774

<sup>44</sup>ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Extracted Processes, Alex Leitch v Charles Thomson, 7/3/1782

The superstructure's façade was the most obvious element of the house's design. Some New Town architects did influence builders. Robert Adam's house for Baron Ord in Queen Street (**plate 21**) was widely copied by other builders and this influence will be discussed later in this section. Copying allowed builders to follow tastes set by famous architects and wealthy patrons, whilst still being committed to completing houses quickly. Doors and windows were an opportunity for builders to be more decorative and expressive than a rubble wall allowed. As walls were being built doors and windows were fitted into the building. There were many types, which could be comparatively sophisticated and make the building appear more attractive to buyers or lodgers. Alex Crawford's elevation for two houses in Queen Street (**plate 99**) shows balusters surrounds for the fenestration and Robert Burns gave one building on the south side of George Street 18 Venetian windows<sup>45</sup>, but his plan for this has not been found. Archival research of glass production may reveal large orders for window glass from builders to fit these Venetian windows out quickly.

Venetian windows were very popular, and had been used in Edinburgh before the development of the New Town, such as at Adam Square (**Plate 44**). They were found in public buildings like the Theatre Royal (**Plate 114**), Register House (**Plate 42**) and the Journeymens' Lodge (**Plate 105**). They were also used on both houses, like John Williamson's house in Queen Street (**Plate 100**) and tenements, such as gable ends on Castle Street (**Plate 9**). Building so many windows in New Town houses and tenements led to quick assembly techniques. In this case, the masons, wrights and glaziers worked together to assemble the sash case windows, their frames and the ashlar stone surrounds in the New Town's houses.

As the walls, doors and windows were being built into the house's exterior, the interior was also being built up. Stairways, vents, and structural timber frames were set in place floor by floor until the roof was ready to be built. Surviving evidence suggests hanging stairs were the most common form of stair, as in John Brough's (**Plates 79 - 81**), and William Smith's house plans (**Plates 39-40**).

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<sup>45</sup>ECA, Extent Tax, 1783 - 1786, SL35/15

In Brough's plan for a tenement the front door led to a passageway and straight to the stairs (Plates 79-81). These had been built into the walls, and it is because of this that the stairs were called hanging stairs. Brough intended these stairs for a tenement, but what stairs were built into single houses? Surviving stairs on Queen Street houses are also hanging stairs<sup>46</sup> (Plate 86), which indicates that hanging stairs were commonly used in the New Town. Both tenement and house stairs were given iron railings fitted into the house by smiths (plate 86) on front door steps and railings. These were mass produced in foundries and factories in Falkirk, and nearby Cramond to make building quicker and more cost effective.

Like masons and smiths, wrights had wood already cut and ready to assemble to build floors and roofs quickly so the house could be finished in accordance with a contract or Council laws. Doors and sash and case windows were also ready made easily fitted into the house. In 1792 John Hay worked at Lady Balcarras's house on the north side of George Street. He described the building's "bearing beams", "perpendicular posts", "cross girders"<sup>47</sup> and wood for ceiling supports, flooring, and skirting which wrights would have collected on site and fitted together. As with stone, the timber's journey to the wrights' hands at the New Town's building sites was a complicated one. Timber had usually been imported to Leith, and seasoned in a cellar or warehouse for a "sawer" cut it into pieces for assembly by the journeymen wrights, who were working for the master wrights hired by the builder.

The last stages of house building were to lay paving and then provide stabling and coachhouses in the meuse lane at the back of the house. This is not to say that house builders paved the streets, but they had to ensure that it was level and aligned to the street. The Council provided causewaylayers to do this and make the roads (plate 87). An important causewaylayer was Thomas Stevenson, who was an overseer of public works. He dominated building causeways from the 1760s to the 1790s. Stables had the same stages of house building, from feuing and marking out ground, laying foundations and finishing the roof and interior. Although there are no surviving

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<sup>46</sup> S.McKinstry, S. McKinstry, *Twenty Seven Queen Street, Edinburgh, Home of the Scottish Chartered Accountants 1891 – 2000*, The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland/RCAHMS, 2000

<sup>47</sup>NLS, Acc9769/22/1/35

drawings of New Town stables, they would have been like others in Edinburgh, such as Lord Barjarg's, built between 1760 and 1761 (plate 89). This was a two storey building, which is the kind the Council asked for in the New Town. However, some stables in Edinburgh could be very large, such as Lady Drummond's stables which had four storeys, which suggest they also housed people(Plate 88).

From digging out foundations to finishing the interior decorations of the house and stables, builders worked safely and quickly. Buildings were designed and built systematically in stages of legal, academic and practical rules of construction. Some of this practical experience was passed on from builder to builder, and this knowledge may have originated not only from working practices, but also books, such as ones written by Palladio and Vitruvius. However, if this was the case, then the resulting buildings were not a reflection upon the Palladian architecture Georgian architects like Lord Burlington had aspired to, but a reflection upon common building practices among tradesmen who could either read and understand these treatises or have them explained to them by those who could.

But, books were not necessarily the primary source of inspiration for telling builders how to design and construct houses. Traditional practices, like rubble walling, show that builders also had practical building skills, which were not taught through books, but by being on building sites. They also put up houses by issuing instructions to their workmen and ordering supplies of "ready-to- assemble" parts from merchants and tradesmen to the site, which hastened completion. Builders, like architects, organised men and materials and worked as designers and constructors, and their designs and work gangs will be discussed later in this section and in further detail in the third section of the thesis.

### **Getting Materials and Supplies**

New Town houses reflected the importance of local, national and international supplies, materials and the extensive networks of contacts builders must have had with local men and international sources of raw materials and finely made parts. New Town houses and tenements were called regular and uniform because mass - manufactured parts were used in them. Supplies of stone, lime, brick, glass, slate and iron were among the many materials builders had to buy. Often,

suppliers were Scottish, but builders also bought goods from England and abroad. New Town houses were products of the Industrial Revolution in Scotland, Great Britain and Europe.

The most obvious local produce used in house building was stone and brick. Builders bought stone from local quarries. Popular ones were nearby at Hailes, Redhall, Ravelston and Broughton<sup>48</sup>. Often builders themselves owned or rented quarries and could either be self-sufficient in stone or supply others. Less obvious local products also included lime. This was used by masons and plasterers and was a very important ingredient for mortar and plaster. Farmers and builders from Gilmerton (William Handyside, Gilmerton farmer<sup>49</sup>) or Nicolson Street (masons Robert Baird, William Haldane and James Taylor<sup>50</sup>) were able to mine for lime and sell bags of it to builders such as John Brough, or the Dean mason and New Town builder, Alex Peacock, and his partner Andrew Neil, Brough's overseer<sup>51</sup>.

At the same time as natural products like stone and lime were being quarried and mined, man-made products like iron, brick and glass were being made in and near Edinburgh. There were two large local brick factories owned by builders: one by the mason, William Jamieson, and another by the brothers, Adam and Thomas Russell. They enabled them to build and supply others in the New Town and elsewhere. Jamieson exported his bricks to America<sup>52</sup>, and the Russells won the approbation of Mr Lees of Staffordshire who was called to Edinburgh by the Council to advise on brick production<sup>53</sup>. The Edinburgh Glass House Company<sup>54</sup> and the Edinburgh Roperie Company<sup>55</sup> had factories in Leith. They supplied builders with glass for doors and windows, or rope for scaffolds and lifting gear for heavy materials like stone and wood. Messrs Edington and Caddell at Cramond made ironmongery which builders bought for New Town<sup>56</sup> houses.

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<sup>48</sup> A. A. McMillan, R.J.Gillanders, J.A.Fairhurst, *Building Stones of Edinburgh*, Edinburgh Geological Society, 1999

<sup>49</sup>NAS, CS231/Seq/B1/7

<sup>50</sup>NAS, SC39/17/387, Robert Baird, William Haldane and James Taylor, 13/7/1787

<sup>51</sup>NAS, SC39/17/397, Alex Peacock v Thomas Dickson, 23/1/1788

<sup>52</sup>ECA, Petitions and miscellaneous papers of Edinburgh Town Council, 1/1/1765 - 31/12/1767, Petitions1765, D0014R.

<sup>53</sup>ECA, TCM, 30/4/1788

<sup>54</sup>NAS, CS231/Seq/B1/7

<sup>55</sup>ibid

Houses were also built of materials that came from elsewhere in Scotland. One of the most obvious and popular of these were roof slates from Easdale, an island near Oban in the west of Scotland. Millions of slates were quarried every year by the Easdale Marble and Slate Quarrying Company and transported east or elsewhere in the British Empire. Builders often used Easdale slate but there were also slate quarries nearer to Edinburgh at Stobo<sup>57</sup> and Ladyside<sup>58</sup>. Builders also fitted out houses with carpets made in Stirling by firms like Archibald Gilchrist, Robert Harvey and John Bowie<sup>59</sup>. Glaswegian merchants like John Shirra, William Stirling and Sons and Robert Brown, McAlpine and Co also supplied builders with goods.<sup>60</sup> Edinburgh architects, like Robert Robinson<sup>61</sup>, and Charles Freebairn<sup>62</sup>, used west coast merchants to get supplies for building projects, which could also be on that side of the country as they were not restricted to working within Edinburgh's walls.

Iron work was not only supplied by local artisans but also by the Carron Iron Company which was based near Falkirk. This was an extensive factory which could mass produce items quicker and cheaper than smaller foundries. Carron supplied builders with a proliferating range of objects, such as fireplaces, railings, pipes, cisterns and cookers. Fireplaces were bought as kits to be fitted into houses. They joined with the vents and chimneys and gables on the roof. These would also have been built into the superstructure as the house was going up. The most impressive and dramatic fireplaces were made of plaster and marble, and gave plasterers and carvers opportunities to show off their skills as designers and craftsmen, though, some wooden fireplace surrounds were also used, such as Gilbert Meason's house on St Andrew's Square<sup>63</sup>.

England also provided materials for builders. John Brough's accounts list these suppliers. Andrew Neal<sup>64</sup> and William Morrison's accounts do not show English suppliers, but it is likely that Brough was not the only builder who bought materials from England. He had a large network of English

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<sup>56</sup>ibid

<sup>57</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 9/7/1792

<sup>58</sup>ibid, 19/3/1793

<sup>59</sup>NAS, CS231/Seq/B1/7

<sup>60</sup>ibid

<sup>61</sup>NAS, SC39/17/323, Hugh McGregor v Robert Robertson, 1/3/1776

<sup>62</sup>NAS, CS271/8604, Charles Freebairn v William Shaw, 1776

<sup>63</sup>NAS, SC39/17/306, William Keys v Gilbert Meason, 30/3/1774

<sup>64</sup>NAS, CS96/726/1

manufacturers and merchants. Names and towns are recorded in his accounts, but not in detail. Brough was known in the north of England in Manchester, Leeds, Wakefield, York, and he did business in the midlands at Birmingham, and also in the south in Newburgh and London. From all these records only the Birmingham brass founder, John Clark, and York's "ornamental chimney piece"<sup>65</sup> maker, Thomas Wolstenholm, show what was being made or sent. Examples of Wolstenholm's fireplaces can still be seen in York<sup>66</sup>, although they have yet to be identified in Edinburgh's New Town.

Thomas Wolstenholm's fireplaces were transported to Edinburgh and then carted to the builders' building sites in the New Town to be stored and fixed into the houses when required. An example of a chimney piece being sent in boxes for construction can be seen in the records of the plasterer, James Nesbit, and the architect, James Craig, who advised William Forbes of Callender about refurbishing Callender house between 1785 and 1786. Nesbit promised Forbes that the chimney piece was to be sent in 2 boxes and put up in 3 days<sup>67</sup>. In the attic of William Morrison's Princes Street tenement were a parcel of railings, boxes of door locks, parcels of stucco work and four ready cut capitals<sup>68</sup>. These are examples of the way that builders ordered and stored things which were not necessarily made in Edinburgh or made by builders on site, but made available for them to fit into the house quickly.

The same but longer journey would have been made for the iron and wood that was imported from Scandinavia and America for house building. Riga and Libau wood and iron from Gothenburg was shipped in on order.<sup>69</sup> John Brough was surely one among many builders who used these materials. Other builders who specified Riga wood for their houses include William Keys and James Craig for Gilbert Meason's house<sup>70</sup> and the College of Physicians' Hall<sup>71</sup> respectively. Leith timber merchants like Robert and Alex Sheriff could supply this wood, seasoned and cut to specified

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<sup>65</sup>Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, *York Historic Buildings in the Central Area, A Photographic Record*, HMSO, 1981

<sup>66</sup>*ibid*, p. 22, plates 179-180

<sup>67</sup>NAS, GD171/24/22

<sup>68</sup>NAS, CS96/794/1

<sup>69</sup>NAS, CS231/Seq/B1/7

<sup>70</sup>NAS, SC39/17/306, *William Keys v Gilbert Meason*, 30/3/1774

<sup>71</sup>Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Library, *College Minutes January – May 1776*

measured parts for the buildings and then transported to the sites. Houses were fitted with ready made parts. Builders sold supplies to one another both locally and from far afield. John Brown, a wright from Tollcross, supplied wood to other wrights<sup>72</sup> as well as making furniture<sup>73</sup> and working in buildings, such as those put up by John Brough<sup>74</sup>. The masons, William Jamieson, the Russell brothers and William Pirnie, all made and sold bricks as well as built houses, and the Chrystie family sold stone from their quarry at Hailes<sup>75</sup>.

Houses were products of many parts produced industrially across Great Britain and Europe. Supplying materials sustained a community of builders who needed one another to survive in business - especially in hard times. Such powers of organisation and management show that builders were not only designers and contractors but that they worked as merchants and suppliers to tradesmen. Just as the Sherriff brothers offered builders trade credit for timber, so did builders. When men worked in partnership or in family businesses then these arrangements were even more convenient. This business is examined in the last section of the thesis. Organising a good supply of materials aided the speed with which houses could be built, and research on this complements the views established on the study of stages of building New Town houses.

### **Site management**

Another aspect of house building was site management. Good site management helped to be built houses quickly and safely and increase profits. Council laws about foundations and refuse clearance demanded it and so too did contracts. James Craig agreed by contract to supervise the site of the Physicians' Hall and his men's health and safety which included building huts (shades) (plate 90), scaffolds, gangways, and lifting gear<sup>76</sup>. All these things will now be discussed.

Craig himself wrote that contracted work meant better supervision and care taken over work - "the utmost care is necessary", he told James Boswell, to prevent work "from being slighted & superficially done. This I know from experience of my own work people<sup>77</sup>". Apart from the

<sup>72</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 196, 540, 21/5/1794

<sup>73</sup>ibid, Box 193, 527, Messrs William Sibbald and Co John Brough, James Miller and John Brown, 15/11/1792

<sup>74</sup>NAS, CS231/Seq/B1/7

<sup>75</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 154, 405, Janet Chrystie v James Tait, 31/10/1776

<sup>76</sup>Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Library, Contract, 26/3/1776

<sup>77</sup>Yale University Library, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, C847, James Craig to James Boswell, 27/2/1787



College Hall, Craig supervised work at the Observatory, New Church and for Robert Adam's Linneaus monument at the Royal Botanical Gardens<sup>78</sup>. He was trained and experienced in organising a building site<sup>79</sup>. This examination of building site management looks at scaffolding, railing off sites, workmens' huts and refuse clearance.

Builders knew how dangerous sites were. Men lost their lives building houses. Lady Glenorchy grieved when the architect of her chapel fell to his death from its scaffolds<sup>80</sup>. Newspapers carried reports of men falling from scaffolds as at Sir Laurence Dundas's house in August 1772<sup>81</sup>. Later, in 1775 the journeyman mason, Walter Fettes, took a court case against William Jamieson and his overseer, Robert Mailler, because of an accident on the site<sup>82</sup>. Further evidence about working conditions and accidents can be found in Captain Horne's Mortification fund<sup>83</sup>. This was a pension paid to tradesmen who had been hurt. Examples from the 1750s show that men were hurt building the Exchange. Hospital archives do not have records like these, and contracts like Craig's may have helped improve site management. There was, however, little that could be done to help "mason's trouble", which was phthisis. Stone dust got into lungs and many men died before reaching fifty years old<sup>84</sup>.

The first stage in site management was the chalking, digging and levelling the ground for a feuar. The site was then fenced off. The overseer of public works then gave the site a signpost. None have survived, but they were likely to signify that the plot had been taken, and give the feuar's name. Overseer, James Gordon, was also asked to ensure that builders railed off their areas so their property, materials and men could be supervised safely<sup>85</sup> and other builders, residents and traffic could work too.

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<sup>78</sup>A. Lewis, K.Cruft, A.Fraser, *Descriptive List of Works and Projects by James Craig, James Craig 1744 – 1795, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, Mercat Press, 1995, pp.101-120

<sup>79</sup>A.Lewis, K.Cruft, *James Craig: A Biographical Sketch, James Craig 1744 – 1795, The Ingenious Architect of the New Town of Edinburgh*, Mercat Press, 1995, pp.1-12.

<sup>80</sup>NAS, CH2/129/25, Chapter XII, p.392

<sup>81</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 8/8/1772

<sup>82</sup>NAS, SC17/39/17/328, Walter Fettes v William Jamieson, 19/3/1777

<sup>83</sup>ECA, McLeod Bundles 113 and 114.

<sup>84</sup>*The Builder*, vol. 10, no.506, p657, 1852 . Thanks to Dr Andrew Doig for this information.

<sup>85</sup>ECA, TCM, 11/6/1788

Putting in wooden rails began the second step of site management which was to ensure that supplies of materials and shades were kept at the back of the houses. This removed obstructions to traffic. In 1789 James Hill's goods stopped the Russell brothers and John Burns working<sup>86</sup>. In 1791 inhabitants of Frederick Street complained that materials blocked their safe access which suggests supplies were delivered to the front of houses. These had to be removed from the streets<sup>87</sup>.

Workshops were set up at the backs of houses to accommodate men and supplies. Dean of Guild court cases show that back gardens were used for the mason's shades and the wright's work places<sup>88</sup> which were simple wooden huts. John Home's design for one of these huts, intended for Princes Street in 1780 (Plate 90) shows how simple these huts were. In Home's case this hut was a large, two storey structure. But, in these huts tradesmen would assemble parts of the structure. From 1786 the overseer of public works had to ensure that these work places did not obstruct traffic, which meant that they were set up in the back garden areas<sup>89</sup>.

The Councils' laws about refuse clearance informed builders about keeping building sites safe. The Acts were passed in 1770 and 1777 and indicate the amount of earth and building rubbish building the New Town had created. This was dealt with by creating "the Mound". Minutes about it appeared between 1781 and 1787, and these correspond with laws that were passed about building refuse clearance. The 1770 Nuisance Act had specified that it was illegal to lay down rubbish, stones and timber on streets and for masons to hew stones on the street without written permission. If they did not have it they would face fines. A builder had twenty four hours to clear away earth and rubbish from digging out foundations or face further fines. These measures were strengthened in 1777, when it was added that water pipes could not be put on the outside walls of houses. Also, timber had to be removed from the streets within three hours of delivery. As usual, stone, earth and rubbish had to be removed from the street and masons could not hew or dress stones there. By 1786 the overseer of public works also had to ensure the removal of

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<sup>86</sup>ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Unextracted Processes, SL91/20, Adam and Thomas Russell, John Burns v James Hill, 9/4/1789

<sup>87</sup>ECA, TCM, 22/6/1791

<sup>88</sup>ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Extracted Processes, Alex Gray, 9/5/1786

<sup>89</sup>ECA, TCM, 9/8/1786

encroachments and obstructions. The onus was on the builder to organise his men, materials and workplace efficiently and legally.

These laws, fines and supervision ensured that builders developed a system for site management whereby rubbish was heaped at the backs of houses. Often, it was recycled for levelling streets as John Brough told the Court of Session<sup>90</sup>. But first he would heap up piles of rubbish. Between 1782 and 1784 he faced fines for leaving rubbish in meuse lanes in Princes, George and St Andrews Streets<sup>91</sup>. Work areas, supply stores and rubbish heaps were made into distinct areas by the builder, overseer and tradesmen. Failure to do these things meant that builders faced fines and embarrassing court cases.

As well as securing the safety of workmen, supplies and refuse collection, builders also had to protect their buildings and sites from theft and vandalism. In compliance with the 1770 Nuisance Act, the architect, Robert Robinson, asked the Dean of Guild in 1774 for permission to build a wall around his site on the southwest corner of St Andrew's Square to secure materials from weather damage and theft<sup>92</sup>. Considering the high costs of hewn stone and seasoned timber this was reasonable. Robinson was not the only one to safeguard sites. James Craig enclosed the Physicians' Hall site with temporary railings and hired a superintendent to defend his building and materials from "idle mischief" and "injury"<sup>93</sup>. In the light of court cases for theft among tradesmen in the New Town, putting up walls, fences and hiring security was a sensible precaution against losses of time and money. Fencing allowed work to be safer and quicker. But, it did not always secure tradesmens' property from theft. In 1782 journeymen wrights Alex Mouat and Thomas Thomson were hanged for stealing other wrights' tools from New Town building sites on George Street, Queen Street and Princes street<sup>94</sup>.

Site management was an important part of how houses were built. It is something that scholars of the New Town have not commented upon, but it was something that architects and builders were

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<sup>90</sup>NAS, CS271/49912, Answers for the City Treasurer of Edinburgh to Bill of Suspension for John Brough, 24/4/1787

<sup>91</sup>ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Unextracted Processes, SL91/14, William Sprott v John Brough, 23/4/1783

<sup>92</sup>ECA, TCM, 20/4/1774

<sup>93</sup>Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Library, Accounts 1777-1778

aware of through their own training, working methods and through the Council's laws. Providing sites with scaffolds, railings, workhuts and refuse dumps enabled houses to be built quickly and safely, and this is something that everyone wanted. This research also amplifies the logistics of builders' businesses in the New Town through their organization of labour, materials and sites.

In conclusion, common ways in which houses were built have been outlined from the moment the foundations were dug, to the completion of its superstructure. In the course of the chapter's studies it is clear that builders had a more complicated life than they have been given credit for by New Town scholars.

On one hand, tenements can be read as derivatives of a building tradition that was well established in the Old Town. Rubble walls, hanging stairs and the wood work in the roof and windows were all typical of this kind of work. Similarly, locating quarries, and timber supplies as well as site management using scaffolds, protective fences and huts were also well established. But, builders were also organisers and managers of new building supplies. Within these aspects of their work, the builders fostered links with communities of merchants and tradesmen as they themselves began to supply men with raw materials to build houses with. People began to know each other and work with another, and builders established trade links throughout lowland Scotland, England and some parts of Northern Europe. This led to men developing new professional skills and having the confidence to try working as builders themselves, such as Andrew Neal and James Hill who both worked in John Brough's team. With so many properties being built in the New Town the building professions developed quickly.

Founders were one of many other new professions which established themselves as a part of house building in the area. New found confidence was also expressed in designs and elevations, such as using British Palladian designs, including Venetian windows, or aspects of Robert Adam's designs, in houses and tenements. At the same time, builders also managed to refrain from idealism, and maintain a grip on practical ways of building properties. In this respect, their designs for tenements reflected a consistent concern to make houses easy and profitable to build.

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<sup>94</sup> NAS, JC7/41, 13/3/1781 – 9/4/1783

## CHAPTER 5: WHO BUILT HOUSES ?

The builders' names and trades are given in Town Council archives such as Council minutes, Chamberlain's accounts and feuing records, but they do not reveal how teams of men were organised to build houses, and how they learnt their skills. Contrasting old and new tradesmens' organisations shows that there was a challenge to the established incorporations of masons and wrights working in and around Edinburgh. Builders wanted to be recognised as skilled professionals. These new professionals emerged through the traditional structure of master craftsmen, and journeymen as well as architects and the need to decorate New Town properties. This chapter will discuss incorporation mastercraftsmen, builders and architects because these three groups commonly designed and built properties in the New Town, with the builders becoming stronger than the two other professions in the area.

### Incorporations

The New Town promoted the importance of Edinburgh's tradesmen. The Mary Chapel had worked for the medieval Royal Court and Council. Even in the 18th century Council Deacons claimed honorific titles like the King's Carpenter in Scotland (William Butter<sup>1</sup>) (plate 91), the King's Glasier in Scotland (Thomas Sommers<sup>2</sup>) (plate 92) and so on. Even the New Town's overseer, William Sibbald, called himself Clerk of the King's Works in Edinburgh<sup>3</sup>. This was a continuation of the Chapel's traditions of loyal, royal service for both Stewart and Hanoverian monarchs; even in the 1790s the Chapel abided by 17th century rules (Acts and Regulations)<sup>4</sup>.

The Chapel represented many crafts that were affiliated to the masons' and wrights' trades in Edinburgh. Wrights, coopers, painters and slaters were represented by the Deacons of wrights, and the Deacons of masons represented the masons, bowers (makers of bows), glaziers, plumbers and upholsterers. These Deacons ensured that masters of each trade could work freely and without encroachments into their trades and crafts from those without training and title to do so.

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<sup>1</sup> ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Extracted Processes, Messrs Wilson and Pirnie v William Butter and George Ranker, 7/3/1782

<sup>2</sup> J.Kay, *A Series of Original Portraits and Caricature Etchings by John Kay with Biographical Sketches and anecdotes, Volume one*, Hugh Paton, 1842

<sup>3</sup> ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Extracted Processes, William Sibbald's report on Rose Street, 23/5/1791

<sup>4</sup> NLS, Dep302/2, 13/2/1784

They also represented the trades in Council and sought to maintain its seats on benches of its chambers, Committees, Dean of Guild court and at annual Conventions of Royal Burghs.

The Chapel ensured that businesses thrived and survived by overseeing apprenticeships in its trades. Apprentices entered the Chapel under an indenture aged between 15 and 16 and served for six years. Graduating to practising a craft and trade as a business in Edinburgh was dependent on passing an essay whereby two Chapel master craftsmen asked the apprentice to design and make something. This meant that the apprentice spent time studying the Chapel's books and attending practical arts and crafts training. Records of the apprentices' essays show that they read Palladio, and had to produce designs and pieces of work in their respective trades.

For examples, masons had to make plans and pasteboard models of houses<sup>5</sup>, and give them hanging stairs while glasiars made windows, and wrights made furniture. In 1772 apprentice mason, Alex Reid, was asked to make a model of a hanging stair, and draw a Doric column for his essay<sup>6</sup>. Another apprentice mason, Lockhart McPherson, was also asked to make a model of a stair, as well as design an elevation and plan of a house, and draw a Doric door<sup>7</sup>. Wrights were also often asked to copy a Tuscan, or Doric column. John Young<sup>8</sup> and Thomas Heriot<sup>9</sup> were both asked to do this "after Palladio". Apprentice painters were usually asked to paint in mahogany, and copy stone, like white marble, like William Deas's essay<sup>10</sup> although Alex Weir was asked to paint a tenement white, and pick out architectural enrichments too<sup>11</sup>. Lastly, glasier Andrew Keay had to read Walter Geddes's book "of draughts<sup>12</sup>", and specifically the 82<sup>nd</sup> page of the book, to pass his essay. The Chapel made him read the book, and this illustrates that incorporation apprentices read books to study to pass their exams. Giving tenements' hanging stairs, painting them white, and using Palladio were all ways of working which were adopted and adapted in building the New Town and ensured that there were standards of work to be learnt and kept.

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<sup>5</sup> D. Stevenson, *The First Freemasons, Scotland's early Lodges and their members*, Aberdeen University Press, 1988, p.16

<sup>6</sup> NLS, Dep 302/2, 1/8/1772

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, 19/8/1780

<sup>8</sup> NLS, Dep 302/1, 14/7/1755

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*, 29/8/1759

<sup>10</sup> NLS, Dep 302/2, 13/2/1771

<sup>11</sup> NLS, Dep 302/1, 5/3/1757

Before the New Town was built this training programme produced new tradesmen. To be a master craftsman of the Mary Chapel, or of the incorporations of wrights and masons of Leith, Canongate, Calton and Portsburgh was to have the best possible chance of finding work in Edinburgh and its near neighbours, in local architects' or government offices. Having become a master craftsman, a member of the incorporations could aspire to become a Deacon, and have a political career.

Master craftsmen were allowed to work for themselves, take apprentices and employ tradesmen. These tradesmen were called journeymen. The incorporations would not allow journeymen the same rights as master craftsmen, and would sometimes prosecute them as "unfreemen" who had trespassed and encroached on the incorporations' rights and privileges. Apprentices to master craftsmen often worked as journeymen before they sat their essay<sup>13</sup>, and sometimes a master craftsman would spend his career working for Deacons<sup>14</sup>.

Even in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Mary Chapel allowed unfreemen to work in the city because there were not enough master craftsmen to complete building projects<sup>15</sup>. Journeymen tradesmen, whether they were apprentices to master craftsmen, or men from outside Edinburgh and its neighbouring towns, flocked to the capital to find work. Deacons and master craftsmen employed them, and encouraged them to either join the incorporation, or work exclusively for the masters there. But, there was little hope of every journeyman becoming a master craftsman because of the time and money it took to go through apprenticeships<sup>16</sup>.

Consequently, journeymen set up their own society. This was affiliated to the incorporations, but looked after journeymens' interests, and families. The Society of Journeymen was established in 1717 through the Mary Chapel for the journeymen wrights and masons in Edinburgh. Unfortunately, there are no surviving minutes for the Society. It is safe to assume that, like

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<sup>12</sup>NLS, Dep 302/2, 8/2/1783

<sup>13</sup> D. Stevenson, *The First Freemasons, Scotland's Early Lodges and their members*, Aberdeen University Press, 1988, p.14

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, p.43

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*, pp.18-19

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, pp.42-51

incorporations, it had office holders and rules, and it is highly likely that both the Chapel and the other incorporations' Deacons knew the leaders of the Society of Journeymen. The Chapel appointed a "keeper of the journeymen' box", such as the wright, Alexander Bruce, in 1783<sup>17</sup>, which illustrated the close relationship between the organisations. The box probably contained records and accounts of payments. Journeymen made up the building teams which put up houses. They were large and had specialists in them such as "founders" and masons, wrights, smiths, plasterers, painters, plumbers, upholsterers and glaziers. These men put up the substructure and superstructure. They would also have labourers working beside them who would help them. The builder, his overseer and the Council's overseer would have given these journeymen drawings, instructions and the builder paid either daily or weekly wages.

These relationships between master craftsmen, journeymen and labourers were very well established by the time the New Town was being built. The stability of these relationships was rarely tested. In 1764 journeymen unsuccessfully went on strike for increased wages<sup>18</sup>, but they did not seek to overthrow the Chapel's monopoly on working in Edinburgh, and training apprentices. The Deacons dominated business in Edinburgh and its outlying districts. The unrest caused by the Congress group of master tradesmen, and the Unity group of journeymen from 1777 to 1779 were developments of established groups of tradesmen in the incorporations and Society of Journeymen.

Despite misgivings about the extension of the royalty from 1759, the incorporations' grip on building in the New Town was obvious from 1767 until the fall of Sir Laurence Dundas from power. Mary Chapel men like John Young and William Jamieson, Canongate's Alex Young and Duncan Drummond, and Calton's William Pirnie and John Horn were all busy feuing and building in the east end. Each had their own logistics and building teams.

As well as traditions, titles and placements in political, professional and social institutions of local and national significance, the Chapel was well versed in producing modern architecture for

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<sup>17</sup>NLS, Dep 302/2, 20/9/1783



Edinburgh. Deacons had been responsible for converting the High Street, Canongate and Holyrood into a series of fine houses, courts and squares from the 17th century on. By the time James or Chessels Courts was being planned and built the Chapel had already demonstrated to Edinburgh and Scotland that it was capable of transforming a medieval city into a modern one. Although lacking the sublime grandeur of the New Town or George's Square and Lady Nicolson's Park, Mylne's Court and James's Court did show that local men knew how to design and build squares and could build modern, uniform tenement blocks (plate 93). Mid 18th century Edinburgh saw many more squares and streets being planned and built, and Chapel Deacons and masters found work to do and property to possess. Often proprietorship led to property empires being planned and maintained. The Chapel's opposition to the 1759 extension bill was not about an unwillingness to build modern architecture but about maintaining these empires in the light of the expected exodus of people to the new *élite* district.

In 1759 the Chapel flexed its political muscles and brought Drummond's bill down. As well as binding Edinburgh's building trades together, it also sat in majesty over a confederation of other incorporations of masons and wrights which worked in Edinburgh's neighbouring satellite districts in Canongate, Leith, Calton and Portsburgh. Together these organisations controlled building businesses and training programmes, but the New Town's builders created new groups and added new professions to them, which the incorporations had not included.

### **Builders**

Journeymen had built houses in old Edinburgh during the 18th century, such as Alison Square<sup>19</sup>, which was built by the wright, Colin Alison, in Bristo, in 1749<sup>20</sup>. This was not common until the extension of the royalty encouraged free trade. The New Town presented new opportunities for work with journeymen and unfreemen working for themselves. This was a break with the incorporations' rights and traditional working practices. Furthermore, unfreemen also began to give boys apprenticeships, which also broke incorporations' traditions.

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<sup>18</sup>*Edinburgh Courant*, 9/7/1764

<sup>19</sup>ECA, TCM, 24/1/1781

<sup>20</sup>S. Harris, *The Place Names of Edinburgh*, Gordon Wright Publishing, 1996, p.57

Incorporation master craftsmen dominated the building of the New Town in the 1760s and 1770s, but some men who worked there cannot be traced to existing archives for incorporations. There are no archives which show the memberships of the Journeymen's Society, as well as the Leith, Canongate, and Portsburgh's Incorporations of masons and wrights. Consequently, it is difficult to know which men people who did not belong the Mary Chapel or Calton incorporations were necessarily journeymen who later became builders. But, in a few cases, some tradesmens' locations are given in records. For example, John Watson was from Pleasance, and James Donaldson was from Crosscauseway. They and James Harper worked together to feu a plot for building in the New Town in February 1772<sup>21</sup>. They were not Mary Chapel men, and Watson, Donaldson and Harper worked outside the Chapel's jurisdiction, and restrictive practices. Meanwhile, Messrs Home, Neal, Reid and Thomson, busy building along Canal Street, also represented <sup>22</sup> the New Town breaking down the Chapel Deacon's power and becoming a free trading area for new tradesmen and businesses. This was a realization of George Drummond's dream of the 1750s. The Incorporated Trades of Calton led the way in accepting that a master could work in more than one trade - something that the Mary Chapel called "encroachment". In 1769 David Donaldson was allowed to work as a wright and glazier<sup>23</sup> but this was an isolated case. In the Edinburgh incorporation, the mason, Alex Laing, was allowed to work in his trade if he paid for the privelege<sup>24</sup>. This, as well as asking men to produce drawings like the ones asked for in essays, was to be the way the incorporation adopted unfreemen as members in the future, without asking them to become apprentices.

Although the harsh realities of life as a builder contrasted with Drummond's zeal for the extension in the 1750s, there is a change in the pattern of feuing and building in the New Town after 1780, when Sir Laurence Dundas fell from political power. The Independents replaced Sir Laurence's incorporation master craftsmen with their own choices. They looked to employ men from outside of the Mary Chapel and free trade flourished. Although politicians applied aspects of Adam Smith's thinking on competition it is unknown if wages and house prices were driven down. Indications that the builders of the New Town were changing are given in the Council's

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<sup>21</sup>ECA, TCM, 10/2/1773

<sup>22</sup>ibid, 31/3/1773

<sup>23</sup>ECA, SL110/1/3, Incorporated Trades of Calton, 30/11/1769

administrative records such as feuing records, town Council minutes, tax records and the chamberlains' accounts. Men outside the Chapel, like Robert Burns, thrived by getting the contract to build at St Andrew's Church in George Street, and as a mason he organised slater, wright and plumber work<sup>25</sup> which implies he employed a team of journeymen. This was "free trade" in action since the Mary Chapel would have charged him with encroachment but the New Town was a haven for unfreemen and free trade.

Burns developed a successful house building business in the New Town. James Tait, James Nesbit, William Smith, John Sutter, Claud Cleghorn, Alex Forrest, John Hay, Daniel Lamb, John Brough and Andrew Neal and many others joined did so too. They were not members of the Mary Chapel and Calton incorporation, and it is not known where they came from. Council minutes do record that the mason, Alex Peacock,<sup>26</sup> ( Queen Street) and the wright, Claud Cleghorn,<sup>27</sup> (George Street and Frederick Street) were from Dean, and the wright, David Hay (Charlotte Square), was from Aberlady<sup>28</sup> but not if they were members of incorporations. It appears that the New Town allowed tradesmen who were neither a master craftsman nor a member of the Journeymen's Society and still work as a tradesman, and, what is more, as a builder. The rise of the unfreemen is described in Mary Chapel minutes. Between 1776 and 1779, when Congress and Unity groups were applying pressure on Sir Laurence's administration, through calls for burgh reform, and wage rises, journeymen were encroaching on masters' trades and work at Leith Pier<sup>29</sup>, and elsewhere<sup>30</sup>, and it was at this time that unfreemens' businesses prospered. A little later, from 1781 until the 1790s Portsburgh's masters began to refuse to pay homage to the Mary Chapel and the authority over the confederation of neighbouring incorporations was being questioned<sup>31</sup>. This resistance to restrictive practices and the old jurisdictions of Incorporations represented a common development of new building businesses and practices. In this same period, the Chapel was defending its rights and privileges through court cases against New Town builders who were

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<sup>24</sup>NLS, Dep 302/2, 23/10/1773

<sup>25</sup>ECA, TCM, 6/2/1782

<sup>26</sup>NAS, CS231/Seq/B1/7

<sup>27</sup>ECA, TCM, 20/8/1783

<sup>28</sup>ibid, 4/8/1790

<sup>29</sup>NLS, Dep 302/2, 20/6/1776

<sup>30</sup>ibid, 22/5/1779

<sup>31</sup>ibid, 22/9/1781

encroaching on its rights, and, at the same time, seeking to reform its rules to allow them entry so to absorb the blows being dealt its authority. As if to symbolise the reconciliation of the builders with the Chapel Deacons in the late 1780s and early 1790s Robert Burns became a Chapel<sup>32</sup> and Council Deacon<sup>33</sup>. He was one of many New Town builders who had joined the Mary Chapel. As these new master builders multiplied in numbers in Edinburgh so journeymen could find more work, and move from builder to builder until they too were ready to work as a builder.

In 1791 a labourer, James Gunn, became an apprentice of builders, Alex Paterson and James Dott, with a view to becoming a house builder himself<sup>34</sup>. Paterson and Dott were New Town builders (North Castle Street, 1792 - 1793<sup>35</sup>), and were not members of the Mary Chapel. Taking on apprentices reflected the organisation and ambition to continue to compete with the Chapel and incorporations' training programmes. It is not known what Gunn's training was to consist of, nor how long it was to last. But, it does show that builders were training men outside skilled trades, such as labourers, to work in the house building business.

In comparison to incorporation apprentices, it was also unusual for a labourer to be taken on. Boys from George Watson's Hospital and George Heriot's Hospital, which were schools, and relations of master craftsmen, or sons of brewers, farmers, bakers, barbers and other established urban trades usually supplied the incorporations<sup>36</sup> with apprentices and the money required to train them<sup>37</sup>. Gunn was being given a chance to learn a good trade where he may not have been given the chance to do so by incorporations.

Although Gunn's training programme is not known, the wright and builder, John Brough, also took on an apprentice called Archibald Johnston, who was from Linton. In June 1784 Johnston agreed to become Brough's apprentice and servant<sup>38</sup>. But, Brough did not teach Johnstone, as an

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<sup>32</sup>ibid, 14/9/1793

<sup>33</sup>ECA, TCM, 18/9/1793

<sup>34</sup>NAS, SC39/17/415, Paterson and Dott v James and Alex Gunn, 1/6/1791

<sup>35</sup>ECA, TCM, 29/5/1793

<sup>36</sup>ECA, Rolls of Apprentices 1706 – 1774, SL34/4/1

<sup>37</sup> D. Stevenson, *The First Freemasons, Scotland's Early Lodges and their Members*, Aberdeen University Press, 1988, pp.12-42

<sup>38</sup>NAS, B22/8/175, John Brough, 24/6/1784

apprentice builder, his own trade of carpentry, but mason work and plaster work too. This kind of training was different to the apprenticeships incorporations offered where apprentices studied just one trade.

New organisations emerged through the building of the New Town which gave builders increased professional status and higher public profile. Builders Robert Inglis (mason) and James Salisbury (wright) led Edinburgh's "Society of Master Builders, Wrights and Masons"<sup>39</sup>. Although there are no surviving minutes and accounts for the Society, the very existence of the group implies that New Town builders, who did not belong to the Mary Chapel or other incorporations, bound themselves together in a society. This group could then articulate concerns about building and business to the Council, Chapel, incorporations, architects, investors and clients. Property investment groups and partnership businesses in the New Town were backed by Independent party leaders like David Steuart. He was a patron of Robert Inglis, who himself, like others, worked freely for different clients and builders, such Dr Alex Monro at the Pleasance Road<sup>40</sup> (plate 27).

The wright, John Brough, does not appear to have been a member of an incorporation, or journeyman. Unlike many New Town builders, John Brough's team of tradesmen can be named<sup>41</sup>. The group gives a fascinating insight into how incorporation master craftsmen and unfreemen were working together in the New Town. This will be discussed in more detail in the last section of the thesis. Brough provided men with training and incentive to work as an independent builder, and knew the Society of Master Builders. The wright, John Young, the plumber, Robert Selby, and, the painter, Mitchell Young all worked for John Brough between 1783 and 1786 as he built tenements on North Hanover Street and at number 10 South Bridge Street. Here, a New Town builder was contracting Mary Chapel master craftsmen and Deacons to work for him when he himself did not hold that status, and represented a new way of working.

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<sup>39</sup>NAS, SC17/35/405, Edward Bruce v James Salisbury, 2/7/1790

<sup>40</sup>ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Extracted Processes, Dr Monro, Pleasance Road, 22/10/1789

<sup>41</sup>NAS, CS 231/Seq/B1/7

Whereas, John Young, Robert Selby and Mitchell Young expected to take on apprentices and journeymen in the traditions of the Mary Chapel, John Brough's workmen included men who worked as builders themselves. The mason, William Veitch, worked as a builder in the New Town, and, later Brough's foreman, the mason, Andrew Neil, and the mason, James Hill, were also to become builders. Although, not included among the workmen for these particular buildings, Brough also worked with the wright, James Salisbury<sup>42</sup>, at Robert Belsches' house in Queen Street. This relationship meant that Brough had contact with the Society of Master Builders.

His ability to hire incorporation Deacons to work beside other builders like William Veitch, and encourage others like Neal and Hill to work for themselves indicates that he too, like Salisbury and Robert Inglis, represented free trade and a new way of working in Edinburgh and that this was recognised by Deacons like Young and Selby who had chosen to build in the New Town themselves. John Young's connections with builders will be discussed in the last section of the thesis. Young, Veitch, Hill, Inglis, Salisbury and Bryce knew one another through previous work in the New Town, and lodgings there. The team Brough assembled already had good experience of building, and working freely, in the New Town.

### **Architects**

There is little information about how builders learnt their trade and business. What were the likely sources of knowledge for the builders? Without archives of builders' apprenticeships, akin to the information given in incorporation minutes, which records apprentices, masters and essays, to discuss, there are alternative sources of information about what builders learned. This discussion establishes builders' networks, ways to transfer knowledge and information systems.

The first source of knowledge is what was visible in Edinburgh, and the New Town. It is clear that builders knew buildings, and furthermore, knew builders and architects. This leads to the second source of knowledge, which was given through people that builders knew. In the New Town, some builders established a working relationship with Robert and John Adam. Professional architects and master craftsmen, like John Young, were able to pass on knowledge and designs for

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<sup>42</sup>NAS, CS238/B7/56

builders to study. This links to the third source of knowledge builders would have had, which is books about architecture, and building. Men like John Young, or architects, like James Craig and Robert Adam, had libraries. Pattern books and treatises were widely available, and builders would have been able to study drawings and follow instructions on how to build houses.

Practical experience came through apprenticeships and employment. The Adam practice dominated Edinburgh and provided many men with work and inspiration. Robert Adam's late buildings in Edinburgh like New College and Charlotte Square (**Plates 101 to 102**), and James Adam's St George's Chapel (**Plate 123**) offered builders and tradesmen opportunities for work. The New Town continued to provide the Adam practice with work, and inspired journeymen to become builders. But, this influence was nothing new. The Adam business had been important in Edinburgh since the middle of the century, and before the New Town had begun to be built.

Whereas the young Robert and James Adam had left Edinburgh to go on tour to Italy, their employees, be they master craftsmen or journeymen did not go to Europe to see great classical monuments, attend drawing classes there led by inspiring tutors, gather noble and wealthy patrons and socialise with them and then get government posts in architecture, and even become Members of Parliament. Despite this gulf in social and professional standing, Robert Adam influenced many New Town builders who can be called the Adam group. These could aspire to getting apprenticeships and work for the best architects, like Robert and John Adam, while reading books on architecture or going to local drawing classes. The ordinary builder did not have an academic training, but the same given to previous generations of tradesmen. Even local Edinburgh architects like James Craig, though he also had a masons' training, did things that a builder did not by dining with the Duke of Buccleuch<sup>43</sup>, befriending Lord Kames<sup>44</sup> and Dr Alexander Dick<sup>45</sup>, President of the Royal College of Physicians, and writing letters to the Douglas family to find work<sup>46</sup>. He was the link between tradesmen and patron for William Forbes of Callender, and a man who could

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<sup>43</sup> NAS, GD224/1085/1 -

<sup>44</sup> I.Lustig and F.Pottle, *The Applause of the Jury, 1782 – 1785, 3/12/1782*, Heinemann, London, 1981, pp.29-30

<sup>45</sup> J.W.Reed and F.A.Pottle (ed), *Laird of Auchinleck, 1778 – 1782, 7/8/1779*, McGraw Hill, 1977

<sup>46</sup> Yale University Library, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, C847, James Craig, 27/2/1787

offer tradesmen introductions to his clients<sup>47</sup>. However, even James Craig was dependent on John and Robert Adam at times.

In the New Town, tradesmen did not use this hierarchical social system to find work. Once they became feuars they could build better than Craig or other architects could because they had the money to build their buildings, and a business that made money. When they became successful, like James Nesbit, they could even compete with architects in competitions for big projects, such as the planning of Charlotte Square. Some builders used successful careers in the New Town to call themselves architects.

Both Robert Inglis and James Salisbury, leaders of the Society of Master Builders, were former employees of Robert Adam and had worked together at Register House during the 1770s. Working at this site in the New Town, Adam created another group of builders who were independent of the Mary Chapel. Accounts for the building of Register House show many Scottish tradesmen at work<sup>48</sup> - David Henderson, John Wilson, Robert Inglis and William Jamieson were masons as well as the plumber, Robert Selby, and the slater, James Ramsay and Adam's plasterer, Thomas Clayton<sup>49</sup>. Clayton will be discussed later in this section with regard to interior decoration and the group's success as businessmen will be examined in section three of this thesis. The wright, James Salisbury, oversaw tradesmen at work at Register House. Henderson, Wilson, Inglis, Jamieson, Selby, Ramsay and Clayton went onto work in the New Town as architects, overseers, builders and craftsmen. It could be said that the Society of Master Builders was the indirect result of Inglis and Salisbury working together for Robert Adam. Although builders were not architects like Adam they learnt from them, and were inspired by the architect's own business company, his ability to cut across incorporations, freedom of movement and his fame and success.

There is further indirect evidence for the Adam group of tradesmen. Unfortunately the Royal Bank of Scotland no longer has its collection of accounts for the late 18th century. These would have

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<sup>47</sup>NAS, GD171/242/4,15

<sup>48</sup>NAS, SRO4/1, pp 50 -60

<sup>49</sup>NAS, SRO4/7,p.33



listed who the Adam brothers paid, and when. The Adam of Blair Adam archive is also closed and it is not possible to investigate other sources of information there to find more Adam employees. But, a reconstruction of an Adam group of tradesmen is possible using accounts Robert Adam ran with Drummond's bank in London<sup>50</sup>. There are also many other archives for Adam building projects in England and Scotland which could be researched to identify more workmen who appear in the New Town as builders.

These accounts are a clear demonstration of the sophistication of the Adam business as well as the hardship it faced. In the 1780s, the business was in credit by only £50. Earlier, after the Ayr Bank crash, the Adelphi scheme in London had nearly ruined the business. In the late 1760s and early 1770s Robert Adam hired men whose names are found in the New Town ten years later. Did they follow Adam north to Scotland to become builders and run their own businesses? Geoffrey Beard has studied the Drummond's bank accounts<sup>51</sup>, but he did not recognise the Scottish tradesmen Adam had hired. The Drummond's accounts show that some men, such as Edinburgh upholsterers, Young and Trotter, or the Canongate wright, William Wright, were already Edinburgh and New Town tradesmen and builders. But, John Williamson, James Hill, William Smith and James Gordon were all new to the city and its extension. Were they same men who worked in Edinburgh as builders and an overseer of public works? Was this James Hill the same man who worked for John Brough? Considering Brough's link with James Salisbury, and James Hill, can this group of Adam associates be connected with the Society of Master Builders?

There is no direct documentary evidence to answer these questions, but graphic and physical evidence show Robert Adam's designs did influence builders, and that tradesmen he hired knew one another and employed one another, so it is highly likely that workmen followed Adam, worked for Brough and were associated with the Society of Master Builders. The influence of Adam's designs shall be discussed as a source of knowledge to understand who built houses and what they looked like, while the relationship between tradesmen who worked for Adam shall be examined in the last section of this thesis.

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<sup>50</sup>Royal Bank of Scotland Archives, Ledger Books of Drummond's Bank, London, 1767 - 1795

<sup>51</sup> G. Beard, *Robert Adam's Craftsmen, Adam in Context*, Georgian Group Symposium, Lavenham Press, 1992, pp. 24- 28

Surviving elevations for Queen Street houses by builders in the 1780s and 1790s show the impact Robert Adam's designs had on them. Here, the influence of Lord Chief Baron Ord's house, designed in 1771 (Plate 43), and Register House (Plate 42), designed in 1768, are clearly seen even though the builders are working 15 to 20 years after their conception. Lord Chief Baron Ord house's elevation was very influential and James Simpson has already published an article on this building<sup>52</sup>. But, Simpson did not compare the elevations. Firstly, the front door was copied, and Adam's idea took hold and was used in New Town houses by Robert Burns (1787) (plate 6), John Hay (1790) (plate 16), two plans by Alex Balfour (1790) (plates 95 - 96), Robert Inglis (1790) (plates 97-98), and Alex Crawford (1791) (plate 99).

Another aspect of the elevation that was copied was the façade's ashlar fronted rustication, string course and fenestration. Alex Balfour's houses on Queen Street, which he designed in 1790 (Plates 95-96) show a strong influence of the Ord house, and one even copies the doorway's decorations (Plate 96). Other builders on Queen Street who followed Adam's elevation include Robert Burns (Plates 5 -6), John Hay (Plate 16), Alex Crawford (Plates 85 and 99). The Ord house's design set the standard for others to follow. Some of the men who built on Queen Street may have already worked for Robert Adam. It is highly likely that James Hill would have associated himself with other builders, and that the Society of Master Builders looked to Robert Adam for employment and inspiration in business.

The Adam practice also inspired tenement designs, such as bow-windowed tenements. John Adam's designs for Adam Square in the 1760s<sup>53</sup> (Plate 44) celebrated family prestige and preceded Robert and James' London Adelphi flats. The bow flats John Adam built influenced John Young's "Bow flats" in Princes Street. The "Bow flats" in turn building inspired later New Town builders. The uniformity and symmetry of north Frederick Street's tenements are reflections of an old Adam design, building traditions and expertise passed down from a generation of

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<sup>52</sup> I. Gow and J. Simpson, *8 Queen Street, Edinburgh: Restoring an Adam House, Architectural Heritage IV, The Journal of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland*, Edinburgh University Press, 1993, pp. 58-66

<sup>53</sup> I.R.M.Mowat, *Adam Square: An Edinburgh Architectural First, Book of Old Edinburgh Club, New Series*, 2003, pp 93 - 101

Edinburgh masters and journeymen to a new generation prior to building the New Town (**Plate 125**).

As with the Ord house elevation, builders adapted the design of an old building, in this case nigh on 30 years before Frederick Street's tenements were being built, as well as take inspiration from John Young's tenement. Young was open to working with builders, such as John Brough, and others, and this willingness to work with one another helped builders to learn from one another. The builders of Frederick Street worked together to protect their business interests, and to demonstrate their abilities to design and build tenements. The bow tenements reflect their mutual professional knowledge of Adam buildings, New Town architecture and one another's plans. The buildings are a statement in professional solidarity and show that builders could learn about architecture from within the New Town.

John Williamson's elevation for a house on Queen Street (**plate 100**) had large Venetian windows for the east and west sides of his tenement. These may have been inspired by the wings of Register House (**plate 42**). In both cases, the openings project like wings to a central block. Williamson encased the spectacular display in an arch, as Adam had done in his new College and Charlotte Square designs (**plates 101 - 102**). This house was unique, but also shows a builder, who Adam may have employed, adapting an Adam design and building for himself. Such adoption of designs continued into using motifs. It was more common to decorate door friezes with suns and dials, as Adam had done at Register House and New College. Although builders may have been reluctant to directly copy one Adam house, they were content to pick out elements they liked and could afford to build.

John Paterson also belongs to the Adam group. He was Robert Adam's clerk of works for building New College. His correspondence clearly shows how New Town builders, such as James Nesbit, were competitors for major public building projects. Paterson was also a builder in his own right, building tenements along George Street<sup>54</sup> and Princes Street<sup>55</sup> (**plate 17**). But, the design he gave has no direct parallel with the Ord house, Register House, Adam Square or the Frederick Street

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<sup>54</sup>ECA, TCM, 3/3/1784

bow flats. Paterson left Adam's service to work as an independent builder, and advertised in the *Caledonian Mercury* as having the "executive part of the late Mr ADAM'S business in this country"<sup>56</sup>. The Adam brothers subcontracted supervision work to other New Town builders. The chief masons for building Glasgow Infirmary in the 1790s were Messrs. Morrison and Burns<sup>57</sup>. They were almost certainly James Morrison and John or Robert Burns who were established builders in Edinburgh.

Builders of the New Town learnt about designing buildings through the buildings Robert and John designed and built in Edinburgh and the New Town, and through professional contacts with the brothers' business. At building sites at the Ord house and Register house, builders would also learn practical skills in trades in how the build Adam designs. The Ord house there influenced Queen Street's houses, and the bow fronted tenements in the New Town were inspired by Adam Square.

William Adam published a book of designs in *Vitruvius Scoticus*. This book was intended for potential patrons, and to emphasise Adam's national importance. Builders and architects who saw Adam's designs in this book were also impressed, even though Adam did not conceive tradesmen and journeymen as being the principal readership for his book. He himself had trained as a mason, but had established himself as Scotland's leading architect. Local architects had closer professional links with Edinburgh's tradesmen and they could also influence tradesmen with books.

In the 1750s, James Brown, Michael Naesmith, James McPherson, David Henderson, William Mylne and James Craig were all trained as tradesmen who chose to work as and be called architects. The Edinburgh journeyman mason, George Jameson, published a book of designs called "Thirty three designs, with the orders of architecture, according to Palladio" in 1765 and

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<sup>55</sup>ibid, 2/3/1785

<sup>56</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 29/3/1792

<sup>57</sup>ibid, 19/5/1792

ran drawing classes that local men like the mason, Walter Chrystie, attended<sup>58</sup>. Other local masons, like a young Robert Burns subscribed to it<sup>59</sup>.

Jameson was not an architect, but a journeyman mason. Like master craftsmen in the incorporations, he looked to Palladio for inspiration. He wrote his book for the benefit of other journeymen, and not for noble patrons. In this respect, the book is similar to the pattern books Batty Langley had published for London's journeymen in the 1730s and 1740s. These gave clear instructions and designs for men to follow, which would allow them to produce houses. Although information about builders' libraries is lacking, the architect, James Craig, had a collection of these pattern books, including Batty Langley's works. It would be surprising if he was the only architect who had a library, and the only man who had books by Batty Langley, William Halfpenny and other manuals made for tradesmen.

In 1765 the Edinburgh architect, Robert Robinson, proposed to publish a book of his designs<sup>60</sup>. Like George Jameson, he intended this book to be used to further his career. But, whereas Robinson saw himself as an architect, and, like Adam, wanted patrons to contact him and build his designs, Jameson wanted journeymen to read his book, attend his drawing classes, and learn about Palladian architecture – Palladio's treatise on architecture was the same book that incorporation apprentices were asked to learn for their training.

John Paterson's correspondence reveals that New Town builders studied architecture. To return to his correspondence with Robert Adam, he reported that James Nesbit “has given up the most of his plaistering (sic) Business to follow after his favourite study<sup>61</sup>”, which was architecture. Presumably, this meant Nesbit read books. Paterson described Nesbit as a builder, who had aspirations to be an architect. It is not known if Nesbit took on an apprentice who later called himself an architect, rather than a plasterer or builder.

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<sup>58</sup>NAS, CS96/1356

<sup>59</sup>*Edinburgh Courant*, 29/7/1765

<sup>60</sup>ibid, 2/2/1765

<sup>61</sup>NLS, MS19992, f.66, John Paterson to Robert Adam, 23/3/1791

New Town architects took on apprentices. James Craig himself had James Begg as his draughtsman and apprentice<sup>62</sup>. Begg later worked at Callender House in 1784<sup>63</sup> and designed Gayfield Square<sup>64</sup> in Edinburgh near his master's St James Square. Robert Robinson took on Glaswegian Robert Allison<sup>65</sup>, and David Henderson had John Nicolls<sup>66</sup> at Inverleith House and as a foreman of journeymen masons at Register House. Evidence for all three apprentices shows that they were expected to survey, draw, help supervise the building team, check materials and keep account books. The New Town produced new building teams, builders and architects and was like an architectural school for apprentices to learn trades and skills. The sheer scale of the New Town in terms of Scottish urban developments made this process of professional development innovative, but, the development of new architectural practices, and the builders' profession was typical of Georgian English urban planning and building<sup>67</sup>. This New Town school was a reflection on the success of the construction industry in the New Town, the and the industry's ability to supply the demand for housing in the area, with resulting consumerism for trades, and commerce in interior decoration. Architects had art collections and libraries<sup>68</sup>, such as James Craig's one, which apprentices used in order to learn more about being a professional architect. Builders, journeymen and tradesmen studied and learnt building design and construction, but the market for their buildings appears not only in the New Town but also elsewhere in lowland Scotland.

Edinburgh supplied architects and tradesmen for several country house building operations, churches, town and city improvements. As they travelled to these places, so local incorporations saw free trading builders and architects move into their areas and work in the names of professionalism, modernity and improvement. The New Town was both the biggest and most influential urban planning and building project in Scotland. Examples of this movement will be analysed in the third section of this thesis when builders' works at churches and country houses

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<sup>62</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 27/8/1787

<sup>63</sup>NAS, GD171/188/20, 20/10/1784 - 31/12/1784

<sup>64</sup>J.Gifford, C.McWilliam, D.Walker, *Buildings of Scotland:Edinburgh*, Penguin, 1984, p 427

<sup>65</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 152, 396, Answers for Robert Allison to Robert Robinson, 7/7/1774

<sup>66</sup>NAS, SC17/39/362, John Nicoll v David Henderson & John Wilson, 1/2/1782

<sup>67</sup> J.Ayres, *Building the Georgian City*, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, 1998,pp.8-28

<sup>68</sup>NAS, CC8/10/51A and B.

will be discussed in terms of the builders' influence and importance. The New Town had become a building school, and what its builders had learnt was displayed throughout Scotland.

Competing architects, master builders and building teams in the New Town created a tightly knit professional community. Partnerships and subcontracting work among masters and journeymen bonded men together in business. As builders and architects moved from site to site, and project to project, overseers and teams of men would have followed. Builders on Frederick Street worked together to protect their businesses between 1786 and 1787, when they opposed the stormont window law.

The Frederick Street builders, and the Society of Master Builders protected one another from bankruptcy and enabled men to survive in business longer than had they been endlessly competing with one another and driving each other out of business. Builders were not the only men who designed and built tenements in the New Town. Incorporation Deacons and master craftsmen did this also. There was a tradition of building tenements in the Old Town (Plate 25), and these tenements were still visible, and inhabited, when the New Town was being built. Considering that incorporation masters, and their apprentices, knew these buildings, it is highly likely that Edinburgh's tenements influenced builders in the New Town.

Builders probably read Batty Langley and William Halfpenny's books of the 1740s, as well as Palladio and other classic architectural treatises, in addition to learning from living architects. But they also learnt practical building skills from working on houses that had already been built in Edinburgh. These had hanging stairs, stormonts, and gabled ended fronts, and builders incorporated in these features into their own properties. They preferred to build these things to continue traditions, but also because they knew there was not a market for grand town houses for men of their means in the New Town.

Tenements had been built in Edinburgh long before the New Town was built. Wall headed gables had been built into tenements had been built since at least the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century at James

and Chessells Courts (Plate 24) in the Lawnmarket and Canongate, and in the High Street (Plate 25), and this feature were commonly used in the New Town and its new suburbs. It can be found in the New Town's George Street (Plates 7 and 14), Queen Street (Plates 12, 97, and 117) and cross streets like Frederick Street (Plates 12 and 117) and Castle Street (Plates 9, 106, 107 and 120), Rose Street (Plate 13) and in Robert Inglis' tenement for Dr Alex Monro in Pleasance (Plate 27). All these examples were designed between 1784 and 1791 – at least 40 to 50 years after they appeared in the Old Town. These buildings, together with those at Lady Nicolson's Park, Adam Square and George Square, showed that Edinburgh could have large designed spaces for new housing without always turning to an architect to plan them.

There are many more examples of tenement buildings and designs in the New Town. The earliest were built by the wright, John Young<sup>69</sup>, at Thistle Court (Plate 4), but these were set aside from the street. Young also built tenements on St Andrew Square<sup>70</sup>, as did the Deacon mason, William Jamieson<sup>71</sup>. Incorporation mason, Alex Reid, is another master craftsmen who built tenements in the New Town's main streets. He had property in Princes Street<sup>72</sup>. Indeed, Reid's essay had asked him to make a model of a hanging stair, which was very commonly used in tenement properties. Other examples of tradesmens' tenements in main streets can also be found in wright John Horn's Princes Street property<sup>73</sup>, the mason, William Smith's property in George Street<sup>74</sup>, and the wright John Sutter's there too<sup>75</sup>, and the wright, William McConochie, and the smith, George Stiel, who both had tenements on Queen Street<sup>76</sup>. All of these are examples of building tradesmen being proprietors of tenement properties in the New Town.

Thistle and Rose streets were also built with tenements, and John Marshall (Plate 13), John Weir (Plate 94) and Andrew Neal (Plates 29 and 118) designed these there throughout the 1780s. Planning tenements for the minor streets could be said to follow Council legislation and guidelines

<sup>69</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's accounts 1766 – 1768, Lots purchased in the new extension, 3/8/1767

<sup>70</sup>ECA, 1777-1778, St Andrew's Square, Shelf 5E

<sup>71</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's accounts 1766 – 1768, Lots purchased in the new extension, 20/8/1767, 2/11/1767; Chamberlain's accounts 1768-1770, Lots purchased in the new extension, 25/9/1770

<sup>72</sup>ECA, New Town Excise survey rolls 1777-1778, Shelf 5E

<sup>73</sup>ibid 1775 – 1776, Shelf 5E

<sup>74</sup>ibid 1777-1778, Shelf 5E

<sup>75</sup>ibid



for building in the New Town. But, tenements also appear on cross streets too. Surviving examples of tenement designs for cross streets include Alex Laing's building on Hanover Street (Plate 121) from 1788, and for Castle and Frederick Streets. The Castle Street tenement designs are by William Romanes and James Dickson (Plate 9), John Hay (Plates 106 to 107), John Hay and John Baxter (Plate 45), and John Watson (Plate 120) and date from the 1786 to 1791. The Frederick Street tenements are by Robert Wemyss (Plate 8), and Peter Logan (Plate 15) and are dated 1785 and 1791 respectively. Despite the obvious preference for bow fronted tenements in both streets (Plates 124, 125 and 126), the only surviving example of a bow fronted tenement from these examples is John Hay and John Baxter's elevation (Plate 45). This shows that there was more than one type of tenement intended for the cross streets.

The cross streets ran into the main streets of Princes Street, George Street and Queen Street. Here, builders also designed and built tenements. This was a solution to building corner stances. Robert Wright (Plates 12 and 117) and John Wilkie (Plate 28) joined their tenements on Frederick Street with those on Princes Street and Queen Street respectively between 1787 and 1788. But, builders also went into the hearts of the principal streets and designed tenements there. In 1784 John Clerk and George Winton intended to build a tenement in George Street (Plate 7), and John Marshall followed them in 1790 (Plate 14). In 1787 Robert Wright designed tenements in Queen Street (Plate 11), and three years later Robert Inglis also planned tenements on the street, with what appears to be a plan showing a mix of houses and flats (Plates 97 and 98). John Wilkie's design for a tenement on Princes Street (Plate 28) is the only example of one on this street, but there were many others there. These designs and buildings show that tenements were all over the New Town from the 1760s to the 1790s and were intended for its squares and every kind of street. There were all kinds of different designs, and some proved more popular than others, such as bow fronted facades. The fact that tenements were already a part of Edinburgh and Scotland's architectural history, and were continuously designed and built throughout the building history of the New Town suggests that this type of housing was common knowledge for the builders of the New Town.

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<sup>76</sup>ibid

The construction of the New Town's tenements and houses on an extensive scale enabled many types of tradesmen and journeymen to participate in the work. Accordingly, there were opportunities to improve their skills, gain experience, practice with Master Builders, master craftsmen and architects, and ultimately to operate independently themselves as builders. As a result of these developments, the public perception of tradesmen and journeymen emerged enhanced, as did other professions, from the building of the New Town. The establishment of the Society of Master Builders, and the link its leaders, Robert Inglis and James Salisbury, had with Robert Adam help to identify one of the builders' sources of inspiration and knowledge which was Robert Adam himself. Other architects also showed how architecture could be studied, and builders, journeymen and tradesmen also learnt from established tenement architecture. The builders often shared common sources of knowledge and inspiration be they from tenements, or architects, and their buildings could represent common interests such as the Adam group's houses on Queen Street, and the Frederick Street builders' tenements. However, these new groups did not produce tradesmens' directories to market themselves.

Edinburgh street directories from the 1790s give many examples of builders living in the New Town. Men like Robert Calder, John Crombie, Alex Balfour, John Burns, William Gray, James Henderson and James Hill are all called "builder", and their addresses are given in Rose Street, Thistle Street, Princes Street and Frederick Street to mention only a few examples. These builders also sometimes called themselves architects. As well as being a builder on Thistle Street in 1794<sup>77</sup>, Alex Balfour is also called an architect, and had another address at number 15, North Frederick Street the year before<sup>78</sup>. John Paterson described James Nesbit as being both a builder and an architect. Balfour's designs for Queen Street houses (Plates 95 and 96) in 1790, and Nesbit's house on George Street (Plates 46, 108 and 109) had led to a public perception of New Town builders being architects. In this respect, tradesmen becoming known as architects follow an established tradition such as William Adam being trained as a mason before becoming an architect. In 1760s Edinburgh, men who had trained as masons, like James Craig and David Henderson, decided to call themselves architects, but in 1790s Edinburgh, Balfour and Nesbit had been known as a mason, plasterer, builder and then as an architect which makes the term builder

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<sup>77</sup> ECA, Edinburgh Street Directory, 1794 - 1796

appear as a new intermediary stage between being a practising tradesman and an architect who is a designer, and undertaker of buildings.

Not every member of the incorporations, Society of Journeymen and Society of Master Builders can be identified because of lack of surviving archives. But, an attempt has been made to classify builders, buildings and to identify sources of knowledge – be they Edinburgh's houses and tenements, books, formal apprenticeships, drawing classes and meetings between workmen. There are links between ways builders learnt how to design buildings, and ways they built houses in that for both they were required to read Palladio, and needed to know one another. In these respects, the builders of the New Town represent a community of professional house builders whose tenements reflected their professional identity, and business interests, and whose houses represented aspirations to being professional architects.

The builders of the New Town gave tradesmen greater wealth, fame and ambitions. This was reflected in their appearance. The architects, Robert Robinson, had a silk vest<sup>79</sup>, David Henderson had nankeen breeches, a silk tartan vest and a big coat<sup>80</sup> and James Craig's portrait also shows the architect presenting himself well (Plate 38). Builders and tradesmen also spent money on their appearance. William Morrison had clothes sent to him from London<sup>81</sup>. Accounts for clothes and furniture show that they took pride in their appearance. Making a good impression got work. Writing in the *Caledonian Mercury* in 1778, An Old Hand, said that a mason looked more like a Lord Provost<sup>82</sup>. Later, John Kay mocked wright Francis Braidwood's clothes, and shoes (plate 103).

The men would have dressed well for formal meetings such as Council meetings, church services, courts and assemblies. These were ways of meeting clients; then another was at parties, dinners and Edinburgh's clubs and societies. Thomas Sommers, a Mary Chapel Deacon and the King's

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<sup>78</sup>ibid, 1793-1794

<sup>79</sup>NAS, SC39/17/298, Roderick McGraw v Robert Robinson, 5/2/1773

<sup>80</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 186, 498, Duncan Fisher v David Henderson, 14/1/1790

<sup>81</sup>ibid, Box 170,449, David Young v William Morrison, 15/4/1784

<sup>82</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 20/6/1778

Glazier in Scotland, was the treasurer of the Pantheon Society<sup>83</sup>, a serious political debating society, which met at the Mary Chapel's hall and at the Grand Lodge of Freemasons. He himself planned to publish a book of his memoirs<sup>84</sup> (Plate 92).

Outside the Council's patronage of the guildbrethren, burgesses, and trained bands' captains, builders were members of Edinburgh's clubs and societies. One was the Cape Club which celebrated James Thomson's life and work<sup>85</sup>, and no doubt championed Craig and his New Town plan. Members included William Brodie, John Baxter, William Pirnie, William Jamieson, John Brough and William Smith who were all master craftsmen and builders who built houses in the New Town<sup>86</sup>. There were also sports like golf, and clubs such as the Burgess's Golf Club, where the masons, William Pirnie, George Veitch, and the wright, Francis Braidwood, and the architect, Robert Hunter, met and played on Bruntsfield Links<sup>87</sup>. These men also worked in the New Town as house builders and designers. John Kay's cartoon showing cock fighting at the Assembly Rooms' building site in George Street surely shows how men met and passed time together (plate 104).

Masonic lodges allowed builders to meet and socialise outside the formal constraints of Council, incorporation or journeymen society meetings. The largest memberships of master craftsmen and architects were in the St Mary Chapel (Lodge No.1), Canongate Kilwinning (Lodge No.2) and the Journeymen Masons (Lodge No.8) (plate 105)<sup>88</sup>. Other lodges had some architects and tradesmen too such as St Luke's, St James's, St Andrew's, St David's and Canongate and Leith lodges, as well as Canongate Kilwinning lodge<sup>89</sup>. But, of these, it is hardly surprising that St Mary Chapel and

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<sup>83</sup>NLS, Dep 302/3, 12/9/1788

<sup>84</sup>J. Kay, *A Series of Original Portraits and Caricature etchings by John Kay with Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes*, Volume One, No.LXXX, Hugh Paton, 1842

<sup>85</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 25/9/1780

<sup>86</sup>NLS, MS 2004

<sup>87</sup>NLS, Dep 375/1

<sup>88</sup>The Grand Lodge of Scotland Library, Chartulary and List of Lodges and members from Institution of Grand Lodge, 1736 -1762, No.1

<sup>89</sup>ibid

Journeymen Masons' lodges held the most members as they were closely associated with the Mary Chapel, Edinburgh's incorporation of wrights and masons, and the Journeymen's Society<sup>90</sup>.

In the Journeymen's Lodge there were members who are not named in incorporation records, such as Alex Porteous, John Christie, William Veitch and James and William Morrison, but, whose names all appear as tradesmen and builders in the New Town<sup>91</sup>. A daughter of this lodge was St James's Lodge, and here, in the 1790s, builders Claud Cleghorn and Alex Crawford were members<sup>92</sup>. It appears that men who called themselves builders were recognised by other incorporation master craftsmen and architects as members of their clubs, societies and lodges.

From these convivial and professional meetings of tradesmen, architects and builders a new, confident professionalism grew and from this builders had the confidence to work for themselves and organise labour and materials with formal training given through apprenticeships, books and on building sites, and professional societies like the Society of Master Builders, as well as more informal training given in masonic lodges which were directly linked with training tradesmen and sharing their knowledge.

Building the New Town took many men many years. Some of these men became successful speculative builders who were free of the incorporations' rules and history, and who would allow a labourer, like James Gunn, to aspire to a new profession and become a builder in the New Town. This was an opportunity not so much based on patronage, and whom Gunn knew in Council and incorporations, or his ability to pay apprenticeship fees<sup>93</sup>, but on ability – his willingness to learn new skills through looking, copying, reading and being with skilled professionals.

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<sup>90</sup> D. Stevenson, *The First Freemasons, Scotland's Early Lodges and their Members*, Aberdeen University Press, 1988, pp. 12-42

<sup>91</sup> The Grand Lodge of Scotland Library, Chartulary and List of Lodges and members from Institution of Grand Lodge, 1736 -1762, No.1

<sup>92</sup> *ibid*

<sup>93</sup> D. Stevenson, *The First Freemasons, Scotland's Early Lodges and their Members*, Aberdeen University Press, 1988, pp. 12-42

## CHAPTER 6: INTERIORS

For Youngson, Robert Adam, Adam Ferguson, David Hume and Adam Smith are all heroes of the Scottish Enlightenment who epitomised Edinburgh as a place of modernity and civilised society. Hume lived in St David's Street, Adam worked building and planning its buildings and squares, and Smith contributed a political and economic philosophy for its management. But who has ever heard of Alex Crawford, John Williamson, John Brough, Robert Wright, Robert Inglis, James Hill and Alex Porteous and other New Town builders? Is Youngson right to ignore the builders' contributions to the story of the building the New Town? So far, this study of New Town buildings shows how work was organised, and what buildings looked like, but not what they looked like inside. Like the management and training of building teams, archival sources show that New Town house decorators also belonged to the Adam group, and produced popular plaster and paint schemes which contributed to the builders' profession.

Feuars could put up the types of property they wanted to build. Besides offering tenements which could be seen in Old Edinburgh, builders could also offer new designs. Masons, John Hay (plates 106 -107) and Alex Crawford, (plates 85, 99) provided different house designs for clients and avoided replicating one house elevation on every plot they took. Builders responded to what people wanted: be they houses, tenements or shops and this responsiveness helped them survive in business. The builders were set on proving themselves designers, contractors and constructors of buildings. Like incorporation master craftsmen, builders contracted tradesmen to work for them. John Brough could contract master craftsmen like John Young and Robert Selby to help him build his tenements' substructures and superstructures, but who did builders employ to decorate properties, and what did New Town properties look like inside? What did the houses and tenements' plaster and paint decorations look like?

### Plasterers and Painters

Both tenements and houses were plastered inside, and there are examples of this work to be found among tradesmens' accounts, and actual physical remains. The trade was not included in the incorporations' protection, and plasterers were able to work freely. The Society of Plasterers<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>ECA, Moses Bundle 167, no.6503. Seal of Cause, 1767.

became an important group of men to help build and design house decoration. This society's existence, like the Society of Master Builders, demonstrates both the demand for house building and decorating skills in Edinburgh at this time. Being a plasterer was to be a specialist, like a founder, but a specialist in interior design and decoration.

Some plasterers became very successful, and studied architecture. Two men can be considered to be additions to the Adam group have been found at work in the New Town. George Richardson had worked for the Adam brothers<sup>2</sup>, and he published a pattern book of ceiling designs<sup>3</sup>. It included the design he made for Sir Laurence Dundas. This may have influenced Dundas's house in St Andrew's Square (plate 111). Another prominent plasterer in the New Town was Thomas Clayton. Though not an Edinburgh tradesman by birth, he worked for architects Robert Adam<sup>4</sup>, James Craig<sup>5</sup> and David Henderson<sup>6</sup>.

Richardson and Clayton were like master craftsmen and they hired journeymen plasterers. There were many more master plasterers in the New Town apart from these two men and their journeymen. Other people than architects also needed plasterers and these included builders in the New Town. Many examples of plasterers working for builders can be found at work in the New Town. In 1791 the builder, Claud Cleghorn, hired Thomas Russell<sup>7</sup>, George Stiel hired William Stark<sup>8</sup>, William Keys hired Alex Balmana<sup>9</sup>, and William Morrison hired George Whyte<sup>10</sup>, John Gullon<sup>11</sup> and Thomas Wright<sup>12</sup> for his Princes Street tenement. John Brough's plasterers were John Berry, Charles Innes and Company and Messrs Lawson and Aitken<sup>13</sup>. His overseer Andrew Neil

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<sup>2</sup> I.G. Brown, *"The Fittest Place in Europe for our Profession": George Richardson in Rome, Scottish Architects Abroad, Architectural Heritage II, The Journal of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland*, Edinburgh University Press, 1991, pp. 29-41

<sup>3</sup>G. Richardson, *Book of Ceilings Comprised in the Style of the Antique Grottesque*, 1776

<sup>4</sup>NAS, RH4/7, p.33

<sup>5</sup>Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Library, Accounts 1777 - 1780

<sup>6</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Proceses, Box 184, 492, Thomas Clayton v David Henderson, 27/1/1784

<sup>7</sup>NAS, DI46/29, f.321, no.465, Thomas Russell v Claud Cleghorn, 1/6/1791.

<sup>8</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Proceses, Box 186, 496, William Stark v Horn, 18/3/1790

<sup>9</sup>ibid, Box 186, 493, Alex Balmana v William Key, 9/3/1790

<sup>10</sup>ibid, Box 183, 490, George Whyte v William Morrison, 7/4/1789

<sup>11</sup>ibid, Box 182, 484, John Gullon v William Morrison, 31/3/1789

<sup>12</sup>ibid, Box 182, 484, Thomas Wright v William Morrison, 7/4/1789

<sup>13</sup>NAS, CS231/Seq/B1/7

also hired Lawson and Aitken<sup>14</sup>. They probably worked on his Thistle Street properties and probably with James Nesbit in Queen Street, when he and Neil worked in partnership there<sup>15</sup>. It is not impossible that Messrs Lawson and Aitken worked for James Nesbit and found their success through him, if, like other trades in builders' teams at that time, they used the knowledge they gained from Nesbit, Neal and Brough to increase their knowledge of building, plastering, tradesmen, journeymen and patrons. They were not bound to Nesbit, Neal or Brough through any apprenticeship and could work freely. They were like other tradesmen who advertised to employers in newspapers, such as West Bow's slater, Alexander Adam<sup>16</sup>, and the plumber, David Allan<sup>17</sup>.

James Nesbit was the only plasterer who became a builder. He hired a building team just as John Brough did. This meant hiring master craftsmen who then subcontracted work to journeymen. Masons and partners in business, James Miller, James Cleghorn and Robert Montgomery, were hired by James Nesbit to build two houses in George Street in 1790<sup>18</sup>, which presumably meant they worked at Lady Balcarras's house (Plate 46). David Hog was Nesbit's foreman who hired, paid and directed the plasterers, and journeymen at Leith's Quality Street the next year<sup>19</sup> and it is likely that he also oversaw Miller, Cleghorn and Montgomery's men at George Street too as well as all the other tradesmen at work there. But James Nesbit probably designed Lady Balcarras's plasterwork himself and then got Hog to oversee plasterers to execute it.

In 1789 Lady Balcarras intended her house to rival Sir William Forbes's home on George Street which had been built over twenty years earlier. Lady Balcarras's house was a symbol of her social status. For her, New Town houses were to be entirely different to Old Town tenements. She wanted to join Edinburgh's finest New Town society and have a house to match others. This house, like Sir Laurence's house, or Baron Ord's house in Queen Street, was at the top end of the New Town's housing market. Dundas, Ord, Forbes, Balcarras and other large house owners were

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<sup>14</sup>NAS, CS96/726/1-3

<sup>15</sup>ECA, TCM, 22/4/1789

<sup>16</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 21/5/1781

<sup>17</sup>ibid 8/8/1781

<sup>18</sup>NAS, DI46/29, James Miller, James Cleghorn and Robert Montgomery v James Nesbit, 16/7/1790



blatantly showing off their wealth and higher social status in the same ways as John Glassford, John Buchanan and William Cunningham's houses did in Glasgow in the middle of the century.

Lady Balcarras hired James Nesbit because she wanted the house to be opulently decorated and wanted the house "was to be one of the most substantial compleat and elegant of any of that size in the New Town."<sup>20</sup> Nesbit was contracted to build and decorate the house in "an elegant and handsome manner, such at least as is usual for houses in the New Town of Edinburgh to be built and finished....with all conveniences, particularly to have the mason, wright, slater, plaisterer (sic) and stucco work all of the best kinds and the house well and plentifully supplied and finished in wood, the windows, doors, locks and hinges all of the best kinds and to have the chimney pieces substantial and elegant"<sup>21</sup>. Stucco was to be "uncommonly elegant" (plates 108 -109), but was it uncommon at all? Accounts of Nesbit's plasterwork and stucco pieces have not survived, but, remains in the house shows that they were comparable with his other work in Queen Street for the bankers, David Steuart and Robert Allan<sup>22</sup> and St Andrew's Church (plate 112). In all these buildings Nesbit designed festoons, classical figures and military symbols.

Like Glasgow, Edinburgh already had grand villas in its suburbs, such as Sir Hew Dalrymple's house in Potterrow (plate 110), or Milton House in Canongate, which would also have had great plaster schemes in them. Festoons, classical figures and military symbols were not new. The Adam brothers frequently used them. Nesbit was using an established vocabulary of plaster decoration for his designs for public and private architecture in the New Town, but the wealth of his clients, Lady Balcarras, Robert Allan and David Steuart, allowed him more opportunities to incorporate expensive decorative stucco plaster.

But, not every house had the finest features money could buy running throughout it. Gilbert Meason's and Andrew Crosbie's houses in St Andrew's Square had decorations for smaller budgets than the nobles' houses. In 1768, at Gilbert Meason's house the dining and drawing rooms were the most decorative. Here small carvings and mouldings were intended for architraves, bases

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<sup>19</sup>NAS, SC39/17/416, Incorporation of Wrights and Masons of Leith v James Nesbit, 2/6/1791

<sup>20</sup>NLS, Acc 9769/22/1/13

<sup>21</sup>ibid

<sup>22</sup>S.McKinstry, *Twenty Seven Queen Street, Edinburgh, Home of the Scottish Chartered Accountants 1891 – 2000*, The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland/RCAHMS, 2000

and surbases, and there were to be enriched cornices; the drawing room was to have Corinthian cornices. The rest of the house was left unadorned apart from paint or wallpaper decorations<sup>23</sup>. There are no surviving drawings and building accounts for this plaster work.

Andrew Crosbie's house was also designed in the 1760s, and when plaster work was considered the drawing room also received special attention. Here, like in the Meason house, Corinthian cornices were also fitted<sup>24</sup>. Also, like the Meason house, the drawing room's fireplace was marble, enriched with carved surrounds. Quite what these enrichments were was not recorded, but plasterers were employed to help fit the fireplace's decorations into the house.

Nevertheless, both accounts show that even New Town houses for the less wealthy were given some ornate plaster decoration in the public rooms, and that there were some stylistic similarities between two neighbouring properties designed in the same period. But Corinthian corning and carved architraves do not constitute new forms of decorative design and plasterwork. It appears then that New Town houses' plasterwork could be done on both large purses and more moderate budgets, share stylistic similarities, and may even have been designed and put up by men who knew one another. The designs themselves were not original.

There is also some information about tenement plaster decoration. When the mason, James Hill, employed the plasterer, James Dickie, between 1788 and May 1789 to work in Rose Street, an account describes decorations in detail he wanted to give the tenement. The drawing rooms were given festoon and rose decorations with panels and cornices enriched with combinations of festoons and roses, festoon and keel (a fillet from a roll or scroll moulding), case and leaf, Gothick ogee mouldings and honeysuckle and ovolo. He decorated plinths with roses and beads. Then, the New Town plasterer and builder, James Nesbit, inspected the work. How did it compare to his own work in George Street and Queen Street's finest houses?

There is no clear answer to this question since there is so little archival evidence for the types of decorations Nesbit gave his drawing rooms, and the Meason and Crosbie accounts for houses

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<sup>23</sup>NAS, SC39/17/306, William Keys v Gilbert Mason, 30/3/1774

planned in the 1760s do not give details of the types of decoration the plasterer was to give panels and plinths. But, like the Corinthian cornices that were specified for the Meason and Crosbie drawing rooms, Hill and Dickie have given their Rose Street tenement's drawing room an elaborate and decorative decoration with floral and fertile motifs like honeysuckle, rose and case and leaf decorations. The leafiness was developed further with festoons, which recalled Nesbit's own work, and if Hill and Dickie had their festoons like Nesbit's work, the geometric arcs of the compass would have swung over the drawing room's ceiling and the geometric rigour of the pattern echo that of the decorations of Gothic ogee arched mouldings and classical ovalo decorations.

James Craig's use of a carved rose decoration in the central spaces between each columns and pilaster of the underpart of the portico architrave at the Physicians' Hall<sup>25</sup> at least match Dickie's liking of the rose motif, and the Hanoverian propaganda of the New Town, with its merger of Rose and Thistle Streets. Dickie was making a play upon the tenement's location in Rose Street and plaster decorations were more adventurous in their use of Gothic forms. There was a celebration of the New Town itself as a place where tradesmen could become successful builders. Hill and Dickie had a smaller budget and building than Nesbit to work with, but, perhaps they had more opportunity to express their own interests in architectural design, fashion and professional importance. Nesbit, and the Society of Plasterers and the Society of Master Builders would surely have approved of two tradesmen like James Hill, with his links with John Brough and Robert Adam, and Dickie, working together to transform a tenement's drawing room into an appealing advert for wanting to live in the New Town. This was on a much smaller scale than Adam's designs for plaster at Ord house's in Queen Street<sup>26</sup>, but, it was an attempt not to let tenements be monotonous.

Like plasterers, painters were also trained and employed to decorate house interiors. In the 1760s and 1770s incorporation painters also became feuars and house builders in the New Town, such

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<sup>24</sup>National Register of Archives (Scotland), Blair of Blairquhan, 0017. Alex Laing, 1/5/1781

<sup>25</sup>Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Library, Accounts 1777 - 1780

<sup>26</sup>I.Gow and J.Simpson, *8 Queen Street, Edinburgh: Restoring an Adam House, Robert Adam, Architectural Heritage IV, The Journal of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland*, Edinburgh University Press, 1993, pp. 58-66.

as the incorporation Deacon John Bonnar<sup>27</sup> on the west side of south St David Street. At that time, the Deacons, and Council protected their trade and business interests but, in later years, this did not stop journeymen and master craftsmen working for builders in the New Town. John Brough's painters included master craftsman Deacon Mitchell Young, as well as Andrew Manuel, William Loughton and another man called Bryce<sup>28</sup> who were not members of Edinburgh's incorporation. This could be James Bryce, who was at the incorporation as a painter in 1782<sup>29</sup>.

What did paint decorations for New Town houses and tenements look like? There are also details about paint schemes in New Town houses. White, green, stone and mahogany colours were all very popular. At the Meason house in St Andrew's Square, walls were to be whitewashed, but a stone colour was used for dado linings, architraves and mouldings; mahogany for ground and principal floors' doors, and chocolate brown for outside doors and attic floors. Work in 1782 at neighbouring Gilbert Innes of Stow's house followed the Meason scheme<sup>30</sup> which emphasises the strong impression the Meason scheme of the 1760s had on a neighbour who was decorating his house twenty years later.

At the Innes' house, the incorporation painter, Alex Weir, painted doors a mahogany colour to match the wright, William Brodie's new windows, floors and William Trotter's new dining room chairs. Weir also painted the walls French grey and whitewashed the ceilings. Meanwhile, the Princes Street upholsterers, Young and Trotter, gave the house green and stone coloured wallpapers. As at the Meason house, Innes's painter had contrasted white with darker colours. Meason had whitewashed walls, with decorations picked out whereas Innes had grey walls with white ceilings.

French grey and white were popular combinations. They had been used at Register House, James Craig's New Church refurbishment<sup>31</sup> and by James Nesbit at St Andrew's Church. These public buildings matched schemes in private houses, and Gilbert Innes of Stow's house's colours were

<sup>27</sup>ECA, New Town Excise survey rolls 1780 - 1781, Shelf 5E

<sup>28</sup>NAS, CS 231/Seq/B1/7

<sup>29</sup>NLS, Dep 302/2, 19/2/1782

<sup>30</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 170, 447, Young and Trotter v Trustees of John Humble, 13/11/1783

<sup>31</sup>ECA, TCM, 22/3/1780, 10/5/1780, 14/6/1780, 28/6/1780, 30/8/1780

also used in Lady Wallace's refurbishment of the flat<sup>32</sup> she rented from the painter, John Bonnar. Here, the painter, Joseph Robertson, picked out the drawing room's stucco, whose stucco decorations are not specified in detail, in French grey. He painted the dining room a stone colour and the bedroom white. Lady Wallace's tenement flat has the same decorative colours and components as two St Andrew Square houses – with the dark stone colour contrasting the white walls as at the Meason house, and the French grey of the Innes house also appearing – probably in contrast with white again although this is not stated in the account.

This liking for picking out decoration in colour was also present in the grandest houses. White simply covered most of Lady Balcarras's house. Between 1791 and 1792 the painters, Thomas Peacock and Cameron Watson, painted most of the house in whitewash and reserved different colours of white for special public rooms. The most colourful room was the dining room. In the drawing room the ceiling was in "distempered white", with "flat white" for its cornice and also for the dining room's cornice. As usual, doors were painted in a mahogany colour, but the dining room's walls were "Olimpian green" akin to the Innes' wallpaper in their St Andrew's Square house. Like at the Meason house, Lady Balcarras's servants' quarters were painted darker colours, which were, in this case, grey.

Although some of these painters may have been new men to Edinburgh's painting profession as protected by the incorporation, the work that Thomas Peacock, Cameron Watson, Andrew Manuel and William Loughton did appears to be quite typical of the work that incorporation apprentices were asked to do for their essays. Stone and mahogany colours were commonly used to imitate wood, stone and marble and whitewashing walls often requested. The colour combinations, such as that between light and dark colours, picking out stucco, appears to be common for both houses and tenements.

Painters and plasterers were always used to decorate New Town properties but what the decorations looked like remains open to question. Based upon archival sources and some physical evidence for New Town houses and tenements, it appears that painted and plaster decorations had

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<sup>32</sup>NAS, GD113/5/33E/17/1; GD113/5/33E/10

some standard schemes. However, for this thesis, the important point is to stress the importance of painters and plasterers to the development of the builders' profession. The importance of interior did not lie with the way they looked, but who designed, and decorated them. For, although the paint work followed incorporation training manuals, and plasterers could refer to pattern books, they were not always members of the incorporation. Often they were journeymen who worked for builders.

Builders wanted to make properties look good, and this made decorating trades very important to their businesses. It is now clear that New Town houses and tenements' decorations were influenced by established working practices. But, because of the sheer scale of the task of completing the New Town, there was a new and increased importance in house building professions, and the way they were organised. The emergence of the plastering profession joined with the newly formed Society of Master Builders to protect and represent tradesmen, and journeymen working in the New Town, and maybe elsewhere in Edinburgh. James Nesbit is a good example of someone who was both a plasterer and who worked with the Society of Master Builders.

It is difficult to tell who belonged in these new societies because relevant archival evidence has not been found during research for this thesis. But, it is clear that men whose names do not appear in existing incorporation records designed and decorated properties to 18<sup>th</sup> century Edinburgh's tastes. This does not mean that these New Town properties were monotonous. On the contrary, were built and decorated to look attractive by bringing the patrons, builder and his work team together.

## **CONCLUSION TO SECTION TWO**

Section one of the thesis demonstrated that the New Town was a huge project for the Council to manage and was built in a period of considerable political and economic difficulty. It was very important for both political leaders and banks, who lent the Council money, that the New Town was built quickly so that money could be made through taxation, and debts could be paid off.

To do this the Council needed house builders, and this section of the thesis has demonstrated how a new group of tradesmen, called builders, emerged among tradesmen from the established incorporations, the society of journeymen, and Edinburgh's architects, to claim work and some fame. By examining methods builders used to work, find resources, and expertise in design, decoration and building the thesis does not exclude tradesmen from learning from architects, books and apprenticeships. They represented a new community of professionals, who knew one another, and could join Edinburgh society. They were well trained and organised in house building.

Archival research has established common construction methods, decorations, and ways builders gathered men and resources together to mass produce properties. The ready availability of journeymen, and building materials reflects the importance of the industrial production, standards of training and house building design, techniques, and free trade philosophy. These observations complement the studies of Edinburgh's political management in section one of this thesis. The builders profession emerged because of a labour shortage for the completion of the New Town in hard times. As with the administration of the New Town's builders, working practices have not been studied before by New Town scholars in terms of understanding the importance of tradesmen and builders to the the area's architectural history.

Builders built properties like the ones incorporation men did. Both builders and Deacons referred to old tenements, apprenticeships, pattern books, and architects like Robert Adam when they needed education, inspiration and information. But, builders represented organised professions outwith the direct control of Deacons and Adam. In this respect, research into the ways properties

were built has shown that building teams who did the work were creating something new within Edinburgh's architectural professions. For Lord Provosts, encouraging all building businesses to feu and build in the New Town was a pragmatic and practical way to complete the project. Builders developed a professional identity out of this patronage.

These new tradesmen did not act like the incorporation Deacons and masters. Many new men came to find feus and work in the New Town, and some rose up as successful speculative builders in their own right. One example of this would be James Nesbit. Plasterers were not represented by incorporations, but they did represent themselves in their own trade's society, and their importance was represented in every property in the New Town where walls, ceilings, cornices and fireplaces were built and decorated by them. Nesbit, like the Society of Master Builders, is an example of the rise and success of new professional organisations that were bought about through the builders and building of the New Town. James Gunn, a labourer, looked forward to his apprenticeship so that he too could become a house builder. He would have learnt how to design, build and decorate houses for sale and rent quickly.

Robert and John Adam's importance to builders has been discussed in terms of idealism, theory and practice. The bow fronted facades builders produced all over the New Town were initially inspired by John Adam, but Robert Adam's stylistic influence over his "Adam group" of tradesmen is limited to Queen Street. It is quite clear that the majority of builders did not use the Ord house as a template for their own houses, and that the Council did not make them adopt any other elevation by an architect to copy until Charlotte Square was built.

This freedom of expression allowed builders to make their marks in the New Town, and though some houses were built, the majority of properties they put up were tenements. This section has shown how houses were also planned using books, Edinburgh's buildings, New Town laws and other tradesmen to work with. Together, these elements provided builders with efficient and effective sources of inspiration for their houses. This was not entirely dependent on Robert Adam's own buildings and designs. The criticism of builders' architecture as being boring does



not acknowledge the variety of buildings that they produced, and the many references builders used in them, such as living architects, books and existing buildings.

Original builders' designs and an analysis of the management of building in the New Town have been discussed using new graphic and documentary evidence. New Town architecture was not the product of just one "builder", or one architect's plan, but many builders and architects. Although many men have yet to be identified as members of incorporations and the society of journeymen, three new groups of professional tradesmen have been found at work in the Edinburgh and the New Town. These are the Society of Master Builders, the Society of Plasterers and a third group which here has been called the Adam group. These findings support the findings in section one, which established that administering the building of the New Town was also not dependent on a single "masterplan" of house and street elevations.

New Town scholars have not always consulted archival sources before passing judgement on builders' works. Charles McKean complained that one George Street house was covered with the "decorative fungus of an ambitious plasterer"<sup>1</sup> without specifying what house he meant, or identifying who the plasterer was. The only house it could be is James Nesbit's house for Lady Balcarras. This section has shown that it was built and decorated to match the best in the New Town. McKean also refuses to tell us who the builders on the cross streets are, and refuses to show us designs for tenements and houses in the New Town. At present, scholars leave builders nameless, and refuse to discuss their work.

In these respects, his views are based on what is visible today and not what was visible when the New Town was being built, and the work builders actually did. Archives have been used to study how buildings were built, who built them and what they looked like. They show that builders were property owners, business managers and skilled designers and tradesmen. These views support the research findings set out in the first section, which established that builders were deeply involved in the successful completion of the New Town.

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<sup>1</sup> C. McKean, *The Incivility of Edinburgh's New Town, The Neo-Classical Town, Scottish contributions to urban design since 1750*, The Rutland Press, 1996, pp 41-42

## Section Three: The building business

Section 1 of this thesis showed that it was politically and economically vital to complete the New Town quickly, and that laws were passed to ensure this happened. The 1782 and 1785 New Town building acts demanded that feuars started building, and had their properties roofed within 12 months of planning permission being given. For tradesmen and builders who feued large areas of the New Town these laws put their businesses under a huge strain. Section one also showed how building businesses often suffered in debtors courts through the Ayr bank crash of 1772, and poor economic conditions in the 1780s and 1790s. The prospect of damaging legal battles and bankruptcies also made builders look for profits, and survival from one year to another. This section of the thesis will examine how builders ran their businesses, and how their businesses influenced the buildings put up in the New Town.

Section 2 of the thesis showed that builders, like master craftsmen in incorporations, learnt how to design, build and decorate tenements. The Old Town provided many examples of tenement architecture, and this, together with pattern books, and Palladio's treatise on architecture, enabled buildings to be built quickly. This traditional knowledge, combined with methods of building, gathering in materials, and site management, to make building in the New Town as efficient as possible – an efficiency which was enforced by the Council, and Overseer of public building.

Scholars like Youngson, McKean and Reed have not considered the importance of managing building businesses to the actual building of the New Town. They have not asked who were the men who worked for the builders, and who were the builders' patrons. Although Youngson mentioned that successful builders feued extensively, he did not go on to examine the criteria of success, and passed over builders' businesses with the general view that their businesses were short lived, and, with a few exceptions, that they worked on small building projects, and with very little money<sup>1</sup>. For Youngson, the exceptional builders were those who feued regularly like William

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<sup>1</sup> A.J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh*, Edinburgh University Press, 1966, p. 100

Pirnie, Robert Wright, Edmund Butterworth, Alex Reid, John Young and James Tait<sup>2</sup>, but he did not offer an analysis of their business, nor examine other builders' businesses.

In this section there will be case studies of building businesses run by John Brough, John Young, Alex Young, Andrew Neil, and the Chrystie family. These show how building businesses were supported by banks, lawyers, merchants and families, how men worked for one another. They also show how these close relationships helped to form a community of builders in the New Town. Some builders also worked outside the New Town, and established a network of patrons in lowland Scotland's churches, country houses, towns and cities, and these studies show that builders' businesses were far more successful and complicated than they have been given credit for being by scholars.

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<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, pp. 100 - 101

## CHAPTER 7: PROPERTY INVESTMENT GROUPS

The builders of Edinburgh's New Town ran businesses which were financed by investors, and these can be called property investment groups because they developed the streets and squares of the New Town, and elsewhere, for housing. Commonly, a building business had the support of bankers, lawyers, merchants, family and friends who supplied money, materials, expertise in accountancy and advice, but allowed builders to carry the risk of bankruptcy themselves. Some of these property investment groups shall now be discussed and their importance to running building businesses made clear.

Builders, tradesmen and architects at work in the New Town had to trust their backers' financial expertise, and backers had to trust their house builders' architectural skill, because the harsh nature of the speculative building business in the New Town meant many people met with embarrassing court cases, and bankruptcy. Property investment groups helped builders to use their knowledge and skills in building while relying on bankers and lawyers to supply their skills in financial and property management.

Builders needed this support because some architects, tradesmen and builders found it hard to manage their own affairs. The business books of the mason, Walter Chrystie,<sup>1</sup> and Robert Mylne's diaries<sup>2</sup> illustrate that builders and architects kept their own records and accounts of who owed them what and what they owed others too. Diaries, memo books and strong boxes containing bills, accounts and money were kept, but not always safely, and not always in good order. Even the architect, John Adam, found that he was the victim of theft<sup>3</sup>. In 1770, his clerk, Philip Thomson, fled to England with his box of bills papers which he had taken from Miss Gibbs's house in Blackfriars' Wynd, in Edinburgh's Old Town. Among these bills was one with the Carron Company worth £1,000. A loss of over £1,000 would have been enough to destroy most builders' businesses. The description of Andrew Neal's accounts illustrates the chaos the builder faced in trying to run his affairs. This is how his business affairs with Messrs Butterworth and Watson

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<sup>1</sup>NAS, CS228/C/14/44;CS96/1346-1356

<sup>2</sup>NAS, RH4/87/2; RH4/87/3

<sup>3</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 144, 373, John Adam, 27/10/1770

were described: "... getting himself so much involved with these Gentlemen's houses he never had it in his power to know whether the sum contracted to bond any one House was sufficient to defray the expense of it, being unable at any time to make up an account of the expense of building either of these Houses carrying on more than one at the same time, and thereby mixing the payments of the necessities to another as well as the materials purchased. And likewise Mr Neill(sic) being so much straitened(sic) for money never thought of calling in the different accounts for materials furnished to the Houses so as ascertain the quantity and expence thereof, but made interim payments without knowing the ful[sic] amount of the accounts whereby it appears that he has unfortunately been building at least ten per cent below cost upon the sums contracted for amounting upon the whole seven Houses to 9695- ten per cent upon which is 969-10...."<sup>4</sup>

Andrew Neil's(sic) business went bankrupt. The figures 9,695 and 969 probably refer to amounts of money in sterling. He refused to ask for payments for accounts, and was unable to show how far his expenses actually were the causes of his business failure. However, sometimes builders did ask for payments of their accounts, and this led to court cases. Builders could also face other forms of sanction such as inhibitions and arrestments. Arrestments prevented any payments being made by a bank to a customer in debt to the person who took out the arrestment<sup>5</sup>. This effectively froze the debtors' assets and accounts until the debt was settled. Arrestments affected architects, tradesmen and builders. The architect, James Craig, had an account for £350 from the Town Council arrested by Alex Dawson<sup>6</sup>. In January 1781 the architect had borrowed £225.15.8<sup>7</sup>, and he had not repaid it for 10 years. The arrestment let Dawson claim his money. In 1791, the builders, Crooks, Calder and Innerwick took an arrestment against the mason and builder, James Tait. The three men had agreed a price for their work for Tait, but he had refused to pay it. The arrestment forced him to settle the account<sup>8</sup>. Other examples can be found in earlier decades, when in 1774, the wright, Alex Young, took an arrestment against fellow his wright, Duncan

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<sup>4</sup>NAS, CS96/726/1

<sup>5</sup>W. Thomson, *Dictionary of Banking*, London, 1911

<sup>6</sup>ECA, TCM, 16/9/1791

<sup>7</sup>NAS, CC8/130/1

<sup>8</sup>NAS, SC39/17/411, Crooks, Calder and Innerwick v James Tait, 2/11/1791

Drummond, for an outstanding bill<sup>9</sup>, and, in 1781, the nailer, Andrew Williamson, took an arrestment against Alex Young and the architect, David Henderson, for unpaid bills<sup>10</sup>.

Inhibitions prevented the transfer of heritable property from passing from one person to another until a creditor was paid<sup>11</sup>. A register of inhibitions was kept, and these records included some builders. In 1778 Walter Chrystie and John Burns, with associates Thomas Dickson and William Grindle, stopped the wright, Alex Young's credit account with a demand for a repayment of a loan of £200 made the previous year<sup>12</sup>. Merchants also used inhibitions on tradesmen, such as the Glasgow merchant, James Coutter, who pursued the plasterer, Thomas Clayton, for £105, in 1776<sup>13</sup>, and in 1778<sup>14</sup>, the merchant, William Mitchell, served an inhibition on the wright, William Keys, for a bill of £129. Inhibitions prevented heritable property from being transferred to others and by freezing assets had dire implications for a builders' ability to raise money to carry on business through raising money by using their property as deposits for loans from banks, lawyers and other patrons.

### Heritable Security

Most builders, architects and tradesmen who worked in the New Town were not wealthy men. They needed to be able to raise money to be able to work as a speculative builder: to secure land, build property and sell or rent it. A traditional way to borrow money was to set the value of their homes, goods and tools set against the cost of the loan. The valuation of property for this loan, known as a bond, was known as heritable security.

In the 1750s, when the builders of the Exchange fell into debt<sup>15</sup>, the lawyer, John McKenzie of Delvine, valued the property of the mason, Patrick Jamieson, and the wrights, Alex Peter and John Moubray<sup>16</sup>. Among the mason's properties were houses at Crosscausie (Crosscauseway), a weavers' factory in Leith Wynd, and his stone yard and quarry with horses and carts. Peter also

<sup>9</sup>NAS, SC39/17/309, Alex Young v Duncan Drummond, 23/11/1774

<sup>10</sup>NAS, SC39/17/358, Andrew Williamson v Alex Young and David Henderson, 11/7/1781

<sup>11</sup>F.E.Perry, *Dictionary of Banking*, Pitman Chartered Institute of Bankers, 1992, p. 119

<sup>12</sup>NAS, DI46/29

<sup>13</sup>ibid

<sup>14</sup>ibid

<sup>15</sup>A.J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh*, Edinburgh University Press, 1966, p.58

<sup>16</sup>NLS, MS1175, ff.204-205, f.219

had properties on Cowgate, Deas' land, College Wynd, Leith Park, Alison's court and Moubray had property in Todrick wynd, Nairn's land and Gray's close. All these men had property empires, and could use their properties to raise loans against set against their values. This was typical of incorporation master craftsmen's businesses, and it was because the master craftsmen thought that their property empires were going to be threatened by the New Town that they voted against the 1759 extension of the royalty bill. Being the proprietor of a number of houses and tenements allowed these tradesmen to make money through rent, and raise loans secured against the values of their property.

Master craftsmen carried on this tradition in the New Town. Deacon wright, Thomas Hill, owned property in Shakespeare's Square, Deacon painter, John Bonnar, owned a tenement on the west side of Saint David's Street, Deacon William Butter owned a house for rent in Princes Street, and Deacons Alex Reid and John Young owned properties in Hanover, Frederick, Rose, Thistle and George Streets<sup>17</sup>. Meanwhile, incorporation tradesmen still had properties in the Old Town too. Heritable security was a traditional way for tradesmen to raise money to allow them to develop building businesses.

Not everyone who built in the New Town had these property empires. The architects David Henderson<sup>18</sup> and James Craig<sup>19</sup> were unable to raise money through heritable security, and this restricted their ability to work like incorporation master craftsmen. Bad debts could stop a career dead through inhibitions and other mechanisms to claim outstanding debts. These architects worked like the other new builders in the New Town, and raised money through personal loans, or through making profits. Over time, these new builders were able to establish their own property empires in the New Town against which they could borrow money on heritable security. There are many examples of builders becoming proprietors in the New Town; for example, the masons Robert Burns, John Burns, Robert Calder, James Wilkie, John Marshall and Andrew Neil all owned property for rent<sup>20</sup>. The more property they built and owned then the more money they

<sup>17</sup>ECA, Extent Tax rolls 1791-1792, SL35/2/21

<sup>18</sup>A. J. Youngson, *The Making Of Classical Edinburgh*, Edinburgh University Press, 1966, p.62

<sup>19</sup>NLS, Acc4796, Box 7, James Craig, 5/8/1782

<sup>20</sup>ECA, Extent Tax rolls 1791-1792, SL35/2/21

could raise on heritable security. In turn, heritable securities led to future feu duty income, whilst securities over heritable properties meant that financiers of building businesses, lawyers and bankers, controlled the builders' mortgages and loans to build properties. The relationship between raising money on heritable security and feu duty income provided the context for the "indulgences" the New Town administrators gave builders. Should the business fail, then these financiers, and administrators, did not go bankrupt, but the builders. A lawyer could help a builder get land, and money, to build houses in the New Town.

### **Banks**

Bankers dominated Edinburgh Town Council's leadership. Sir Laurence Dundas's house in the New Town dominated St Andrew's Square, and was going to be the model house to be copied along the west side of Charlotte Square<sup>21</sup> (plate 49). Chartered banks like the Royal Bank, and Bank of Scotland as well as leading merchant banks like Sir William Forbes, James Hunter and Company or Messrs Steuart and Allan advanced building businesses money. These bankers controlled both the businesses by funding them, and also by leading the Council's administration of planning applications. They had a good knowledge of the builders and the buildings they wanted to put up in the New Town, and the loans they authorised to the builders allowed them to build. Banks gave builders opportunities to borrow money with such loans backed by heritable securities. The banks knew the builders, the building process and how seasons dictated when work could start and end. As businessmen and patrons they were interested in a tradesman's reputation for sound financial management and encouraged men to prepare annual business plans.

Sir Laurence Dundas lived in St Andrew's Square and surrounded himself with his bank's supporters there. Like Sir Laurence Dundas, merchant bankers were also patrons to tradesmen and builders, and the houses that Messrs Steuart and Allan built and lived in on Queen Street (numbers 26 – 29) have been recently discussed in Sam McKinstry's book *Twenty Seven Queen Street, Edinburgh, Home of the Scottish Chartered Accountants 1891-2000*<sup>22</sup>. Between 1789 and 1791 the builders Robert Wright, James Tait Andrew Neal and James Nesbit worked together to build these houses, and they used the façade of Robert Adam's Ord house in Queen Street as an

<sup>21</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 16/8/1787

<sup>22</sup> S. McKinstry, *Twenty Seven Queen Street, Edinburgh, Home of the Scottish Chartered Accountants 1891 – 2000*, The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland/RCAHMS, 2000, pp. 1-25



inspiration for their elevations, as had other builders<sup>23</sup>. These houses, together with those belonging to Sir Laurence Dundas, Sir William Forbes, Sir James Hunter Blair and Sir James Stirling in the New Town were all signs of the importance of bankers, and their political leadership in the New Town's history who used architecture to represent their financial and political interests and power in creating public and private spaces and buildings in the New Town. Sir James Hunter Blair supported the wright, Alex Young, and the mason, Alex Laing, and looked to the architects, Robert Kay, and Captain Andrew Fraser, to give plans and estimates for building projects. Sir William Forbes, Sir James's business partner, also frequently hired Alex Young, Alex Laing and the architect, James Salisbury<sup>24</sup>. Sir William and Sir James's business and political ally, David Steuart, granted feus to Alex Laing<sup>25</sup>, John Young<sup>26</sup>, James Nesbit<sup>27</sup>, James Hill<sup>28</sup>, Claud Cleghorn<sup>29</sup>, John Brough<sup>30</sup> and Andrew Neal<sup>31</sup>. In 1787 Steuart offered to feu 360 feet of Queen Street, and had already feued extensively in George Street<sup>32</sup>. He could then encourage his builders to work on his feus. These builders and their properties represented Steuart's business and political interests in the New Town, and Edinburgh, and they join with the men that Forbes and Hunter liked to employ to create a group of New Town builders and tradesmen which the Independent bankers and Provosts preferred.

Both John Young and James Hill worked in John Brough's team of workmen in middle of the 1780s in the New Town's Hanover Street, and the South Bridge tenements, and they were to go on to have streets named after them in the west end of the New Town - Young Street and Hill Street. The wright, John Young, was an incorporation Deacon who had been the first tradesman to feu and build property in the New Town. But, he was an ally of the Independent Council and openly worked with builders even though they were not members of the incorporation. The mason, James Hill was possibly a former employee of Robert Adam's practice, and was also well

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<sup>23</sup>ibid, pp. 20 - 21

<sup>24</sup>NLS, Acc4796/216-217

<sup>25</sup>ECA, TCM, 9/12/1789

<sup>26</sup>ibid, 10/2/1790

<sup>27</sup>ibid, 14/10/1789

<sup>28</sup>ibid, 28/4/1790

<sup>29</sup>ibid, 30/5/1792;30/7/1794

<sup>30</sup>ibid, 16/5/1786

<sup>31</sup>ibid, 6/7/1785

known to journeymen and builders. The other builders in this group worked independently of the incorporation. They represented free trade in the New Town - something that Steuart, Forbes and Hunter believed in.

Bankers' support for the New Town was vital to its success, but financiers expected to see profits and repayments of loans being made promptly. The quickest way a builder could repay a loan was to sell a property. The banks offered building businesses different types of accounts. The most common were cash and credit accounts. Other useful services banks included accountancy and keeping money secure in newly built counting houses, such as Sir William Forbes, James Hunter and Company's Counting House in Parliament Square, which was designed and built by Alex Laing (plate 113). These services contrasted with traditional ways of looking after money in strong boxes at home.

Not many builders invested money in bank stock the way that the Adam family did. John Adam, like his father, banked with the Royal Bank of Scotland, and bought its stock<sup>33</sup>. He also had business in the 1750s with Fairholm's Bank<sup>34</sup>, before it went bankrupt. Having investments in a bank allowed John Adam to know financiers well, and to be consulted about proposed architectural projects, which in turn would provide him with work and money. This mutual investment was nearly unique, although, the wright, John Young, also held stock in the Royal Bank<sup>35</sup> in 1789. The banks helped builders' businesses and allowed builders to establish themselves as property owners and generate their own economic and social influence in the area. Credit and cash accounts were the most common ways banks chose to help businesses to grow in the New Town.

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Scotland was famous for its faith in speculative projects<sup>36</sup>. The new Town was the largest speculative building project in the whole of Great Britain, and to help businesses build the New Town, Scottish banks adopted speculative banking methods whereby gold and

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<sup>32</sup>S. McKinstry, *Twenty Seven Queen Street, Edinburgh, Home of the Scottish Chartered Accountants 1891 - 2000*, The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland/RCAHMS, 2000, pp. 20 - 21

<sup>33</sup>Royal Bank of Scotland Archives, Dividend Book 1757-1775, RB/757/3

<sup>34</sup>Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections Department, La II 92-95

<sup>35</sup>Royal Bank of Scotland Archives, Share Transfer Book 1778 - 1789, nos 861-1168, no.1115, RB/760/4

silver coins were replaced with paper money. This paper money promised to secure payment, and from this large credit accounts were opened. Some banks, like the Ayr Bank, specialised in credit accounts, and promised to back projects through its paper money. Credit accounts were a way for property developers to borrow money which acted like an overdraft and bought builders precious time to settle bills and accounts, to buy materials and labour to build houses and complete a speculative building business plan.

Fortunately, there is some correspondence which highlights the issues which concerned both builders and bankers, and reveal the builders' powers of organisation of the workforce and business. In 1778 the wright, Alex Young, wrote to the banker, James Hunter Blair, to explain his reasons for needing a credit account: " Sir, William Smith and I heaving agreed Each of us to Build Sceperat(sic) houses and the same time joined together with a fine mutual hanging stair to serve Both Lands in the stories above the stret(sic) stories those Lands Being Built Regularly will heave a Good appearance in Georges(sic) street as I heave(sic) Been Creadiley(sic) informed what Enables Smith Brough and many others in the newtown(sic) to Build so Extensively is Justley(sic) owoing(sic) to some Good friends taking them By the hand and advanceing(sic) them money which the pay five percent Interest, for this Building that I propose to Carrie on I am very Certain owld(sic) turn out much to my advantage my Stock Being too Smale(sic) I am afraid to Begin without Being of Shure(sic) of assistence(sic), when my houses are all sold in Hanover Street and Every thing paid I shall heave a Balance [sic] Clear of the world of four Hunder (sic) pounds Sterling I can Give Heritable Scequarity(sic) upon my house for one Hunder(sic) more which makes five Hunder(sic) inall(sic) with a Little more and the Creadet(sic) I will get upon materials will Enable me to go through and if the house sell at the ordenry(sic) Rates I shall next year be Enabled to Carrie(sic) on a Building without Borrowing any money I heave(sic) no other Persons(sic) to aplay(sic) to Butt(sic) you whom I trust and Intlley(sic) depen(sic) upon I have Received so many Repeated favours from you I am ashmed(sic) to aske(sic) for more, Butt(sic) Duly(sic) Conceidering(sic) this Building the advantage, which will arise from it will putt(sic) me in such a Situation as will Enable me Ever to go thro(sic) any thing of the kind again heaving(sic) thos(sic) Vew(sic) I Beg you will Exquse(sic) my Requests what I owld(sic) most humble Beg

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<sup>36</sup> P. Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People, England 1727 – 1783*, Clarendon Press, 1989, pp.567-571

from you is please to Loan me what money I shall want afte(sic) Expending my own to Carrie(sic) on my work I shall give you any Security(sic)you pleas(sic) to ask tht(sic) is in my powr(sic) to give and you may Depend upon my Fathfull(sic) trust which I Flature(sic) my self I heave(sic) Given some Smale(sic) proof upon the whole if this is not Akeepble(sic) I Beg you a thousand pardens(sic) nothing(sic) has mowved(sic) me to this further then I owld(sic) wish to Dow(sic)Every thing in powr(sic) Lawfully to provid(sic) for my Famley(sic),16/2/1778,Sir, Your most obedient humble servent (sic), Alexander Young<sup>37</sup>"

Young provides a fascinating insight into business practices. Having agreed with William Smith to share a tenement stair, Young pleaded with Hunter Blair to cover him for the present building season (Spring – Summer) He relied upon selling property on Hanover Street, built in a previous season, in order to assure the banker that no further money would be required from him for the following year. He unpacks some of the planning he had to do to keep working as a speculative builder. The speculative builders' business plans ran from year to year, and relied upon generating enough income to cover costs and make enough profits to invest in the next year. Young added these sales to the value of his own property, and his ability to gather building materials together quickly, through trade credit with merchants, which would enable him to start building in George Street quickly. Business demanded that he did so, or he faced losing his projected profit and coming unstuck for continuing building in 1780. Not being able to build would then incur difficulties in paying trade credit accounts and he would have a reputation for being a bad businessman.

Young's plan relied upon the bank's help. He did not have "friends" or family to offer him loans. In order to get the bank's money he would accept its interest rate. Although this is unknown, Young mentions a common rate at 5%, which meant that the £500 pounds he mentioned would need have an extra £25 payment. Like Alex Young, the architect, James Craig, also needed money to be advanced to him for his designs to be built. He was unable to build on Princes Street between 1777 and 1778 because his backer did not bid enough for the feu there. He wrote to the Council for more time to find money before it took a decision on the feu: " The Chamberlain mention for

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<sup>37</sup>National Register of Archives(*Scotland*)0017, Blair of Blairquhan, Alexander Young, 16/2/1778

me to give in my offer in sooner than will be Convenient for me as the person who spoke to me about it has not yet thourouly(sic) Considered what he will give but will in a few days when you shall have his offer...<sup>38</sup>."

Who this person was is not known, but he or she had seen Craig's plans and proposals for making a Princes Street building profitable and attractive to buyers or lodgers. By 1782 unemployment endangered Craig's account with Sir William Forbes, James Hunter and Company. Without heritable security and a healthy cash account Craig relied upon impressing clients with his artistic merit<sup>39</sup> through the poet, James Thomson, and his success as the architect of the New Town plan. He told Sir William Forbes he needed £30 to save his credit account, and sent the banker the silver box and gold medal he had won in 1766 for his New Town plan as security on a loan for this ailing account.

Craig was not the only architect who was in need of money. His fellow Edinburgh architect, John Baxter junior, also wrote in 1782 about his need to save his credit account. He addressed his request to James Ross, who worked for the Duke of Gordon: "...real necessity obliges me to still crave your assistance, as my whole dependence for cash to answer my credite[sic] depends on your goodness; and as I informed you of my wants when last in the North hopes now that, it will be convenient for you to send me what cash you can spare, as there is no Credite[sic] given here for any article in the Building line."<sup>40</sup>In the same month he also wrote: "...hopes you will not forget me in my Need...The demands upon me this Season is more pressing than usuall(sic). I suppose from my own making out in such a extensive scheme. Thank God I am still within bounds of my Fortune; although(sic) I am at present much embarrassed with everyone to whom I oe(sic)a shilling. I therefore (sic) hope that you will oblige me with a draft for three or four Hund(sic) pounds which will put me out of the power of mankind. Our worthy Friend SWF the Bankier(sic) refused a bill payable at three months for two Hund (sic)pounds, withowt (sic) a heritable bond on Springfield, the bill was received at the House of Bertram Gardner and Co and withowt (sic) so

<sup>38</sup>ECA, Petitions and miscellaneous papers of Edinburgh Town Council, 1/1/1776 - 31/12/1777, D0018

<sup>39</sup>NLS, Acc.4796, Box 7, folder 2, James Craig, 5/8/1782

<sup>40</sup>NAS, GD44/43/266, John Baxter, 28/1/1782

much as knowing the People would have given me Credite(sic) for as many Thousands. This has nettled me and I can assure you will not be soon forgot(sic).<sup>41</sup>"

Given that the high level of debt run by the Council these letters of 1782 indicate the dire state of the city's economy that year, Sir William Forbes may well have been nervous about risking capital on men who could not guarantee a quick return on loans. Credit accounts were useful for builders but hard for them to maintain at this time. But, whereas architects like Craig and Baxter suffered, builders and tradesmen in the New Town were also often proprietors and owned the tenements they rented. This gave them heritable security for raise loans. The letters Alex Young, James Craig and John Baxter touched upon the same issues that affected builders. They too needed money and credit accounts and banks could supply them with both. A key difference between the builders and the architects was that builders looked to own property in the New Town and raise money through loans on their properties.

For architects, master craftsmen and builders involved in building the New Town securing cash was a constant requirement in order to employ tradesmen paid daily, weekly and monthly wages, and pay merchants, as well as meet legal costs for securing land. One way builders could access cash quickly was through a cash account with a bank. Unlike credit account, a cash account was not an overdraft. It had to have money in it for it to work, and builders would keep what profits they made in cash accounts. Profits kept the cash account in good health and allowed credit accounts to be negotiated.

Cash accounts allowed men to settle bills and get goods quickly. If a builder kept a healthy balance in his account then his good credit helped him to get loans. This is what Alex Young was trying to demonstrate to James Hunter Blair when he wrote to him. In 1783 the wright, William Butter, asked for £300 credit upon his cash account with the Royal Bank<sup>42</sup>, while, the architect, James Salisbury, proposed a £200 credit on his cash account with the bank, with Henry Dundas's approval<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup>ibid, John Baxter, January 1782

<sup>42</sup>Royal Bank of Scotland Archives, Minutes of Court of Directors, 5/3/1783

<sup>43</sup>ibid, 15/1/1783

There are examples of other builders and master craftsmen in the New Town using cash accounts with the Royal Bank of Scotland and Bank of Scotland. At the Royal Bank, in August 1780 the wright, John Young, presented a bill for the surgeon, David Wardrope, to pay within six months<sup>44</sup>, and that same year, the mason, William Smith, asked Dr Abernethy Drummond to settle a bill for £60<sup>45</sup>. The next year Smith asked William Glendonwin to pay £102<sup>46</sup>.

Merchants also held accounts and asked builders to settle bills. James Whyte asked for payments from John Brough<sup>47</sup>, James Salisbury<sup>48</sup> and Messrs Reddie and John Wilkie<sup>49</sup> of the New Town at the Royal Bank. Young, Brough, Smith and Salisbury all had cash accounts with the Royal Bank and other bankers like Sir William Forbes, James Hunter Blair and David Steuart. Builders could keep both of them content with their accounts and skills as builders.

Banks and bankers were important backers of building and builders in the New Town. Sir Laurence Dundas's house, and the Royal Bank of Scotland, the Bank of Scotland, the Ayr Bank, Steuart and Allan, and many other banks were represented in the New Town not only through governors and directors' houses, but also through these banks being patrons to builders. Bankers feued large and important areas of the New Town for their own houses, and encouraged more general property development along principal streets like Queen Street and George Street, and they also surrounded themselves with builders and master craftsmen they trusted to carry out the work they wanted done. Criteria for this trust did not lie in the tradesmen owning stock in their banks, but in their skills as builders, and in being able to manage their business affairs through credit and cash accounts, meetings and correspondence. Alex Young's letter to Hunter Blair, shows that it was not only architects who could look to bankers for help and investment, and that bankers were patrons of builders.

## Lawyers

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<sup>44</sup>ibid, 9/8/1780

<sup>45</sup>ibid, 15/11/1780

<sup>46</sup>ibid, 22/8/1781

<sup>47</sup>ibid, 10/12/1783

<sup>48</sup>ibid, 24/12/1783

<sup>49</sup>ibid, 30/3/1785

Another important group of patrons of the New Town's builders' businesses were lawyers. Like bankers, lawyers gave expertise to help building businesses survive, and, like bankers, lawyers also contributed to feuing and building in the New Town. It is no surprise to find that lawyers also worked as bankers, and men like Henry Dundas took an interest in the building of the New Town. Indeed, the New Town was full of lawyers' houses, such as that of Henry's brother, Robert Dundas, who built a house in George Street for his wife. In 1786, he bought the property from the wright, Claud Cleghorn<sup>50</sup>, and Mrs Dundas settled there soon afterwards<sup>51</sup>. Bankers and lawyers lived side by side one another in the New Town, and they knew one another in business through meetings of bank directors, other companies and the courts. A lawyer's work could include getting land to build upon, securing loans for a builder to develop that land, and then selling or renting the new property out without taking the financial risks that builders took on by negotiating loans, and making payments to workmen and suppliers.

Because of this professional and social contact they also knew builders, and they too invested in building businesses. Initially, lawyers helped builders get feus and sasines which helped builders claim proprietorships and then get heritable security for loans, and if the builder was commissioned to build through a contract then a lawyer would also help to draft the agreement. The process of feuing and then renting or selling property needed lawyers to draft feu contracts, sasines, dispositions, resignations and *clare constat* agreements between builders and feuars. Lawyers also acted as estate agents for prospective buyers and lodgers. Newspapers carried advertisements for houses for sale or rent. Lawyers conducted house sales and rents. Some of these men lived in the New Town. Mr Beveridge ( offices:24 Princes Street)<sup>52</sup>, Mr Donaldson (offices:46 Princes Street)<sup>53</sup>, Mr Adair (offices:55 Princes Street)<sup>54</sup>, Alex Abercromby (offices: South Frederick Street)<sup>55</sup>, and Robert Brown (offices: 42 Queen Street)<sup>56</sup> are all examples of resident bank directors, property developers and lawyers acting as estate agents for New Town properties and representing both their own interests and those of the builders. Prospective owners

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<sup>50</sup>ECA, TCM, 21/6/1786

<sup>51</sup>ECA, Extent Tax 1791 – 1792, SL35/21

<sup>52</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 29/1/1789; 24/1/1792

<sup>53</sup>ibid, 19/1/1792

<sup>54</sup>ibid, 21/7/1792

<sup>55</sup>ibid, 21/1/1792;3/12/1792

<sup>56</sup>ibid, 26/1/1792



and lodgers had to contact the lawyers to look over the houses and discuss legal and financial matters with them. In 1781 the builder, Alex Young, and the lawyer, William Sprott, offered to sell a flat at the western entry of Queen Street and St Andrew's Street for £450 or rent it at £40 per year<sup>57</sup>. But, if things went wrong, then lawyers also represented builders in court cases over debts, and as trustees for bankrupts.

Judges, Advocates, Writers to the Signet, and writers all chose to live in the New Town. But, perhaps the clearest example of the importance of lawyers to the completion of the New Town lies with Lord Alva. He was an Extraordinary Director of the Royal Bank of Scotland as well as being a judge and a landowner, with whom Edinburgh Town Council had to negotiate in order to complete Craig's plan. The Council needed his land which lay over the areas now covered by Charlotte Square and the west end of the New Town<sup>58</sup>. Lord Alva would have known the Council's financial position and its leaders well. The deal they struck helped speculative builders have land to build on and allowed their businesses to survive. Lawyers and builders developed land for housing.

Alva was not the only lawyer to have influence over the Royal Bank. Henry Dundas successfully ousted Sir Laurence Dundas as its leader prior to the 1777 elections<sup>59</sup>. He did this with an alliance between lawyers such as the advocate, Joseph Williamson, the writer, James Beveridge, and the judge, Lord Ankerville, and the independent bank, Mansfield, Ramsay and Company<sup>60</sup>. The bank's directors included many lawyers. David and John Anderson, John Davidson, John Campbell and Robert Dundas were all lawyers who advised and led the bank. As with Sir William Forbes, James Hunter and Company, it is highly likely that directors considered builders' accounts and proposals. Beveridge<sup>61</sup>, Ankerville<sup>62</sup>, John Anderson<sup>63</sup> and John Campbell<sup>64</sup> were all residents in the New Town and would have known builders by sight, and by name. Lawyers and bankers like Henry

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<sup>57</sup>ibid, 28/3/1781

<sup>58</sup>ECA, TCM, 24/8/1785

<sup>59</sup>M.Fry, *The Dundas Despotism*, Edinburgh University Press, 1992, pp 80-81

<sup>60</sup>Royal Bank of Scotland Archives, Transfer Book 1763 - 1778, RB/538

<sup>61</sup>ECA, New Town Excise Survey Rolls 1785-1786, Shelf 5E

<sup>62</sup>ibid 1777 - 1778, Shelf 5E

<sup>63</sup>ECA, Extent Tax 1791 -1792, SL35/21

<sup>64</sup>ibid

Dundas were politically powerful men. Many others used the New Town as the perfect setting to show off that they were successful and wealthy. Builders could provide this popular image with house designs, and decorations. In return, lawyers not only provided patronage, but also management through loans, accountancy, contracts and estate management. There are examples of lawyers working in property investment businesses.

In 1772 the writer, Walter Ferguson, hired James Craig to plan St James Square (plate 71). This was then feued out to builders to work speculatively. The next decade Writer to the Signet, James Jollie, developed Picardy<sup>65</sup> and Leith<sup>66</sup>. The lawyer, Robert Brown, also wanted to build tenements. Extent tax records show he was proprietor of tenements on the west side of Hanover Street<sup>67</sup> and the east side of Castle Street<sup>68</sup>. Brown hired the builders, Messrs. Robert Wright and James McKean, to design and build them. In 1793-1794 the stent masters recorded they were building "for Mr Robert Brown" there<sup>69</sup>. The lawyer, Alex Wight, also developed properties in the New Town. He hired John Brough to design and build a tenement on Hanover Street<sup>70</sup>, and owned others on St Andrew's Street, Princes Street, Rose Street and Thistle Street<sup>71</sup>. He also represented the feuars of the New Town against a proposal by the mason, William Jamieson, to build bow fronted flats along the south side of Princes street<sup>72</sup>, as well as the incorporation in their attempts to prevent builders working as "unfreemen" in the Old Town<sup>73</sup>.

James Jollie knew speculative builders like John Brough. Jollie and the lawyer, Alex Duncan, accepted a bond of credit with the Royal Bank of Scotland for £500 on Brough's behalf<sup>74</sup>. Jollie helped Brough at Drumsheugh<sup>75</sup> and helped Duncan to sell houses<sup>76</sup>. Together they supported Brough's business and acted in his interest. Three years later Jollie helped Brough again, when he

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<sup>65</sup>ECA, TCM, 1/9/1784

<sup>66</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 6/1/1787

<sup>67</sup>ECA, Extent Tax 1791-1792, SL35/21

<sup>68</sup>ibid 1793-1794, SL35/23

<sup>69</sup>ibid

<sup>70</sup>ECA, TCM, 10/2/1790

<sup>71</sup>ECA, Extent Tax 1791-1792, SL35/21

<sup>72</sup>ECA, TCM, 16/8/1780

<sup>73</sup>NLS, Dep 302/3, 5/9/1787

<sup>74</sup>NAS, CS231/Seq/B1/17

<sup>75</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 23/2/1788

<sup>76</sup>ibid, 11/1/1787

and the merchant, George Spankie, borrowed another £500 for Brough from Captain Gilbert Waugh<sup>77</sup>.

John Brough's foreman, Andrew Neal, left his master and set himself up as an independent builder and businessman in the New Town. Like Brough and most others, Neal had to find investors and did so among bankers and lawyers by offering them security on his heritable property in the New Town and Stockbridge. The private bank, Messrs Seton, Wallace and Company backed him<sup>78</sup>. So, too, did two men called Edmund Butterworth and John Watson. Butterworth was a writing master<sup>79</sup> and Watson was a lawyer, and together they created a property development company. Between the late 1780s and 1790s Neal, along with others, was hired to build houses on their feus on Queen Street<sup>80</sup>, North Castle Street<sup>81</sup>, and Thistle Street<sup>82</sup>. They hired Robert Inglis, from the Adam group and Society of Master Builders, to design houses (plate 98), and experienced men such as Neal and the masons Alex Peacock, John Hay, John and Robert Burns, and the wright, Adam Russel to build them.

These builders knew each other. Inglis and Neal worked along Queen Street, as did the Burns brothers<sup>83</sup>. The Butterworth and Watson business backed free trading builders and supported successful speculative building businessmen. Unfortunately, Watson did not offer Neal accountancy services, and the builder's own private papers became muddled. At home, his treasure chest of bills and memo book, diary and account books did not save him from miscalculating. He simply looked to the investment Butterworth and Watson were making in New Town housing to fund his business.

Muddles and unpaid bills often led to court cases, sequestrations and bankruptcies. Many builders, architects, master craftsmen and journeymen went to court to pursue and defend cases of bad debt between 1772 and 1795. One builder who frequently brought cases for bad debts is the wright,

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<sup>77</sup>NAS, CS231/Seq/B1/17

<sup>78</sup>NAS, CS96/726/1

<sup>79</sup>ECA, TCM, 23/8/1780

<sup>80</sup>ibid, 29/4/1789

<sup>81</sup>ibid, 18/8/1790

<sup>82</sup>ibid, 8/12/1790

<sup>83</sup>ibid, 22/12/1790

Alex Young. He pursued people to settle their accounts with him in court. In 1785 he took Mrs Williams to the Sherriff's Court over a bill for work done in 1783 to fix her bathing machine at Little Carron, Leith<sup>84</sup>. He also pursued the glazier, Thomas Reikie, and the smiths, Messrs Davidson and Porteus, for their unpaid accounts<sup>85</sup>. Young himself was also pursued and the judges, Bailies and Sheriff must have been used to architects, builders, journeymen and merchants chasing one another from court to court, year to year. Collectively, these court cases are more than a reflection on builders' competencies to manage businesses. They also illustrate the difficult economic times in which people tried to make a living and career. Many men turned to solicitors, advocates, Writers to the Signet and other lawyers to both represent their interests in law courts, and in banks, and with other investors.

Like bankers, lawyers could lend money. Although they did not hold money in Counting Houses or in cash and credit accounts, many lawyers helped builders with cash payments. James Craig often borrowed from lawyers such as Robert Young, William McEwan and Robert Pitcairn<sup>86</sup>. Bonds and loans were the two most common forms of advance. Builders would pay interest on these and sometimes "cautioners" were required too. These people accepted a bond of caution for the builder and guaranteed the repayment of the money being advanced. Although Thomas Hill refused to have cautioners, and would not be a cautioner for anyone else, many builders did find cautioners and even acted as cautioners too, such as the mason, John Burns<sup>87</sup>.

Lawyers were also leaders in the property investment groups at work in the New Town and were closely associated with bankers. But, lawyers like John Watson, Robert Brown and James Jollie were not the great lawyers of the day like Henry and Robert Dundas, or the judges in courts like Lord Alva. Neither were they directors of banks like James Beveridge, and the Campbells. But, these lawyers were successful property developers who hired relatively unknown builders who were not famous and expensive like the architect, Robert Adam, to work for them in the New Town. As well as hiring builders, lawyers also invested in building businesses, and represented their business interests in banks and courts whereby more wealthy lawyers and bankers could also

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<sup>84</sup>NAS, SC39/17/380, Alex Young v Mrs Williams, 5/8/1785

<sup>85</sup>ibid, Alex Young v Thomas Reikie and others, 16/2/1785

<sup>86</sup>NAS, CC8/8/130/1. ff.261-273

back their speculative business plans. Builders like Alex Young, John Brough, Andrew Neal, Robert Inglis and Robert Wright were among many builders who benefited from lawyers supporting their business interests.

### Merchants

Alex Young's letter to James Hunter Blair said that builders' businesses sometimes had " Good friends taking them By the hand" and giving them loans. Some lawyers and bankers were good to builders, and invested money in their businesses, but there builders could also find others to give them money. Commonly, these investors were family, friends and merchants. The lawyer, William Morrison, who built on Princes Street, persuaded his family to invest in his tenement building on Princes Street. Hugh and Alex Morrison both backed him as did a "friend" called Charles Freeman<sup>88</sup>. The wright, John Brough, also received money both through his lawyers James Jollie and Alex Duncan, as well as through others<sup>89</sup>. Between 1783 and 1785 the plumber, Robert Selby, and the lawyer, Alex Wight, who were both proprietors on Princes street<sup>90</sup>, and neighbours of influential lawyers like James Beveridge, lent Brough money. Once again, the builder had got investment in his business, and he worked to repay these loans and make profit. Other common backers were merchants.

They were powerful and influential investors in building businesses. Like bankers, lawyers, families and patrons, merchants often had a vested interest in seeing building businesses succeed. One example of merchants "buying into" buildings is Robert and Alex Sherriff's property in the New Town. Robert Sherriff rented a room to James Beveridge in St Andrews Street<sup>91</sup> before he moved to his own house in Princes Street, and the Sherriffs also had property in St Andrew's Square<sup>92</sup>, St David's Street<sup>93</sup> and they backed the mason, John Crooks, who build a house on George street in 1789<sup>94</sup>.

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<sup>87</sup>ECA, TCM, 3/11/1790

<sup>88</sup>NAS, CS96/704/1

<sup>89</sup>NAS, CS231/Seq/B1/17

<sup>90</sup>ECA, New Town Excise Survey rolls 1777-1778, 1785-1786, Shelf 5E

<sup>91</sup>ibid 1775 – 1776, Bay 005

<sup>92</sup>ibid 1777 – 1778, Bay 005

<sup>93</sup>ibid 1780 – 1781, Bay 005

<sup>94</sup>ECA, TCM, 21/1/1789

These timber merchants in Leith supplied wrights and builders, and, like lawyers, they decided to procure their own tenements and hire builders to design and construct. Their investment in businesses is seen in those for whom they acted as trustees, as shall be discussed later in an examination of partnership businesses. Like other investors, merchants also offered builders credit on accounts. Trade credit on bills could run for 18 months before demands for payment were made. John Baxter junior commented on wood prices and showed how important having a good network of friendly merchants was to building.

In December 1771 he wrote that, " I cannot mention the prices of wood here as that article seems to be raised to a price beyond purchasing(sic). I bought a ships cargoe(sic) last Jully(sic) and has been offer'd(sic) 30 per Cent for my bargine(sic)...<sup>95</sup>". Between 1779<sup>96</sup> and 1781<sup>97</sup> Baxter did business with the Sheriff's business as well as with Messrs Young and Trotter, who gave him trade credit. This, it was hoped, would allow him enough time to build, and make his profits.

William Trotter himself had served as a Bailie in the Town Council in the 1770s, in 1770, 1771 and 1774, during Sir Laurence Dundas's years - the banker having spotted the merchant as being useful to building the New Town. Other merchants who worked with builders also sat in the chambers - John Learmonth and John Spottiswood were among many others who did business with architects and builders in the New Town. Merchants, like builders, found business in the New Town, and some of them became Magistrates. In this respect, the merchants were able to join wealthier bankers and lawyers to influence the building of the New Town not only through supplies and materials, but also through offering trade credit and being able to negotiate agreements with builders. These merchants also found business in the New Town and encouraged the commercial premises in tenements the builders designed and built for themselves, and their patrons and investors. In 1788, the mason, Alex Reid, was able to design and build a tenement on the southeastern corner of Frederick Street and George Street<sup>98</sup> and sell it in different lots to different people, who, in turn, sold their flats to others.

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<sup>95</sup>NAS, GD44/43/54/23, John Baxter, 10/12/1771

<sup>96</sup>NAS, GD44/43/228/3, John Baxter, 2/10/1779

<sup>97</sup>NAS, GD44/43/247/11, John Baxter, 6/1/1781

This chapter has examined property investment groups and especially the roles bankers, lawyers and merchants had in backing building businesses by supporting applications for accounts, and assessing the income that their properties were worth through heritable securities. Bankers and merchants could also exert influence through their positions in the Council. Research for this chapter confirms the findings of chapter two of section one of the thesis.

Because patrons were often powerful men there was a dichotomy in their support of building businesses, and their administration of Council laws and regulations. The words of William Pirnie and John Brough show that the "indulgences" builders received from the Council were very useful, but enforcing laws was not always helpful. The Calton mason and New Town builder, William Pirnie, was prepared to bargain with the Council over its outstanding bills due him for building St Andrew's Church, George Street: "...But Mr Buchan the Chamberlain observing to the Council that I had betwixt £4 or £500 to pay to the Town for my feu in Hanover Street he was of opinion that I should be allowed to retain in my hands the half of the purchasemoney(sic) till my accompts(sic) were settled - It was not convenient for me at that time to take out a Charter for Hanover feu but I now want one, and begs that your Lordship and Council will authorise the Chamberlain to allow me to retain in my hands the one half of purchasemoney(sic) which is about two hundred Guineas and order my Charter to be extended on paying the balance(sic), and it will singularly oblige me as I have laid out a considerable sum of money for betwixt two and three years past, and have never received a single shilling for all the buildings I have erected in Hanover Street..."<sup>99</sup>

William Pirnie needed to find money to settle outstanding accounts but he had been building extensively on Hanover Street from the early 1780s and he asked to pay half the costs of his feu on the street. This arrangement would allow him to stay solvent. The builders John Brough<sup>100</sup>, Robert Calder<sup>101</sup>, George Veitch and John Burns<sup>102</sup> all asked for similar favours from the Council. What Robert Calder called the "usual indulgence" was to be allowed to pay purchase money for

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<sup>98</sup>ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Unextracted Processes, Alexander Reid v John Calder, 14/8/1788, SL91/19

<sup>99</sup>ECA, TCM, 8/11/1786

<sup>100</sup>ibid, 10/5/1780

<sup>101</sup>ibid, 5/1/1781

<sup>102</sup>ibid, 23/10/1782

their feu later since it was not convenient for many builders' bank accounts and network of loans to pay the full sum at once. This was an embellishment of the terms of the New Town Act of 1768, which allowed tradesmen to pay purchase money after they had completed building as additional feu duty<sup>103</sup>.

The law's ideal was not always matched by the reality of the building business. Houses had to be built and sold or let before the purchase money was paid. As John Brough told the Council, he "depended upon..payment of the price of houses he had built upon the said lots<sup>104</sup>" to pay his bills. Indulgences allowed builders to pay this money in instalments. The Council resisted its duties being divided into fractions by builders who constructed tenements, and punished builders who assumed indulgences would be given.

On the other hand, this study of property investment groups that backed the builders of the New Town has shown that the very same bankers, lawyers and merchants who led Edinburgh's politics were also the same men who financed builders' tenements in the New Town. There was a clear contrast between the Council's short term financial needs to gather income from housing, and the long term imperative to complete the building of the area. The properties that suited the builders' businesses best were tenements, and their investors supported these schemes. This is because tenements proved to be the most economically viable form of housing for these businesses to build. Thus builders' abilities to prepare good business and building plans for approval by their investors were vital to their continued success as feuars, and contractors. Investors like merchants, lawyers and bankers supported businesses with accounts, loans, indulgences and advice. Because the lawyers often dealt with property purchases, land developments, accountancy and business management skills, they knew how to draft builders' business proposals for banks and merchants to back. Some bankers also invested in property and land developments, and could recognize a sensible business proposal, while merchants knew that builders would always need their merchandise to make these proposals realities. These backers were not always Scotland's famous politicians, lawyers and bankers. Small merchant banks, Edinburgh lawyers, merchants and builders worked together to make businesses successful, and complete the New Town.

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<sup>103</sup>ibid, 24/2/1768, New Town Act, article 5



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<sup>104</sup>ECA, TCM, 16/5/1781

## CHAPTER 8: BUSINESS PLANS

Builders prepared business plans to encourage investment in their building projects. These could be devised to run for a year, or even more. The two things, which builders had to provide their investors with were clear books of accounts and a book of plans to show what the building would look like. The two types of building, which were commonly considered for building, were houses and tenements.

### Good accounts and profits

Considering the great levels of debt which the Council carried during the building of the New Town the Magistrates wanted to keep the costs of public building low. From 1780 Captain Andrew Fraser and the architect, Robert Kay, enjoyed the confidence of Sir James Hunter Blair. Fraser was responsible for overseeing the building of Leith Fort<sup>1</sup>, and had helped in the design of St Andrew's church in George Street (plate 48) as well as the proposed crescent at Portpatrick<sup>2</sup>. Kay went on to be the architect of the South Bridge scheme, where he worked with Hunter Blair's mason, Alex Laing<sup>3</sup>. Together Fraser and Kay also expressed their desire to save the Council money and complained about overcharged accounts<sup>4</sup> by leading architects, like James Craig. The architect's costly work at the New Church, Royal College of Physicians and for the funerary monument for Lord Provost Alex Kincaid<sup>5</sup> tarnished his reputation in Council. He was not the only architect to find it hard keeping accurate accounts. When building the New Town of Langholm for the Duke of Buccleuch, the architect, James Playfair, was faced with the Duke's judgement that both he and his tradesmen were not keeping good accounts. The Duke wrote, "I know his people are often inaccurate as he himself is often very confused in his accounts though I believe an honest man at bottom."<sup>6</sup> How did builders calculate costs to make money?

The mason, Andrew Neal's muddled accounts showed how hard it was for builders to control the costs of building. Lawyers, bankers, merchants and other advisers and investors could help builders balance books, but builders, architects and master craftsmen often found themselves in

<sup>1</sup>ECA, Bay D, shelf 18, bundle 119, item. No.89

<sup>2</sup>National Register of Archives(Scotland), 0017, Blair of Blairquhan, Andrew Fraser, 8/8/1785

<sup>3</sup>ECA, South Bridge Trunk 2, Bundle 10

<sup>4</sup>ECA, TCM, 23/5/1781

<sup>5</sup>NAS, SC39/17/365, Alexander Fraser v Kincaid's Trustees, 6/8/1783

<sup>6</sup>NAS, GD224/655/2, f.80

debtors courts when businesses faced bankruptcy, showing how hard this exercise was. Between the 1780s and 1790s Robert Inglis<sup>7</sup>, Alex Loro<sup>8</sup>, William Ritchie<sup>9</sup> as well as John Brough, Andrew Neal and William Morrison were all business failures in the New Town. Being in debt damaged a builder's reputation and ability to work.

Making profits ensured that builders could keep their businesses, and they had ways to encourage the administrative support they needed to keep their accounts in good order. These included using bankers and lawyers' expertise in business and property management, the professional societies of tradesmen and builders like the Society of Master Builders', Plasterers' Society, and Journeymen's Society, social contacts and their own properties to protect their interests and raise money.

Making low estimates for the final cost of building was one way to be rewarded with a contract for public work by the Council, but it was very hard to keep costs down. Books written by Edward Hoppus, such as *Practical Measuring made Easy to the Meanest Capacity by a New Set of Tables*, or Isaac Keay's *Practical Measurer, or Plain Guide to Gentlemen and Builders*, gave guidance to costing work and materials. Hoppus's book had first been published in London in 1738, and it was constantly updated and republished and by 1765 there had been seven editions. It helped London's speculative builders who were reading books by John Crunden, William Halfpenny, Batty Langley, William Pain and William Salmon to help them design houses.

It was very hard to predict accurately the final costs of building even with the help of books to give the costs of materials and tools. The appropriate methods of measuring work costs were debated in the incorporation<sup>10</sup>. Some tradesmen trained as surveyors of estimates and work, and these men were called measurers. These men would check estimates and accounts for work and give their opinions in disputes between a tradesman and his client. Edinburgh Council frequently asked measurers to assess estimates and accounts which illustrates how common these disputes were.

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<sup>7</sup>ECA, TCM, 27/11/1793

<sup>8</sup>ibid, 23/4/1794

<sup>9</sup>ibid, 8/7/1789

Builders would sometimes tell the Council how many houses they intended to build on their feus, but they would not give the costs. In March 1791 the wright, John Young, told the Council his founders had begun foundations for 3 to 4 houses on Princes Street, which he intended to build that year on a feu of 120 feet<sup>11</sup>. Each property was between 30 to 40 feet wide. The wright, John Brough, had also presented James Hunter Blair with a similar proposal whereby he intended to build 6 properties along the northeastern corner of Hanover and Queen Streets. He had feued 108 feet and each property was to be 30 feet wide<sup>12</sup>. Neither Young nor Brough, who worked together in Hanover Street and South Bridge Street, gave any details to the Council on the profits they would make. However, when builders felt that their profits were threatened they then complained to the Council. Banning stormont windows caused many complaints and this law would have influenced the way builders promoted the profitability of their properties to their investors. In 1774 the architect James Craig provided the Merchant Company of Edinburgh with a business proposal for the street they intended to feu in the Old Town<sup>13</sup>. This proposal not only consisted of a survey of the ground, and a plan and elevation of the property to be built, but also a costing of the likely returns for these buildings. He had given the merchants an idea of how much money they would receive from the development.

Speculative builders had to calculate the profits they would make from their buildings. When John Brough and John Young told the Council how many houses they intended to build, then they would also have prepared a business plan for feuing large areas just as James Craig had done for Merchant Street. Forecasted profits, accompanied by plans, encouraged investors to lend money to the builder. Two ways builders demonstrated profits were to consistently supply the New Town with houses and tenements. To do these things they needed business plans.

### **Business plans for houses**

The optimistic tone of the 1752 pamphlet to extend the royalty of Edinburgh and create a New Town suggests that new Edinburgh was to have fine houses in it. After 1767 the New Town did have fine houses built in it. Nationally important architects like Sir William Chambers and Robert

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<sup>10</sup>NLS, Dep 302/2, 23/10/1773

<sup>11</sup>ECA, TCM, 2/3/1791

<sup>12</sup>NAS, CS271/42628

Adam designed three of these. There can be little doubt that when Craig presented his New Town plan to King George III (plate 117) that both men thought that the new streets and squares would be built with fine houses.

Owners of New Town houses saw their properties as being superior to others in the area. In 1789 The Countess of Hopetoun looked to sell her house on the north west corner of St Andrew's Square which had been built in 1774, "not by a person of speculation but by a gentleman for the accommodation of his own family."<sup>14</sup> This gentleman was Robert Hamilton of Wishaw, who had feued 40 feet there in May 1772<sup>15</sup>, and began building in 1774<sup>16</sup>. Looking out the house's drawing room window of this house a visitor would have seen many ladies and gentlemen's houses in the New Town. Nobles, bankers, lawyers and merchants lived side by side. Countess Leven, Earl Northesk, Lady Pollock, Lady Glenochry, Sir Laurence Dundas, Baron Ord, Sir William Forbes, James Hunter Blair, John Fordyce, James Stirling, Sir Adam Ferguson, judge David Smyth, Alexander Ferguson of Craigdarroch, James Coutts, Sir John Pringle and diplomat Robert Murray Keith all lived nearby one another.

Robert Murray Keith's daughter, Ann Murray Keith, wrote to Jeremiah Hill of Clifton in March 1773 to tell him that "my Father has purchas'd an exceeding good House in our New Town of Edr – it is delightfully situated – we are not to have this place till next Winter – so that we shall have time to fit it up at our leisure."<sup>17</sup> Many years after 1774, in 1792, she wrote a letter from Princes Street in which she thought "never was any thing so different from another as new Ednr is from old Ednr".<sup>18</sup> Ann Murray Keith enjoyed living in her New Town house, but she did not consider the builders or architects of the New Town to be worth mentioning in her correspondence. Like The Countess of Hopetoun, owners of New Town houses were keen to impress on onlookers that they were the owners of these properties and not lodgers who rented them from a "person of speculation". But, did this mean that speculative builders did not build houses?

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<sup>13</sup>ECA, Minutes of the Merchant Company of Edinburgh, 1767-1783, 21/4/1774, 17/5/1774, 8/6/1774, 2/9/1774

<sup>14</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 8/1/1789

<sup>15</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1770 – 1772, p.75

<sup>16</sup>ECA, Extent Tax 1775 – 1776, SL35/9

<sup>17</sup>NLS, MS3524, f.22

<sup>18</sup>*ibid*, f. 85

Architects, Deacons and builders knew that the New Town attracted nobles, and successful urban professionals to live there, and that these families ideally wanted to buy new houses. One way these houses were built was by contract. This was an established way of doing business both for public works for the Town Council, and for private housing projects. Lady Nicolson's Park<sup>19</sup>, New Street<sup>20</sup> in Canongate and George Square<sup>21</sup> were all modern housing developments where builders negotiated contracts with clients. These negotiations were probably done with the help of the builders' lawyers, such as Robert Brown, who helped the mason, James Tate, feu and build on Charlotte Street for "considerable profit."<sup>22</sup> Newspaper correspondent "Aedilis" wrote in May 1787 that "It must be allowed, that two finer streets than Prince's Street and George's Street are not in Europe."<sup>23</sup> and the builder, James Tait, was one of many other builders who played upon this patriotic propaganda. In 1792 he delayed building his houses on Charlotte Street lest he "Destroy the view of the houses north side of the square which when finished will be one of the finest pieces of architecture on the known world for regularity and uniformity, much to your Lordship and Council's honour and this country".<sup>24</sup> Tate would have prepared drawings and estimates for building the properties for Robert Brown and his purchasers.

These estimates and plans do not survive today, but in 1768 the wright William Keys prepared an estimate for the cost of building Sir William Chamber's design for a house for the merchant, Gilbert Meason, in St Andrew's Square<sup>25</sup> (plate 84). As with other contracts for building houses, Keys sought agreements about the costs of materials. Another New Town house contract was made between Lady Balcarras and James Nesbit for her house in George Street<sup>26</sup> (plate 46). Usually, contracts specified the estimated cost of materials, payments by instalments, the time taken to complete the stages of building, and a penalty clause for the late completion of the building.

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<sup>19</sup>NLS, Dep 267/1222

<sup>20</sup>ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Extracted Processes, Sir James Dunbar, 1779

<sup>21</sup>NLS, MS1174, ff.171-176

<sup>22</sup>ECA, TCM, 22/2/1792

<sup>23</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 10/5/1787

<sup>24</sup>ECA, TCM, 22/2/1792

<sup>25</sup>NAS, SC39/17/306, William Keys v Gilbert Mason (sic), 30/3/1774

<sup>26</sup>NLS, Acc9769/22/1/13

If a builder was late completing the house then the penalty clause would damage his profits. In 1787 the builder, Robert Burns, did not finish Dr Walker's house on time and the penalty clause was invoked<sup>27</sup>. But, this did not stop Burns from building houses. That year he feued in Princes Street, and built houses there for sale by 1789. However, in 1789 he had not built the properties by a negotiated contract, but built by speculation in the hope that he would find a buyer. But, business was poor, and he could not sell, "The delay has been no means owing to me but to the slackness of sales the run being all on Georges Street and Queens Street – two other Houses are noe (sic) Building...you may assure then that no Builder is more anxious to Compleate(sic) the new Town than I am to Beautifie(sic) it – ."<sup>28</sup>

Building beautiful houses for the New Town's richest inhabitants was costly. Ian Gow has described how New Town houses were more opulent and spacious than Old Town tenements, and how Robert Adam's Ord house was copied<sup>29</sup> by speculative builders. But, Gow does not mention the costs of building New Town houses. Ann Murray Keith's advice to Lady Balcarras on decorating her George Street house was to "fit up your house to your own liking, & with your own money – keep an exact account of all your lay out to the attention of penny."<sup>30</sup> This attention to the costs of building and decorating was important because the cost of building houses was high. The advocate, Andrew Crosbie, built himself a grand house beside Sir Laurence Dundas's mansion in St Andrew's Square, but he was unable to furnish and decorate it quickly and held parties in the kitchens<sup>31</sup> rather than in a finely plastered drawing and dining room. Next door, as from 1771<sup>32</sup>, Sir Laurence was to spend £20,000 to finish his house<sup>33</sup>. But, no one else could have spent so much. More typical New Town house costs can be found among accounts, contracts, courts and newspaper adverts for sales.

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<sup>27</sup>ECA, Petitions and miscellaneous papers of Edinburgh Town Council, 1/1/1761 – 31/12/1794, D0012R

<sup>28</sup>ECA, TCM, 22/7/1789

<sup>29</sup>I. Gow, *The Northern Athenian House*, Rassegna, Edinburgh, 64, 1995, pp. 40 -48

<sup>30</sup>NLS, Acc9769/22/1/11

<sup>31</sup>NAS, GD 26/13/659, letter to Lord Balgonie, St James St, London, 15/7/1771

<sup>32</sup>ibid, letter to Alexander Belsches, 14/12/1771

<sup>33</sup>M. Fry, *Dundas Despotism*, Edinburgh University Press, 1992, p.82

The “Journal and Ledger of affairs of James Hunter Blair, 1/3/1768 – 3/4/1779<sup>34</sup>” is an account book which recorded the costs of building his house in George Street. In 1768 he hired the architect, David Henderson, to design the house. He had already planned Sir William Forbes’ house in George Street – “I have paid David Henderson three guineas as your share of the plan he did of our new houses, and I acknowledge to have received that sum from you<sup>35</sup>”, wrote Hunter to Forbes on 27 July 1768: Hunter recorded in his journal his payment of £3 and 3 shillings to Henderson in June that year.

The work to build the house began. Although Sir William's house's building accounts are not known, James Hunter's journal records Canongate wright, Duncan Drummond, at work between 1768 and 1769. He was a popular New Town builder and had been building gables and houses in St Andrew's Square. The gables were for houses east of Gilbert Meason's house, and east of Sir William Forbes's house on the square's northern side<sup>36</sup>. He built another gable for Sir Adam Ferguson's house<sup>37</sup>, neighbouring Andrew Crosbie's house<sup>38</sup>, on the eastern side of the Square. He also built houses. In 1772 the Council fined him through the Sherriff Court for not roofing houses within two years of building on the north side of the Square<sup>39</sup>. The case recorded his feus as being 01 and P1 on the feuing map, which were granted from August 1768; but, according to the feuing plan, this would have made Drummond the builder of houses on the south side of the square, on the south-eastern corner where Countess Leven and Charles Wright had feued<sup>40</sup> plots in August 1767.<sup>41</sup>

The feuars had picked out their building plots and then hired Drummond to build, just as James Hunter Blair and Sir William Forbes had done for their houses in George Street. Fellow wright and New Town builder, Alex Young, supplied Drummond with wood for his work at St Andrew's

<sup>34</sup>National Register of Archives(Scotland), 0017, Blair of Blairquhan

<sup>35</sup>NLS, Acc4796/216

<sup>36</sup>ECA, TCM, 11/5/1769

<sup>37</sup>ibid, 6/12/1769

<sup>38</sup>ECA, Extent Tax 1774-1775, SL35/8

<sup>39</sup>NAS, SC39/17/291, City Treasurer v Duncan Drummond, 17/6/1772

<sup>40</sup>ECA, Feu Duty Ledger 1768 - 1802

<sup>41</sup>ECA, Chamberlain's Accounts 1766 - 1768, Purchase of Lots in the New Town, 1767, p.27



Square from 1769 onwards<sup>42</sup>. Although Hunter may have thought Drummond a safe man to build his house, the house was not completed to its contract price. In February 1770 Hunter recorded in his journal that the building was £70 above the agreed price and in 1771 the banker calculated the house had cost him £1,318.8/3 so far. The final cost was not recorded, but if the house followed Sir William Forbes's house design then an impression of its appearance can be had from a newspaper advertisement.

Sir William Forbes's house had in its sunk storey a large parlour, back parlour, and a small room; a water closet on the first floor and a large drawing room and bedroom on the second floor. The third floor had three more bedrooms and two closets, with two garret rooms and three lumber rooms in the roof. There was also a pump well and water pipe 100 feet deep enclosed in the garden wall at the back of the house as well as access to an area intended for the coachhouse and stables<sup>43</sup>. Another house on the southwestern corner of St Andrew's Street was described in similar terms. It described rooms for servants, vents, water supplies and cellarage, adding that the house was "free of fire and smoke<sup>44</sup>", which were all attractions to living in comfort, elegance and ease.

In January 1772 neither Sir William Forbes<sup>45</sup> or Sir Robert Murray<sup>46</sup> advertised prices when they put their New Town houses up for sale in the newspapers. Like Andrew Crosbie's house, Sir William Forbes's house was not even completed - the Drawing room was not painted and papered, although the banker told potential buyers that the coachhouse and stables could be built for "three quarters of the usual price". Even Baron Ord was unable to completely decorate his house to Adam's designs because of the costs involved<sup>47</sup>.

William Keys's estimated price for building Gilbert Meason's house was build £1,875.10<sup>48</sup>. In 1780 Robert Belsches advertised his St Andrew's Square house, situated at the northwestern corner of the Square, for sale at £1,800, which showed that house prices held their value in the

<sup>42</sup>NAS, SC39/17/309, Alex Young v Duncan Drummond, 23/11/1774

<sup>43</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 4/1/1772

<sup>44</sup>ibid, 13/1/1776

<sup>45</sup>ibid, 4/1/1772

<sup>46</sup>ibid, 8/1/1772

<sup>47</sup>I. Gow, *The Northern Athenian House*, Rassegna, Edinburgh, 64, 1995, pp. 40 -48

<sup>48</sup>NAS, SC39/17/306, William Keys v Gilbert Meason, 30/3/1774

New Town, but also that they cost nearly £2,000. Extra costs came to the new inhabitants through the builders by transferring the feu duties and presenting accounts for the new interior decorations. The costs of houses compare well to costs of new houses in George Square. George Burgess was to pay £1,200 for his house<sup>49</sup>, and in 1771 Sir Adam Ferguson bought Mr Grant's house there for £2,200<sup>50</sup>.

Making business plans to build houses was risky for builders and to their clients too. Deciding to build a house in the New Town fulfilled the ambitions set out for the new Edinburgh in the 1750s and 1760s, and the demand for them in the latest nearby property developments, such as George Square. However, the realities of building meant that houses were expensive to build and sell. Even wealthy house owners could not always afford to decorate their houses. Builders had to be confident that they would have a buyer for their houses before building them or risk embarrassment, and continual requests for indulgences until the property sold. The decision to feu strips of streets and build a series of houses could be damaging if buyers could not be found. Contracts for building ensured that there was going to be a buyer, but even these could prove damaging to the builders' reputations if the building was finished late, or its costs went over the agreed price.

### **Business plans for tenements**

Making business plans to build tenements was not as precarious as deciding to build houses. This was because it was cheaper to build tenements, and money could be quickly gathered in from rents. The study of the administration of the New Town and its builders highlighted the fact that then individual decisions of builders which did not necessarily match the priorities of the Council. Builders had to sell quickly to make money. After the Ayr Bank crash of 1772, and the following years of war with America and France in the 1770s and early 1780s, there were few rich men in the city who were willing to spend £2,000 on a New Town house. The feuing boom that took place in the middle of the 1780s resulted in both houses and tenements too being built.

Tenements were a part of the planning and building history of the New Town. When John Young took his feus along George Street in 1767 he created Thistle Court, which consisted of flats set

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<sup>49</sup>NLS, MS1174, ff.171-176

back from the main street (plate 4). In the 1760s there were more tenements on Shakespeare's Square, Canal Street, the cross streets, and on St Andrew's Square by the mason, William Jamieson, and, the wright, John Young, as well as tenements on Queen Street and Princes Street which were built in the early years.

As well as being the traditional form of house building and property ownership in Edinburgh, tenements were also more attractive in hard times. Following the collapse of the Ayr Bank, renting property was more attractive than buying. Building businesses responded to this change of circumstances and looked to make properties more attractive by being easier to rent. In March 1772, the lawyer, Walter Ferguson, negotiated the let or sale of Thomas Hill's house at the east end of Princes Street<sup>51</sup>. This house was now being converted for commercial use. The sunk storey, which had once had the house's kitchen and cellars, was now being made into a public house and shop. The upper half of the house was being converted to have rooms to rent.

The builder, Robert Burns, was content to design tenements when he saw that the single house market was predominantly in Queen Street and George Street. He built on the east side of Hanover Street, and rented the entire sunk floor to Mazzoni, who was a perfumier and hair dresser, and above his shop was Stewart's shoe shop and Small's confectionery<sup>52</sup>. Burns had designed and built a tenement to accommodate commercial businesses. He was not the only man to do this. Tax records also show the plasterer, Finlay Ferguson, and the mason, John Calder, built tenements with shops in them in Frederick Street<sup>53</sup>.

Another example of a builder providing shops in a tenement is William Pirnie's house on the west side of Hanover Street<sup>54</sup>. Like Burns, Pirnie had developed the sunk storey for shops. In his tenement there were "sundrie small tenants in sunk areas". There were four shops with McCoull's candle shop, Monro's watch and clock shop, Gilchrist and Clark the grocers and William Drummond's tailor's shop. In 1790 Pirnie wrote to Drummond to demand rent for six months -

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<sup>50</sup>NLS, MS1273, f.8

<sup>51</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 18/3/1772

<sup>52</sup>ECA, Extent Tax 1791-1792, SL35/21

<sup>53</sup>ibid 1788 - 1789, SL35/18

<sup>54</sup>ibid 1789-1790, SL35/19

£12 and 12 shillings (annual rent was £25 and 4 shillings). He warned that he would pursue Drummond in court for the outstanding arrears for the rent for "my House" warning that "If any disagreeable measures are taken you have yourself alone to blame"<sup>55</sup>. Pirnie was making at least £100 pounds a year from his shop lets in this one Hanover Street property. This rental income from New Town tenements would generate annual revenue for a builder only if he retained the property, and encouraged his investors to continue to finance him. In 1784, the wright, Thomas Hill, who built and owned property in Shakespeare's Square, used his tenement's rents, which made between £70 to £80 a year, to demonstrate that he was a "safe" customer for Sir William Forbes, James Hunter and Company to lend him £400<sup>56</sup>. Hill charged annual rents between £18<sup>57</sup> and £26<sup>58</sup>. The highest rent was £40<sup>59</sup>. These compared well with other landlords. The plumber, William Scott, charged £21.10.0 for a room in the Square<sup>60</sup>, and David Stevens £26.4.0<sup>61</sup>. On average, a flat in Shakespeare's Square cost some £26.2.0 to rent for a year.

For Hill and Pirnie rents allowed income and investment. Given the struggle to survive the harsh economics of the building business in the New Town it is hardly surprising that builders and investors wanted to generate as much income as possible. This is one of the factors that led builders to designing and building dormer flats with stormont windows in the New Town. Money could be made from the sunk storey's shops straight through to the top storey's flats. In 1786, builders in Frederick Street (plates 124 and 125), Robert Calder, William Murray, Robert Ferguson, Daniel Lamb, John Crooks, James Balfour, John Weir, Alex Reid, Richard Thomson and Robert Wemyss, expressed their frustration to the Council in a letter about being unable to build these top storey flats, and losing income: : ".....that when the Petitioners feued their different areas in the streets above nam'd they had not the most distant thought but they were to be allowed to build their Tenements thereon agreeable to the printed Regulations published by your Lor'p and Council for that purpose and in uniformity with the houses previously built in said streets. That in all of these streets; and even in some of the principal ones particularly princes street, all the houses

<sup>55</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 186, 498, William Pirnie v William Drummond, 26/10/1790

<sup>56</sup>NLS, Acc4796, 119, Sir James Hunter Blair, 7/12/1784

<sup>57</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 180, 480, Thomas Hill v Mrs Hannah, 1788-1789

<sup>58</sup>ibid, Box 180, 480, Thomas Hill v Mrs Miller, 1788-1789

<sup>59</sup>ibid, Box 165, 435, Thomas Hill v Mrs Morrison, 1783

<sup>60</sup>ibid Box 152,397, William Scott v Alex Smith, 28/3/1782

<sup>61</sup>ibid, Box 152, 397, David Stevens v Aitkin, 21/5/1787

have stormont windows/ i.e. windows in the Roof/ - Two of the Petitioners William Murray and Robert Calder lately presented Elevations of their Intended Buildings to the City Chamberlain, with stormont windows Represented thereon, in which he refused to receive alledging at some time that your Lor'p and Council had determined to allow no buildings in future to be Erected in these streets with windows of that kind. Had it at first appeared necessary to allow such windows, it would certainly be now both Improper and irregular to alter the plans, But when there are such a number of houses already built in each of these streets with stormont windows/ or windows in the Roof/ with submission it would be very uniform to deviate in the smallest from the original plan. That it was Expressly upon the faith that the Petitioners were to be allowed to build agreeable to the plan followed by those who had gone Before them that they feued their different areas, and if your Lor'p & Council shall notwithstanding thereof be pleased to refuse liberty to build stormont windows it will be not only very hurtfull to the Beauty of the streets, but be a very material prejudice to the interests of the Petitioners as they will thereby lose a Compleat Story in each of their houses, which those finished have , tho' the owners thereof paid no higher feu than the Petitioners. This would be peculiarly hard on the Petitioners, as owing to the descent in most of these Cross Streets, they are at a much greater Expence in digging the foundations of their houses than the feuers in the principal streets, Except a Small piece of ground presently digging in George's Street, and what adds materially to the loss the Pet'rs will sustain if these windows be prohibited is that of the houses in the Cross Streets are let out in flats . Consequently they must loss a Compleat story in each of the houses which differs the case widely from the houses in the prin'l streets that are in General let in lodgings. May it therefore please your Lor'p and Council to take the premises under Consideration, and in Respect of the evident want of uniformity which must take place if these windows are prohibited & the great loss the Petitioners must sustain from the want of a Story in each house, be pleased to allow stormont windows (or windows in the Roof) to be built in the Cross Streets in question agreeable to those already finished, and the Petitioners as in duty bound shall ever pray & c<sup>62</sup>."

Another benefit of building tenements rather than houses in the New Town was that individual apartments cost less to buy and consequently there were more people able to buy them than

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<sup>62</sup>ECA, Miscellaneous petitions to Edinburgh Town Council, 1/1/1784 - 31/12/1786, Petition of the Feuars and

houses. The lawyer, Robert Watson, owned two flats on the west side of south Frederick Street. The elevation copied the house of the lawyer and property developer, Robert Brown, at 42 Queen Street<sup>63</sup>. The builder whom Watson hired to design and put up his flats was John Crooks. Each flat cost £700, which meant that a tenement flat was easier to afford than a New Town house costing £2,000. Along Frederick Street, and elsewhere, builders, and their investors, made business plans to build tenements in the New Town that would generate income through rents, and through their comparative affordability.

Builders were capable of looking after their own interests and properties. It was traditional for builders to do so, especially among incorporation and family businesses. They could rent and sell properties for themselves. For example, in 1792 newspaper advertisements named them as the principal contacts for prospective buyers and lodgers. Daniel Lamb was based in Rose Street, but built in George Street<sup>64</sup>, South Frederick Street<sup>65</sup> and Hill Street<sup>66</sup> to the west of the New Town. There are advertisements for his properties in the *Caledonian Mercury*, and for Andrew Kay's property in Rose Street<sup>67</sup>.

Rose Street and Thistle Street were the dominated by tenements. Builders often both lived and worked in these streets, and were able to make tenements appeal to many people. Before the architect, James Adam, designed the English Chapel<sup>68</sup> at the east end of Queen Street (plate 123), in 1791, in 1785, the builder, John Brough, with Captain Andrew Fraser, was able to offer Sir William Forbes an Episcopalian Chapel in Thistle Street<sup>69</sup>. Brough would build it to sit 250 people for "moderate profit" at a cost of £1000, with £300 advanced at once, and £700 paid on completion. Forbes considered Brough a "safe" and "friendly" man. Builders' business plans for tenements could undercut the costs architects would charge for houses, or public buildings, and also show investors that profits could be made from rents and sales.

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Builders in Frederick Street, 29/3/1786, D0021R

<sup>63</sup>NAS, B22/8/211, Disposition for Robert Inglis to Messrs Scott and Reid and others, 21/1/1794

<sup>64</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 2/2/1792

<sup>65</sup>ibid, 7/5/1792

<sup>66</sup>ibid, 1/12/1792

<sup>67</sup>ibid, 23/2/1792

<sup>68</sup>ibid, 12/6/1792

<sup>69</sup>NLS, Acc4796/36

Keeping good accounts and devising good business plans for building, selling and renting houses and tenements were imperative for building businesses to survive. This chapter has emphasised that builders made business plans. Of these plans, tenements were the best way for them to make money. James Craig's plans of the New Town impressed both the King (plate 116) and Edinburgh's public (plate 1). The plan was an effective way to advertise an impressive project to build new houses in Edinburgh. Builders were willing to build tenements with shops and garret flats in them just as they had done in the Old Town, like the wright, William Butter's plans for the head of Fortune Close (plate 122). These may not have been as grand as Andrew Crosbie's and Sir Laurence Dundas's houses in St Andrew's Square, but they did offer realistic ways to stay in business at this time. Healthy account books could also be matched with good looking flats. The bow fronted flats of Frederick Street, and Castle Street, adopted a popular elevation which the wright, John Young, had used in Princes Street<sup>70</sup> to create a New Town tenement fashion. But, some tenements also copied houses, such as John Crook's copies of Robert Brown's house on Queen Street, and Robert Inglis' adoption of Lord Rockville's house's doorway also on Queen Street (plate 98). The New Town's appearance was shaped not only by a determination to beautify the city, but also to stay in business.

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<sup>70</sup>ECA, TCM, 22/8/1781

## CHAPTER 9: BUILDING “WITH SUCCESS”

This chapter discusses in greater detail how builders stayed in business. It examines their business concerns and shows that there were communities of builders which were established through professional working relationships, such as through working for the Adam family, and through family relationships, such as the Chrystie family. Often these patrons allowed builders to work outside Edinburgh too. Certain individuals, such as John Young, was able to have a long career as a New Town builder. This was no mean achievement considering the hardships many building businesses faced after 1772.

### Managing Work Teams

In 1781 William Smith complained that his feu to the west of the Physicians' Hall on George Street was to cost him £400 when it was "well known that I cannot pay so large a sum."<sup>1</sup> Three years later he complained again that he was paying more for his land than anyone else. With the cost of wood doubling because of war he was not able to build "with success."<sup>2</sup> This threatened his business, but the Council refused his request for help, just as it had refused John Young's request in 1779<sup>3</sup> to suspend feu duty payments to allow men to stay in business owing to the increased wages builders paid following the 1778 and 1779 journeymen strikes.

Land values, material and labour costs were all issues a builder had to address to stay in profit. But, were there other ways to build “with success”? Delays in building were damaging. In 1786 John Brough wrote to the Council to complain about, "the great disadvantage it brings me under for if I put away my men as they are so scarce at present they cannot be replaced, and the hardship of paying them, and the work not going on, is obvious to everyone."<sup>4</sup> It is hardly suprising then that John Young sought to cut costs in his business through his designs and journeymen. When he was designing the house beside Sir Laurence Dundas's house he cut costs<sup>5</sup> and made the masons cut stone in the winter to have it ready to assemble in the building season<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>ECA, Petitions and miscellaneous papers of Edinburgh Town Council, 1/1/1781 - 31/12/1782, Smith, 27/3/1781, D0020

<sup>2</sup>ECA, Miscellaneous petitions to Edinburgh Town Council, 1/1/1784 -31/12/1786, Smith, 27/4/1784, D0021R

<sup>3</sup>ECA, McLeod Bundle 119, 67, John Young 18/8/1779

<sup>4</sup>ECA, TCM, 18/8/1786

<sup>5</sup>ECA, Miscellaneous petitions to Edinburgh Town Council, 1/1/1784 - 31/12/1786, 5/1/1781, D0021R

<sup>6</sup>ECA, Petitions and miscellaneous papers of Edinburgh Town Council, 1/1/1781 - 31/12/1782, John Young, 25/11/1781, D0020



The speed with which builders could assemble materials and men determined how quickly they could build houses and tenements. Section two of this thesis looked at John Brough's building gang and saw that it was made up of builders and incorporation master craftsmen. On top of these skilled craftsmen, a builder also needed to hire journeymen and labourers.

The builder, William Morrison, hired journeymen to build his tenement at the west end of Princes Street. His wrights included James Drummond<sup>7</sup> and William Buchanan<sup>8</sup> and James McWhatty, David Miller, and William Wilson. In 1787, McWhatty, Miller and Wilson not only charged Morrison for their labour but also for supplied flooring deals<sup>9</sup>. Morrison also had to hire journeymen plasterers such as Thomas Wright<sup>10</sup>, John Gullan and James Nicoll<sup>11</sup>. Meanwhile, the foundation digger, Alex Black, paid labourers<sup>12</sup> to dig and cart earth away for him as he himself worked for James Hill. Hill's other foundation diggers, Alex Hill<sup>13</sup> and Henry Smith<sup>14</sup>, no doubt also did this as he built along Thistle Street<sup>15</sup>, Rose Street<sup>16</sup>, Frederick Street<sup>17</sup> and Queen Street<sup>18</sup>.

Once a plan was approved by the Town Council, a builder had to quickly find a gang of tradesmen to work for him. Journeymen rented rooms, usually in the cross and minor streets, in the New Town to be close to builders and work. Being close to such a huge building site raised the chances of finding work regularly although they also had to eat, drink, and buy clothes, fuel and tools as well as pay tolls and taxes on goods they bought to work with. The social tone of the New Town, as set in the 1752 pamphlet, had already been widely compromised by the presence of these tradesmen and journeymen. The reality of building the New Town was not to have an exclusive

<sup>7</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 182, 484, James Drummond v William Morrison, 31/3/1789

<sup>8</sup>ibid, Box 182, 848, William Buchanan v William Morrison, 31/3/1789

<sup>9</sup>ibid, Box 179, 474, James McWhatty v William Morrison, 20/3/1788

<sup>10</sup>ibid, Box 182, 484, Thomas Wright v William Morrison, 7/4/1789

<sup>11</sup>ibid, Box 182, 484, John Gullan and James Nicoll v William Morrison, 31/3/1789

<sup>12</sup>ibid, Box 194, 532, Alex Black v James Hill, 22/1/1793

<sup>13</sup>ibid, Box 194, 241, Alex Hill v James Hill, 22/1/1793

<sup>14</sup>ibid, Box 200, 550, Henry Smith v James Hill, 3/2/1794

<sup>15</sup>ECA, TCM, 18/4/1787; 26/11/1788

<sup>16</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 183, 488, William Laing v James Hill, 23/11/1789

<sup>17</sup>ECA, TCM, 18/6/1788

<sup>18</sup>ibid, 25/1/1792

residential area, where rigid social hierarchies were enforced, but to encourage social mobility and change.

Annual rents for flats in Rose Street, Canal Street, Shakespeare's Square, Hanover and Frederick Streets were between £22 and £26. William Pirnie collected £33.12 a year from a tenement flat in south Hanover Street<sup>19</sup> (£8.8 per quarter), and the wright, Daniel Lamb, collected £25. 4 shillings from a South Frederick Street flat<sup>20</sup>(£12.12.0 per half year). Extent tax records for 1792 to 1793<sup>21</sup> show that few journeymen rented rooms in either the principal and cross streets, although builders were landlords.

It was in the minor streets that most workers set up their temporary homes. Once again, many proprietors were builders and tradesmen. Now, there were many more who were tenants. Rose and Thistle Streets were full of journeymen. Roxburgh, the mason, rented a flat from the wright, John Boog, and Rannie, the glazier, rented from the builder, Robert Ferguson, in southwestern Rose Street. The painter, Marshall, lived in the north eastern half of the street near his "painting shop" while William Pirnie rented rooms to the mason, John Greenhill, and the glazier, Peter Shaw, in his house there. Thistle Street had a similar story. The wright, Duncan Drummond, was hired by Sir William Forbes and James Hunter to work on their New Town houses. Drummond also rented a house and cellars from the bankers<sup>22</sup>. This allowed the bank to "own" a tradesman and builder, not only through the business accounts, but also through rents. Business failure meant that the bank would recover its money through a sequestration sale.

For builders, renting rooms to journeymen allowed them to have workers to hand, and to ensure that wages were paid which were then recouped through rents. Those men who decided to live outside the New Town may have found rents were nearly as high. William Jameson charged £25.4.0 a year for a flat at the foot of Fleshmarket Close<sup>23</sup> (£12.12.0 per half year), and £24.0.0 a

<sup>19</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 180, 480, William Pirnie v James Adelton, 1788 - 1789

<sup>20</sup>ibid, Box 180, 480, Daniel Lamb v Bandy, 1788-1789

<sup>21</sup>ECA, Extent Tax 1792-1793, SL35/22

<sup>22</sup>NAS, SC39/17/334, Sir William Forbes v tenants, 3/4/1778

<sup>23</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 176, 467, William Jameson v David Murray, 1786

year for a house in College Wynd (£7.0.0 a quarter year)<sup>24</sup>. It was just as easy to live and work in the New Town, and fall under the patronage of a builder.

These examples of managing a work team show how difficult it was both for builders and their teams to make enough money to make profits and have somewhere to live near the New Town. However, some teams did manage to find ways of staying in work. Two of these were to become well known to builders through working on projects and the second was to join a family business. These will now be discussed.

### **The Adam Group**

Section 1 of the thesis showed that Robert Adam inspired the planning and building of the New Town, and then section two identified a group of builders who can be called the Adam group because they not only worked for Robert Adam, but also because they copied his elevation for Baron Ord's house on Queen Street in several other houses along that street. But, working for Mr Adam also allowed builders to work together and create business partnerships even if they did not copy the Ord house elevation, and to develop a network of professional contacts through family and partnership businesses. These networks also helped builders work "with success", as William Smith found out himself when he went into a partnership with Robert Wright to build in the New Town.

There can be little doubt about the power and influence of the Adam family's buildings and patronage of tradesmen in Edinburgh. John, Robert and James Adam were able to influence tradesmen who aspired to be builders, and architects themselves. The following study of men who knew Robert Adam is based on archival sources, and shows the complicated network of contacts these men, and Adam, made through building the New Town.

The plasterer, James Nesbit, was able to offer William Forbes of Callender a meeting with Robert Adam in April 1786<sup>25</sup>, and the two men knew one another and worked together to help their patron. He may have had contact with the Adam business before this, when, in 1782, he worked at

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<sup>24</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 176, 467, William Jameson v Wilson, 1786

<sup>25</sup>NAS, GD171/24/17

Tweeddale house in Canongate<sup>26</sup>. By 1787, Nesbit intended to join the builders of the New Town, and he himself built Mrs Spense's house on the north side of George Street<sup>27</sup>, where he later also built houses for Colonel William Maxwell, Lady Balcarras and William Ramsay of Barnton<sup>28</sup>, and also proposed to build a Tontine Hotel on the street too<sup>29</sup>. He was successful, and the Council recognised this.

By 1790 he was working for the Council, and plastering its meeting hall<sup>30</sup>. From there he could influence the Provost with his plans for Charlotte Square in the New Town which impressed the Magistrates that year – much to Robert Adam's horror. It was not the first time that Adam faced competition from New Town builders. In March 1786 an exasperated Adam pleaded with the Trustees of the South Bridge to adopt his plans and refuse "the idea your lordship mentions that the Trustees have adopted of taking some House in the new Town (sic) as a model and repeating that through the whole length of the new street, would certainly produce a very tiresome and bad effect, even worse than if each Builder was to be left at liberty to follow his own fancy in decorating the premises on which he built."<sup>31</sup>

The builders of the South Bridge were the same men who built in the New Town. Robert Inglis, James Salisbury, John Paterson, William Jamieson, Francis Braidwood, Alex Laing, Robert Burns and Edmund Butterworth were all busy there as was the causeway layer, George Welsh. It was politically and economically expedient to allow these men to develop their businesses in the South Bridge. From 1787, James Nesbit joined these men in becoming a successful builder. He found support from the banker, and former Independent Lord Provost, David Steuart, who allowed him to build houses for his business partner, Robert Allan, on Queen Street<sup>32</sup>. Just as David Steuart had led the Independents to be free from Sir Laurence Dundas's power, so that local Edinburgh businessmen could work with greater freedom, so Nesbit celebrated the authority of the

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<sup>26</sup>NLS, MS 14680, ff.170 - 179

<sup>27</sup>ECA, TCM, 21/3/1787

<sup>28</sup>ibid, 2/2/1791

<sup>29</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 26/4/1792

<sup>30</sup>ECA, TCM, 2/2/1791

<sup>31</sup>ECA, South Bridge Trunk 2, Bundle 6, Robert Adam, 24/3/1786

<sup>32</sup>S. McKinstry, *Twenty Seven Queen Street, Edinburgh, Home of the Scottish Chartered Accountants 1891 – 2000*, The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland/RCAHMS, 2000, pp. 1-25

Magistrates with his decorations for his New Town houses, which included the classical symbol of the absolute authority of Magistrates, the Roman fasces rods surrounding an axe, as well as other patriotic military symbols which recalled the building of Leith Gun Battery and the raising of the Edinburgh Regiment during the American Wars of Independence (plate 65). Nesbit also searched for his own independence to work as a builder and, ultimately, an architect, and to be free from the incorporation's authority. There were other builders who also shared these aims. From 1787 the incorporation sought out builders and tradesmen who had worked illegally in Edinburgh as "unfreemen"<sup>33</sup>. Among those who transgressed were Robert Adam's overseer at Register House, the wright, James Salisbury, the wright, David Hay and the mason, Robert Wright<sup>34</sup>. In 1793 the masons, Robert Inglis and John Williamson, decided to join the incorporation after sitting their essay<sup>35</sup>, but not a serving an apprenticeship. Earlier, in 1786, the mason, Robert Burns<sup>36</sup>, and the slater, John Baxter<sup>37</sup>, had joined upon paying a fee as builders moved into the South Bridge to work.

James Salisbury and Robert Inglis were both builders, and Robert Burns was called mason, and architect<sup>38</sup> from 1786 onwards. Although he himself became a member of the incorporation, and was to become a Deacon, a Council Deacon after 1791, and even survey the New Town<sup>39</sup>, in the 1790s, Burns worked with builders. Like James Nesbit, James Salisbury, Robert Inglis, John Williamson and others, he himself had worked for Robert Adam, and had been inspired to become a builder and an architect in the New Town. In the 1760s the mason, Robert Burns, had worked for Adam in building Dalkeith church's steeple<sup>40</sup>.

This in itself is not too surprising, but Robert Burns's connections with the Adam group in the New Town were strong. This is not solely because of his house elevations for Queen Street (plates 5 and 6), but also because he worked in partnerships with these men. Burns worked with

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<sup>33</sup>NLS, Dep 302/3, 5/9/1787

<sup>34</sup>ibid, 9/2/1793

<sup>35</sup>ibid

<sup>36</sup>ibid, 23/11/1786

<sup>37</sup>ibid, 4/2/1786

<sup>38</sup>ECA, TCM, 10/5/1786

<sup>39</sup>ibid, 22/1/1794

<sup>40</sup>NAS, GD224/1026/56/3

the mason, Robert Inglis to build a tenement on Queen Street<sup>41</sup> and Thistle Street<sup>42</sup> in 1790. Since 1786 Robert Inglis had worked closely with James Nesbit in the New Town. He had allowed Nesbit to build James Mansfield's house on the north side of George Street in 1786<sup>43</sup>, and together they built Mrs Spense's house on the same side of the street the next year<sup>44</sup>. Between 1789 and 1790 they had begun working in Queen Street, and Burns probably knew Nesbit to be a plasterer and builder. In 1786, Robert Inglis and James Balfour, who also built on the north side of George Street, with a house for Miss Ord<sup>45</sup>, and others, who called themselves builders, petitioned the Council for better drainage in the New Town<sup>46</sup>. By 1790 Inglis, like Nesbit, was being hired by the Council to work on public works. He worked as a mason at Leith harbour drawbridge, and Leith pier<sup>47</sup>.

Following the boom in feuing and building in the New Town in the 1780s, men like Robert Inglis worked as builders. Robert Burns had decided to join the incorporation in 1786, but was commonly called an architect by then rather than the mason he was known as when he first appeared in the New Town in 1780 to build St Andrew's church and the parapet wall on Princes Street. He had decided to work closely with prominent builders like Robert Inglis. Perhaps because his brother, John Burns, worked in the New Town from 1782, and also called himself a builder<sup>48</sup>, and had an open - handed attitude to working with builders at a time when the incorporation was prepared to prosecute unfreemen, to join with the other common economic and political reasons why some incorporation masters worked with builders which were discussed in section two's examination of John Brough's team of tradesmen. Of these men, James Salisbury and John Young shall be discussed in greater depth here.

John Burns never called himself an architect, and he never decided to live beside his clients in Queen Street as Robert Burns did. But, John Burns was an important builder who was prepared to

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<sup>41</sup>ECA, TCM, 1/9/1790

<sup>42</sup>ibid, 28/7/1790

<sup>43</sup>ibid, 29/11/1786

<sup>44</sup>ibid, 21/3/1787

<sup>45</sup>ibid, 29/11/1786

<sup>46</sup>ibid, 10/5/1786

<sup>47</sup>ibid, 21/4/1790

<sup>48</sup>ibid, 23/10/1782

feu over 100 feet of streets at a time<sup>49</sup>, which indicated that he was preparing business plans to build at least two to three houses a year, or feu this ground out to others with whom he worked in partnership.

The men he worked with were commonly associated with Robert Adam's workmen. With the masons, James Hill and Alex Porteous, he built Lord Provost James Stirling's house on Queen Street in 1790<sup>50</sup>, and probably James Deans' house there too<sup>51</sup>, in the same year. He also worked with the property developers, Butterworth and Watson, in 1790 to build the lawyer, Alex Young, a house in Queen Street<sup>52</sup>. Because he worked with Butterworth and Watson would have bought him closer to Robert Inglis, who worked with Robert Burns, since Inglis worked for them too (plate 98).

Earlier, in 1788, Burns had worked with Hill to build for the baker, James Gull, a tenement on the east side of Frederick Street<sup>53</sup>. For his own part, James Hill was a successful builder in the New Town who had taken on building in Thistle Street<sup>54</sup>, and had the west end of that street named after him, just as the Wright, John Young, did too. Through his connections with John Burns, and probably Robert Burns, he could also call upon James Nesbit to help him<sup>55</sup>. So John Burns knew Adam's men like Robert Inglis, James Hill, Alex Porteous, and even his brother, Robert, could claim to have worked for the distinguished architect. In turn, these men, together with others, like James Newsbyte and James Balfour, worked closely with one another in building houses and tenements.

In 1792 James Adam employed Burns and James Morrison to build Glasgow's Infirmary Hospital. An advertisement in the *Caledonian Mercury* for journeymen masons to build it stated that they should contact "Messrs Morrison and Burn<sup>56</sup>". Both men would have been supervisors,

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<sup>49</sup>ibid, 22/12/1790

<sup>50</sup>ibid, 25/1/1792

<sup>51</sup>ibid, 21/7/1790

<sup>52</sup>ibid, 24/11/1790

<sup>53</sup>ibid, 18/6/1788

<sup>54</sup>ibid, 18/4/1787; 26/11/1788

<sup>55</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 183, 488, William Laing v James Hill, 23/11/1789

<sup>56</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 19/5/1792

subcontracting work out. Although it is not known whom James employed to build St George's Chapel, it is highly likely that he would have looked to another New Town builder, and his building team, to construct his designs. James, like Robert before him, employed successful Edinburgh builders. "Mr. Burn" would have been either John or Robert Burns, who had impressed Adam with their business skills and buildings in the New Town and South Bridge. James Morrison had also worked in the New Town. In 1788 he feuded 122 feet along the north side of Thistle Street<sup>57</sup> and then transferred plots to others such as the Wright, David Auchterlony<sup>58</sup>, the mason Alex Boog<sup>59</sup> and William Stewart<sup>60</sup>. He was another builder who helped other tradesmen. Also in that year, Morrison worked with the wright, Alex Young, and the mason, Charles Linn. Together they had a contract to build a house in Rose Street<sup>61</sup>, and he worked with the builder, William Morrison, at Dalmahoy House in 1789<sup>62</sup>. James Adam would have seen Morrison as a successful builder and consequently hired him.

But, John Burns' connections with the Adam family's employees went beyond that of these men. He also worked with the mason and builder, George Veitch<sup>63</sup>. This man was also known by Robert Burns<sup>64</sup>, and worked with closely with William Veitch to build houses and tenements on George Street<sup>65</sup>, for George Willison<sup>66</sup>, and Hanover Street<sup>67</sup>, for Michael Riddell<sup>68</sup>. Both men were not members of Edinburgh's incorporation, and worked as builders. Although they did not work directly for Adam, they were closely related to a family who did.

Adam's builders were not linked together by copying Adam buildings but by working for the architect. A great many builders in the New Town knew one another through their work for Robert Adam. John Paterson, John and Robert Burns, James Morrison, James Hill, James

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<sup>57</sup>ECA, TCM, 6/2/1788

<sup>58</sup>ibid, 3/12/1788

<sup>59</sup>ibid, 7/3/1792

<sup>60</sup>ibid, 1/8/1792

<sup>61</sup>NAS, B22/8/195, 4/8/1788

<sup>62</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 182, 484, Earl Morton v William Morrison and James Morrison, 3/3/1789

<sup>63</sup>ECA, TCM, 23/10/1782

<sup>64</sup>ibid, 10/5/1786

<sup>65</sup>ibid, 24/12/1783

<sup>66</sup>ibid, 14/1/1784

<sup>67</sup>ibid, 9/9/1789

<sup>68</sup>ibid, 9/9/1789



Salisbury, Robert Inglis, John Williamson and James Nesbit were all successful builders. They themselves can be understood both in terms of being builders of the New Town and extensions of the influence Robert Adam had on architecture in Edinburgh. But, none of these builders formally joined the Adam family business. They were freelance employees. Other builders did seek security in family businesses and they now need to be discussed.

### **The Chrystie family**

Robert and John Burns were brothers who both worked as house builders in the New Town. But, there is no evidence that they worked together to build there as Messrs. Burns and Burns. John Burns' connections with George Veitch and Alex Porteous led him into contact with the Chrystie family, who, like Porteous, Inglis, Nesbit and Hill, were known to Robert Adam, and worked together as a family business "with success".

William Chrystie was John Adam's principal mason. He helped the architect inspect and report on Cleish Church with a view to planning a new one for 500 people<sup>69</sup>. William Chrystie employed many masons to work for him; they included John Burns, Robert Calder, Alex Porteous, Alex Purdie, Peter Logan, Robert Wright and James Morrison in the 1770s. All these men went on to become builders in the New Town, but they themselves worked for Adam, and other Edinburgh architects. William Chrystie was also James Craig's chief mason for the building of the Physician's Hall in George Street between 1776 and 1780. John Adam helped to mediate between the two men as Adam knew both men well through mutual building and planning projects for the New Town, Royal Botanical Gardens, and the Royal Infirmary. William Chrystie's journeymen masons worked for important New Town architects, and then became builders of the New Town in the 1780s and 1790s. These men joined with Robert Adam's men from Register house, and possibly London, to form a group of tradesmen who were employed by the Adam practice and became builders.

The Chrystie family's connections with builders and architects extended beyond William Chrystie, and his journeymen. The wright, John Chrystie, was a near neighbour of the architect, James Craig. They both lived at the foot of the West Bow in the Old Town. John Chrystie even repaired

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<sup>69</sup>NAS, HR493/1, 16/3/1775-19/5/1775

the architect's flat with new plaster, wallpaper and door locks<sup>70</sup>. He was also the manager of Hailes quarry through his cousin, Walter Chrystie<sup>71</sup>, and John passed this job to Janet Chrystie. The wright, James Tait<sup>72</sup>, and the Nicolson Street and New Town mason, James Donaldson<sup>73</sup>, owed her money for stone between 1776 and 1791. Donaldson, a Crosscauseway mason, was in partnership with James Watson and James Harper, who feued and built on Queen Street in 1773.<sup>74</sup>

Janet was not the only woman to work for the Chrysties. Elizabeth Chrystie was the wife of the mason, George Veitch. When he died in 1788 she took over his business affairs, and completed the tenement on the west side of North Hanover Street.<sup>75</sup> Earlier, in 1784, William Chrystie's daughter, Marion, married the mason, and employee, Alex Porteous.<sup>76</sup> In November that year he and William Veitch, brother-in-law to Elizabeth Chrystie, worked together in the New Town<sup>77</sup>. Later, in 1788, Porteous intended to build a house on the north side of Rose Street, between Hanover and Frederick Streets, to neighbour William Veitch's house there<sup>78</sup>.

Everyone in the family business would have seen the feu and house as an extension of its honour and a nest egg for Marion's future family. The business partnership between Porteous and Veitch was described for the benefit of Alex and Robert Sherriff, Leith's timber merchants, and New Town property developers, when they had Veitch's estate conveyed in 1789.<sup>79</sup> After Veitch died, Porteous went on to work in partnership with the mason James Hill – a man he had worked with under William Chrystie, and Robert Adam. In 1790 they feued 60 feet on the south side of George Street with a view to building there<sup>80</sup>, and they also built a house for the lawyer, George Robinson, on Queen Street in 1791.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>NAS, CS96/1356

<sup>71</sup>NAS, CS228/C/14/44

<sup>72</sup>ECA, Bailie Court Processes, Box 149, 386, Janet Chrystie v James Tait, 31/10/1776

<sup>73</sup>NAS, SC39/17/412, Janet Chrystie v James Donaldson, 9/3/1791

<sup>74</sup>ECA, TCM, 10/2/1773

<sup>75</sup>ibid, 6/2/1788

<sup>76</sup>F.G. Grant (ed), *Edinburgh Marriages 1751 – 1800*, Scottish Record Society, J. Skinner, 1922

<sup>77</sup>ECA, TCM, 16/4/1788

<sup>78</sup>ibid, 16/4/1788

<sup>79</sup>ibid, 30/12/1789

<sup>80</sup>ibid, 28/4/1780

<sup>81</sup>ibid, 1/6/1791

This snapshot of the Chrystie family business shows how both blood relations and extended family members were asked to collaborate together to secure work, resources and property. The family was able to work together with great success. The involvements of blood relations and extended family in business interests were to expand the influence Chrystie family in Edinburgh's building trades and construction industry further. But, it is not the only example of family businesses at work among builders in the New Town. To give only a few examples, there were brothers who worked together like George and William Veitch, John and Robert Wemyss<sup>82</sup> and Adam and Thomas Russell<sup>83</sup> and father and son businesses which included William Smith passing his affairs to William Smith junior<sup>84</sup>, and the architect, George Gowans, who worked in the New Town<sup>85</sup>, and his father, the Abbeyhill marble merchant, Alex Gowans<sup>86</sup>.

Family businesses were not new to Edinburgh's building businesses. The incorporation's master craftsmen, Deacons and Council Deacons, often represented families. The masons Patrick Jamieson and William Jamieson were father and son, as were the wrights, Francis and William Brodie, and Charles and William Butter. But, what was new were the emerging builders' businesses in the New Town who did not follow the incorporation's meetings, laws and adhere to its hierarchies of journeymen, apprentices, masters, Deacons, Council Deacons, Conveners and Trades Councilors, but were still able to get the confidence of Lord Provosts. These businesses were successful and linked with the Society of Master Builders, and Robert Adam's builders like James Salisbury.

The wright and architect, James Salisbury, worked for Robert Adam at Register house as the principal supervisor of its construction and worked with the masons, John Hay and Robert Inglis and the slater, John Baxter as well as the wright, John Brough as a wright and fellow builder in the 1780s and, later, worked with Inglis at the head of the Society of Master Builders. Through Brough, Salisbury knew Brough's overseer, Andrew Neil, who himself worked with James Nesbit, Robert Inglis and James Nesbit. But, Salisbury himself oversaw Neil's men in completing

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<sup>82</sup>ibid, 24/11/1787

<sup>83</sup>ibid, 3/6/1789

<sup>84</sup>ibid, 8/11/1786

<sup>85</sup>ibid, 8/6/1791

<sup>86</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 26/2/1780

Robert Belsches' house in Queen Street to John Brough's designs. Brough told his client that "Mr Salisbury has the direction on your parts of the whole operations to be carried on the whole house.<sup>87</sup>" Belsches also employed the mason, James Hill, to help in the work.

Salisbury was not only trusted by fellow builders but also by bankers. Sir William Forbes insisted that the Writers to the Signet hire him for the development of Parliament Square in 1780<sup>88</sup>, and described him as "a person in whose skill or integrity we had perfect confidence.<sup>89</sup>" Later, Salisbury made plans for the banker's houses and set "a pattern for the people at Edinburgh to work by<sup>90</sup>" in his drawings. Like other builders, Salisbury also retained the confidence of Robert Adam as a constructor and overseer. In 1787 Edinburgh's Dean of Guild Court heard how Salisbury had been given plans for 13 houses Robert Adam had designed for Leith Street<sup>91</sup>. These tenements offered work for builders, and Salisbury worked with the slater, John Baxter, and masons, Reid and Thomson<sup>92</sup> there to help them build. John Baxter, and his partner, the mason, John Hay, also wanted to build a tavern beside the tenements to the east of Register house<sup>93</sup>.

Apart from John Baxter, none of these men was a member of the incorporation, and even Baxter had joined the incorporation in 1786 without an apprenticeship. Builders were able to organise major building operations without recourse to Deacons, and their own network of professional contacts was dominating building the New Town by the 1780s. In response, the incorporation's Deacons who also worked in the New Town began to work with builders too – even former Sir Laurence Dundas's man, the wright, William Butter, who helped the wright and builder, Claud Cleghorn, work in Hanover Street in 1783<sup>94</sup>.

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<sup>87</sup>NAS, CS238/B7/56

<sup>88</sup>NLS, Acc4796, 84, Sir William Forbes, 13/7/1780

<sup>89</sup>ibid, Sir William Forbes, 12/8/1780

<sup>90</sup>NLS, Acc4796, 227, Sir William Forbes accounts 1783 - 1793

<sup>91</sup>ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Extracted Processes, Thomas Hill v James Salisbury, 26/4/1787

<sup>92</sup>ECA, Dean of Guild Court, Unextracted Processes, Plan of Leith Street, 1789, SL91/20

<sup>93</sup>ibid, William Hay, John Hay and John Baxter, 2/11/1789, SL91/20

<sup>94</sup>ECA, TCM, 20/8/1783

This study of family businesses shows how close business contacts could become in the New Town. There was a community of builders. The success family businesses enjoyed was partially due to the close contact partners had with one another. The Adam builders and the Society of Master Builders also enjoyed good contact with one another, and a builders' success could depend not only on his reputation among his financial backers, but also his professional peers in the building business. One of the most successful house builders in the New Town was John Young, who worked from 1767 to the 1790s.

### John Young

Youngson rightly acknowledged John Young as an important feuar, but he did not discuss how Young's business worked.<sup>95</sup> He feued and built extensively, but he did so with the help of a network of builders. He grasped the political and economic policies of the independent Council and used them to his advantage in the New Town.

John Young had found favour with Provost David Steuart for his support in bringing down Sir Laurence Dundas. The wright used his popularity to add to his property portfolio in the New Town which included tenements at Thistle Court, St Andrew's Square and Princes Street, where his bow flats had won praise from fellow professionals. Young gave up land for St Andrew's Church to be built, and even built its Session house himself<sup>96</sup>, and still obtained large feus to develop housing on.

In March 1783 he took 125 feet of the north side of George Street, opposite the Assembly Rooms<sup>97</sup>, and the next year he feued another 92 feet on the same side of the street<sup>98</sup>, whilst also feuing along the north eastern side of Hanover Street<sup>99</sup>. In May 1786 he continued to feu on the eastern side of Hanover Street<sup>100</sup>, and built two houses there for the lawyers, Alex Young and Archibald Milne, by 1787<sup>101</sup>. He then went on to feu more on the eastern Hanover Street in

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<sup>95</sup> A.J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh*, Edinburgh University Press, 1966, pp. 100 - 101

<sup>96</sup> ECA, TCM, 5/3/1788

<sup>97</sup> *ibid*, 3/3/1784

<sup>98</sup> *ibid*, 26/10/1785

<sup>99</sup> *ibid*, 28/6/1785

<sup>100</sup> *ibid*, 16/5/1784

<sup>101</sup> *ibid*, 3/1/1787

1787<sup>102</sup>, whilst feuing 90 feet on Thistle Street<sup>103</sup> in the same year. With David Steuart's support, Young returned his attention to the north side of George Street, where he feued 40 feet in 1789<sup>104</sup> together with another 36 feet of Thistle Street<sup>105</sup> where he built for Alex Houston<sup>106</sup>. Again through David Steuart, Young feued another 40 feet of north George Street in 1790<sup>107</sup>, and sold a house there to Elizabeth Bannerman in 1791<sup>108</sup> as he took on his final large project in the New Town which was to feu 229 feet of west Princes Street.<sup>109</sup>

Between 1783 and 1791 the Council had awarded Young several large feus in the New Town and he was committed to building nearly every year. Like James Hill, Young was to have a part of Thistle Street named after him. Young Street is a testament to John Young's feuing, but in order to develop these feus into properties he needed a large workteam and Young established a network of builders around him. Some of these have already been discussed in section two, such as John Brough's workmen. Young worked with other builders too, and his relationships with John Baxter, John Hay and John Crooks shall now be briefly discussed to illustrate Young's large network of builders and its influence on building the New Town.

In 1787 Young worked with the slater, John Baxter, and the mason, John Hay, to build along the north side of George Street<sup>110</sup>, such as Katherine Somerville's house<sup>111</sup>, and along eastern Hanover Street. Young even transferred some feuing ground there to Baxter and Hay to develop for themselves.<sup>112</sup> This was not new territory for Baxter and Hay, as they were neighbours to Young as feuars on north George Street.

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<sup>102</sup>ibid, 1/8/1787; 19/12/1787

<sup>103</sup>ibid, 18/4/1787 – 30/5/1787

<sup>104</sup>ibid, 5/8/1789

<sup>105</sup>ibid, 5/8/1789

<sup>106</sup>ibid, 9/2/1791

<sup>107</sup>ibid, 10/2/1790

<sup>108</sup>ibid, 21/12/1791

<sup>109</sup>ibid, 9/3/1791

<sup>110</sup>ibid, 28/11/1787, 19/12/1787

<sup>111</sup>ibid, 26/8/1789

<sup>112</sup>ibid, 14/2/1787

In 1785 Baxter feued 186 feet of north George Street to build 6 houses<sup>113</sup>. The owners of these houses were Colonel Campbell, Robert Hope, Earl Haddington<sup>114</sup> and Neil Ferguson<sup>115</sup> (plate 10). These builders were prepared to alter house elevations to accommodate other houses, such as removing pilasters<sup>116</sup>, copying Young's bow fronted elevations on Princes Street and Hanover Street for their own tenements on Castle Street (plate 45), which fellow builder Robert Wright acknowledged in his own designs for Castle Street in 1790<sup>117</sup>, and helping the architect George Gowans, to whom they transferred land on George Street and Castle Street to allow him to build "several houses<sup>118</sup>" there in 1789<sup>119</sup> and 1790<sup>120</sup>, only two years after Baxter and Hay had got the feus<sup>121</sup> by which time they must have started building operations there which Gowans either replaced or completed. But the lack of houses on Castle Street suggests the latter.

Young, Baxter and Hay worked in partnership. They were recorded as joint builders of the Earl of Haddington's house on George Street<sup>122</sup> in 1787, and it can be assumed that they worked together when feuing records mention Young, Hay or Baxter as the feuar. This means that Young and Baxter can also be associated with Hay's feus on Princes Street in 1785<sup>123</sup>, and on Queen Street<sup>124</sup> and north Castle Street corner<sup>125</sup>, and along Thistle Street between 1790 and 1794<sup>126</sup> or Baxter's house for George Robertson Scott on George Street.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>113</sup>ibid, 1/6/1785

<sup>114</sup>ibid, 19/12/1787

<sup>115</sup>ibid, 27/8/1788

<sup>116</sup>ibid, 5/4/1786

<sup>117</sup>ibid, 20/1/1790

<sup>118</sup>ibid, 1/6/1791

<sup>119</sup>ibid, 22/7/1789

<sup>120</sup>ibid, 13/1/1790

<sup>121</sup>ibid, 28/2/1787, 5/9/1787

<sup>122</sup>ibid, 19/12/1787

<sup>123</sup>ibid, 26/1/1785

<sup>124</sup>ibid, 24/3/1790

<sup>125</sup>ibid, 27/10/1790

<sup>126</sup>ibid, 3/8/1791, 25/4/1792, 11/9/1793, 19/3/1794

<sup>127</sup>ibid, 25/2/1789

John Crooks was another builder that John Young worked with. In 1787 Crooks had transferred a feu in George Street to Young<sup>128</sup>, for building to begin the next year<sup>129</sup> for a house for John Hay Esq.<sup>130</sup> Like Hay and Baxter, Crooks had feued along the north side of George Street.<sup>131</sup> In 1785 he had built Alex Miller's house there<sup>132</sup>. Although Crooks did not end up joining the Young, Hay and Baxter partnership he was willing to work with these men, and had a good career in partnership businesses. He had worked with the masons, Robert Calder and James Napier, in Rose Street<sup>133</sup>, where they built a house facing the Assembly Rooms<sup>134</sup>. He then moved into a new partnership with the masons Robert Inglis and John Howden. By 1788 they were building on George Street and Frederick Street<sup>135</sup> for William Campbell<sup>136</sup>, Margaret Blair<sup>137</sup> and Mrs Maitland<sup>138</sup> and for Alex and Robert Sherriff<sup>139</sup> and looked to build along the west side of Frederick Street<sup>140</sup> in 1790. Between 1791 and 1793 Crooks, Inglis and Howden built on the west side of south<sup>141</sup> and North Frederick Street<sup>142</sup>, where they built for James Carnegie<sup>143</sup> and James Watson<sup>144</sup>. Like Young, Baxter and Hay, Crooks worked along George Street and the cross streets, and he, like Young, also knew and worked with Robert Inglis.

There were many other builders who took large feus, such as Robert Wright, William Pirnie, Adam and Thomas Russell and John Marshall. Wright had been one of William Chrystie's journeymen, and worked in partnership with the mason, William Smith. In 1788 he feued 135 feet of Queen Street with 47 feet of Frederick Street for a huge tenement development (**plate 12**)<sup>145</sup>,

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<sup>128</sup>ibid, 9/5/1787

<sup>129</sup>ibid, 17/12/1788

<sup>130</sup>ibid, 24/6/1789

<sup>131</sup>ibid, 6/4/1785

<sup>132</sup>ibid, 3/8/1785

<sup>133</sup>ibid, 17/8/1785

<sup>134</sup>ibid, 3/1/1787

<sup>135</sup>ibid, 13/2/1788

<sup>136</sup>ibid, 19/3/1788

<sup>137</sup>ibid, 30/7/1788

<sup>138</sup>ibid, 13/10/1790

<sup>139</sup>ibid, 21/1/1789

<sup>140</sup>ibid, 19/5/1790

<sup>141</sup>ibid, 6/7/1791

<sup>142</sup>ibid, 6/6/1792

<sup>143</sup>ibid, 25/4/1792

<sup>144</sup>ibid, 1/5/1793

<sup>145</sup>ibid, 10/9/1788



and had feued 125 feet on Queen Street the previous year<sup>146</sup>. This meant Wright had feued 260 feet of Queen Street between 1787 and 1788, but he was not the only builder taking large feus here.

Also in 1788, the mason, William Pirnie, feued 125 feet of Queen Street and sold houses on this feu to the banker, George Kinnear<sup>147</sup>, the lawyer, Alex Boswell<sup>148</sup>, and Walter Wood<sup>149</sup>. Elsewhere, in the 1790s, there were also large feus taken, with Musselburgh's brick merchants, Thomas and Adam Russell, taking 186 feet of north George Street<sup>150</sup> for house building, such as the lawyer, George Ferguson's property<sup>151</sup>, and John Marshall's houses and shops on his 101 feet of north Rose Street<sup>152</sup>, where he had feued and built previously (plate 13).

All these builders used networks of professional contacts and teams of workmen to complete their business plans. For those who had been building since the 1770s this meant that their network would have been wider and stronger than others'. Messrs William Smith and Robert Wright, (west side of St Andrew's Square<sup>153</sup>, St David's Street<sup>154</sup>), and the Calton pair, Messrs William Pirnie and John Horn (west side entry to St Andrew's Square<sup>155</sup>), and Walter and William Chrystie and John Burns (George Street<sup>156</sup>, St David's Street<sup>157</sup>), George Veitch and John Burns (George Street<sup>158</sup>, Hanover Street<sup>159</sup>) were all working in the New Town from this time. Of these partnership businesses, Messrs Smith and Wright worked into the 1780s through Smith's son, William Smith junior<sup>160</sup> (George Street<sup>161</sup>, Frederick Street<sup>162</sup>). Messrs James Reddie and John Wilkie, (south west

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<sup>146</sup>ibid, 14/2/1787

<sup>147</sup>ibid, 27/8/1788

<sup>148</sup>ibid, 18/2/1789

<sup>149</sup>ibid, 4/5/1791

<sup>150</sup>ibid, 4/7/1792

<sup>151</sup>ibid, 22/2/1794

<sup>152</sup>ibid, 22/2/1794

<sup>153</sup>ibid, 11/3/1778

<sup>154</sup>ibid, 4/3/1778

<sup>155</sup>ibid, 30/3/1774;8/6/1774

<sup>156</sup>ibid, 19/5/1779

<sup>157</sup>ibid, 9/10/1778

<sup>158</sup>ibid, 19/5/1784

<sup>159</sup>ibid, 10/8/1785;10/11/1784;6/2/1788

<sup>160</sup>ibid, 8/11/1786

<sup>161</sup>ibid, 28/4/1784;15/11/1786

<sup>162</sup>ibid, 16/2/1785

corner of St David's Street and Princes Street<sup>163</sup>, and Princes Street<sup>164</sup>) also worked on into the 1780s (Princes Street<sup>165</sup>, George Street<sup>166</sup>, Hanover Street<sup>167</sup>). Other partnership businesses in the 1770s did not, such as Messrs Greenhill and Meikelbraes (Queen Street<sup>168</sup>), Messrs Watson, Donaldson and James Harper, (Queen Street, west entry to St Andrew's Square<sup>169</sup>), and Messrs. Charles Robertson and John Humble, who were the incorporations' only representatives in partnership (Princes Street<sup>170</sup>). Nevertheless, these businesses could also produce a network of journeymen who knew one another and who went onto to become builders just like William Chrystie's men did.

These brief sketches of three builders has shown that John Young's property empire in the New Town was made not only through his own efforts, but with help from others – not least the builders of the New Town. These builders often worked in partnership businesses, and a study of family businesses, like the Chrystie family, and the Adam family's tradesmen, has shown that the builders of the New Town established a community of builders and journeymen who learnt from one another and worked together.

It is understandable that these New Town builders established a Society of Master Builders to coordinate building business and encourage others to study their work. By 1792 Professor John Robison, who taught Natural Philosophy at Edinburgh College, was even writing lectures for “the instruction of masons, house carpenters...and artisans<sup>171</sup>” about how to design and build arches, domes and roofs. Robison must have thought there was a market for this information, and builders would have supported journeymen working to improve their education and skills, just as William Chrystie and Robert Adam's men had done.

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<sup>163</sup>ibid, 4/3/1778

<sup>164</sup>ibid, 8/3/1780

<sup>165</sup>ibid, 25/4/1781

<sup>166</sup>ibid, 24/1/1787

<sup>167</sup>ibid, 27/5/1782;27/4/1785

<sup>168</sup>ECA, Vassals, Composition and bygone feus in Antient and Extended Royalty of the City of Edinburgh, Martinmas 1734 to Martinmas 1779, 2/12/1773, f.125

<sup>169</sup>ECA, TCM, 10/2/1773

<sup>170</sup>ibid, 8/11/1769

<sup>171</sup>NLS, MS19988

During the 1777 election, a correspondent to the *Caledonian Mercury* newspaper called “Impartial” remarked how Edinburgh’s “ingenious artists and craftsmen<sup>172</sup>” were better educated than merchants, who were “shopkeepers”, because of their knowledge of practical mathematics, natural and mechanical philosophy and because of their common caring for one another. Members of Unity and Congress would have agreed, as would members of the Society of Master Builders. Through organised societies like the Society of Master Builders, the Society of Plasterers, the Society of Painters and the Society of Journeymen, and the Unity Group, these men got to know one another and shared business interests which they protected to help them work as builders with success.

The Unity group represented journeymen and their wishes for a better standard of life. These journeymen in the 1770s included men who later called themselves builders and then Master Builders in the 1780s and the 1790s. They perceived themselves to be separate from both incorporation masters craftsmen, and other journeymen. Failed builder, John Veitch, described himself as having to work as a journeyman mason to make a living<sup>173</sup> - something he perceived to be a final resort and far from his intention to be a successful builder. Robison’s lectures were acknowledging that there was a market for knowledge of architecture among Edinburgh’s journeymen that had existed from the 1770s and had resulted in a new professional clique called builders. These builders were a close community of professional house builders.

John Brough’s Bill of Suspension in 1785<sup>174</sup> was the most extreme form of protest a builder took against the Council<sup>175</sup>. Letters were far more common. Claud Cleghorn, the wright, wrote to the Council in January 1787 to protect builders’ businesses without having a Deacon do it for them<sup>176</sup>. Cleghorn, James Balfour, John and Robert Wemyss (Plate 8) and Samuel Dickson (plate 9) were all wrights with feuing and building interests in the New Town. Together they queried the Chamberlain about their feus on George Street and Frederick Street and told the Council how they

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<sup>172</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 6/9/1777

<sup>173</sup>ECA, TCM, 25/11/1789

<sup>174</sup>ibid, 7/12/1785

<sup>175</sup>NAS, CS271/49912

<sup>176</sup>ECA, TCM, 24/1/1787

had enclosed Cleghorn's ground off without damaging one another's feus or their prospects of building to their respective designs and business plans.

Complaints about the Council's administration of feuing and surveying the New Town properly put pressure on the Council's overseer of public building. In 1783 the mason, William Smith, asked for better drainage to allow him to begin building in George Street<sup>177</sup> and after the 1785 Building Act there were even more complaints from builders between 1786 and 1787 complaining about having feus "cut off"<sup>178</sup>, and suffering "real hardship" through poor mapping and administration.

Disputes with the Council over their enforcement of laws, and allowance of "indulgences" was contrasted with the ways builders worked cohesively to create successful building businesses. Robert Adam's builders showed one way to stay in work, and the Chrystie family showed another. However, John Young gave a clear example of every master craftsmen that a successful builder in the New Town would support not only himself, but business contacts and employees.

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<sup>177</sup>ECA, TCM, 15/1/1783

<sup>178</sup>ibid, 25/1/1786

## CHAPTER 10: WORKING BEYOND EDINBURGH

This chapter is a brief study of builders who found work outside Edinburgh. They enjoyed their reputation as good professionals outside the New Town. Other cities and towns like Dundee, St Andrews, Dunfermline, Kinghorn, Kirkcaldy and Glasgow all took in New Town architects and builders to modernise their streets and public buildings. This chapter examines a few examples of the builders' works elsewhere in Scotland.

### Churches and Country Houses

Outside Edinburgh, church heritors contracted builders to put up new churches, manses and school houses. The Moderate Ministers of Scotland approved of the builders' beliefs in self-improvement, education and profitable schemes. Noblemen also employed builders to improve their country houses, and estates. Together, these provide good sources of archival information about builders working outside Edinburgh.

Rebuilding the West Kirk of Edinburgh from the 1770s to the 1790s gave work to many New Town builders. In the 1770s incorporation Deacons William Butter, William Jamieson and John Young<sup>1</sup> and William Mylne were joined by others like the masons, John Wilson, James Robertson<sup>2</sup>, and Robert Burns, the plasterer, James Nesbit, the wright, William Keys and the architect, James Craig, who worked there at that time too<sup>3</sup> (later in 1791 Craig claimed an account for making plans<sup>4</sup>). In this time the main body of the church was built and fitted out for use. By the 1790s, when the steeple was being built, the mason, Alex Laing, and the architect, Alex Steven<sup>5</sup> were there. This is an illustration of how churches offered New Town builders work, and enthused men to work outside Edinburgh and travel over Scotland.

For example, the wright, John Young, worked at Kinghorn Church in Fife in 1774<sup>6</sup>. Between 1783 and 1786<sup>7</sup> he also worked at Colington Manse with his New Town associates John Crooks<sup>8</sup>, John

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<sup>1</sup> NAS, CH2/121/18

<sup>2</sup> NAS, CH2/718/23

<sup>3</sup> NAS, GD69/210A/1-6

<sup>4</sup> NAS, HR152/2. 2/8/1791

<sup>5</sup> NAS, HR152/2

<sup>6</sup> NAS, CH2/224/9

<sup>7</sup> NAS, CH2/121/19

<sup>8</sup> NAS, HR728/1

Brough, and Alex Steven<sup>9</sup> by inspecting and reporting on the new buildings which the New Town mason, James Robertson, and the marble merchant, Alex Gowan, had designed in 1771<sup>10</sup>. Other New Town builders also worked on churches. James Salisbury inspected and reported on slaters' and wrights' work by Messrs Ritchie and Cockburn, both of whom worked in the New Town, at Mid Calder Church between 1792 and 1793<sup>11</sup>. The mason, Alex Laing, worked at Lauder and Kirkliston Churches in 1783<sup>12</sup> and 1784<sup>13</sup> while the architect of St Andrew's Church's spire, Alex Steven, was also at work at Moffat.<sup>14</sup> John Young, Alex Steven, Alex Laing and John Brough, who were all New Town builders, and worked at the West Church, were also working in local Churches near Edinburgh.

Other New Town builders worked in churches, and church buildings, outside Edinburgh. The mason, John Wilkie, of the New Town partnership James Reddie and John Wilkie, designed Bothkenner Church<sup>15</sup> with the help of the Tollcross wright, John Brown. Francis Buchan, who worked as a wright at St Andrew's Church, planned the new manse at Tranent<sup>16</sup> in 1779 where the wright, Michael Naesmith had built one <sup>17</sup> ten years previously. In 1788 Francis Buchan's brother, the wright, Robert Buchan, worked with Deacon Thomas Herriot, to plan Forfar's new church.<sup>18</sup> Thomas Herriot was among the first feuars in the New Town, and by 1788, he, too, was working with builders, but this time outside Edinburgh. Elsewhere, the mason, Deacon Alex Reid, was called an "architect in Edinburgh" when he was asked to design and built Carluke's schoolhouse in 1789.<sup>19</sup>

Churches, manses and schoolhouses both nearby Edinburgh and far away from the city were being inspected, repaired and designed by builders and craftsmen from the New Town. They were

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<sup>9</sup>NAS, CH2/121/18

<sup>10</sup>NAS, HR728/1

<sup>11</sup>NAS, HR456

<sup>12</sup>NAS, HR497/2

<sup>13</sup>NAS, HR770/1

<sup>14</sup>NAS, HR428/9/2

<sup>15</sup>NAS, HR777/1

<sup>16</sup>NAS, HR 74/1

<sup>17</sup>NAS, HR275/1

<sup>18</sup>NAS, HR415/3/1

responding to newspaper advertisements for work, and to personal appeals by Ministers and Heritors. No doubt their reputations as professional builders in Edinburgh and the builders' own self-education in architecture, and commitment to improving themselves, would have appealed to Moderate Ministers.

The great nobles of Scotland also hired Edinburgh architects and builders to plan out their own new towns on their estates, like Langholm for the Duke of Buccleuch<sup>20</sup> and Fochabers for the Duke of Gordon.<sup>21</sup> In East Lothian the Duke of Buccleuch could employ Edinburgh architects and masons with ease. James Playfair designed Langholm. At Castle Gordon John Baxter junior assembled an army of Edinburgh tradesmen to work. These included plasterers, John Berry<sup>22</sup> and William Lyon<sup>23</sup> and Thomas Clayton<sup>24</sup>, who had all worked in the New Town, as well as the plumber, John Humble<sup>25</sup>, and painter, Walter Smiton.<sup>26</sup>

John Baxter also ordered readymade materials such as London chimneyplaces<sup>27</sup>, stucco<sup>28</sup>, marbles<sup>29</sup>, Swedish and Russian iron<sup>30</sup>, and timber<sup>31</sup> to be sent there from Leith, together with furniture and furnishings from Young and Trotter's warehouse on Princes Street<sup>32</sup>. Looking about the house, and at the ceilings for the drawing and dining rooms, guests saw the craftsmanship, taste and materials of Edinburgh's New Town houses.

Modern houses impressed wealthy clients, but sometimes they preferred to refurbish an old one. In 1775 John Syme described Tweeddale House in Canongate as an "entire wreck" and "in want

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<sup>19</sup>NAS, HR179/1

<sup>20</sup>NAS, GD224/655/2

<sup>21</sup>NAS, GD44/43/78

<sup>22</sup>NAS, GD44//43/144

<sup>23</sup>NAS, GD44/43/39

<sup>24</sup>NAS, GD44/43/239

<sup>25</sup>NAS, GD44/43/57

<sup>26</sup>NAS, GD44/43/288

<sup>27</sup>NAS, GD44/43/270

<sup>28</sup>NAS, GD44/43/22

<sup>29</sup>NAS, GD44/43/157

<sup>30</sup>NAS, GD44/43/117

<sup>31</sup>NAS, GD44/43/228

<sup>32</sup>NAS, GD44/43/188

of modern elegance<sup>33</sup>, despite the fact that Sir Laurence Dundas had been living there while he waited for his Town Council House, as it may be called, on St Andrew's Square. Syme wanted to modernise Tweeddale house. The mason, John Hay, was at work there from 1782.<sup>34</sup> He had already been working for the Marquess of Tweeddale. Hay appears at work at Yester House and Gifford Mill in the 1770s<sup>35</sup> and when he worked at Tweeddale House he also worked with the slater, John Baxter<sup>36</sup> and James Nesbit<sup>37</sup>. Hay was called a "builder" who also measured masonry, wright and plasterwork at Yester House in the late 1780s and early 1790s<sup>38</sup> done by himself, and his partner, John Baxter<sup>39</sup>, and the plumbers, William Scot<sup>40</sup> and Robert Dickson.<sup>41</sup> By 1792 Robert Adam's plans for Yester House were ready - he had worked on them from 1789<sup>42</sup>, and the New Town builders, Hay and Claud Cleghorn, competed to execute them.<sup>43</sup>

Tweeddale hired a group of New Town builders to work at his properties, specifically the slaters, Alex Adams<sup>44</sup> and James Cairnie<sup>45</sup> (via wright William Butter), and the plumbers, Robert Chalmers<sup>46</sup> and Elias Scot.<sup>47</sup> Local men were also hired like the Aberlady wright, David Hay<sup>48</sup>, who came into Edinburgh and established himself as a builder in the New Town. In 1794 he claimed the prize of 10 guineas for being the first builder in the New Town to roof his house in Charlotte Square.<sup>49</sup> Simultaneously he was building on Bridge Street<sup>50</sup>, and Leith Pier<sup>51</sup>. Like any New Town house building team, Yester House was built with a team mostly made up of builders

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<sup>33</sup>NLS, MS14438, f.47

<sup>34</sup>NLS, MS14438, f.180

<sup>35</sup>NLS, MS14680, ff.16,20,130,134,136,137,139,140,141,143,144 - 147.

<sup>36</sup>ibid, f.165

<sup>37</sup>ibid, f.178,179,206

<sup>38</sup>ibid, ff.45-55

<sup>39</sup>ibid, f.67

<sup>40</sup>ibid, f.66

<sup>41</sup>ibid, f.71

<sup>42</sup>ibid, f.93

<sup>43</sup>ibid, f.94

<sup>44</sup>ibid, f.160,162

<sup>45</sup>ibid, f.164

<sup>46</sup>ibid, f.163

<sup>47</sup>ibid, f.171

<sup>48</sup>ibid, f.77

<sup>49</sup>ECA, TCM, 3/9/1794

<sup>50</sup>ibid, 6/5/1795

<sup>51</sup>ibid, 20/5/1795



like Hay and Baxter, Nesbit and Cleghorn who all knew one another. This network also encouraged David Hay to become a builder.

The Tweeddale, and Gordon properties are illustrations of how the New Town and Edinburgh architects and tradesmen found work outside the capital and its new suburb. There were many other estates, country houses and villas which belonged to Scottish nobles and middle class. It is no surprise to see that Edinburgh was often supplying a workforce for new houses and refurbishments since there were so many builders there. Other country house accounts would surely show more builders at work.

This brief survey of builders' activities outside Edinburgh has concentrated upon church buildings and country houses. Their successes in these markets reflect on their work in the New Town. Once again, builders can be found to work together, and to work with the people they knew from the New Town.

## CONCLUSION TO SECTION THREE

In conclusion to this section, the first thing to do is to set the thesis's research findings into the context of scholarship on New Town builders. Like the administration and architecture of New Town builders, New Town scholars have also ignored the builders' businesses. In 1966 Youngson wrote that builders houses were monotonous<sup>1</sup> because they worked on small scale with very limited capital<sup>2</sup>. In 1982 Peter Reed also lamented speculative building in the New Town and also argued that streets looked like barracks because of a "plain repetitive unit" and "inhibited architectural ambition" due to what was affordable for the speculators which made the building piecemeal and austere<sup>3</sup>. But, Reed did not discuss the 1772 bank crash and debt management as issues which affected builders. In 1995, Ian Gow noted and that there had been tenements built in the New Town from the 1760s<sup>4</sup> but he did not elaborate any further.

These previous analyses have not interpreted the builders' works as being examples of successful business management whereby a successful building season led to further backing, proprietorship and better reputations which could encourage patronage from the Church and from nobles. Neither did the previous analyses link the successful businesses with political and financial patronage. But, like Youngson and Reed, Gow did not discuss these buildings and businesses in detail. Making classical Edinburgh the "Athens of the North" has been done without studying the makers of the majority of its buildings. The Royal Commission had set the standards in analysis of New Town architecture but its report only categorised tenements. It did not inspect and report on interiors, and it did not give the names of builders, and an analysis of their businesses.

Youngson sided with the 18<sup>th</sup> century critic Farington's view that the New Town's original appearance was like a barracks, and that its original buildings were monotonous<sup>5</sup> and Reed with the 19<sup>th</sup> critic, Lord Cockburn, that the buildings were cheap.<sup>6</sup> Youngson then contrasts this view

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<sup>1</sup> A.J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh*, Edinburgh University Press, 1966, p.93

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.100

<sup>3</sup> P.Reed, *Form and Context: a Study of Georgian Edinburgh, Order in Space and Society, Architectural Form and its Context in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. T.A.Markus, Mainstream, 1982, pp. 115-155.

<sup>4</sup> I.Gow, *The Northern Athenian House, Rassegna*, IV, 64, 1995, pp. 40-48

<sup>5</sup> A.J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh*, Edinburgh University Press, 1966, p. 93

<sup>6</sup> P.Reed, *Form and Context: a Study of Georgian Edinburgh, Order in Space and Society, Architectural Form and its Context in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. T.A.Markus, Mainstream, 1982, pp. 115-155.

with the architecture Robert Adam produced in Charlotte Square to show how uniformity finally completed the first New Town. But, he declined to refer to the book's excellent illustration of Kirkwood's map of Edinburgh (1819)<sup>7</sup>, which showed every elevation in the New Town at that time, and to discuss original house elevations, plans, buildings and builders in any depth. It appears that to Youngson the making of classical Edinburgh was done without the helping hands of house makers, but more with the thoughts and ideas of Scottish geniuses. Architects' plans are shown throughout the book, but the 18<sup>th</sup> century New Town's tenements only shown in overviews such as the 1780 view of Nor Loch<sup>8</sup> and St Andrew's Church<sup>9</sup>, where the illustrations support a view that the original New Town was a "barracks" of monotonous, repetitive facades.

But, where these illustrations accurate? When Youngson did show New Town tenements, such as those on Thistle Court<sup>10</sup> and Castle Street<sup>11</sup> he did not discuss them in any great detail, or try to place them in the context of the Royal Commission's report on New Town architecture which had attempted to categorise the tenement architecture there. The impression readers of Youngson, Reed and other later scholars, like McKean, are given of builders is that they are hardly worth studying because their businesses were poor, and their buildings were cheap and boring. Ian Gow noted the importance of Adam's Ord house to other property developers in the New Town, and, like other architectural historians before him, focused upon architects rather than tradesmen. Robert Adam triumphed and builders were overlooked in John Fleming's "*Robert Adam and his Circle*"<sup>12</sup>. Once again, this book did not mention Adam's workshop, nor his hirelings but his family circle and friends. New Town scholarship has given the view that builders deny the New Town of long vistas of palatial streets by Adam, and their poverty of ideas and funds dented Edinburgh's ideal. Adam scholarship views other architects as bad copyists<sup>13</sup> and hired hands.

<sup>7</sup>A.J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh*, Edinburgh University Press, 1966, Figure 28, pp. 106-109

<sup>8</sup>ibid, Figure 11, pp. 62-63

<sup>9</sup>ibid, Figure 21, p. 85

<sup>10</sup>ibid, Plate 17, p. 80

<sup>11</sup>ibid, Plate 21, p. 92

<sup>12</sup>J. Fleming, *Robert Adam and his Circle in Edinburgh and Rome*, Harvard Press, 1962

<sup>13</sup>A. Rowan, *The Adam Brothers and Contemporary Office Practice, Adam in Context*, Georgian Group Symposium, 1992, Lavenham Press, pp 42-49

Whilst there can be no denying the importance and influence of the Adam business and its buildings upon the builders of the New Town, the lack of scholarship on the builders themselves has constructed a uninformed criticism of the architecture of the New Town. There has been little to no scholarship of the buildings and businesses of the New Town's builders and architects. But, it is clear that from existing elevations made by builders that buildings were not repetitive.

This calls into question the accuracy of the 19<sup>th</sup> prints, and criticism of men like Lord Cockburn, which Reed accepted as being accurate.<sup>14</sup> Recent scholars have not thought critically about evidence for the first New Town, and asked questions about the validity of Cockburn's views. Kirkwood's map of the New Town at least records a variety of elevations, which corresponds to the variety of elevations that builders prepared for their feuing applications. A curious feature of the 18<sup>th</sup> century New Town is the lack of illustrations of buildings being built when the area was covered with building sites. There are no prints and paintings of men on scaffolds, cutting stone and building houses and tenements. When prints were made to show the New Town in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century they either showed general views, or public buildings. Houses and tenements were were not recorded accurately if the builders' elevations they submitted were actually built. It appears that the inhabitants of Edinburgh did not want to represent a realistic image of itself, or celebrate its artisans instead as if the New Town represented a Platonic Republic where artisans were denied recognition. The view of the New Town as being a residential area with houses built for gentlemen and their families, and not a commercial area with tenements and houses built by a person of speculation has prevailed. Scholars like Youngson and McKean have read and believed the writings of the 1750s as being predictive texts for what the New Town was meant to be, rather than to study the realities of the 18<sup>th</sup> century New Town as it really was. What this section of the thesis has done is to study builders' businesses in greater depth than has been attempted before. Section two of the thesis established that builders had some degree of independence as well as interdependence within Edinburgh's architectural professions, and discussed designs and decorations to see what the 18<sup>th</sup> century New Town actually looked like. This section continued this research to argue that builders were a part of a community of professionals who survived the difficult years described in the first section of the thesis.

Furthermore, it shows that builders were ambitious enough to work outside the New Town. Though many builders were not wealthy men, their financial poverty did not prevent them from working. Like architects, builders needed money to work and would often find funding through heritable security, bankers and lawyers. The speculative builders would not only organise loans, but also devise business plans. A tenement would not only be heritable security, but could also make profit through rents. Builders themselves were not the only people to recognise the strength of this business plan as lawyers and bankers were property developers.

The business plans of the builders and their backers were based upon an annual building plan since the building laws after 1782 required them to have completed the substructure and superstructure of the building within 12 months of the feu being given. But, this did not mean that builders' plans were piecemeal and short of ambition. Some builders feued large strips of streets with a view to building more than one house in a season. The scale of completing the building of the New Town together with builders adopting large building schemes mean that many builders and journeymen worked together.

William Chrystie's journeymen worked in the New Town, and many went on to become builders themselves. The road they took to become masons was not directly under Adam, but under Adam's chief mason. Journeymen also worked under other architects, and master craftsmen, and could establish a network of professional business contacts which they used as builders without direct recourse to Robert Adam. The builders' business records left by John Brough<sup>15</sup>, Andrew Neal<sup>16</sup> and William Morrison<sup>17</sup> give examples of these networks, and an analysis of John Young's business also shows that he did not work alone, but in partnership with other builders. Although these men needed to make money to keep working they did not necessarily work as rivals. The emergence of professional organizations of builders and trades' societies implies that they worked in communities – be they professional or as family relations.

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<sup>14</sup> P.Reed, *Form and Context: a Study of Georgian Edinburgh, Order in Space and Society, Architectural Form and its Context in the Scottish Enlightenment*, ed. T.A.Markus, Mainstream, 1982, pp. 115-155.

<sup>15</sup>NAS, CS231/seq/B1/7

<sup>16</sup>NAS, CS96/726/1 - 3

<sup>17</sup>NAS, CS96/704/1-2

This emerging group of builders, men who were neither an integral part of the incorporation nor Society of Journeymen, and their willingness to learn architecture was noted by Robert Adam, and Professor John Robison. An Edinburgh College Professor preparing lectures to offer artisans another way to learn architecture was a recognition of the importance of tradesmen to Edinburgh, and another way for journeymen to become designers and builders. Robison's lectures were matched in Glasgow, by Professor John Anderson<sup>18</sup>. He also encouraged artisans to study mechanics and architecture, and this places the development of the builders' profession within the wider context of Scotland's late eighteenth century Enlightenment. If builders were successful, like Alex Balfour and James Nesbit, they could even call themselves an architect, and be seen in fashionable clothes and homes and known as a manager of buildings. Section one of the thesis showed professional architects at work planning the New Town in the 1760s. Robert Adam and Sir William Chambers had both studied architecture in Italy and at academies. Thirty years later, artisans and builders could study architecture at local Colleges, and by working for Adam. However, they did not form an architects' club, but the Society of Master Builders. They had their own professional identity.

But, to get a good reputation, builders had to present good business plans as well as good plans for houses, and the tenements and houses they designed were neither austere, nor repetitive nor copies of Adam buildings. They were designed and built within the remits of what the builders knew, and what could be made profitable, but these qualities did not disappoint contemporary inhabitants as much as later critics. The tenement tradition lived in the New Town from 1767 onwards. The mason, Alex Mickelbraes, and the painter, Daniel Davidson, happily sold and rented garret flats to tradesmen in their St Andrew's street flats, like the plasterer, James Russell, who needed a home as he worked in the New Town.<sup>19</sup> Every floor that was rented made money, and no one complained about the architecture. This fact related to the case studies found in section one which discussed legislation about stormont windows.

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<sup>18</sup>D. Daiches, *Glasgow*, Andre Deutsch, 1977, pp 88- 89

<sup>19</sup>NAS, GD1/1135/7/1-5

In the 1780s and 1790s George Street houses were largely whitewashed, with only the entertainment rooms, the Drawing and Dining rooms, being given decoration, but this did not stop inhabitants from celebrating living in them. In 1795, the slater, John Baxter, continued to do routine repairs to houses he had probably helped to design and build.<sup>20</sup> New owners of these houses by Messrs. Young, Hay and Baxter, who were speculative builders, were impressed with what they got. In 1786, George Loch wrote to George Foulis to tell him he had bought a house on north George Street, the third one west of the corner of Frederick Street, and that it was “really a handsome chearfull(sic) house and large enough to serve the family for ever.”<sup>21</sup> The Dining and Drawing room dimensions were given, and Loch welcomed the cow house and hay loft at the back of the house. The cow house was a reminder that even New Town houses on George Street accommodated live stock, and the Scottish tenement tradition of keeping livestock.

For architects and builders the New Town was an opportunity to beautify Edinburgh. It was also a chance to make money and establish a successful business – something which was evidenced by their finding work in other parts of Scotland and in projects other than speculative building. The commercial nature of New Town architecture was partially based on business planning to survive the hard economic conditions Edinburgh had to endure between the 1770s and 1790s and difficulties builders and architects had in accounting costs. Teams of lawyers, bankers, merchants and builders could make the New Town’s buildings profitable – even at the expence of the Council’s coffers when it came to tax collection. The irony of this situation was that merchants, bankers and lawyers also tried to enforce laws for the Council which could damage building businesses.

Builders, and their advisers, were not household names like Adam, or Henry Dundas, but the combination of local Edinburgh professionals managed to make the New Town stand out. The New Town was also completed with local pride. Inhabitants, and residents, were proud of Edinburgh’s New Town. Seen through builders’ eyes, the New Town’s tenements, shops and houses were also ways to raise and spend money on further building, and professional development by learning more about architecture, and managing business with the help of a

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<sup>20</sup>NAS, GD170/444/3, mason work in Edinburgh

network of investors, family, friends, suppliers and workmen. The buildings can be read as being business proposals, and none were built to be deliberately poor, and lacking ambition.

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<sup>21</sup>NAS, GD268/270/23



## Thesis Conclusion

This thesis is not a definitive study of the builders of Edinburgh's New Town but a deeper study of them than has hitherto been attempted. This is the first time they have been researched and written about in any real depth to take into account New Town scholarship, as well as wider contexts of Scottish and British architectural history. The three sections of the thesis have examined the builders' administration, buildings and businesses and argued that the builders of the New Town deserve far more scholarly attention than they have so far received, and that this thesis has shown how the builder of the New Town played significant parts in the ways the area was built, and shaping its final appearance.

Scholarly tradition has understated this significance, and deemed the builders' output to be poor, boring and hardly worth serious study, but this thesis concludes that here that studying the builders explains how Edinburgh's New Town was planned, built and completed, and that there was a distinct group of men who called themselves builders. They were neither master craftsmen from incorporations, nor journeymen from the Society of Journeymen, but emerged from the liberating effects of building the New Town over 30 years as it affected architectural professional organizations and practices. The term "builders" in the New Town was initially used from the late 1770s, and probably referred to ambitious journeymen, it was well established in the 1780s and 1790s by which time the Society of Master Builders has been set up and run by two New Town builders – Robert Inglis and James Salisbury. By the 1790s artisans were being offered courses by Edinburgh and Glasgow Colleges, and learning about architecture was being taken outside the control of Incorporations or professional architects. Builders challenged both these professions in finding work in the New Town, and Scotland.

Edinburgh's Magistrates needed the New Town to make money because it cost them dearly after they borrowed heavily to build it. Duties recouped costs and debts and the faster building was completed the greater were the resulting revenues. However, to administer building the New Town the Council appointed an Overseer of public works and established Council Committees. Despite new administrative systems and structures, the Council allowed New Town housing to develop largely according to the wishes of property developers and residents. There was soon a contrast

between the property rights of feuars and enforcing building controls or the proposed plans for New Town developments. New Town architects such as Robert Adam and James Craig were not able to persuade Magistrates to adopt grand palatial facades until Charlotte Square was being planned in the 1790s. Research revealed several examples of original elevations builders intended for the New Town which show that there was a great variety of building there. The Scottish tradition of building tenements remained common in Scotland's most impressive urban development, and research of original elevations for these has shown that there was more than one type of tenement façade built in the main, cross and minor streets. There are sound reasons why this was so, and the New Town can be understood not as an exclusive aristocratic residential suburb, akin to an early Georgian London square, but as an extension of Edinburgh where commerce quickly took hold. Communities of building businesses contributed to the commercial function of New Town architecture, and their piecemeal development of its squares and streets celebrated this. Yet, this piecemeal type of development was also entirely typical of other leading British cities in this period. Furthermore, the New Town established house building as the area's main industry, and the Council's support for its businesses was also typical of the administration of other, albeit much smaller, Scottish New Towns.

These specialist building businesses were vitally important to make the New Town a success. The Council relied on them to complete the plan. An impression of the scale of the Council's ambitions for new Edinburgh can be grasped through its proposals set out in the 1750s, which included a scheme for developing free trade in the city. Indeed, the 1767 Parliament Act was drafted to make the New Town's provision of new trade and commerce explicit. These had been hinted at as early as the 1730s, but 20 years later Lord Provost Drummond realised that Edinburgh's incorporation of wrights and masons did not have enough master craftsmen, and that its apprenticeships were too few to provide sufficient labour and enterprise to complete a large house building programme within a lifetime. The Council linked free trade with speculative building businesses, and soon Provosts became backers of building businesses in private and public. The typically British urban public building programme which was set out for the New Town from the 1720s to the 1767 Parliament Act not only provided Edinburgh with prestigious nationally important buildings like Register House, but housing in the New Town was not provided through a masterplan, or palatial

elevation. Lord Provost Laurie was careful to avoid including a clause in the Parliamentary Act to provide a clause on housing, and, in doing so, not only deflected current opposition to the Bill, but also encouraged a variety of developments, social mix, commerce and consumerism.

Building James Craig's plan of the New Town was an ambitious project which tested the city's political and economic stability. Architects, Deacons and journeymen in the New Town were involved in political factions and patronage groups centred around Sir Laurence Dundas in the 1760s and 1770s, and the Independent Councilors in the 1780s and 1790s. Over the 30 years it took to build from the east square to the west square, free trade saw a new and important group of tradesmen emerge who were the builders of the New Town. The builders represented some of the ideals of the New Town, which were set out by Provost Drummond and led by Sir Laurence Dundas, to embrace free trade and speculative building and banking. But, confidence in the success of the scheme was shaken by the Ayr Bank crash of 1772 which plunged Edinburgh's Council, bankers and lawyers into debt and crushed many building businesses. Sir Laurence's house in St Andrew's Square was a stunning statement of how he envisioned the New Town as a natural home for his control over Edinburgh Council and a building no one else could match, but after 1772 it became an even greater priority to ensure that the New Town was built, and that building businesses adapted to new market conditions where they could supply the demand for cheaper housing. As a result more tenements and shops were built and the number of individual houses went into decline, proportionately.

As well as Council "indulgences" and incentives to provide housing, property investors and banks offered building businesses cash and credit accounts, as well as bonds to facilitate their stability and growth. For these private investors, the New Town was an extension of traditional business practices whereby building businesses retained proprietorships of properties to use as securities on loans. These loans would give money to continue building, whilst rents, or sales, from the properties would eventually repay loans. Many investors in building businesses were Edinburgh's bankers, lawyers and merchants who produced Edinburgh's political leaders. Men like Provost David Steuart was a banker who feued extensively in the New Town, and supported building businesses. In doing this he was not only ensuring the Council's economic wellbeing improved

through the New Town being built, but also that his own interests in building businesses benefited too. In the 1780s the Council passed laws which forced properties to be built quickly so that it could begin to gather more tax revenues faster. Since building businesses also needed to repay loans, the New Town developed a construction system whereby plans, elevations, foundations and building sites were checked and policed. Tradesmen had to work efficiently as they put up substructures and superstructures time and time again. This professionalism was enhanced by law enforcement. Following the 1770s, the Council balanced this with “indulgences” to help builders just as earlier administrators of Scottish New Towns had done when they supported a principal industry there.

The buildings they built and their materials and methods used were not always innovative, but building teams had to work well together to stay in business. This encouraged a dynamic relationship between builders and their workers and suppliers. New Town builders had extensive knowledge of suppliers of materials, resources, fixtures and fittings in English and Scottish cities, and the British countryside as well as the opportunities to have trade links with Europe, and British colonies. Elements of New Town tenement and house building design and decoration could often be found in the Old Town, which used traditional sources of knowledge such as Palladio, and living experts in architecture like the Adam brothers. Venting, stormont windows, gable ends and hanging stairs were all commonly seen as were copies of the elevation of Robert Adam’s house for Baron Ord on Queen Street or John Adam’s elevation for Adam Square.

Merchants also ensured that buildings were built quickly, and promoted the builders’ support of trade, commerce and consumerism. New Town properties were put up using mass manufactured components such as slates, timber and stone, fire places, carpets and railings. These were sent to building sites from local factories as well as elsewhere from Scotland, Great Britain and Europe. To stay in business profits had to be made and men had to work effectively. Once the building season was over, masons and wrights were set to making parts for buildings in the winter, ready for assembly in the next year. The houses New Town scholars have called monotonous the builders of them may have called uniform and regular and affordable at the time they were completed.

These buildings did not possess the uniformity that Robert Adam and James Craig craved, with palatial facades for entire squares and circuses. Builders did not publish booklets on their planning projects but they did petition and influence the Council about the administration of the New Town and their businesses. Two case studies of these matters included the builders of Frederick Street whose tenements included stormont windows for garret flats to increase rental income, and James Nesbit's concern for the public purse won the Provost's admiration during the planning of Charlotte Square with his proposal to build the square using one of his George Street houses as a model to copy.

Influencing Lord Provosts was less common than not selling properties, delivering a building late and over budget, which often led to penalties, and damaging court cases and consequent ruin. In a period when money was scarce builders had to develop a reputation for being good managers, and yet builders had very real difficulties making accurate estimates and accounts for costs which meant that Bankruptcies were common. There was no market for extravagant architecture in every house and flat. Plain and sufficient buildings and decorations were rewarded with profits and finished houses. Decorative schemes for houses and tenements were often concentrated in drawing and dining rooms. There were common plaster and paint decorations where simplicity and standardisation were rewarded with profits. Builders found construction more efficient, and business convenient to build affordable housing.

Viable building businesses were good news for the Council, and for Edinburgh's bankers, lawyers, merchants and tradesmen. Builders presented books of accounts and plans which represented realistic business proposals for investment and backing. Many New Town houses and tenements were not necessarily attempts at architectural originality, but the Council did not insist that every application to build had to be an innovation. Nevertheless, the buildings did demonstrate that Edinburgh was developing new architectural professions, and the builders were at the forefront of these at this time. The buildings on Craig's New Town plan could be read as ways of making money rather than avenues for innovative architecture. But, this is not to say that builders did not understand architectural principles like uniformity and symmetry, or

apprenticeships and sharing knowledge. They used bow fronts, and stormont windows over large areas of streets, and at their crossings. This form of uniformity was not something that the Council demanded from builders, but something they volunteered as they worked together. Frederick Street's bow fronted tenements mirror builders' common aims and communal organisation. Although Adam Smith's free trade philosophy influenced politicians and their administration of the New Town it did not lead to continual competition between tradesmen, but it did mean competition for incorporations as their monopoly on public architecture was challenged. The builders themselves were organised into the Society of Master Builders, and had common financial, family and professional interests.

To New Town scholars, the builders of the New Town were any tradesmen who were involved in building, but they were a distinct group of men. The Society of Master Builders was not full of master craftsmen in incorporations. The lack of surviving archives for Canongate, Leith and Portburgh's incorporations of masons and wrights, as well as the Society of Journeymen means that it is hard to place men in any of these societies. But, studies of Robert Adam's accounts and building operations at Register house as well as John Adam's principal mason, William Chrystie, have revealed that men who were employed by the Adam practice became builders. They appear in between Edinburgh's incorporation, and Society of Journeymen. They had worked for New Town architects as journeymen and then went on to work as builders which involved not just working as a mason, wright or another trade but in feuing ground, planning buildings, hiring men and finding backers and suppliers.

Architects and master craftsmen from incorporations also had to do this to build in the New Town, but a builders' training was different. They did not go to an Academy, or on tour around Europe like Adam, and they did not become an apprentice for 6 to 7 years which culminated in an essay piece for peer approval like a master craftsman in the incorporation. Builders did offer apprenticeships, but just as journeymen doing the work of architects and Deacons was an innovation, so labourers aspiring to do this work was another example of the building of the New Town causing professional change. It is not known if builders' apprentices sat an essay, but it is clear that builders learnt about architecture from books, and from studying, and working at

building sites in the New Town as well as from College Professors who saw that there was a demand from tradesmen for tuition in architecture.

The Adam group of builders paid homage to their master by copying the Ord house elevation on Queen Street. But, builders also copied one another's designs, with Robert Wright wanting to copy John Young's bow fronted flats, and Alex Peacock's house influencing Robert Inglis's tenement on Queen Street. Sources of inspiration and training for builders in the New Town could be found in the same streets they worked in. By examining John Young, John Brough and the Chrystie family's businesses it is clear that builders, master craftsmen and journeymen knew one another's buildings and one another. The New Town was built by men who influenced each other and worked together. These strong relationships not only resulted in new professional organisations but also fame. James Hill and John Young worked together and both had streets named after them whereas there was no Adam or Craig Streets in the 18<sup>th</sup> century's New Town.

Builders also made an impression in work outside the New Town. They established themselves as tradesmen for the Council to hire, and for Ministers and nobles to employ in building and refurbishing churches, manses, schools and country houses. Given their wider influence, it is hardly surprising that builders and tradesmen took the opportunity to be more ambitious. By the 1790s, both builders and Deacons were being called architects. Building the New Town had created a fast way for local Edinburgh men to learn architecture and, if successful, call themselves architects. The New Town became like a school of architecture for builders.

As well as identifying who the builders really were, and how they organised themselves into influential work teams and partnerships, this thesis has shown how builders' networks provided new ways to learn practical building skills. Whilst their buildings in the New Town represented what could be realistically sold or rented with profits, the builders themselves were ambitious and considered themselves as a dynamic group of professional tradesmen and designers. New Town properties, fine clothes and social and professional contacts with Edinburgh's urban professions

made builders look successful. Behind this showing off was hard earned knowledge of the practicalities of house building and construction industry.

Builders were not invited among Edinburgh's philosophers, economists and literary heroes and were probably mostly ambitious journeymen who could neither write books nor make great speeches in Parliament and courts. But, they knew how to build houses, and their contribution to completing the New Town has been overlooked and damned by New Town scholars. The builders' original designs and letters have been used for their study here not only to benefit the thesis, but also help further studies today's New Town Georgian architecture.

The thesis is set out to examine why the New Town was built in the way it was, its building methods, and the people who built the area's housing. It is not surprising to conclude that speculative builders worked to make money, but the work builders did helps to establish a new chapter in labour history for the building trades of Edinburgh, and Scotland. The communal nature of their business management and architectural practices were not dictated by a desire for political reform, but to survive in business. Research has established the builders' new connections with the Adam brothers' businesses have been made, and to the development of professional architectural services in Scotland. Furthermore, builders businesses were also closely tied with Edinburgh's Magistrates, and bankers, lawyers, merchants and, importantly, tradesmen. These connections reveal the complexities of studying Edinburgh's New Town, and the importance of the relationship between the administrators of the project, its designers and builders to the completion of the New Town.



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Volume 131, Information for John Deas Esq; and others, feuars upon the extended royalty of the city of Edinburgh, pursuers; Against the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Council of the said city, John Hume coachmaker, Young and Trotter, upholsterers; and John Reid and Richard Thomson, masons, Defenders 4/3/1773

Volume 131, Information for the Lord Provost, Lord Provost, Magistrates and Council of the said city, John Hume coachmaker, Young and Trotter, upholsterers; and John Reid and Richard Thomson, masons, Defenders against John Deas, Esq; and others, feuars upon the extended royalty of the city of Edinburgh, Pursuers , 5/3/1773

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 WO48 Ordnance Office ledgers 1660 - 1847  
 WO49 Ordnance Office various accounts 1592 - 1858  
 WO78/1822 Leith Gun Battery plan X.39/20  
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E201/1/71 declared Accounts 1780 - 1781

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E215/3 Declared Accounts 23/2/1755 - 2/2/1780

E216/7/1 1770 - 1784 debts on forfeited estates

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 E227/3 1774 - 1791 warrant Privy Seal, 1774 - 1791  
 E232/1/1 1775 - 1816 orders  
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 E401/2 1783 - 1795 miscellaneous accounts  
 E414/1 - 8 1764 - 1795 Botanic Garden accounts  
 E502/64 - 96 1767 - 1795 cash accounts  
 E508/64/1 - 508/96/10 1766 - 1796 customs cash vouchers  
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GD44/43/76, correspondence, 17/10/1772 - 31/10/1772  
 GD44/43/79, correspondence, 1/12/1772 - 15/12/1772  
 GD44/43/21, correspondence, January 1770  
 GD44/43/22, correspondence, February 1770  
 GD44/43/24, correspondence, April 1770  
 GD44/43/30, correspondence, September 1770  
 GD44/43/33, correspondence, December 1770  
 GD44/43/36, correspondence, 1/2/1771 - 19/2/1771  
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 GD44/43/43, correspondence, 17/5/1771 - 30/5/1771  
 GD44/43/47, correspondence, August 1771  
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 GD44/43/57, correspondence, 13/1/1772 - 31/1/1772  
 GD44/43/62, correspondence, 1/4/1772 - 17/4/1772  
 GD44/43/68, correspondence, 20/6/1772 - 30/6/1772  
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 GD44/43/71, correspondence, 1/8/1772 - 14/8/1772  
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 GD44/43/101, correspondence, 1/9/1773 - 12/9/1773  
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GD44/43/228, correspondence, October 1779

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GD44/43/233, correspondence, February 1780

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GD44/43/247, correspondence, 1/1/1781 - 18/1/1781

GD44/43/253, correspondence, April 1781

GD44/43/266, correspondence, 18/1/1782 - 31/2/1782

GD44/43/270, correspondence, April 1782

GD44/43/273, correspondence, July - August 1782

GD44/43/299, correspondence, January 1787

Lady Glenochry's Chapel

CH2/129/25 Diary 1768 - 1783

Earl Leven/Melville

GD26/6/123/36, accounts of Household Papers, 1765 - 1788

GD26/6/237, personal papers of Jane, Lady Balgorie, 1786 - 1817

GD26/10/108, repair of Monimeal Church, 1779 - 1811

GD26/13/683, letter from Lady Northesk to General Melville on social matters, 8/7/1779

GD26/13/664, Lord Balgorie correspondence, 1771 - 1778

GD26/13/688, letters to Lord Balgorie re family matters, 1779 - 1785

GD26/13/687, letters from Sir John Wishart Belsches to Lord Balgorie, 1779 - 1782

GD26/6/123/33/2, letters to Lord Balgorie, 1767 - 1775

GD26/6/123/33/1, letters to Lord Balgorie, 1767 - 1775

GD26/13/659, letters from Alex Belsches to Lord Balgorie on Edinburgh,

GD26/13/707, letter from James Stodart to Lord Balgorie, 10/11/1781

GD26/13/283, letters from William Danby to Lord Balgourie on social matters, 1773 - 1780

GD26/13/664, letters to Lord Balgorie from Leven family, 1771 - 1778

GD26/10/113, letter on new church siting and dimensions, 28/8/1794

Clerk of Penicuik

GD18/4968, miscellaneous account book of Robert Adam, 1791

GD18/4878, letter to Andrew Dalziel from William Adam, 8/8/1796

- GD18/4908, undated letter from James Adam to Robert Adam,  
Clerk of Penicuik
- GD18/4954, Diary of James Adam, 1762 - 1772
- GD18/5838, South Bridge correspondence, 1785 - 1786
- GD18/5832, Plans of Nor Loch Bridge, 1765  
Duke of Buccleuch
- GD224/82/4 1778 - 1784 letters from the Society of the Writers to the Signet and Edinburgh  
Town Council regarding alterations to property
- GD224/269/6 13/9/1775 - 13/9/1776 vouchers
- GD224/1085/1 1775 - 1885 Dalkeith House dinner books
- GD224/30/1 1776 - 1788 correspondence of Henry Dundas, Lord Melville
- GD224/655/2 1775 - 1792 letters on estate matters
- GD224/269/7 13/9/1776 - 13/9/1777 vouchers
- GD224/269/8 September 1777 - September 1778 vouchers
- GD224/1026/56 1746 - 1829 building accounts
- GD224/1026/40 1790 - 1803 Assessments for repairs to church
- GD224/984/1 1781 rentals of Inveresk
- GD224/983/4 1723- 1773 rentals of Inveresk
- GD224/178/1/1 1770 Douglas Heron and Co
- GD224/178/1/2 1772 Douglas Heron and Co
- GD224/178/1/3 1771 Douglas Heron and Co
- GD224/178/1/4 1772 Douglas Heron and Co
- GD224/178/1/5 1772 Douglas Heron and Co
- GD224/178/1/6 1773 Douglas Heron and Co
- GD224/178/1/7 1772 Douglas Heron and Co
- GD224/178/1/8 1772 Annuities of Duke of Buccleuch
- GD224/178/1/9 1773 Douglas Heron and Co
- GD224/178/1/10 1772 Minute of General Meeting of Douglas Heron and Co
- GD224/178/1/11-13 1772 Minutes of meeting of Douglas Heron and Co
- GD224/178/3/1 1774 Douglas Heron Annuities

- GD224/178/3/5-6 3/5/1774 Henry Dundas
- GD224/178/3/10 1774 Notes of annuities of Douglas Heron and Co
- GD224/178/2/2 1773 Douglas Heron and Co's debts
- GD224/178/2/7 12-17/8/1773 Minutes of Douglas Heron and Co
- GD224/178/2/12 1773 Henry Dundas
- GD224/178/2/27 12/8/1773 meeting of Douglas Heron and Co
- GD224/178/2/29 17-21/12/1773 minutes of general meeting of Douglas Heron and Co
- GD224/178/4/11-12 1778 heritable securities of Douglas Heron and Co
- GD224/178/6 1779-1785 debts of Douglas Heron and Co
- GD224/178/7 172- 1790 George Home correspondence on Douglas Heron and Co  
Forbes of Callender (Now Falkirk Archives)
- GD171/224 8/10/1785 - 27/12/1785 letters to William Forbes of Callender concerning furniture,  
fixtures and servants for Callender House
- GD171/242 25/1/1786 - 29/6/1786 letters to William Forbes of Callender on improvements to  
Callender House
- GD171/146 29/6/1783 - 25/9/1783 letters on the purchase of Callender estate
- GD171/255 4/7/1786 - 29/12/1786 correspondence on improvements and furniture for Callender  
House
- GD171/188 20/10/1784 - 31/12/1784 correspondence on miscellaneous matters
- GD171/2068 15/1/1784 - 2/2/1784 receipts on Callender estate
- GD171/2073 22/1/1784 - 27/10/1784 personal and household accounts
- GD171/2074 22/1/1784 - 8/1/1785 cash book of Callender estate
- GD171/2076 January 1784 - February 1785 accounts for purchase of Callender estate
- GD171/2094 3/3/1785 - 12/12/1785 paper on supplies for Callender House
- GD171/2107 12/4/1786 - 3/11/1786 estimate by James Nesbit
- GD171/2111 1786 - 1787 accounts
- Wedderburn
- GD267/4/3 1764 - 1799 accounts for Wedderburn House
- GD267/4/2 1770 - 1776 miscellaneous accounts for building work at Wedderburn House
- John Pringle

GD282/4/7 letter books 1766 - 1795

GD282/4/8

GD282/4/9 letter books 1765 -1766

GD282/4/10 letter books 1772 - 1775

GD282/4/11 letter books 1775 - 1776

GD282/4/12 letter books 1781 -1783

GD282/4/12 letter books 1787

GD282/4/16 letter books 1789

GD242/4/17 letter books 1793-1794

GD242/4/18 letter book 1794 - 1795

Robert Mylne's diaries

RH4/87/1 1762 - 1764

RH4/87/2 1765 - 1769

RH4/87/3 1770 - 1774

Earl of Morton

GD150/2650/1-11 Chiswick House papers

GD150/2723 1771 -1864 bank book

Register House

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SRO4/7

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SRO4/9

Dewar of Vogrie

GD330

Trinity House

GD226/1/4 1747 - 1771 minutes

GD226/1/5 1769 - 1772 minutes

GD226/1/6 1772 - 1784 minutes

GD226/1/7 1784 - 1797 minutes

GD226/18/237 2/10/1769 David Loch's borrowing receipt



GD226/18/242 1774 - 1775 papers on South Leith church  
 GD226/18/250 January 1780 table of dues of Leith harbour  
 GD226/18/261 undated Leith harbour inspection and report  
 GD226/18/299 23/4/1816 contract for new Trinity House

John Pringle

GD282/4/7 1766 - 1768 letter books  
 GD282/4/8 1768 - 1771 letter books  
 GD282/4/9 1771 - 1772 letter books  
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Gilbert Innes of Stow

GD113/1/145 1763 - 1772 cash books of estates forfeited after the 1715  
 GD113/1/160 1766 - 1770 accounts to commissioner of Trustees for improving fisheries and  
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 GD113/1/161 1771 - 1775 accounts to commissioner of Trustees for improving fisheries and  
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 GD113/1/162 1776 - 1779 accounts to commissioner of Trustees for improving fisheries and  
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 GD113/1/163 1778 - 1779 accounts of sums issues by cashier of Trustees for fisheries and  
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 GD113/1/167 1766 - 1774 accounts of sums issues by cashier of Trustees for fisheries and  
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 GD113/1/168 1774 - 1779 accounts of sums issues by cashier of Trustees for fisheries and  
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GD113/1/172 1763 - 1767 accounts of payments of premiums from various funds of Trustees for fisheries and manufacturers

GD113/1/173 1766 - 1772 accounts of payments of premiums from various funds of Trustees for fisheries and manufacturers

GD113/1/174 1773 - 1780 accounts of payments of premiums from various funds of Trustees for fisheries and manufacturers

GD113/1/185/5 1760 - 1768 Receiver General miscellaneous papers

GD113/1/187 1772 - 1776 receipts and payments made by Receiver General

GD113/1/188 1776 - 1780 receipts and payments made by Receiver General

GD113/1/330 1763 - 1777 miscellaneous papers

GD113/1/332 1746 - 1774 cash book of sums and stockledger

GD113/1/344 1789 - 1792 house rents and repairs on estate of Stow

GD113/1/345 1790 - 1794 house rents and repairs on estate of Stow

GD113/1/346 1794 - 1795 house rents and repairs on estate of Stow

GD113/1/403 1764 - 1774 personal accounts

GD113/1/405 1769 - 1774 personal accounts

GD113/1/406 1780 - 1782 personal accounts

GD113/1/407 1780 - 1787 personal accounts

GD113/1/408 1780 - 1794 personal accounts

GD113/3/697 January - February 1767 business correspondence

GD113/3/712 January 1768 business correspondence

GD113/3/724 December 1768 - January 1769 business correspondence

GD113/3/736 December 1769 - January 1770 business correspondence

GD113/3/750 January 1771 - February 1771 business correspondence

GD113/3/759 December 1771 business correspondence

GD113/3/773 December 1772 - December 1772 business correspondence

GD113/3/786 December 1773 - January 1774 business correspondence

GD113/3/799 January 1775 - February 1775 business correspondence

GD113/3/810 January 1776 - February 1776 business correspondence

GD113/3/822 January 1777 - February 1777 business correspondence

GD113/3/833 January 1778 - February 1778 business correspondence

GD113/7/18 1765 - 1767 miscellaneous papers

GD113/3/19 1770 - 1772 miscellaneous papers

GD113/5/33E 1780 - 1786 accounts for building work for house at St Andrew's Square

GD113/5/128a 1784 accounts for house at St Andrew's Square

GD113/5/128c 1786 accounts for house at St Andrew's Square

GD113/4/156/184 1781 New Assembly Rooms

Abercairny Muniments

GD24/3/99 1763 Lord Kames's subscription paper for building new bridge over Nor Loch, Edinburgh

GD24/1/821

GD24/1/553

GD24/1/564

GD24/1/578

Inhabited House Tax

E326/3/43 1790 -1793

E326/3/44 1793 - 1798

Window Tax

E326/1/160 1765 - 1768

E326/1/161 1768 - 1773

E326/1/162 1773 - 1777

E326/1/163 1777 - 1780

E326/1/164 1780 - 1784

Commissiary Court

CC8/8/124/1 1/10/1777 Alexander Gowan, architect

CC8/8/124/2 9/11/1779 William Ritchie, wright

CC8/8/125/1 22/12/1780 Hugh Johnston, mason

CC8/8/126/1 19/9/1783 William Key, architect

CC8/8/126/2 28/1/1785 Charles Butter, wright

CC8/8/127/2 19/12/1787 George Hunter, mason

CC8/8/128/1 18/6/1789 David Henderson, architect  
 CC8/8/128/1 18/6/1789 John Henderson, architect  
 CC8/8/128/2 20/4/1792 Robert Adam, architect  
 CC8/8/1291/1 5/7/1793 John Adam, architect  
 CC8/8/129/2 24/4/1794 John Wilson, architect  
 CC8/8/130/1 11/11/1795 James Craig, architect  
 CC8/10/51 11/11/1795 Testament Dative James Craig, architect  
 CC8/13/37 124/7/1795 James Craig, architect  
 CC8/8/1301/1 28/8/1795 Margaret Johnstone, relict of Alex Crawford, mason  
 CC8/8/130/1 6/6/1796 Alex Stevens, architect  
 CC8/8/131/1 7/12/1798 James Tait, wright  
 CC8/8/131/1 1/2/1799 John Baxter, architect  
 CC8/8/131/1 11/3/1800 John Adam, architect

#### Court of Session

#### Entailed Estates

SC39/89/1

SC39/89/2

#### Records of the County Councils in Scotland

##### Midlothian

CO2/4/2 1762 - 1769

##### Dalkeith and Post Road

CO2/5/1 1762 - 1797

CO2/5/12 1777 - 1836

##### Cramond and Queensferry

CO2/6/1 1751 - 1781

CO2/6/2 1781 - 1796

##### East Lothian

CO7/2/1/1 1750 - 1783

CO7/2/1/2 1783 - 1800

CO7/2/3/1 Athelstaneford Road 1770 - 1819

CO7/2/3/3 Garvald Road 1769 - 1830  
 CO7/2/3/5 Gladsmuir Road 1780 - 1838  
 CO7/2/3/9 Salton Road 1780 - 1837  
 CO7/2/3/12 Tranent Heritors' Road 1773 - 1787  
 CO7/2/3/16/3 Haddington Road 1768 - 1863  
 CO7/10/1/7 Heritors of Haddington 1773 - 1814  
 CO7/11/1/1 Schaw Hospital Minutes 1784 - 1829

#### Churches

CH2/121/18 Edinburgh Presbytery records 1766 - 1786  
 CH2/121/19 Edinburgh Presbytery records 1786 - 1799  
 CH2/224/14 Kirkcaldy Presbytery records 1777 - 1782  
 CH2/252/14 Lothian Synod records 1762 - 1800  
 CH3/433/1 South College Street records 1765 - 1785  
 HR305/1 Ballingry Heritors records 1757 - 1812  
 HR184/1 Kingbarns Heritors records 1765 - 1834  
 HR152/1 St Cuthbert's Heritors records 1773 - 1791  
 HR115/1 Gladsmuir Heritors records 1761 - 1837  
 CH2/7/8/23 West Kirk minutes 1764 - 1774  
 CH2/718/24 West Kirk minutes 1774 - 1793  
 CH2/718/70 West Kirk accounts 1766 - 1770  
 CH2/718/71 West Kirk accounts 1780 - 1794  
 HR728/1 Colinton Heritors records 1757 - 1817  
 HR497/2 Lauder Heritors records 1783 - 1803  
 HR493/1 Cleish Heritors records 1731 - 1784  
 HR74/1 Tranent Heritors records 1753 - 1784  
 GD69/210 (a - d) Blafour of Pilrig/St Cuthberts records  
 HR152/1 St Cuthberts Heritors records 1773 - 1791  
 HR152/2 St Cuthberts Heritors records 1788 - 1835  
 HR159 Dunfermline Heritors records 1741 - 1797  
 HR275/1 Kincardine-in-Menteith Heritors records 1769 - 1930

HR415/3/ Forfar Heritors records 1 1717-1795  
 HR418/9/2Moffat Heritors records  
 HR 2381 Kinghorn Heritors records 1752 - 1815  
 HR 770/1 Kirkliston Heritors records 1695 - 1785  
 CH2/129/25 Lady Glenochry's Chapel  
 HR81/1 Kettle Hertitors records 1732 - 1810  
 HR 777/1 Bothkenner Heritors records 1788 - 1848  
 HR 179/1 Carluke Heritors records 1761 - 1806  
 HR16/1 Abercom Heritors records 1702 -1831  
 HR 456/1 Mid Calder Heritors records  
 CH3/433/1 South College Street 1765 - 1785  
 GD66/1/272 Kinghorn Church  
 Customs and Excise  
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 CE1/12 Minute Books 27/10/1767 - 1/8/1771  
 CE1/14 Minute Books 14/11/1774 - 31/10/1776  
 CE1/15 Minute Books 14/11/1776 - 17/12/1778  
 CE1/17 Minute Books 17/1/1781 - 9/1/1783  
 CE1/18 Minute Books 13/1/1783 - 1/7/1784  
 CE1/19 Minute Books 5/7/1784 - 20/10/1785  
 CE1/20 Minute Books 24/10/1785 - 7/9/1786  
 CE1/21 Minute Books 11/9/1786 - 6/12/1787  
 CE1/23 Minute Books 18/5/1789 - 3/11/1790  
 CE1/24 Minute Books 9/11/1790 - 19/7/1792  
 CE1/25 Minute Books 25/7/1792 - 3/12/1793  
 CE1/26 Minute Books 3/12/1793 - 16/2/1795  
 Scottish Board of Customs Opinion of Counsel  
 CE7/2 Opinion of Counsel 1766 - 1771  
 CE7/3 Opinion of Counsel 1771 - 1783  
 Letter Books of Scottish Excise Book

CE8/1 Letter Books 1779 - 1785

CE8/2 Letter Books 1785 – 1790

GD110/1201 printed minutes of meetings of subscribers to new Assembly Room, Edinburgh  
1781-1782

GD110/947/29 Sir Hew Dalrymple

GD15/798/1-4 Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh 1781 -1789

GD417/2 Orphan Hospital minutes 1749-1783

GD417/42 Orphan Hospital cash book 1778-1787

RH15/44 David Ross's papers

GD1/816/1 Circus theatre

GD1/1141/21 subscribers to Circus theatre

RHP101/1 St James Square plan

RHP101/2 St James Square plan

RHP4170 St James Square plan

RHP93977 St James Square plan

Forth and Clyde Canal

BR/FCN/1 minutes of meetings of subscribers and proprietors of Forth and Clyde Canal 1767 -  
1770

BR/FCN/11 minutes of meetings of subscribers and proprietors of Forth and Clyde Canal 1775 -  
1787

BR/FCN/12 minutes of meetings of subscribers and proprietors of Forth and Clyde Canal 1787-  
1792

BR/FCN/13 minutes of meetings of subscribers and proprietors of Forth and Clyde Canal 1793 -  
1798

Sasines

Sasines Edinburgh 1781 - 1820

Diaries of Robert Mylne RH4/87/1 - 3 1762 - 1774

Diaries of Robert Mylne RH4/87/4-6 1775 - 1789

Diaries of Robert Mylne RH4/87/7-9 1790 - 1804

Entailed estate improvements SC39/89/1- 2 ( court of session)

***National Register of Archives ( Scotland)***

NRAS 0017 Blair of Blairquhan

NRAS 2177 Duke of Hamilton

NRAS 888 Marquess of Linlithgow

NRAS

***London Guildhall Library***

Carpenter Company Minutes 1757 - 1786

London Masons Company Minutes and Feasts 3/11/1767

Sewers Commissioners Reports 1767 - 1768

***Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh Library***

Minutes 1763 - 1795

Accounts 1767 - 1775

Correspondence and Muniments

7/8/1780 William Smith objects to water pipe abutting on his wall

13/9/1781 letter to James Craig to remove stones and repair building

2/11/1784 Henry Dundas to Dr Dick about the cost of the hall

1/7/1785 James Hunter Blair to Dr John Hope thanking him for efforts on South Bridge

Dr John Pringle's correspondence

Muniments of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh,

Miscellaneous MSS, p89, VI - Papers regarding Buildings

Muniment 205 1773 - 1774 John Thomson, carver on making model of hall

Muniment 206 1773 petition. Alex Reid and William Smith to lay pavement along dyke

Muniment 218 1783 - 1784 papers between College and Henry Brougham of Brougham Hall on building beside the hall

Muniment 245 1715 estimate for building a pavilion

Muniment 246 3/12/1761 Bond of five guineas towards a new hall

Muniment 247 8/12/1761 minutes anent new hall

Muniment 248 1761 memo for hall in Gray's Close

Muniment 249 1761 plan of new hall in Gray's Close



Muniment 250 1761 sub Committee on plans with two copies

Muniment 251 report on plan submitted by Mr George Frazer for new hall and estimates: 1762 Dr Dick consults Mr Adam, H.M. architect; 1763 letter from John Adam, London; 1763 proposal to join Edinburgh College Library with Royal College of Physicians' Library

Muniment 263 1771 feu on east end of Princes Street

Muniment 265 15/2/1772 John Baxter declines work to build new hall

Muniment 266 1/8/1775 Dr Dick approves of plan by James Craig

Muniment 267 7/11/1775 circular letter for subscriptions

Muniment 268 27/4/1776 - 26/11/1779 contract for building the hall including estimates, accounts, minutes of meetings of Committee, letters

Muniment 269 10/2/1777 charter for site on the south side of George Street

Muniment 271 August 1780 - February 1781 - Dr Cullen to maintain hall

Muniment 272 25/9/1780 John Brough's estimate for work in the hall

Muniment 273 17/4/1781 letter to Craig to remove statues and balustrade on top of the hall

Muniment 275 4/11/1782 letter by Craig to College to complete hall

### ***George Heriots School***

Minutes, volumes 9 -11, 1759 - 1795

### ***Mitchell Library, Glasgow Archives***

CO2/27/110 Kilmacolm Parish Statute Labour Road Trustees Minute Book 1792 - 1801

VO2/26/1 Kilbarchan Parish Heritors and Kirk Session Minute Book 1785 - 1834

CO1/2/1/1 Bathgate-Airdrie Turnpike 1792 - 1795

CO1/65/1/3 Shotts Statute Labour Road Trustees Cash Book 1793 - 1803

TD263/276 Paisley Road West 1768 - 1782

TH1/1/7 Glasgow Trades House Minutes 1787 - 1798

*Glasgow Journal* 1782

*Glasgow Mercury* 1781 - 1784

MS. 83106.3117.18 Tontine Society Account Book 1782 - 1820

### ***Glasgow University Archives***

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Plate 1: James Craig, New Town Plan Print. 1768

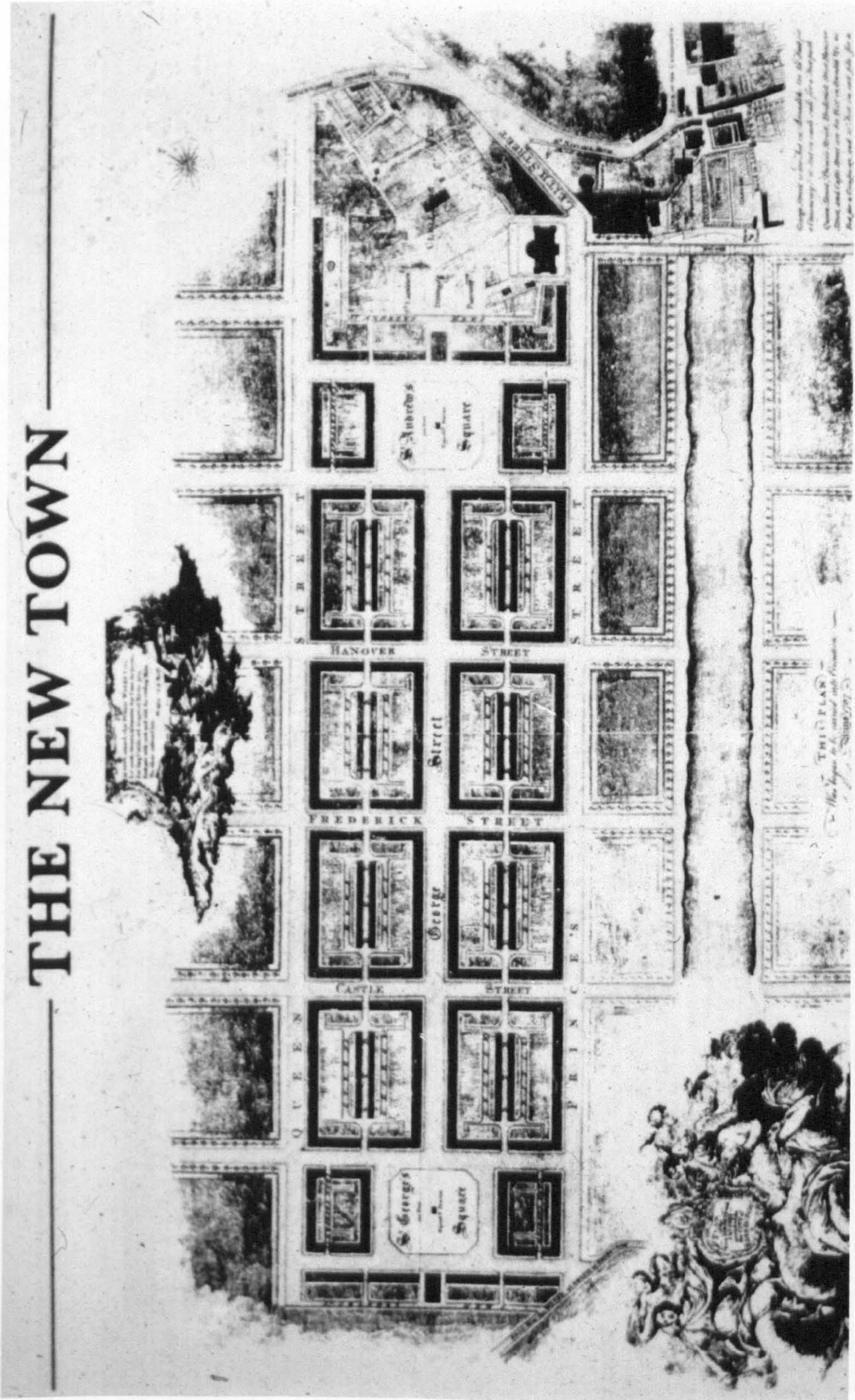


Plate 2: James Craig, New Town Feuing Plan, 1766.

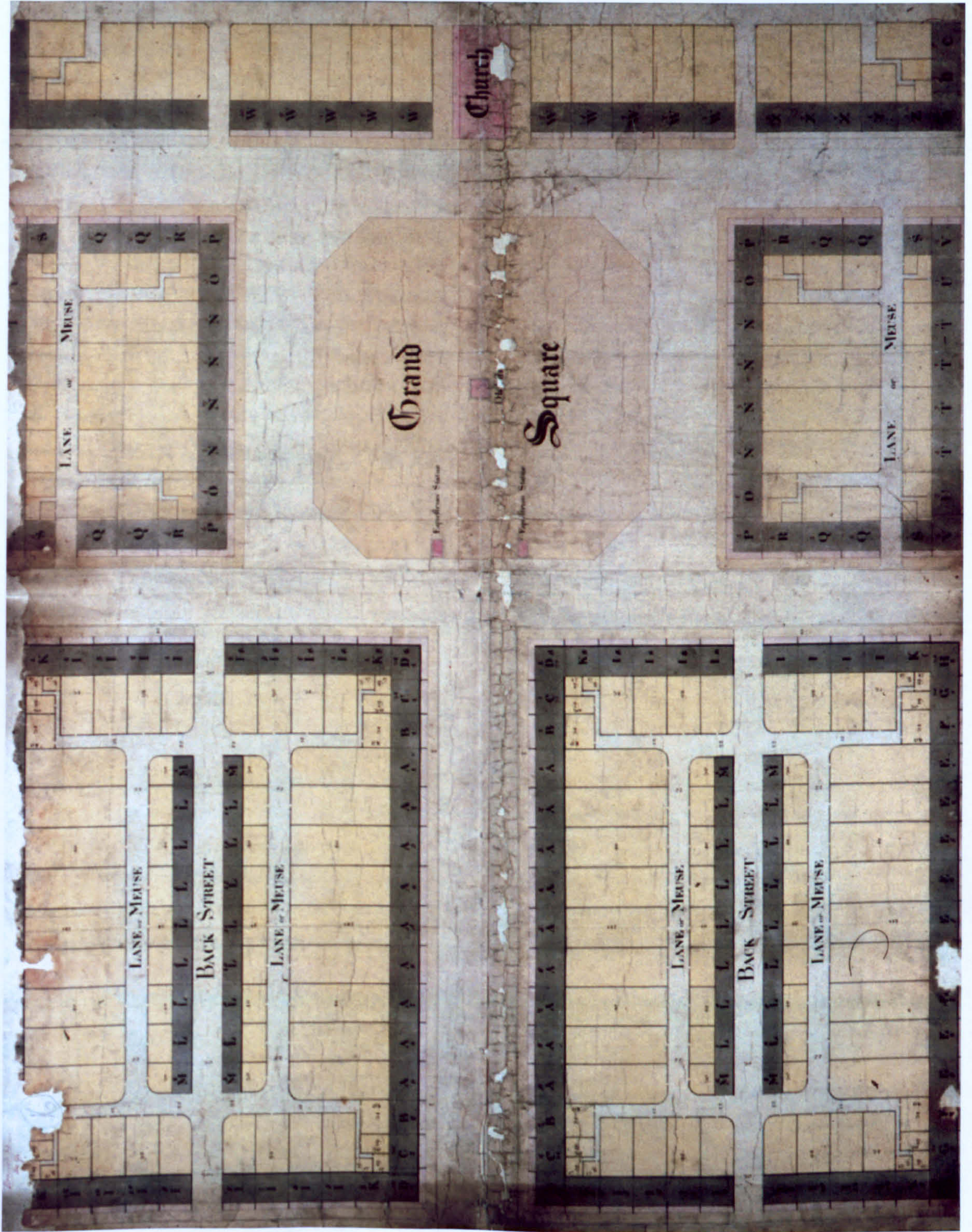


Plate 3: Map of Edinburgh, 1767

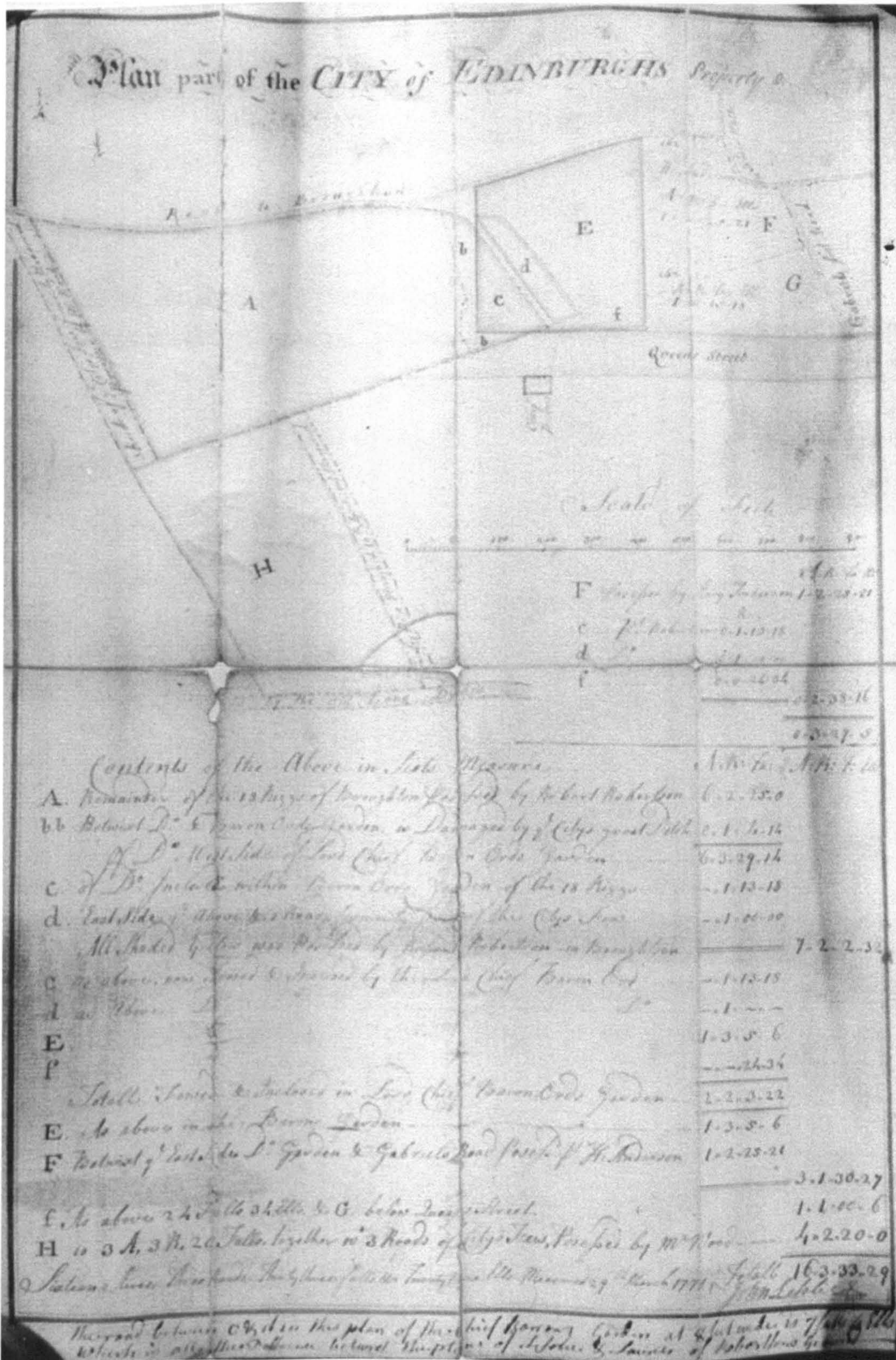


Plate 4: John Young, Thistle Court, 1767



Queen Street, New Town, 1787

Plate 5: Robert Burns, Queen Street, New Town, 1788

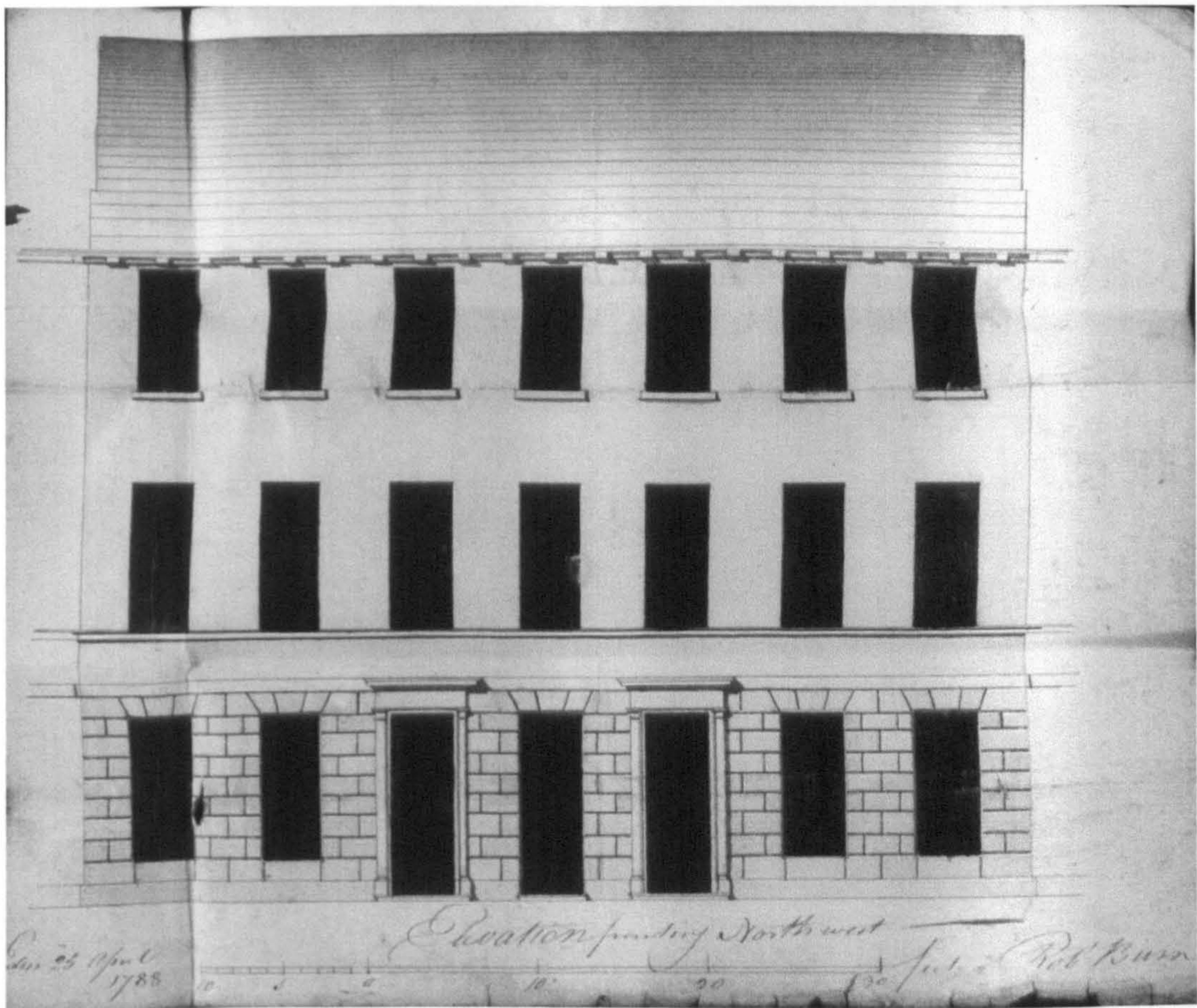


Plate 6: Robert Burns, Queen Street, 1787

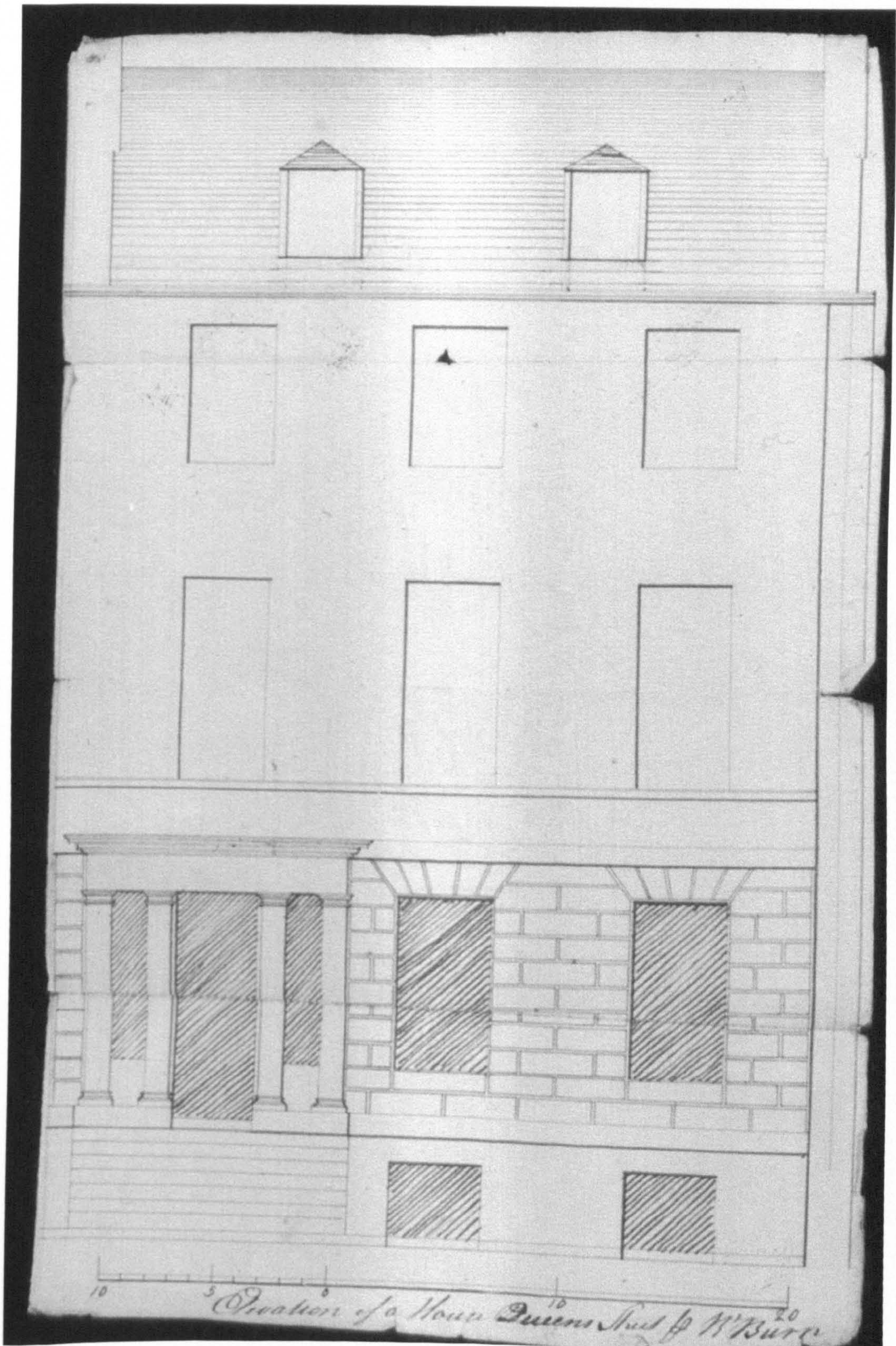


Plate 7: John Clerk and George Winton, George Street, New Town, 1784

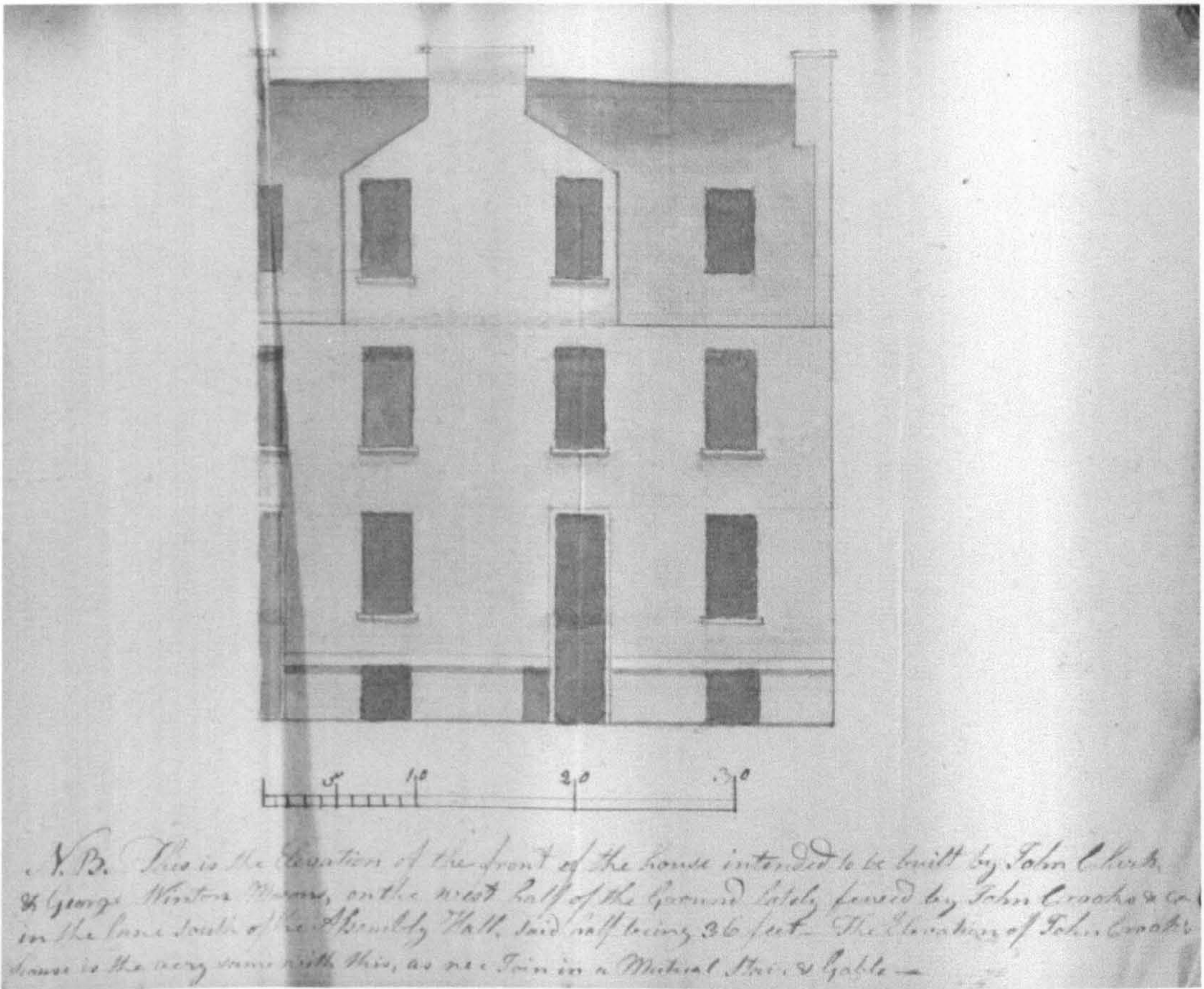


Plate 8: Robert Wemyss, Frederick Street, New Town, 1785

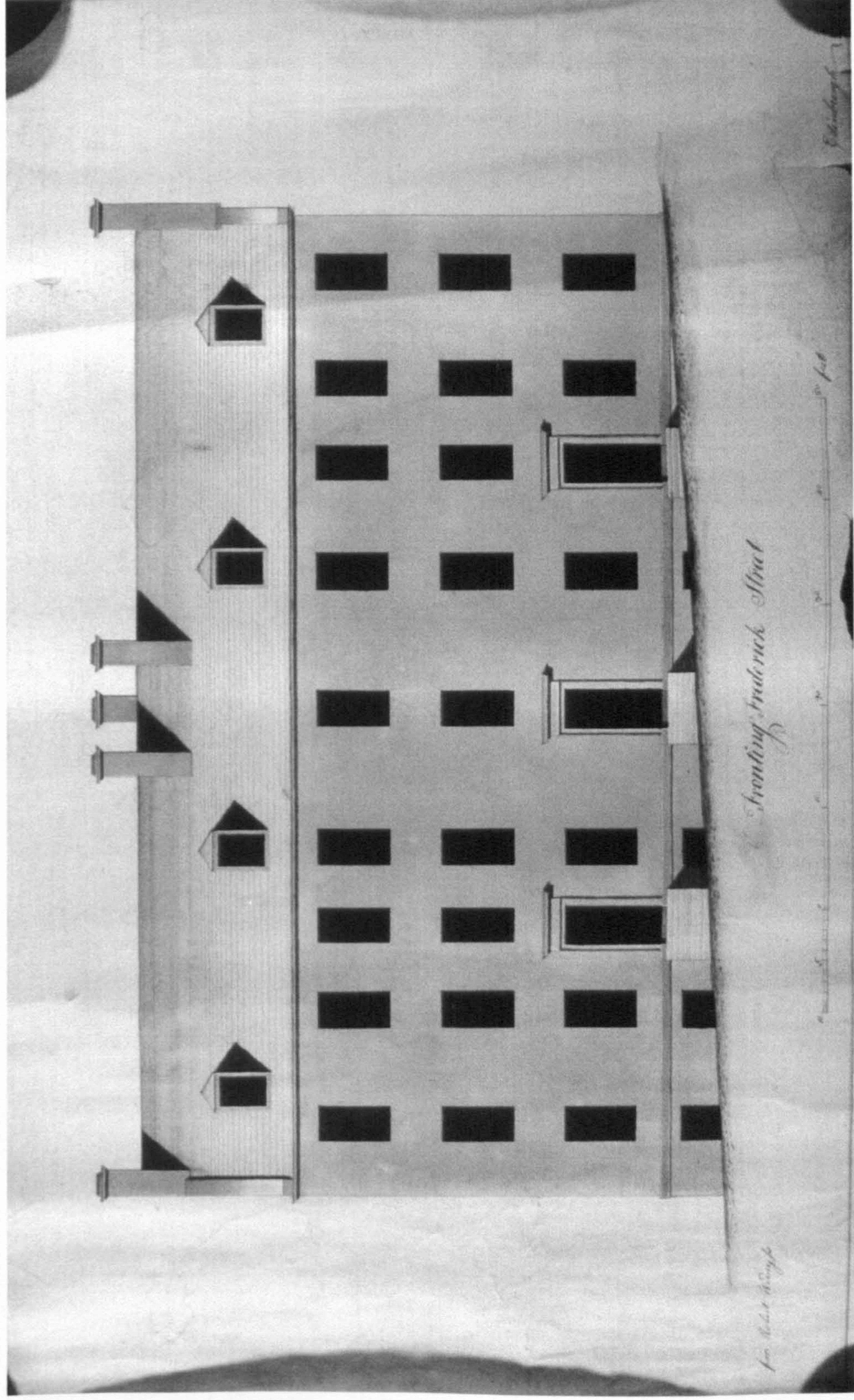




Plate 9: William Romanes and James Dickson, Castle Street, New Town, 1786

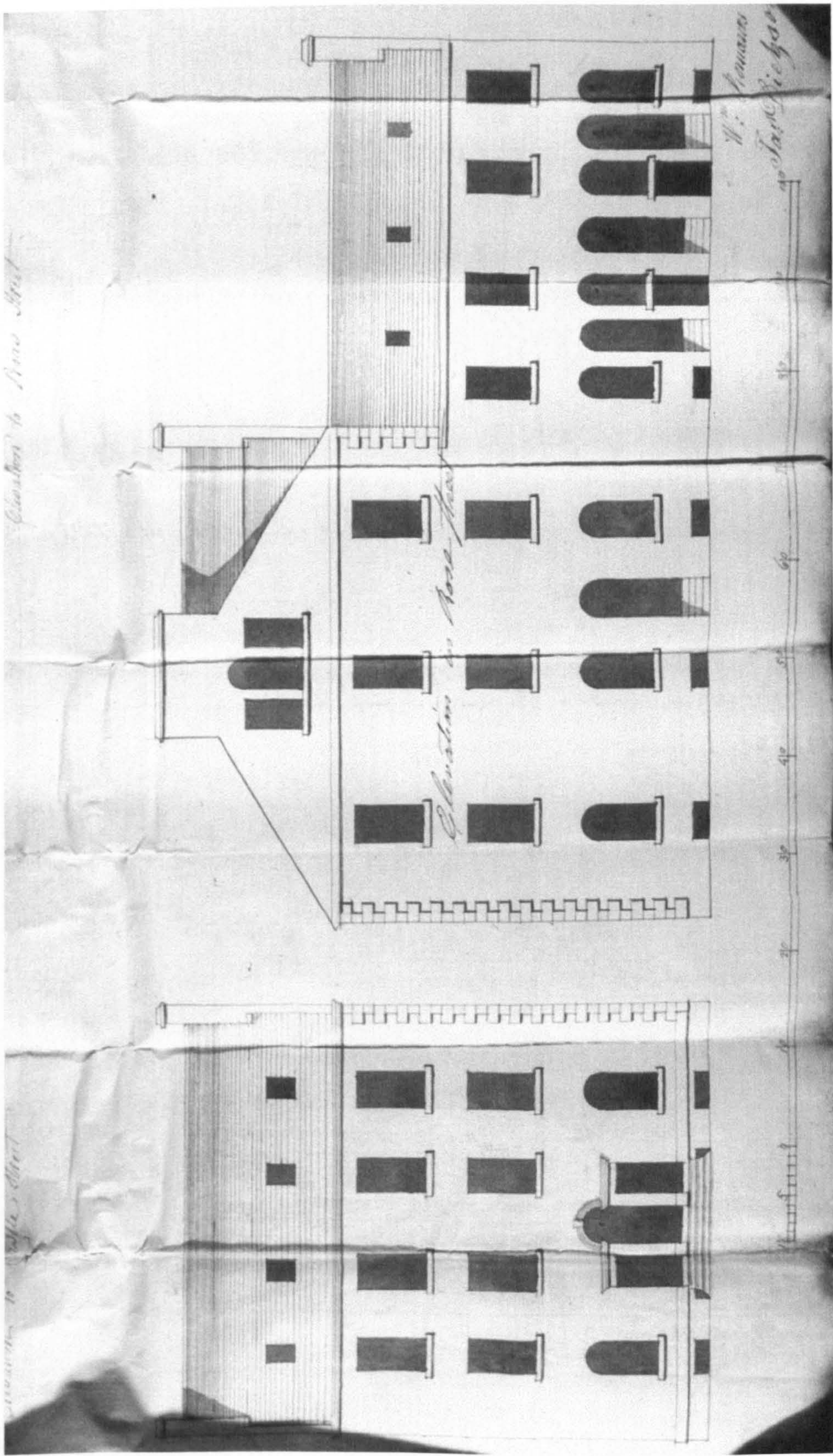


Plate 10: John Baxter and John Hay, George Street, New Town, 1786

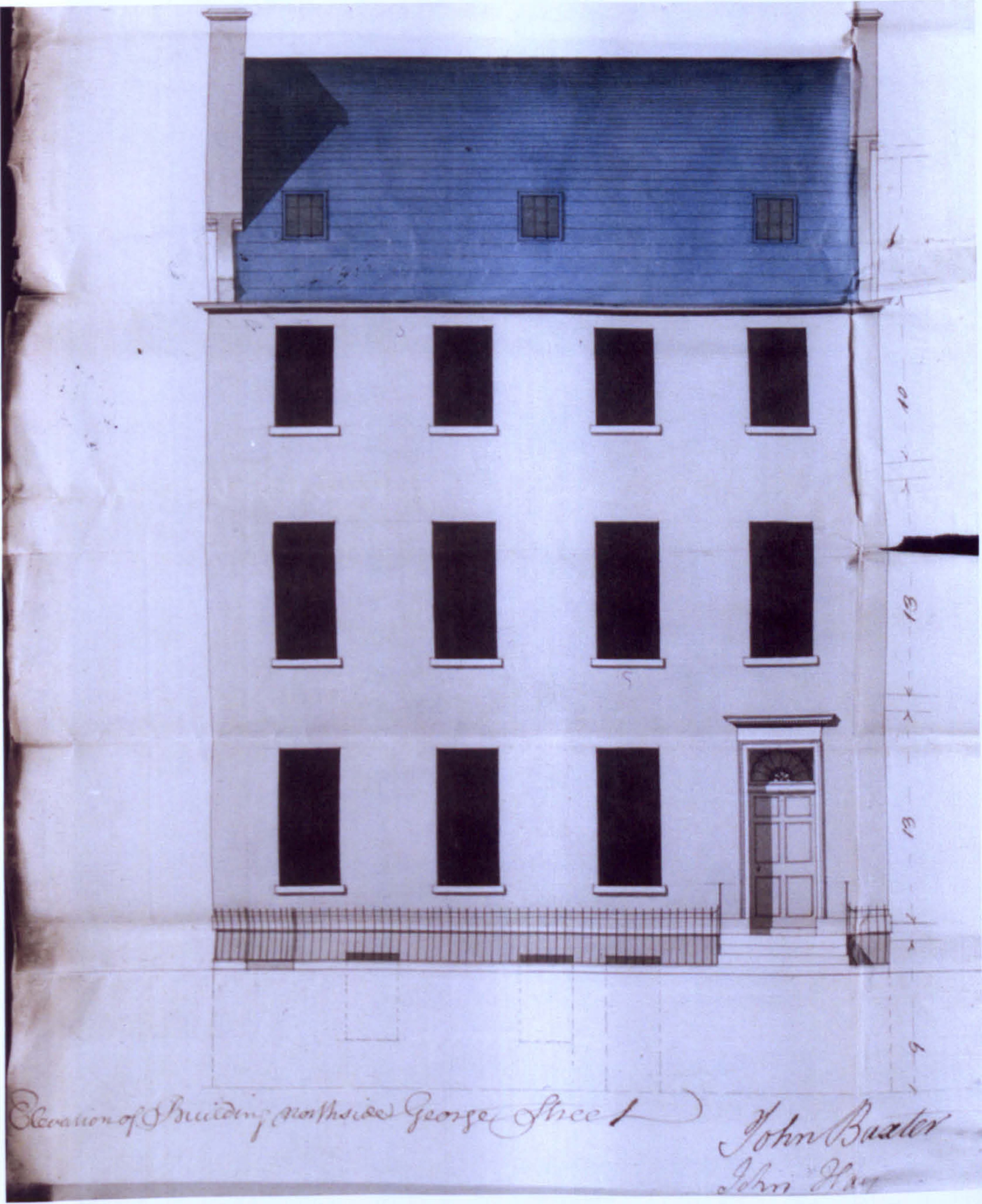


Plate 11: Robert Wright, Queen Street, New Town, 1787

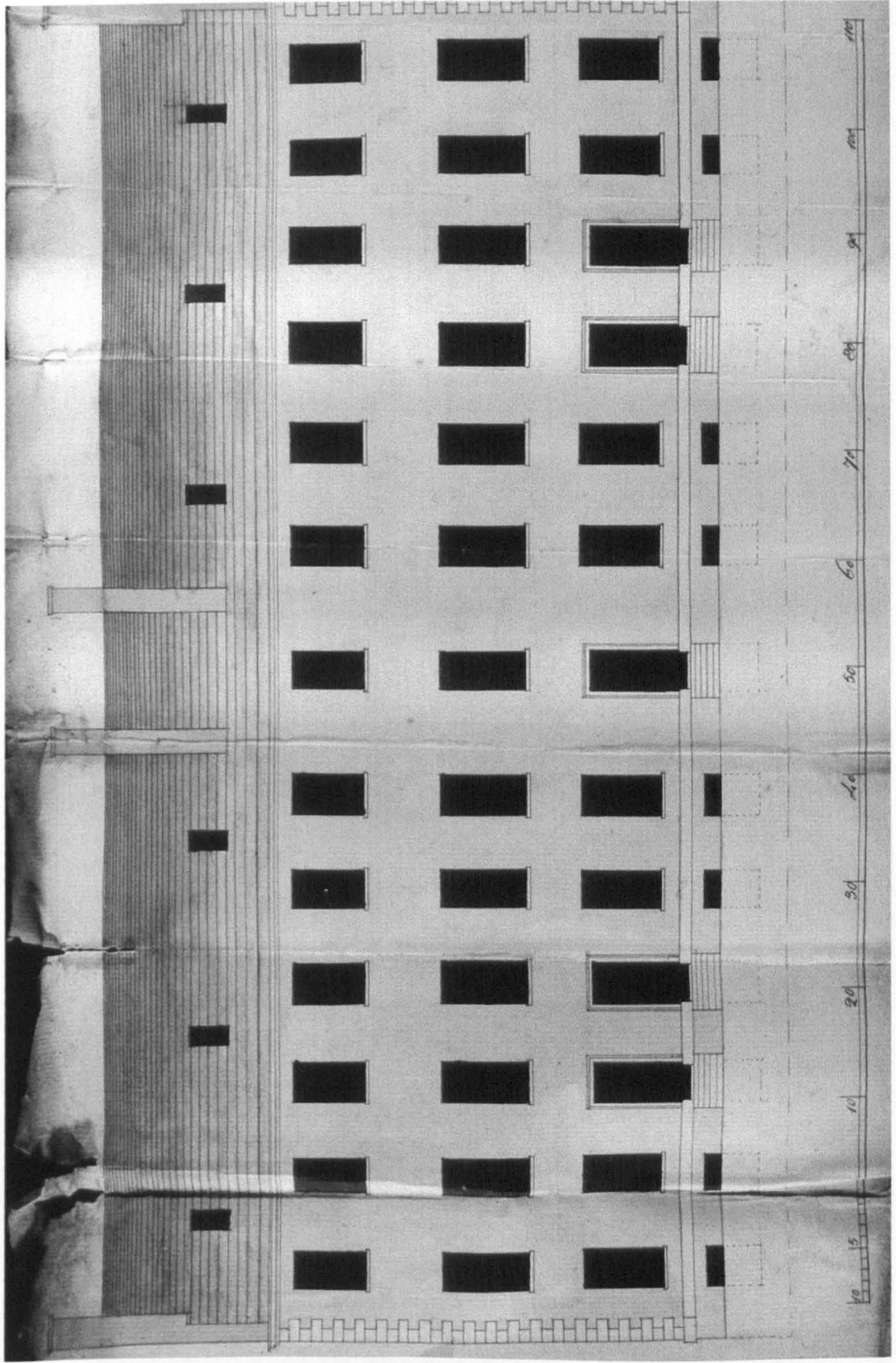


Plate 12: Robert Wright, Queen Street, New Town, 1788

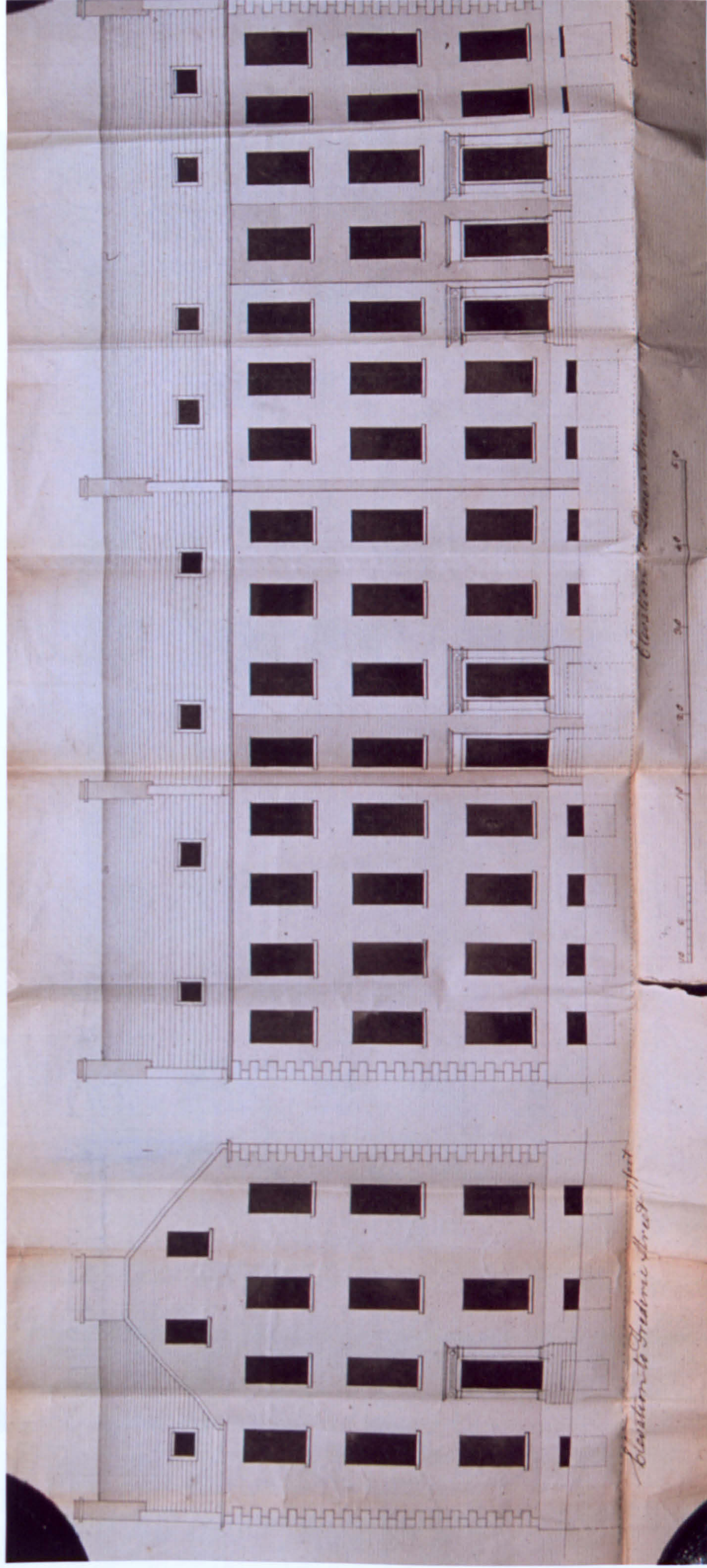


Plate 13: John Marshall, Rose Street, New Town, 1784 - 1786

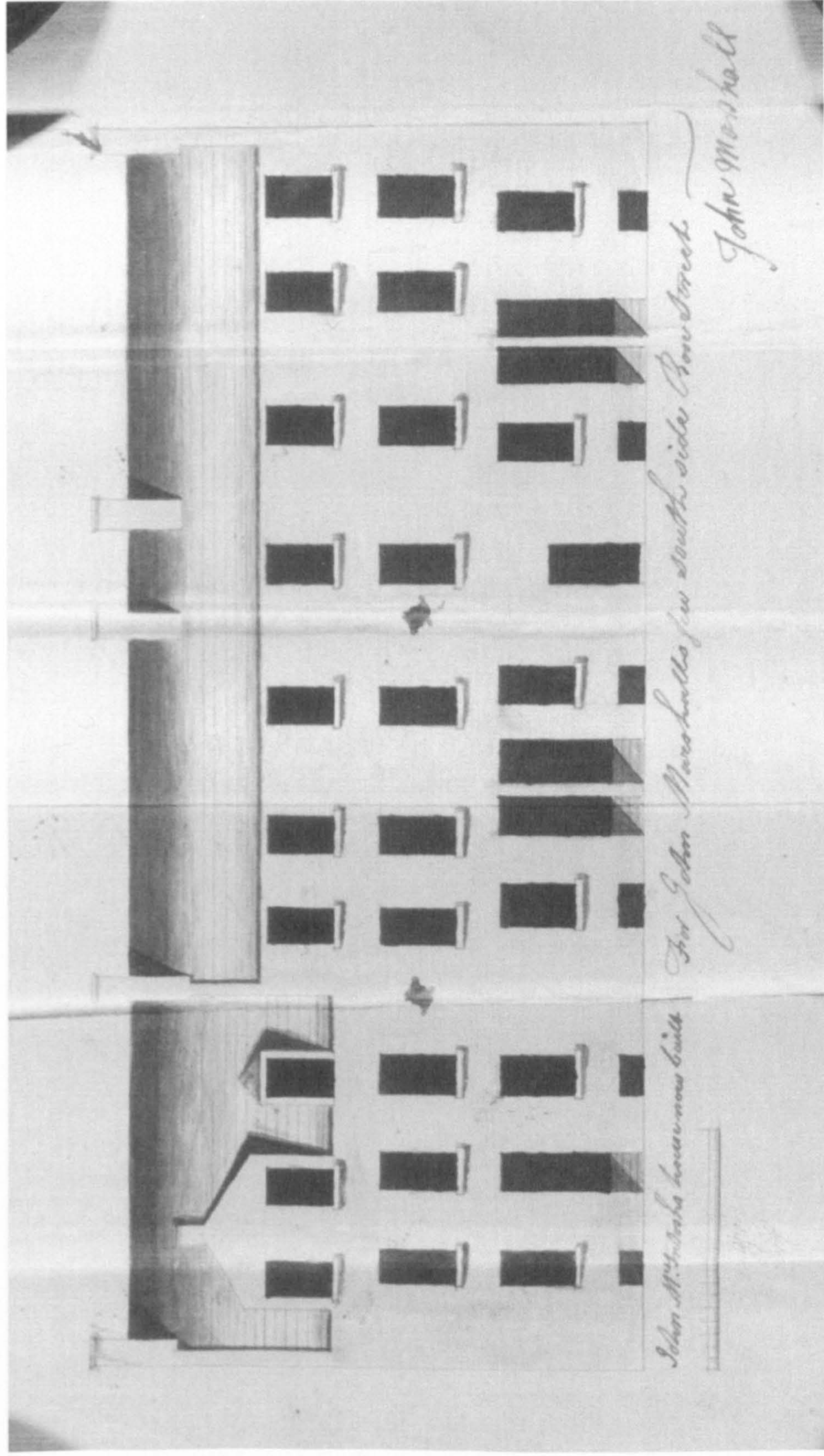


Plate 14: John Marshall, George Street, New Town, 1790

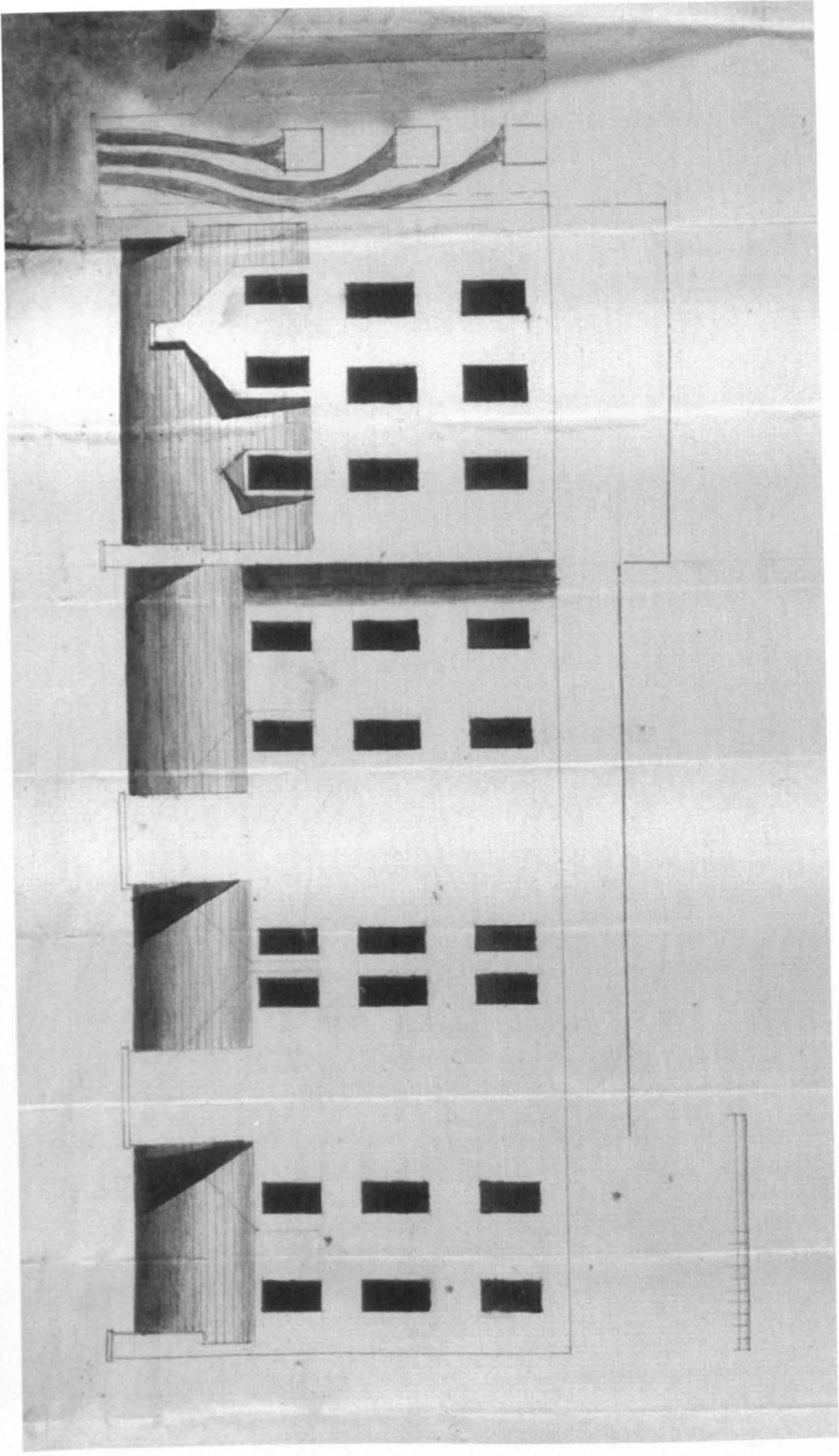


Plate 15: Peter Logan, Frederick Street, New Town, 1790

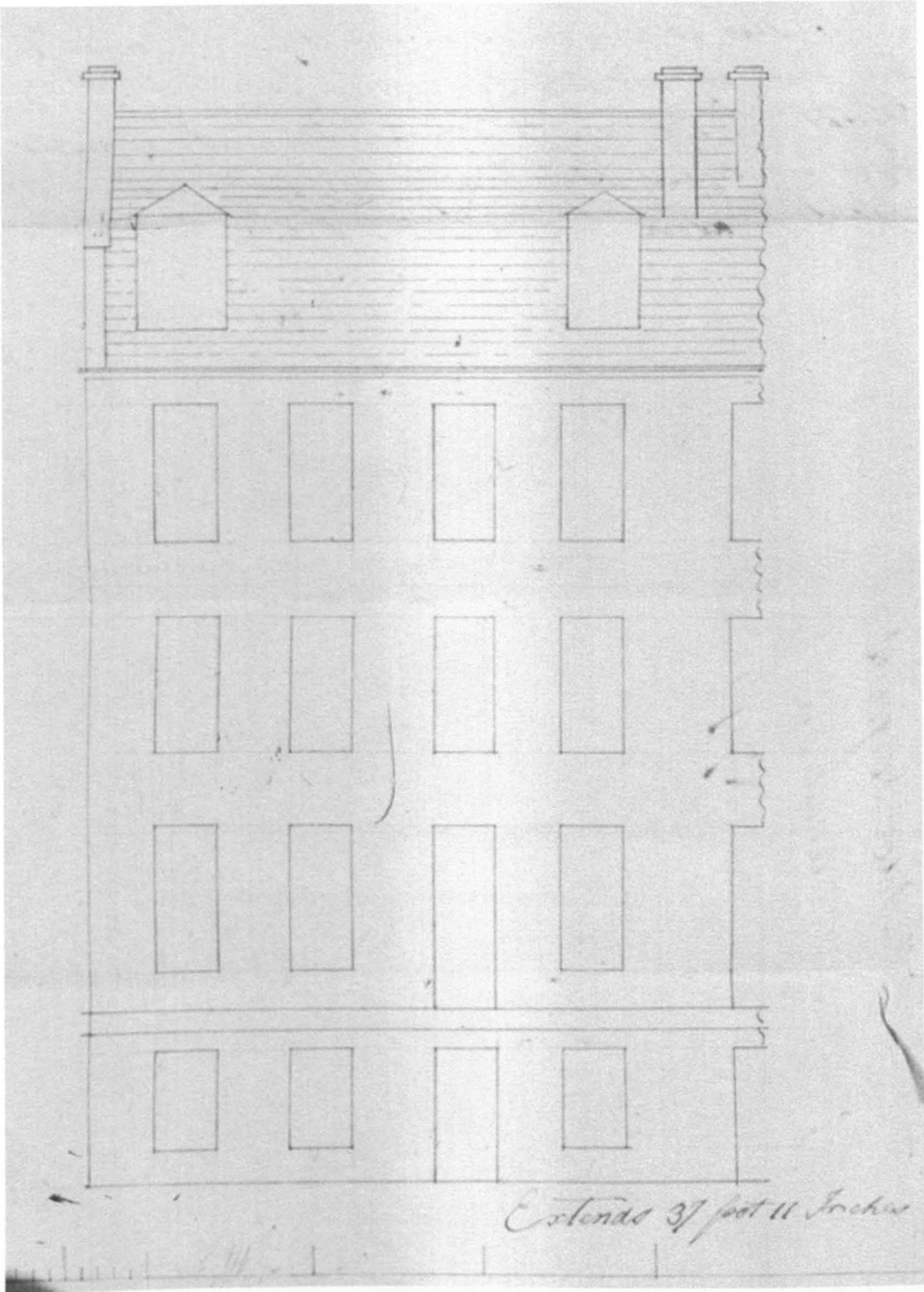


Plate 16: John Hay, Queen Street, New Town, 1790

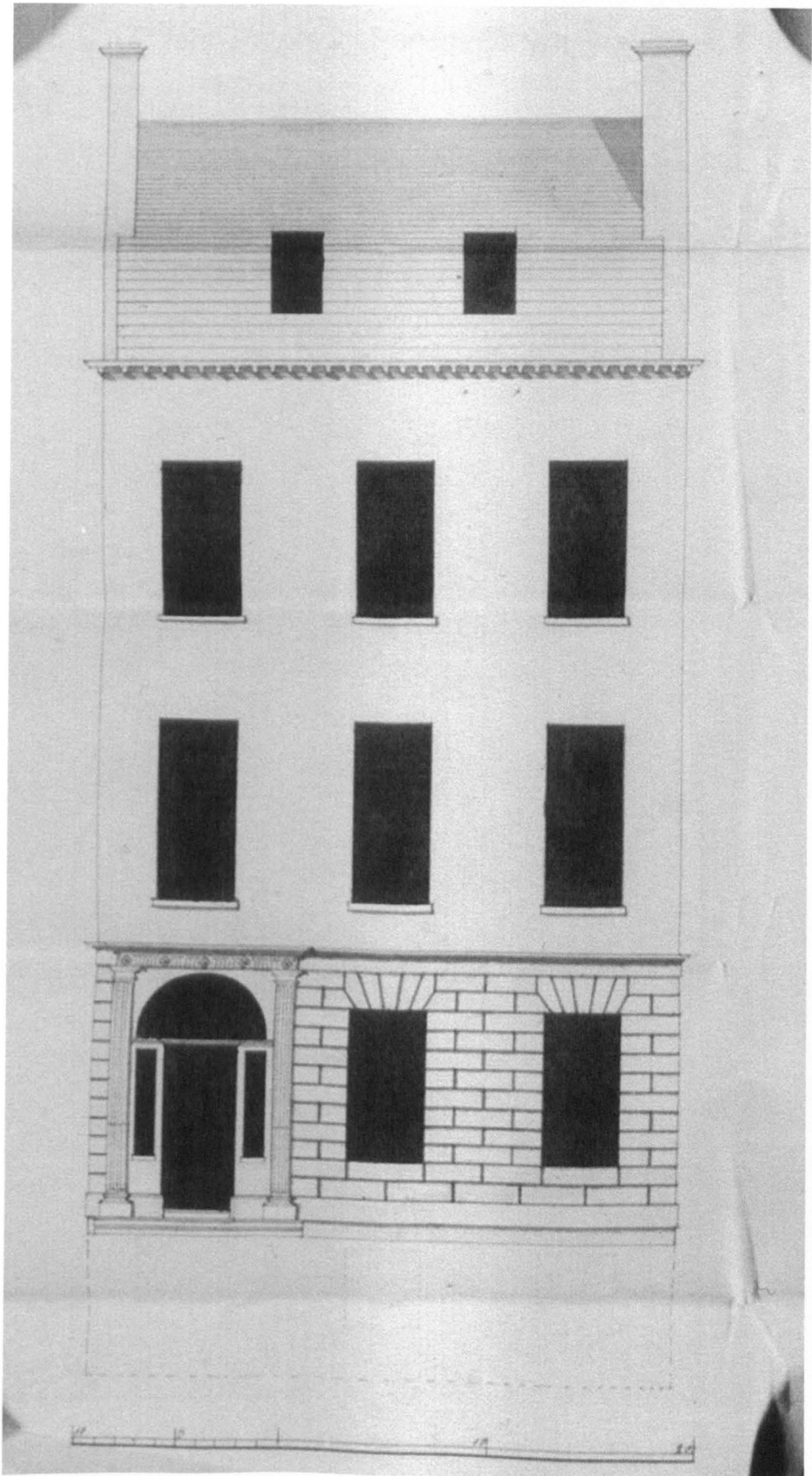




Plate 17: John Paterson, Princes Street, New Town, 1791

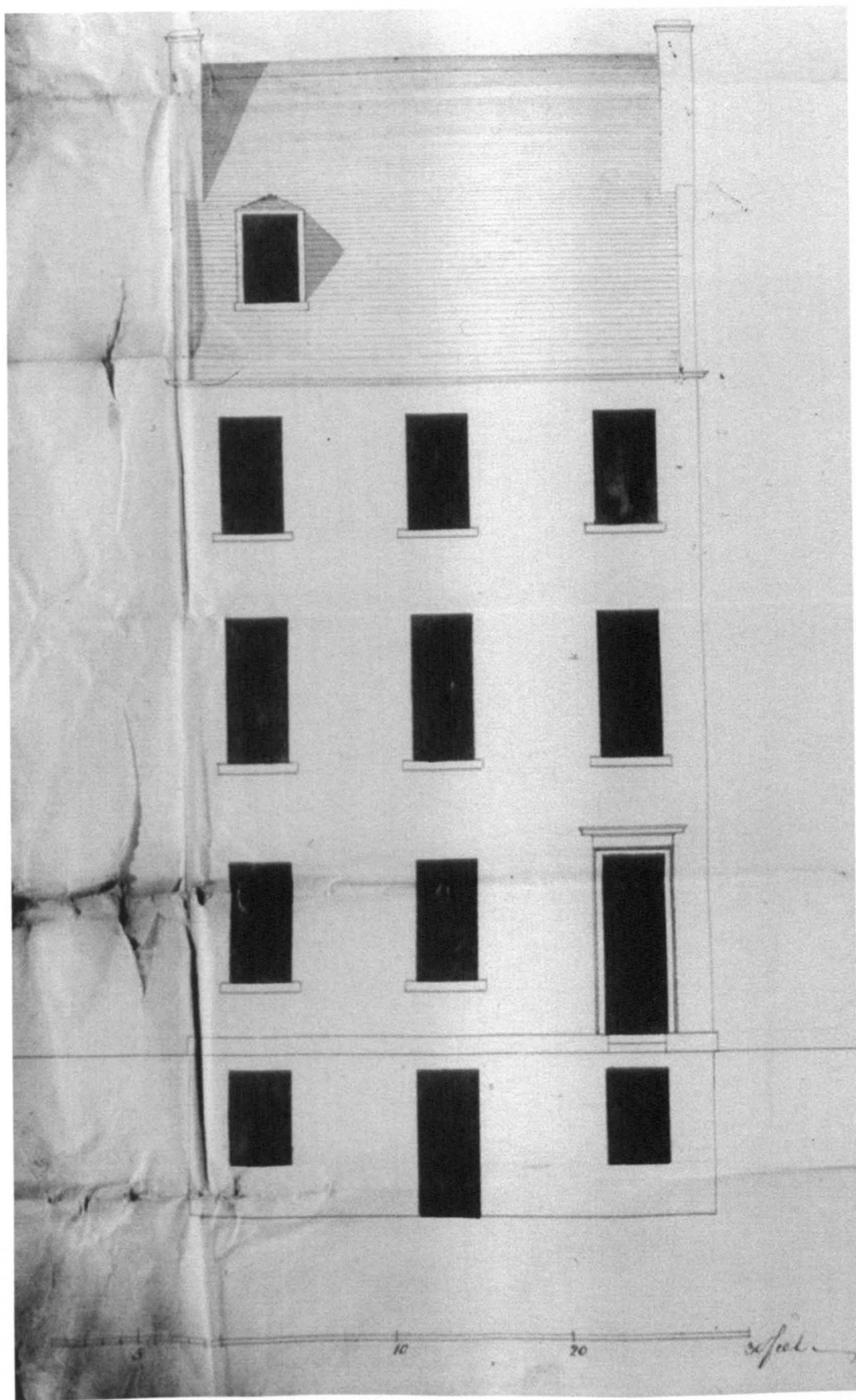


Plate 18: James Brown, St Andrew's Square, 1772.

Plate 18: David Smith, St Andrew's Square, 1768.

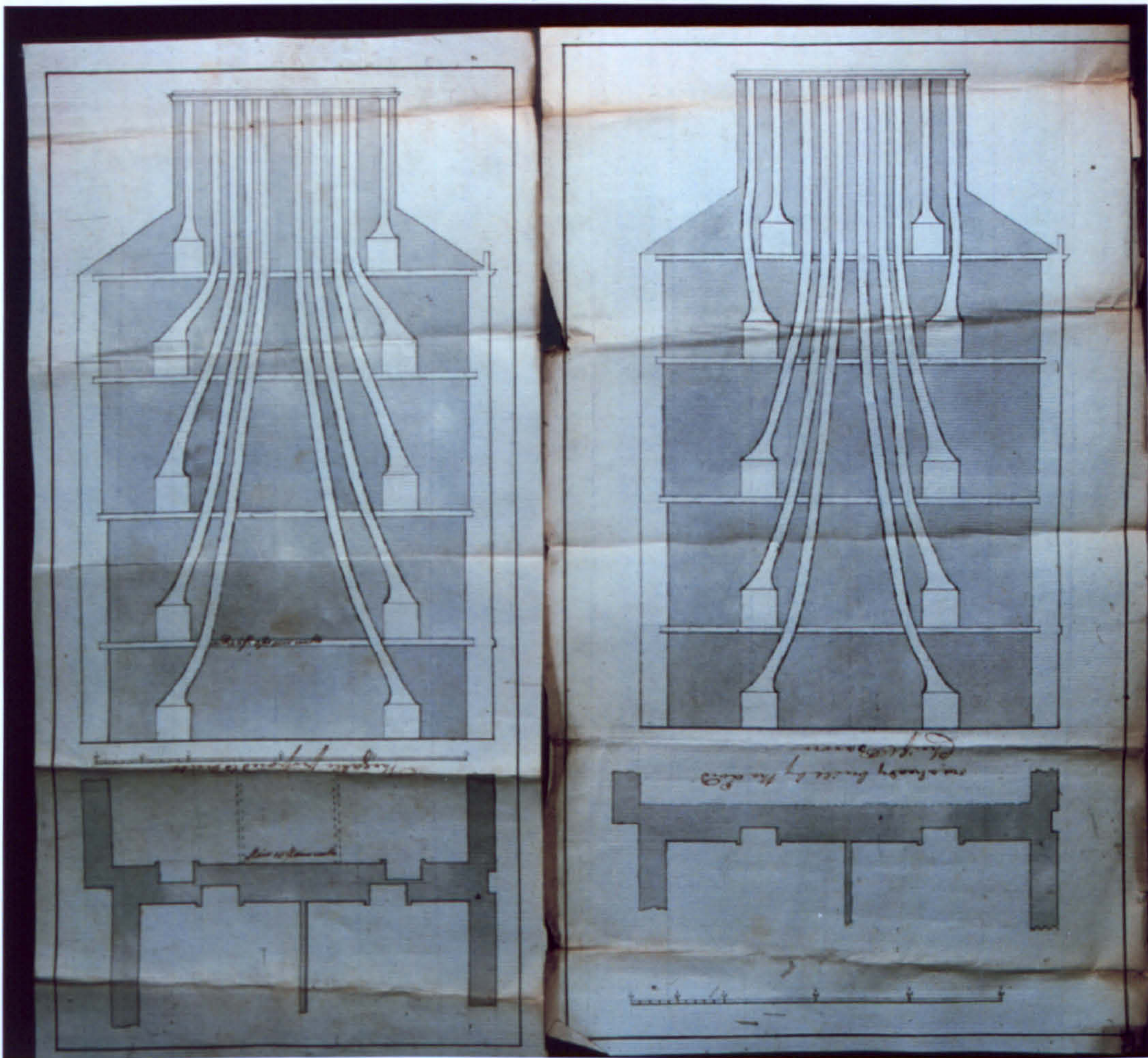


Plate 19: James Brown, St Andrew's Square, 1772.

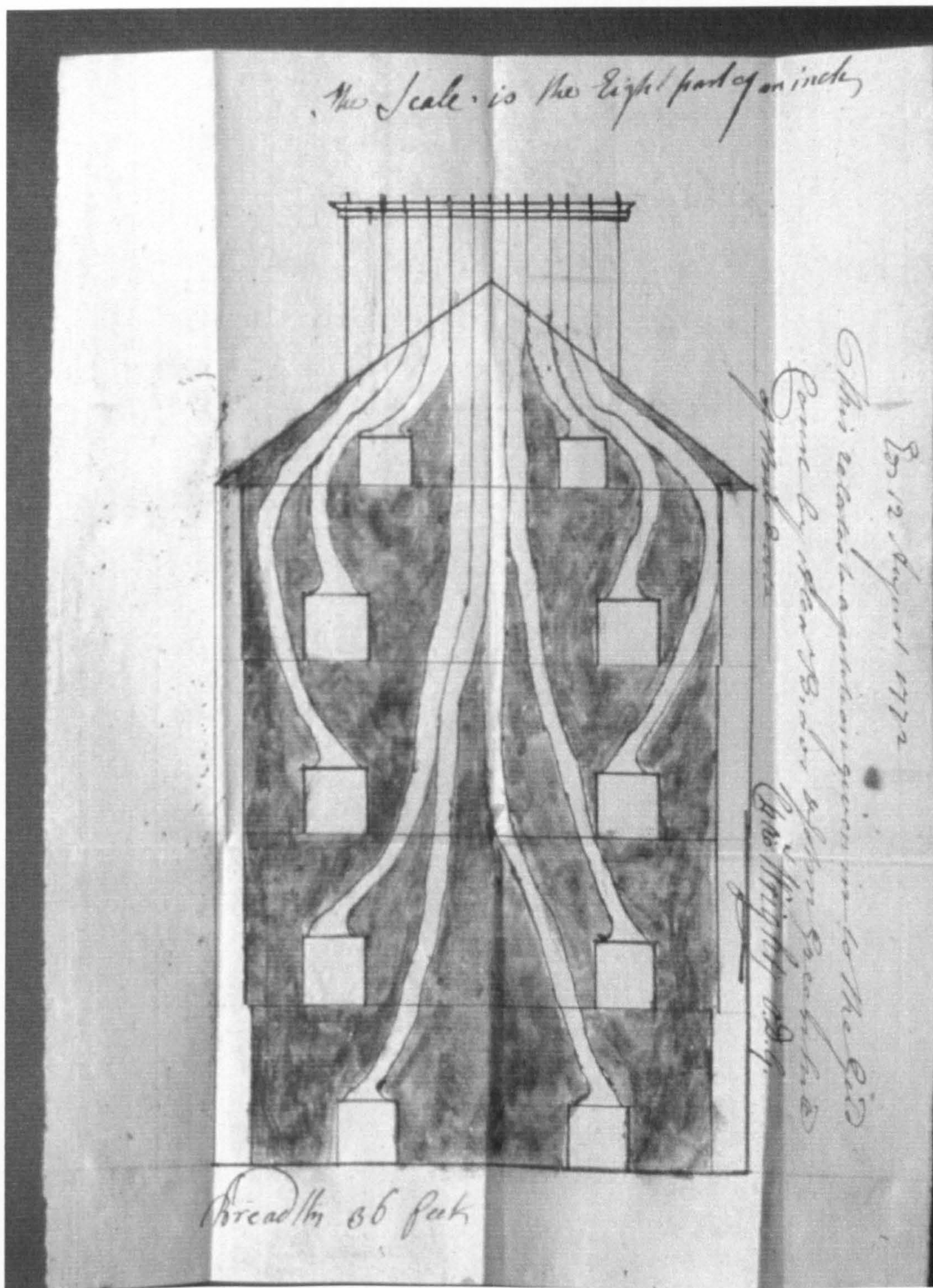


Plate 20: Robert Hunter, Queen Street, New Town, 1772

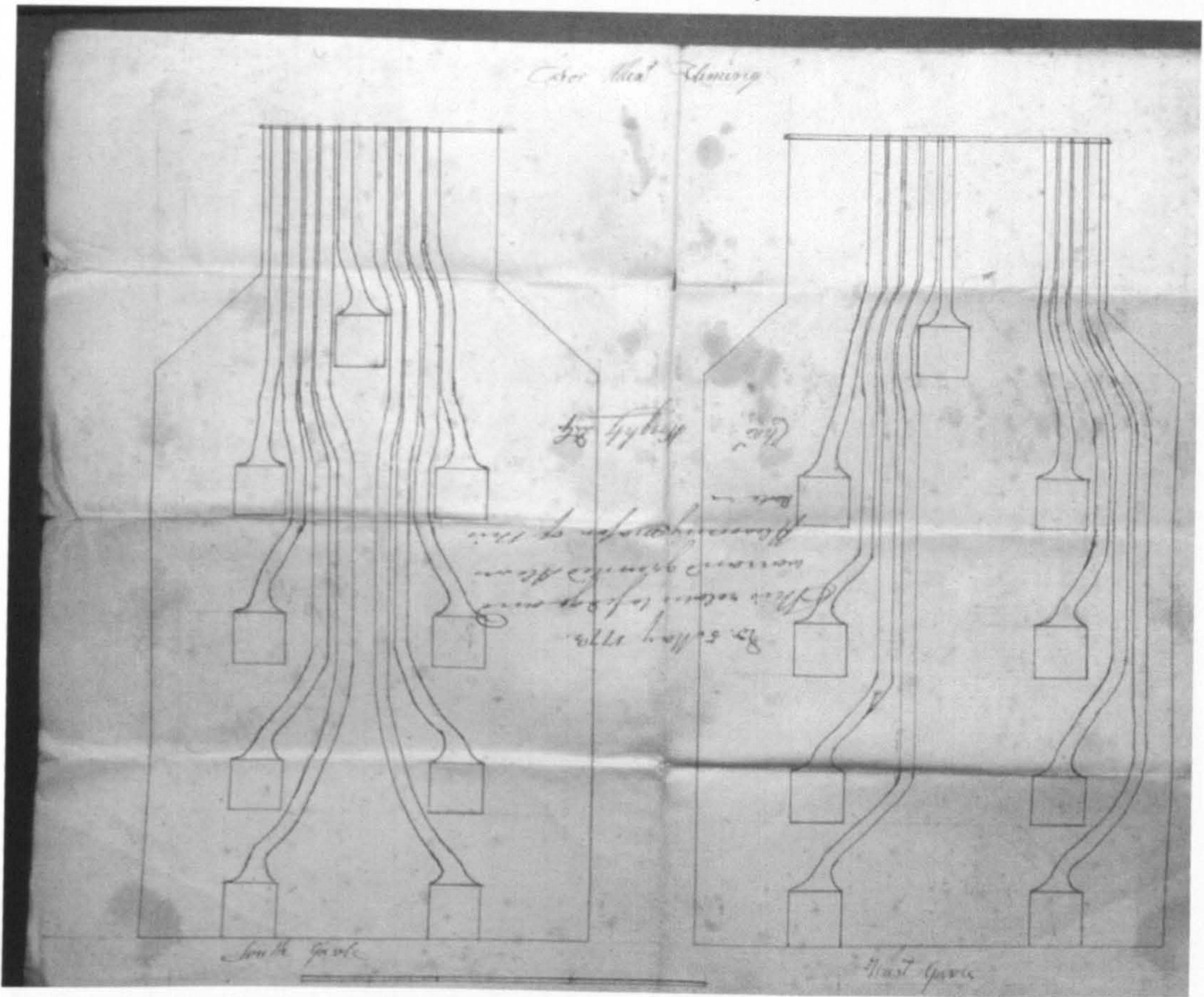


Plate 21: Baron Ord, Queen Street, New Town, 1769

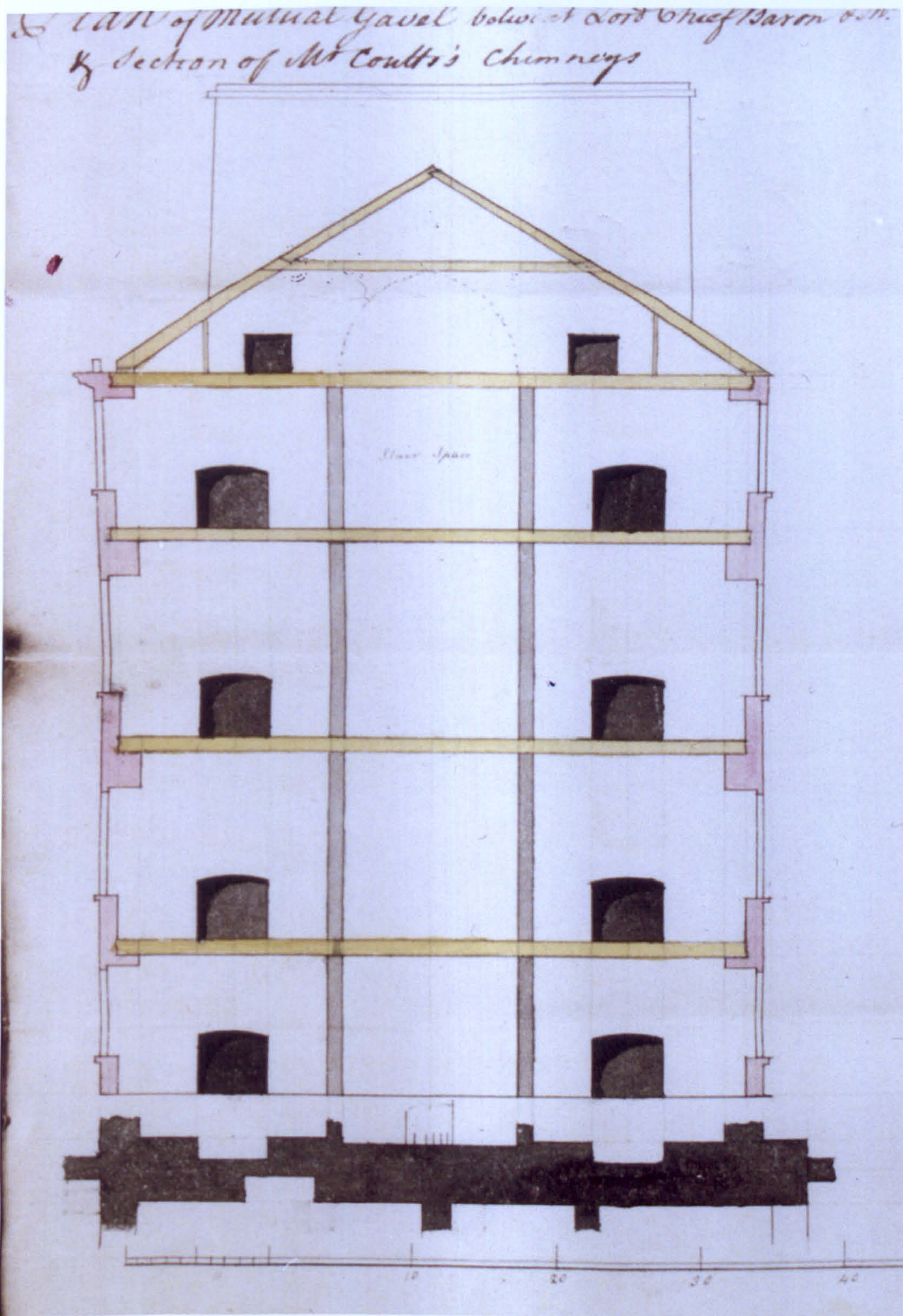


Plate 22: Sir Adam Fergusson, Queen Street, 1768.

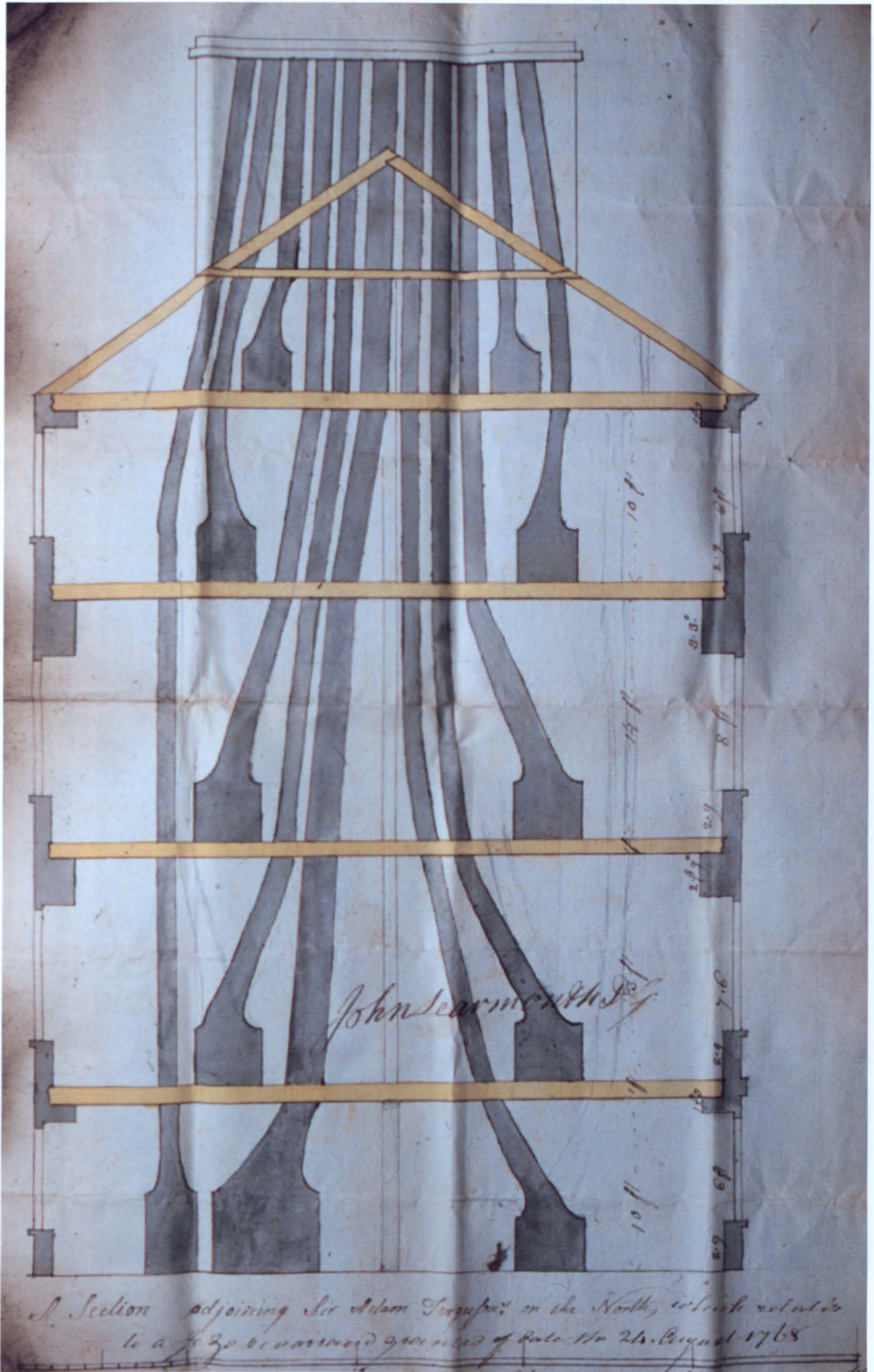


Plate 23: Gilbert Laurie's tenement, 1760.

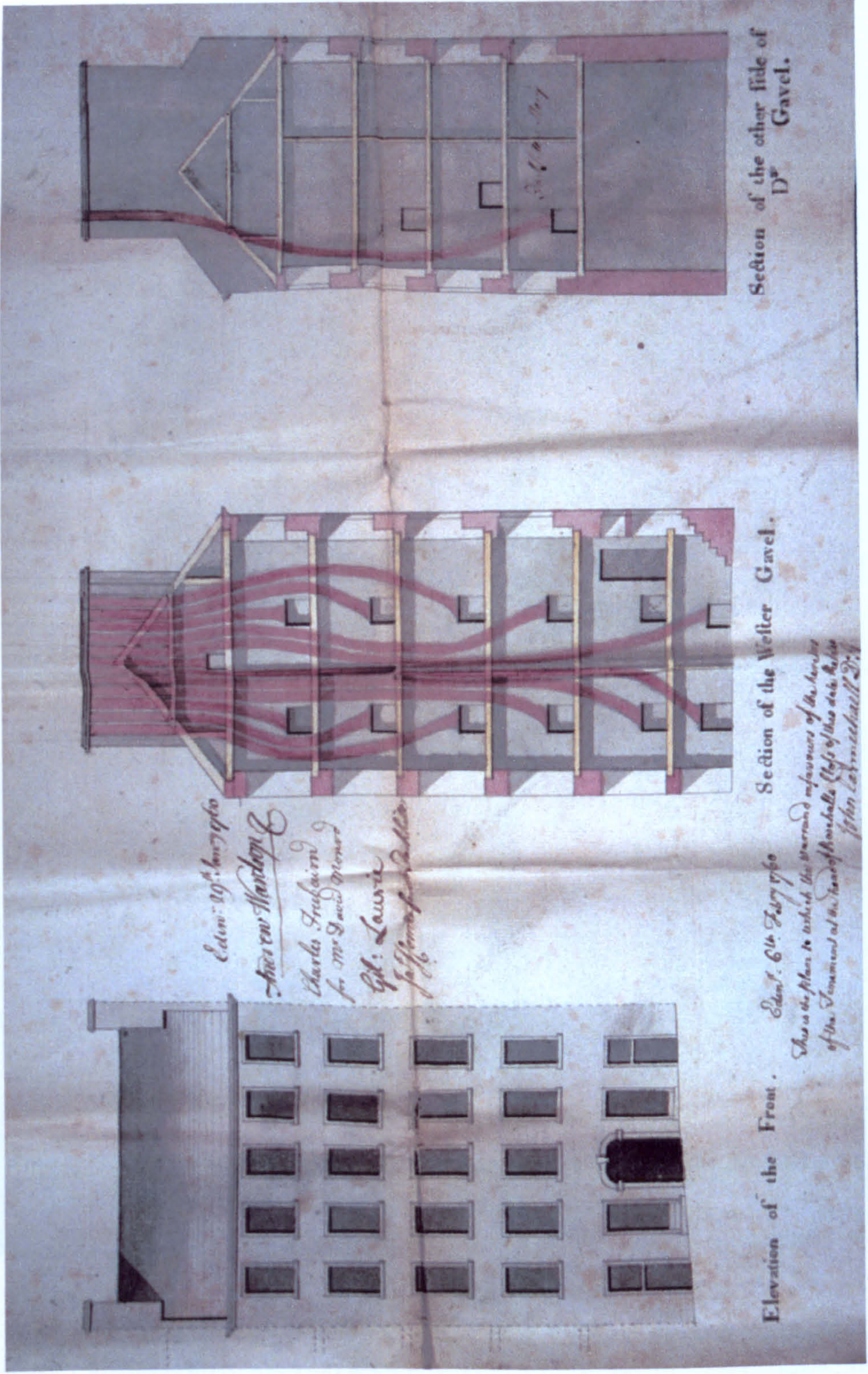


Plate 24: Chessel's Court, 1742.

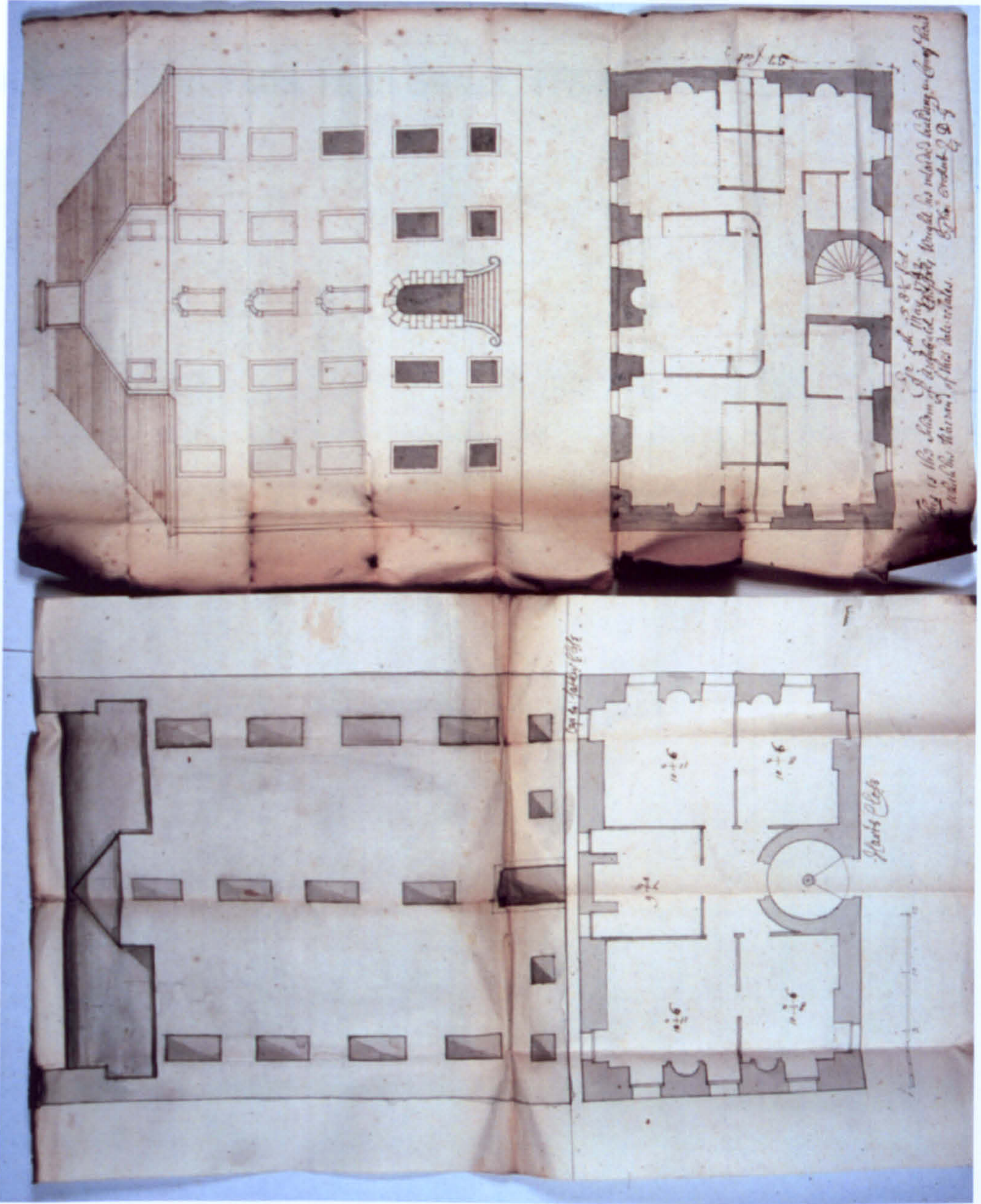




Plate 25: John Yatts, High Street, 1754

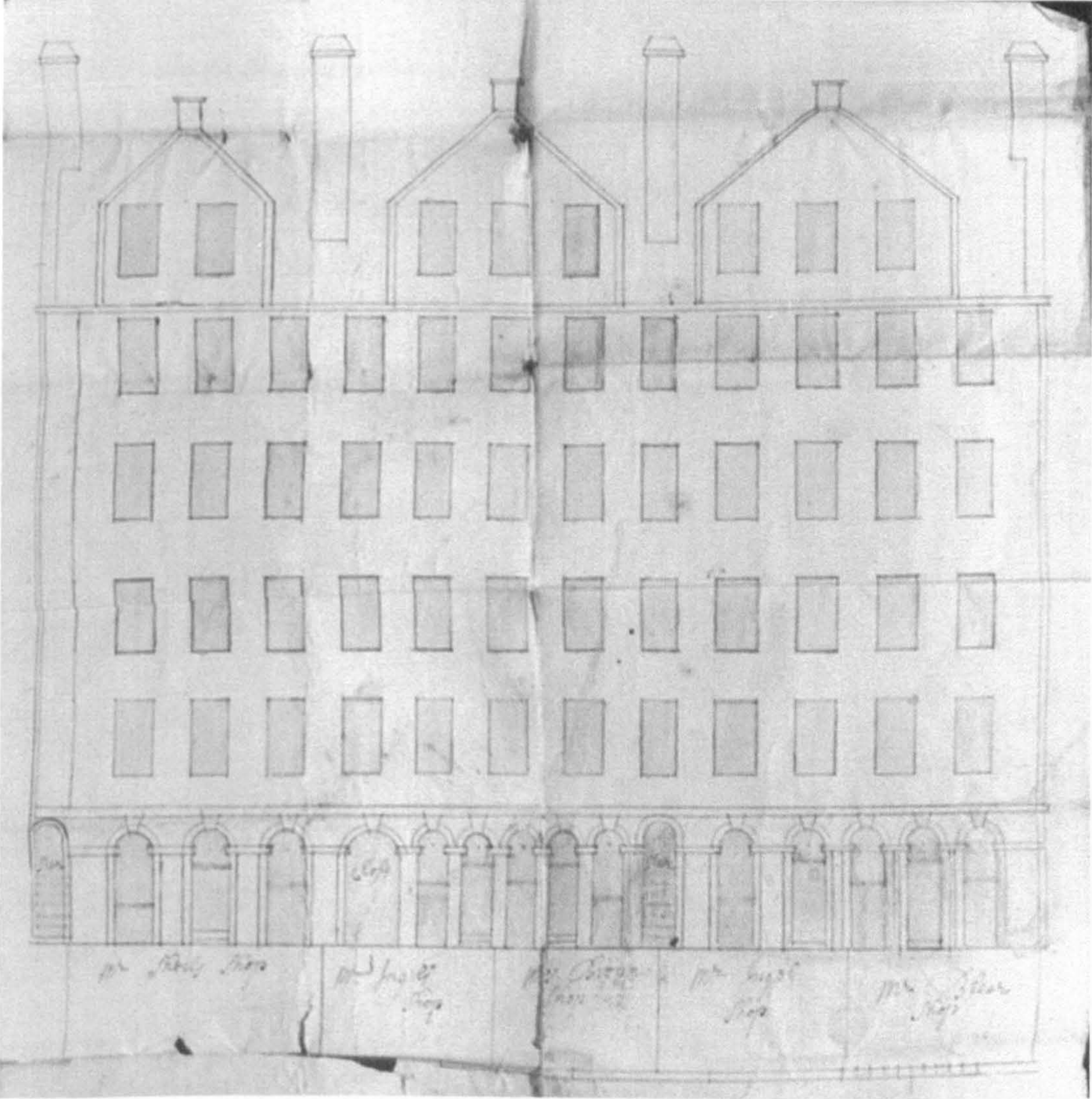


Plate 26: Professor Stevenson, Pleasance, 1768

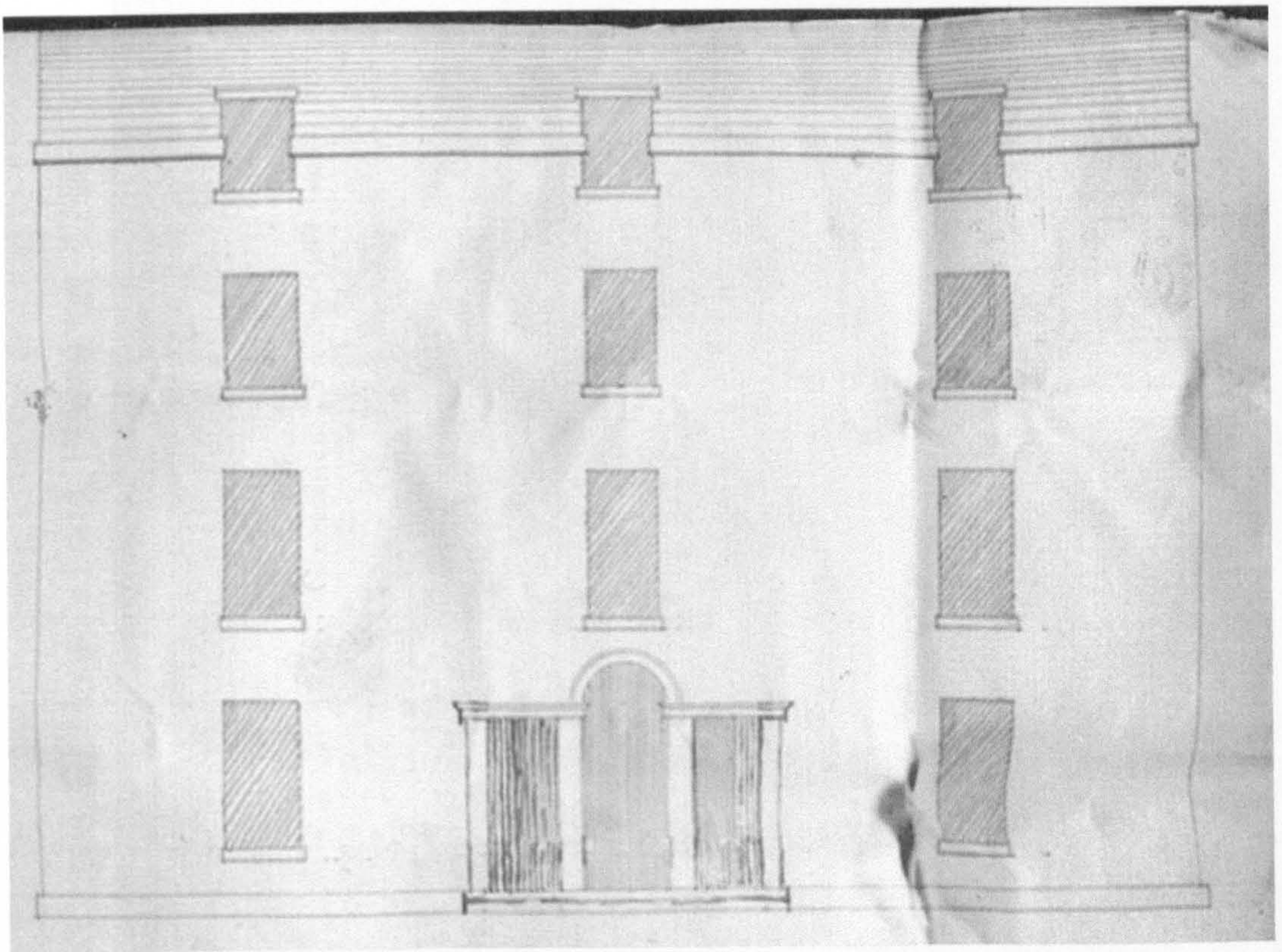


Plate 27: Robert Inglis, Dr Monro's Land, Pleasance, 1789.

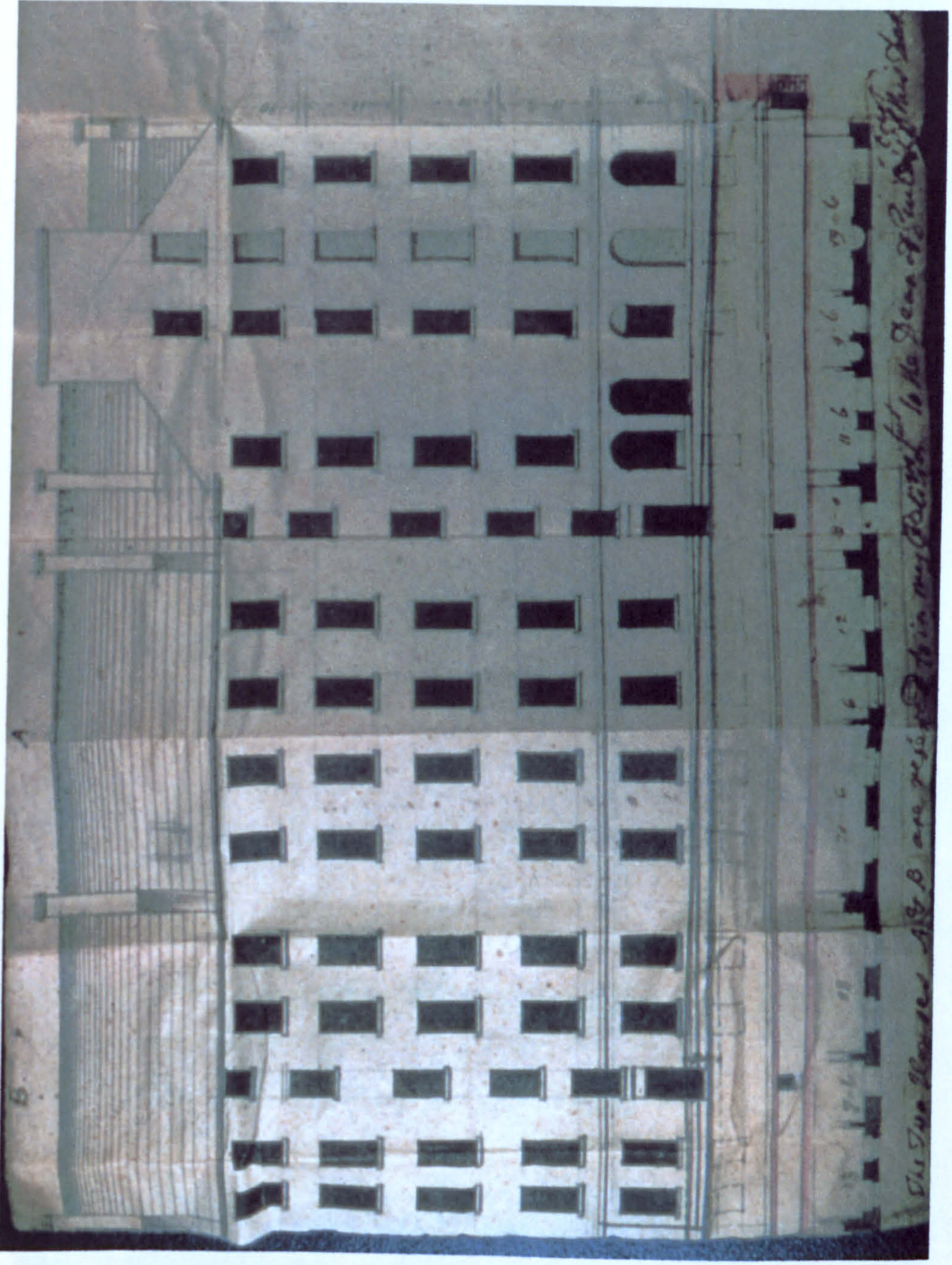


Plate 28: John Wilkie, Princes Street and Frederick Street, New Town, 1787

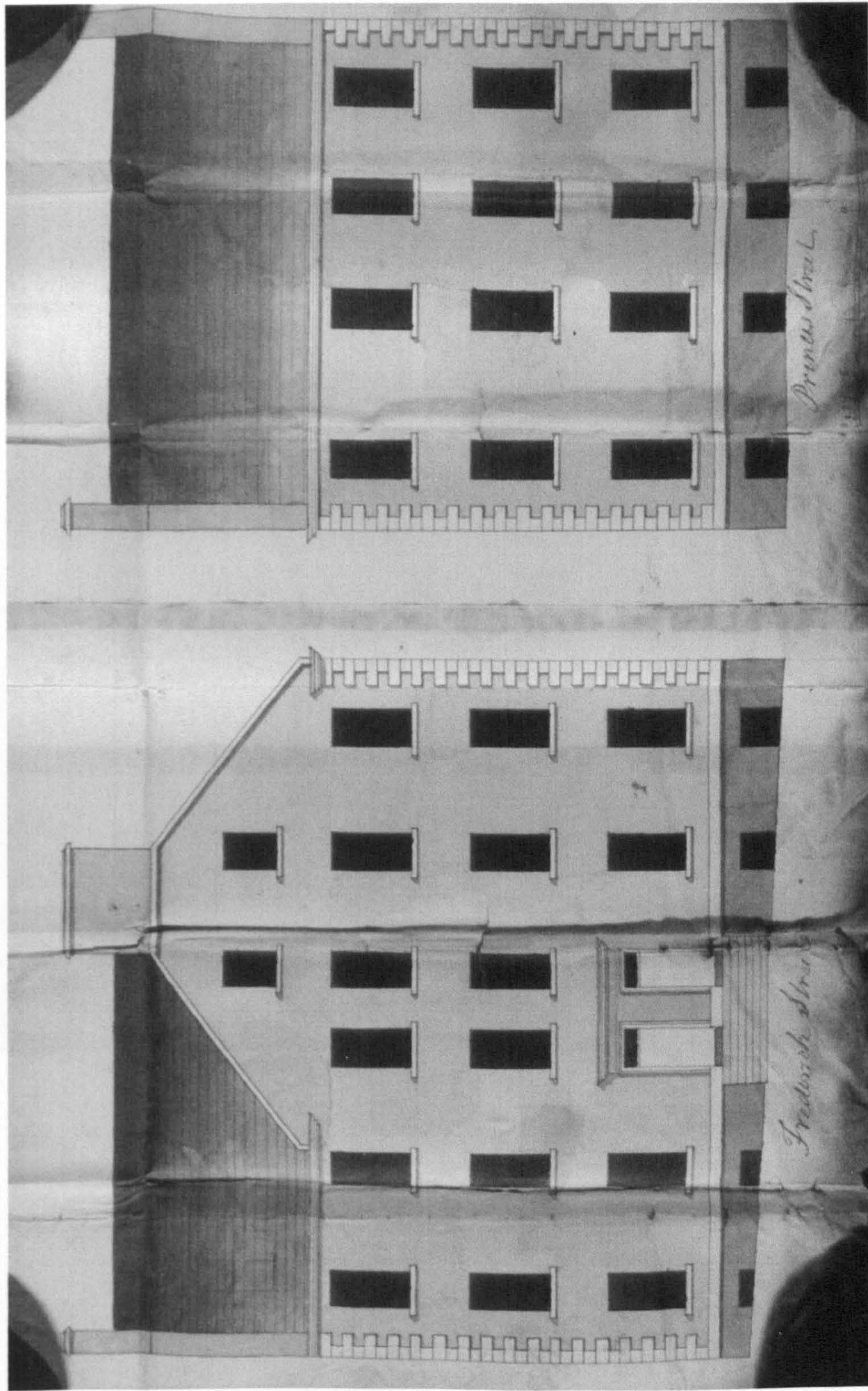


Plate 29: Andrew Neal, Thistle Street, New Town, 1781

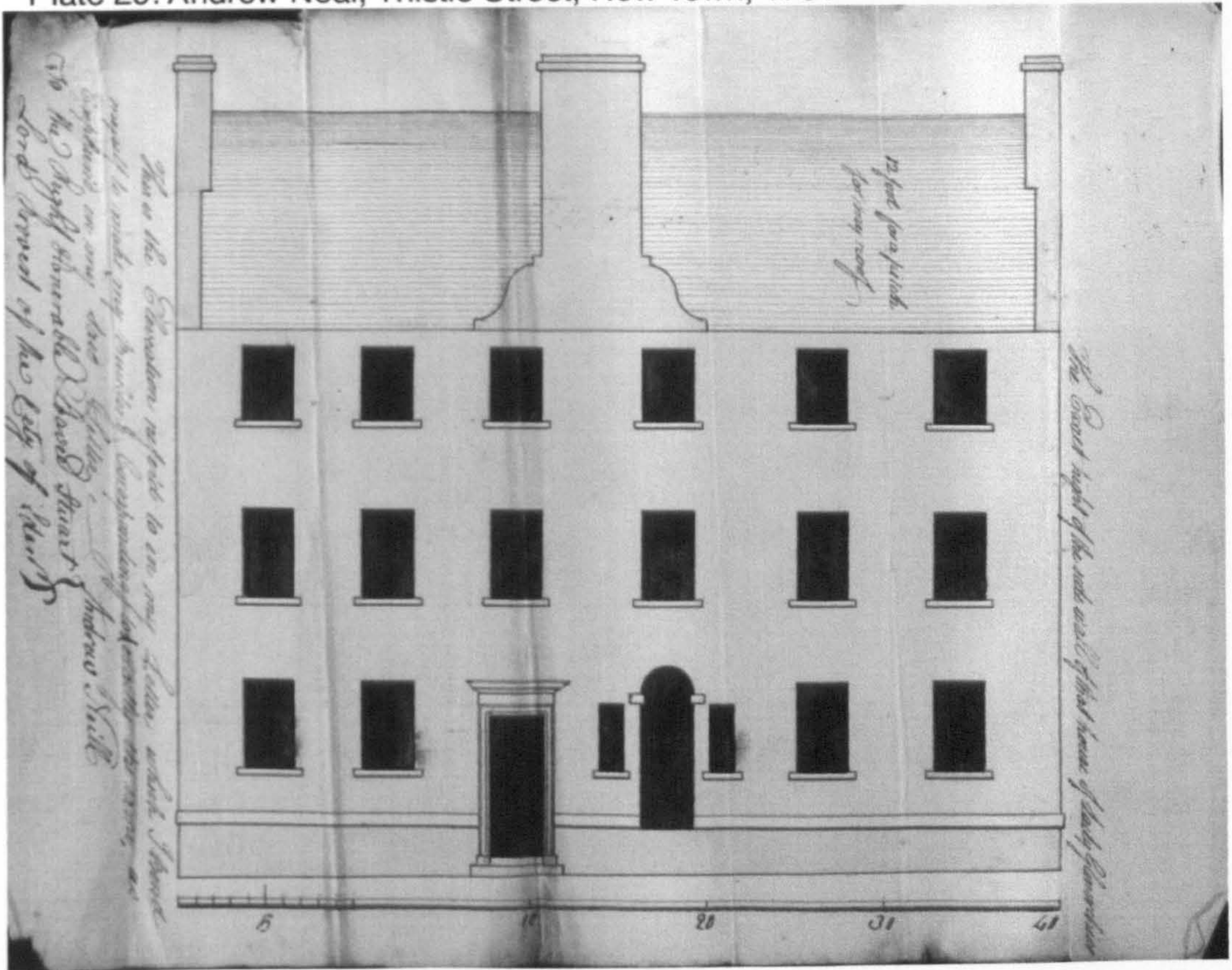


Plate 30: Sir James Clerk, Physicians' Hall, New Town, 1765

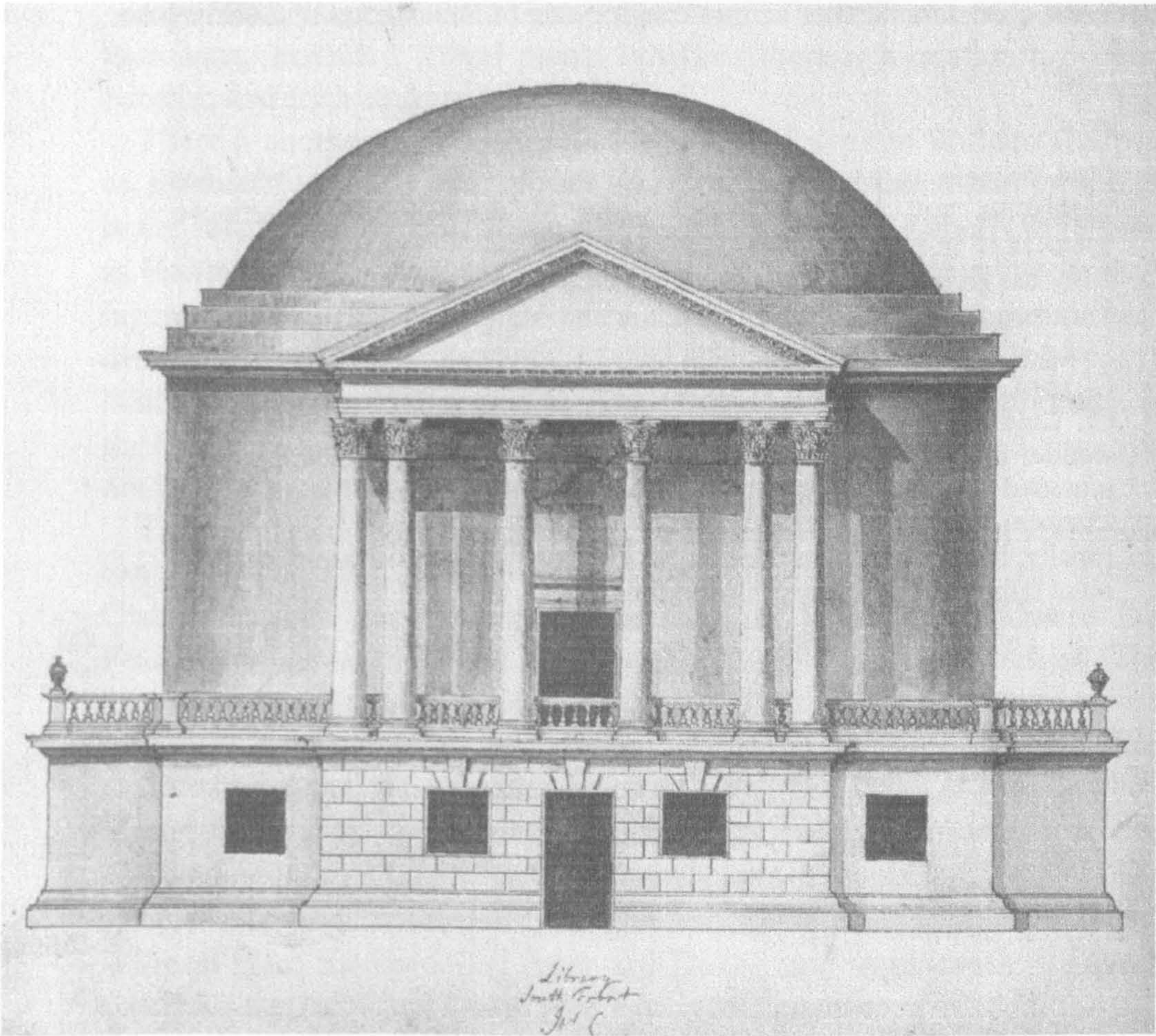


Plate 31: James Craig, New Town plan, 1767

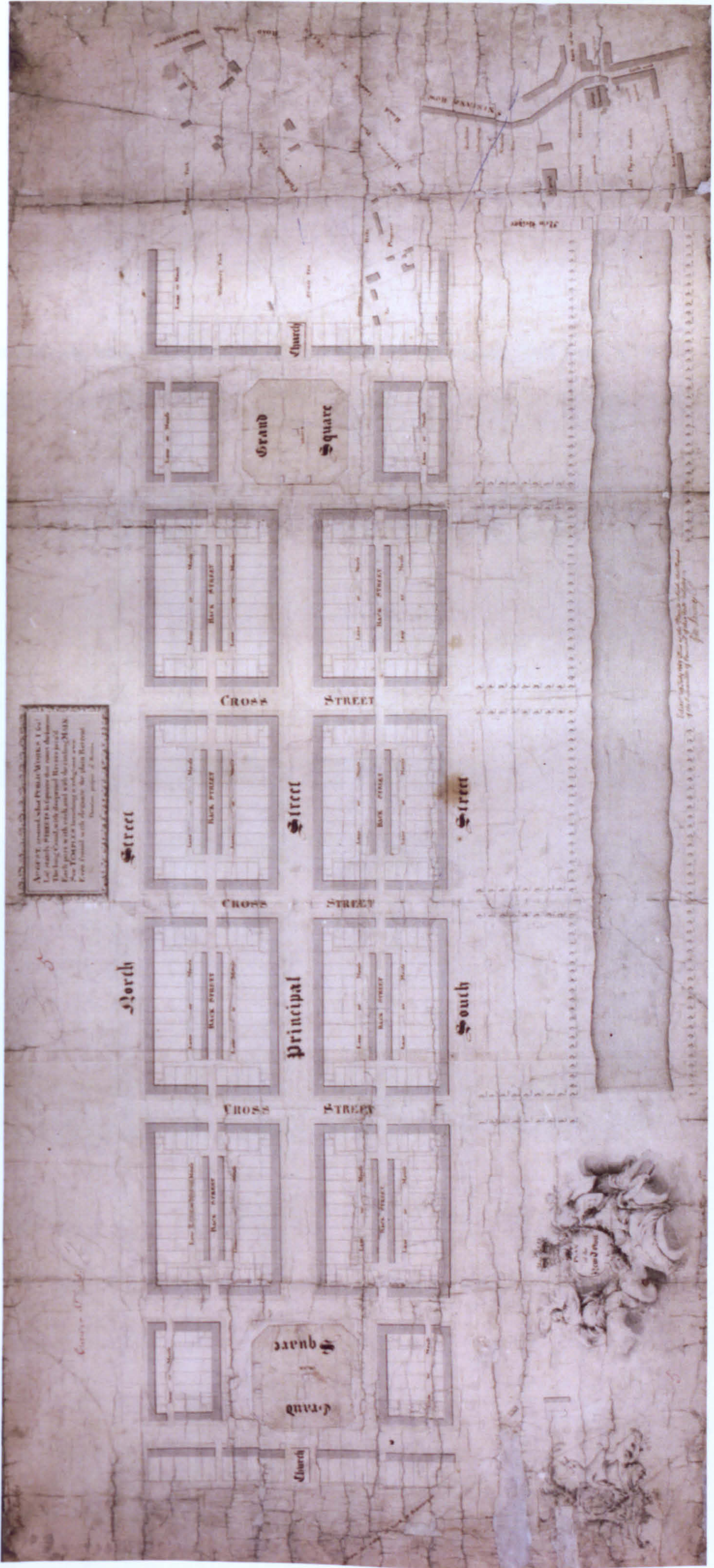


Plate 32: James Craig, New Town plan ( Physicians' Hall), George Street, New Town, 1781

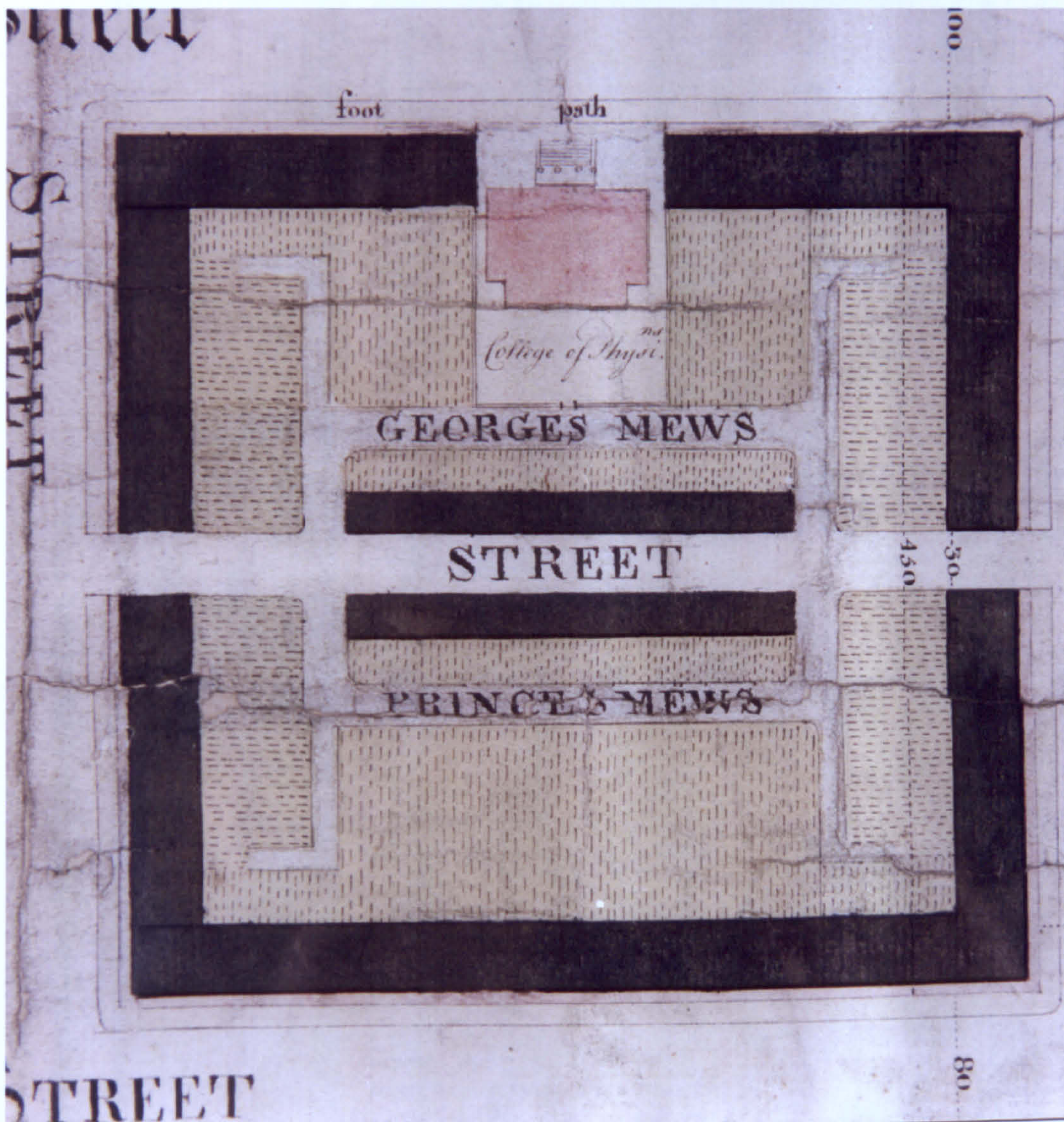




Plate 33 : James Craig, New Town Circus Plan, 1774.

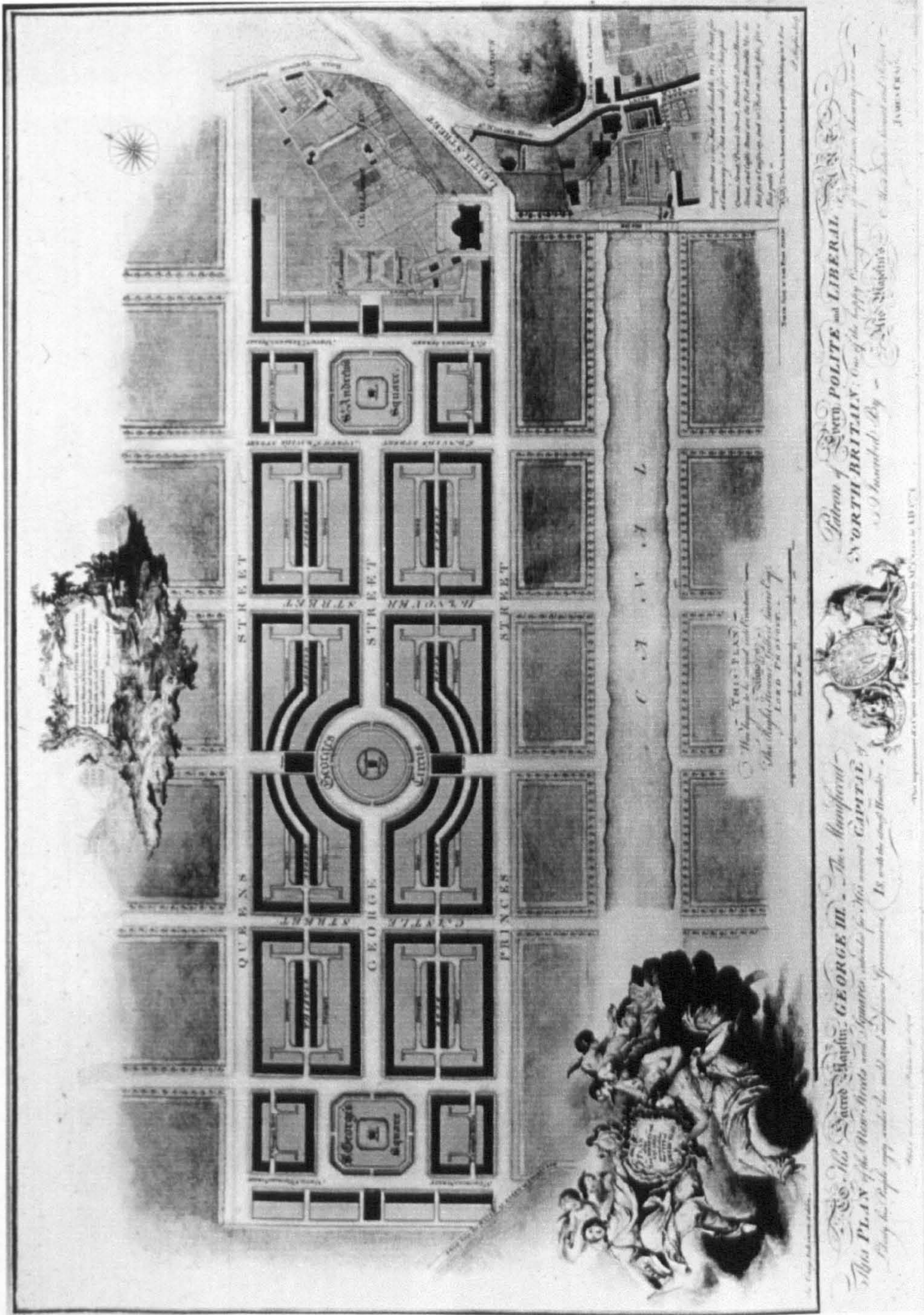
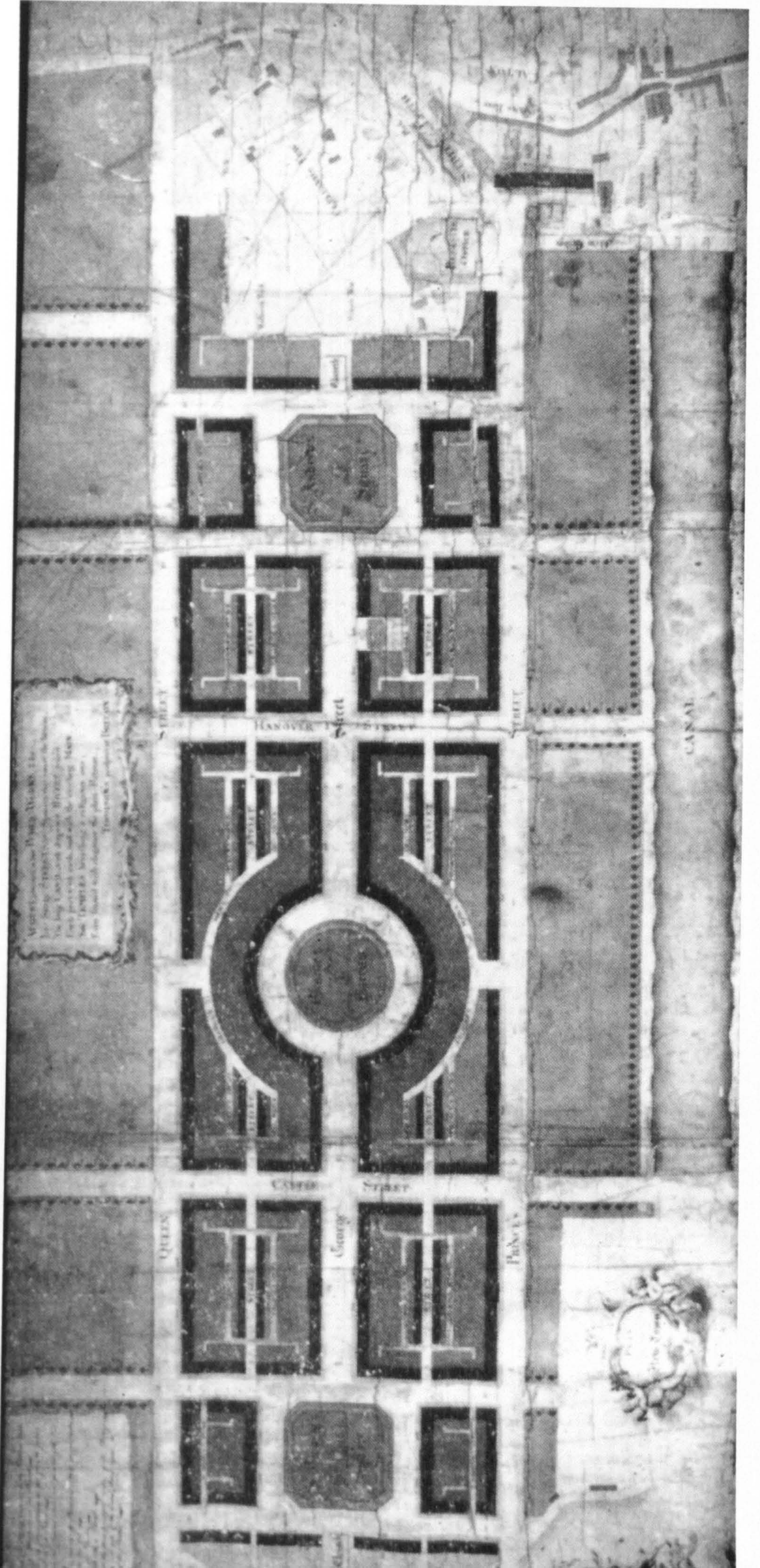


Plate 34: James Craig, New Town Circus Plan, 1781



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The above plan is the property of the  
City of Edinburgh and is intended to  
be printed and sold with the accompanying  
plan of the New Town of Edinburgh  
and the plan of the New Town of  
Edinburgh. The plan of the New Town  
of Edinburgh is the property of the  
City of Edinburgh.

Plate 35 :James Craig, Blythswood Estate, Glasgow, 1792.

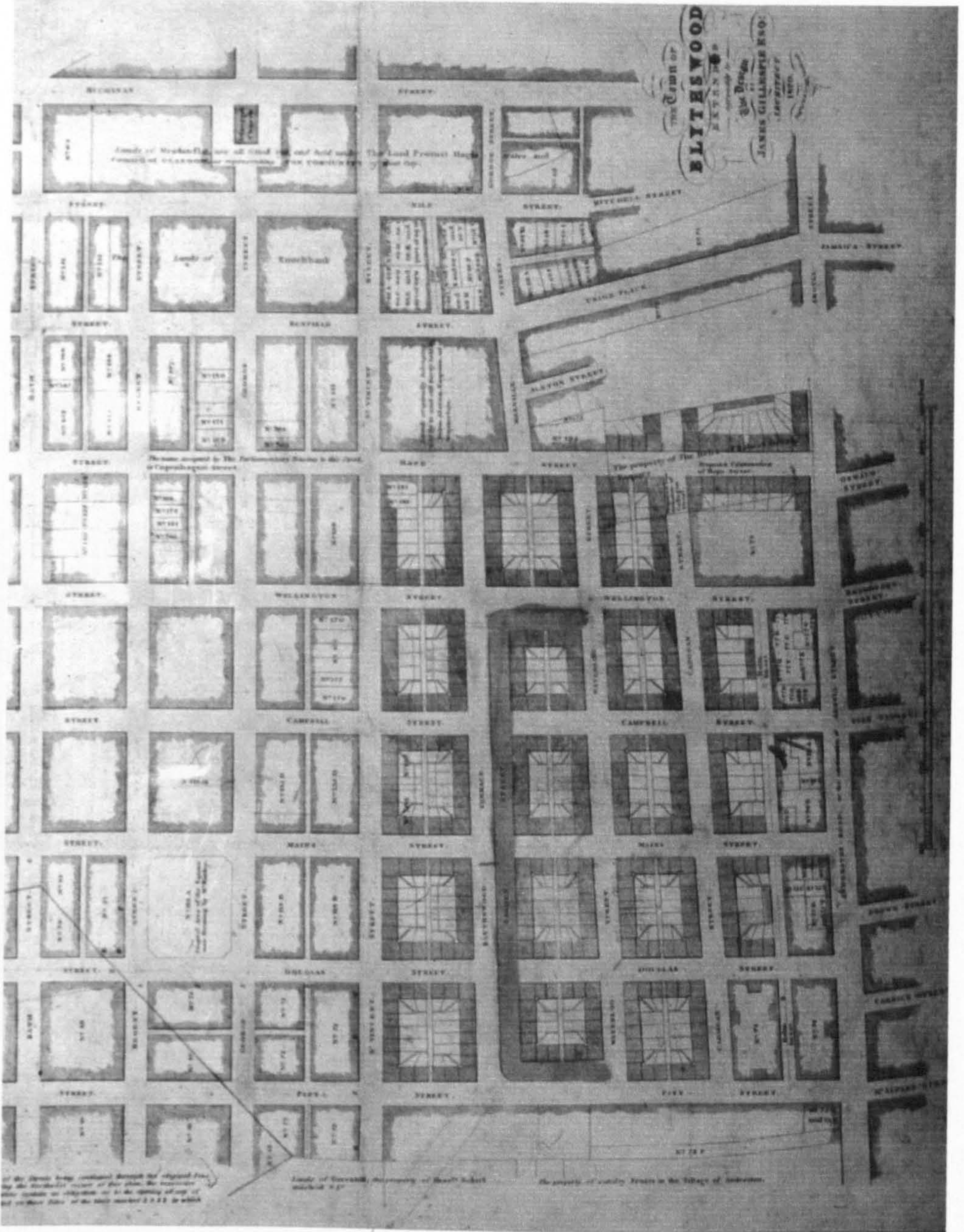


Plate 36: James Craig, South Bridge, 1785

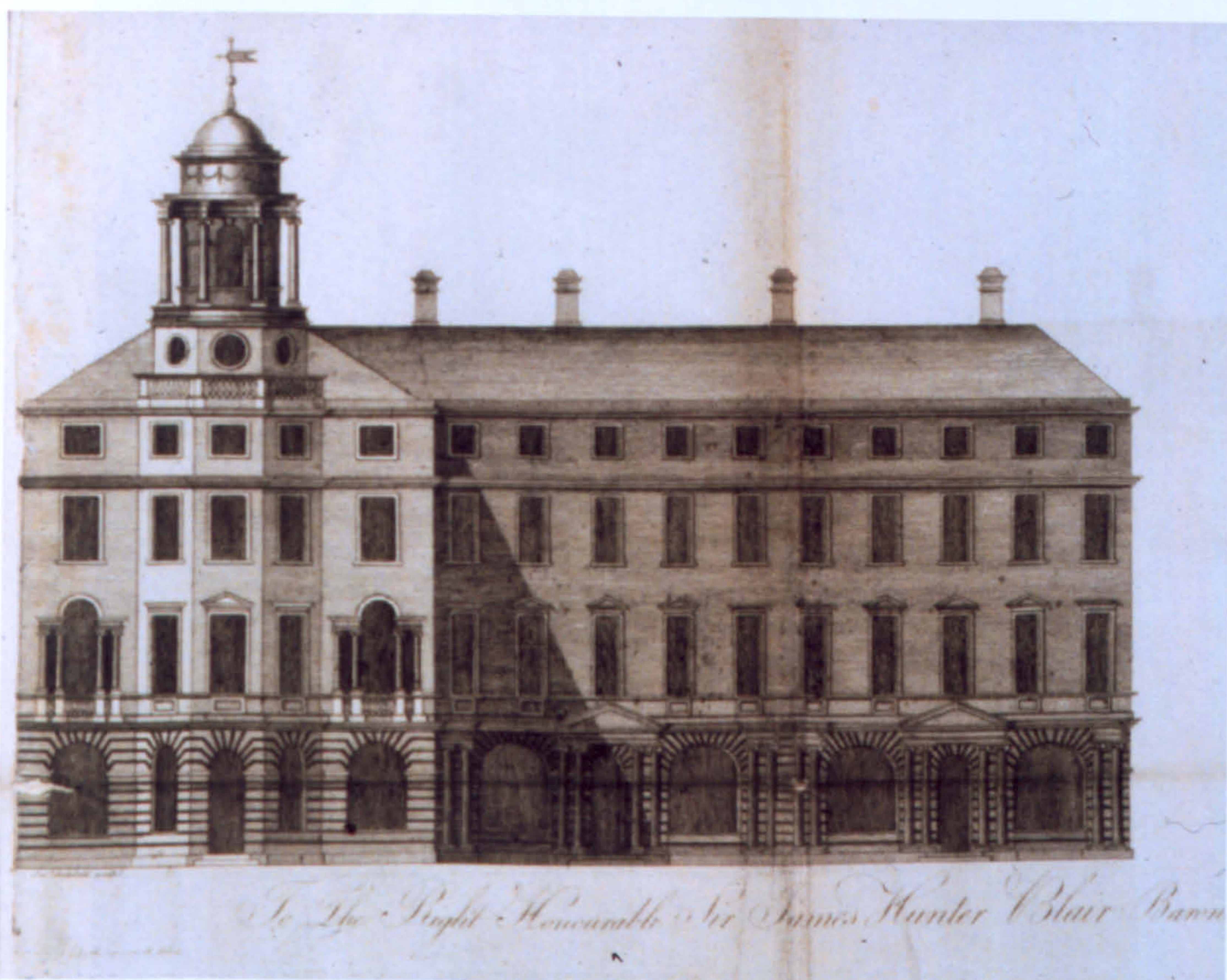


Plate 37: David Allan, James Craig (detail of Physician's Hall's wings), 1781.

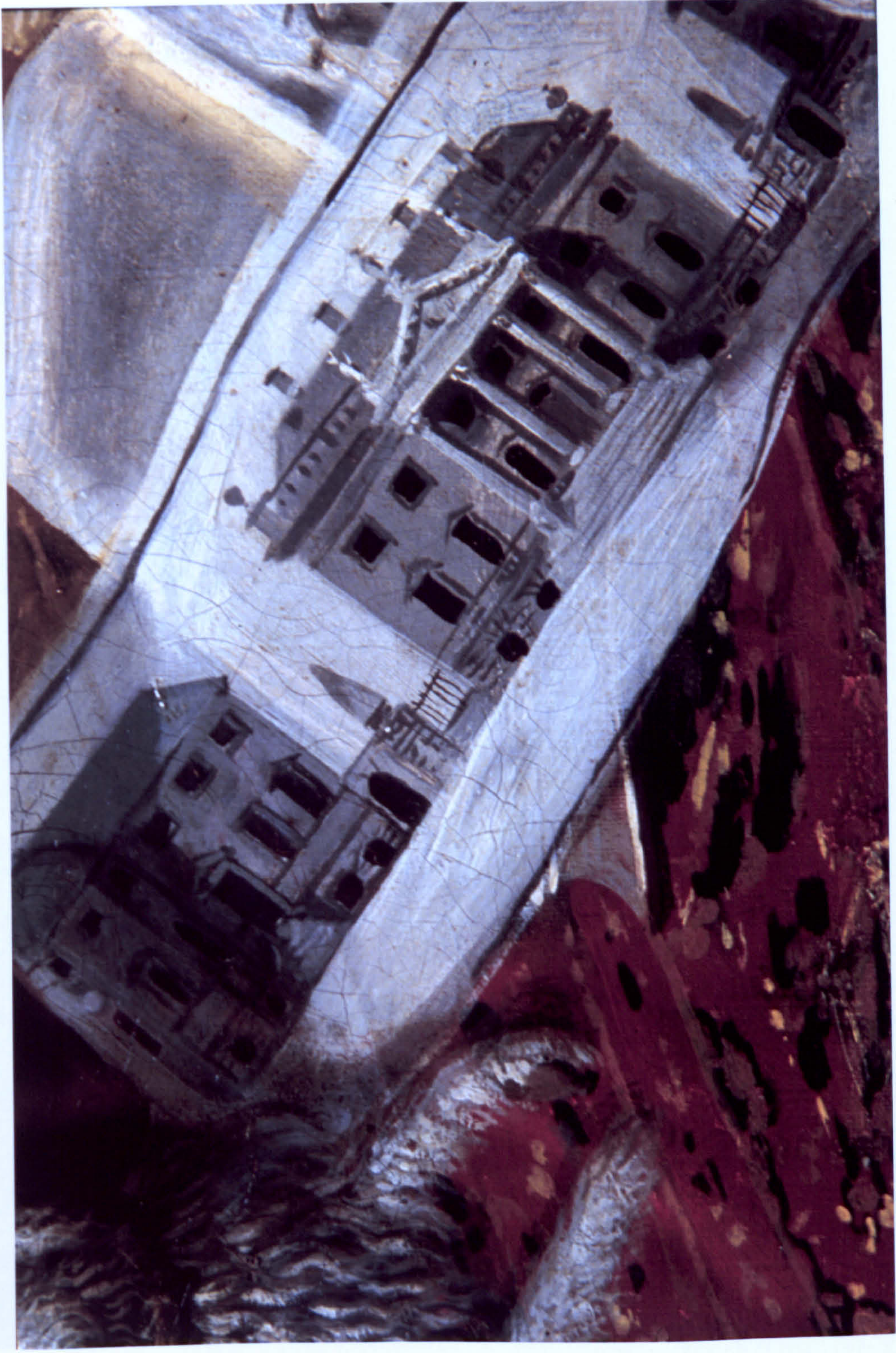


Plate 38: David Allan, James Craig, 1781.



Plate 39: William Smith, George Street, New Town, 1778

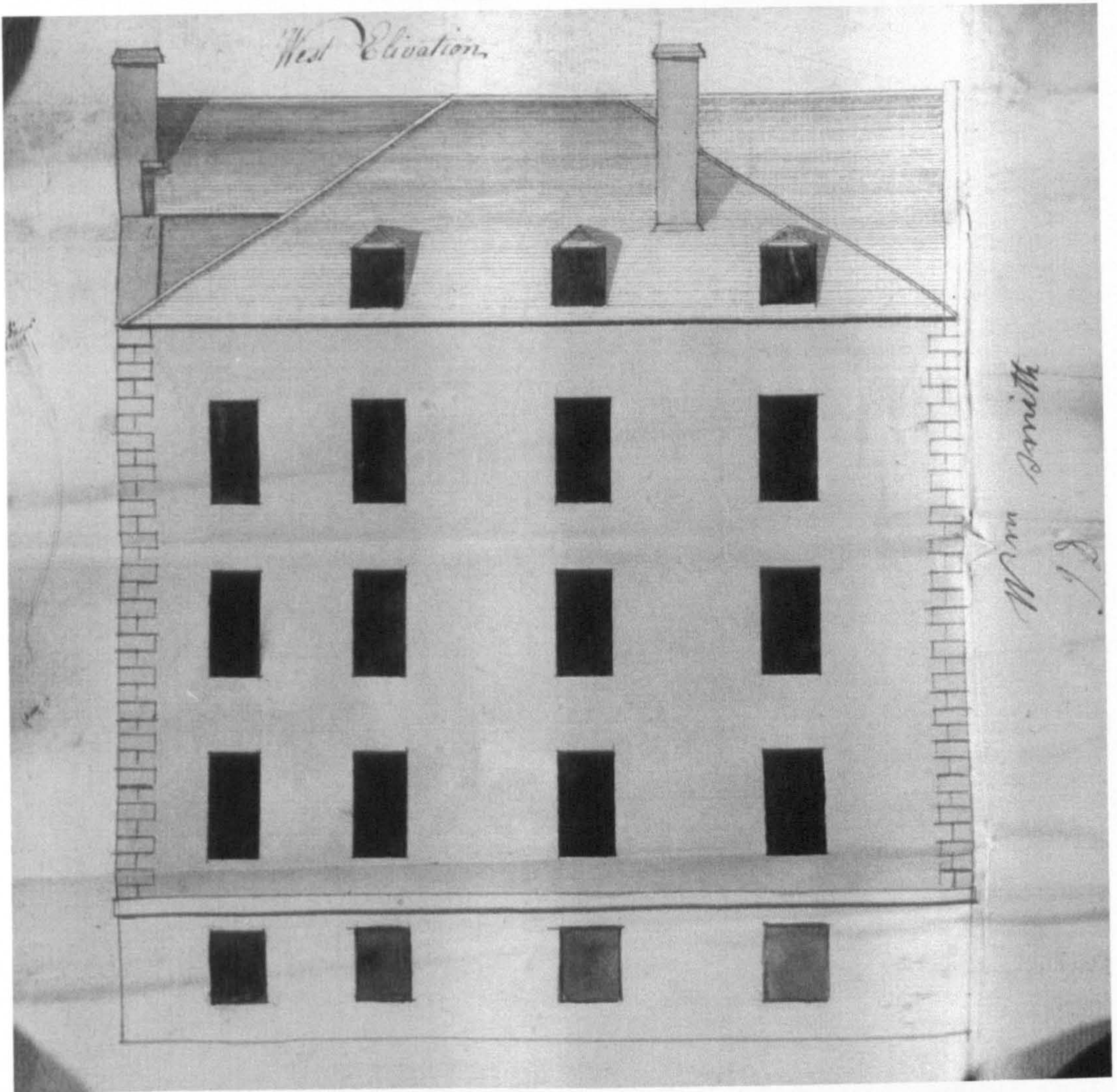


Plate 40: William Smith, George Street, New Town, 1778

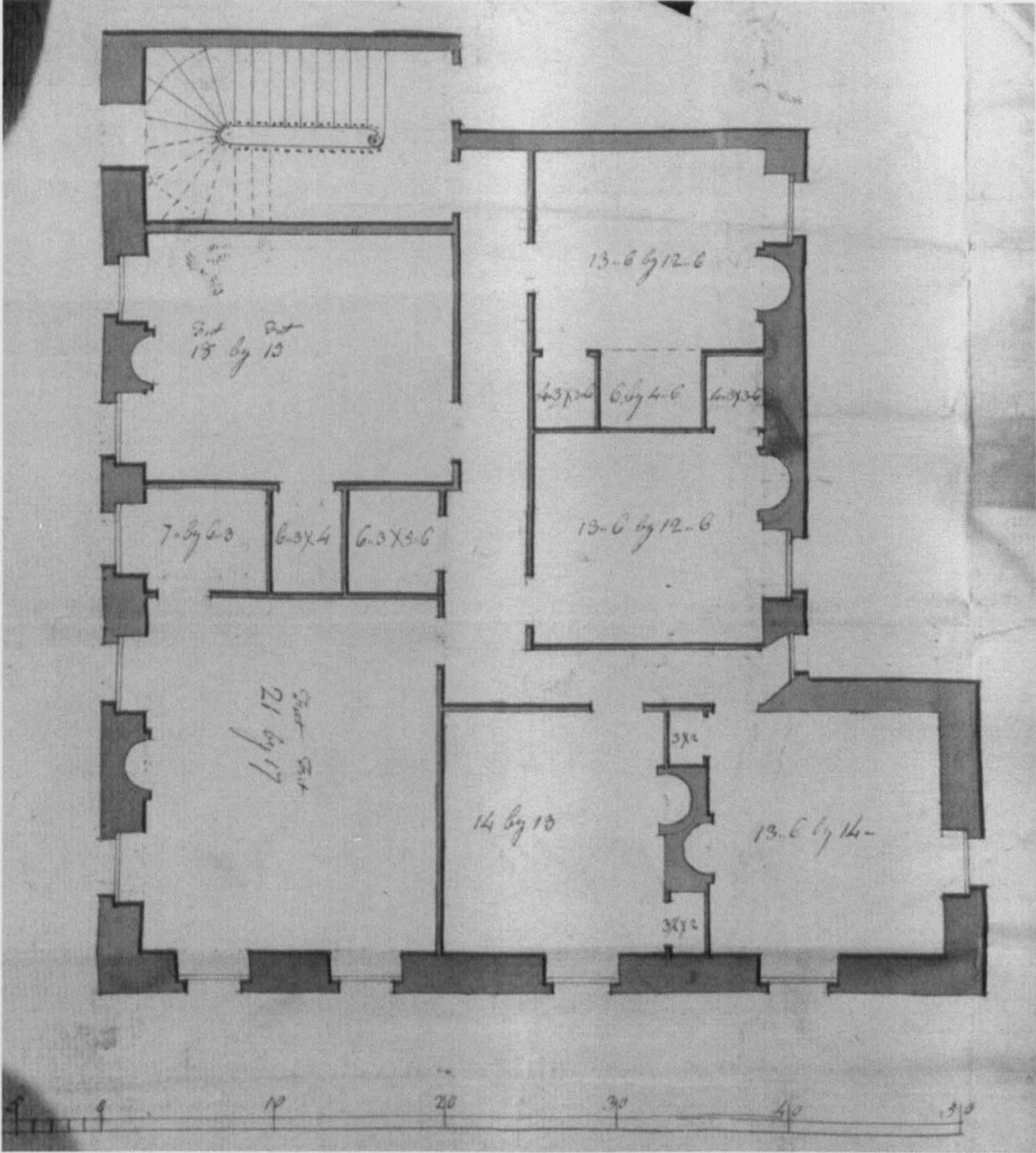




Plate 41: John Young, St Andrew's Square, New Town, 1781



Plate 42: Robert Adam, Register House, Edinburgh, 1768.



Plate 43: Robert Adam, Baron Ord's house, Queen Street, 1771

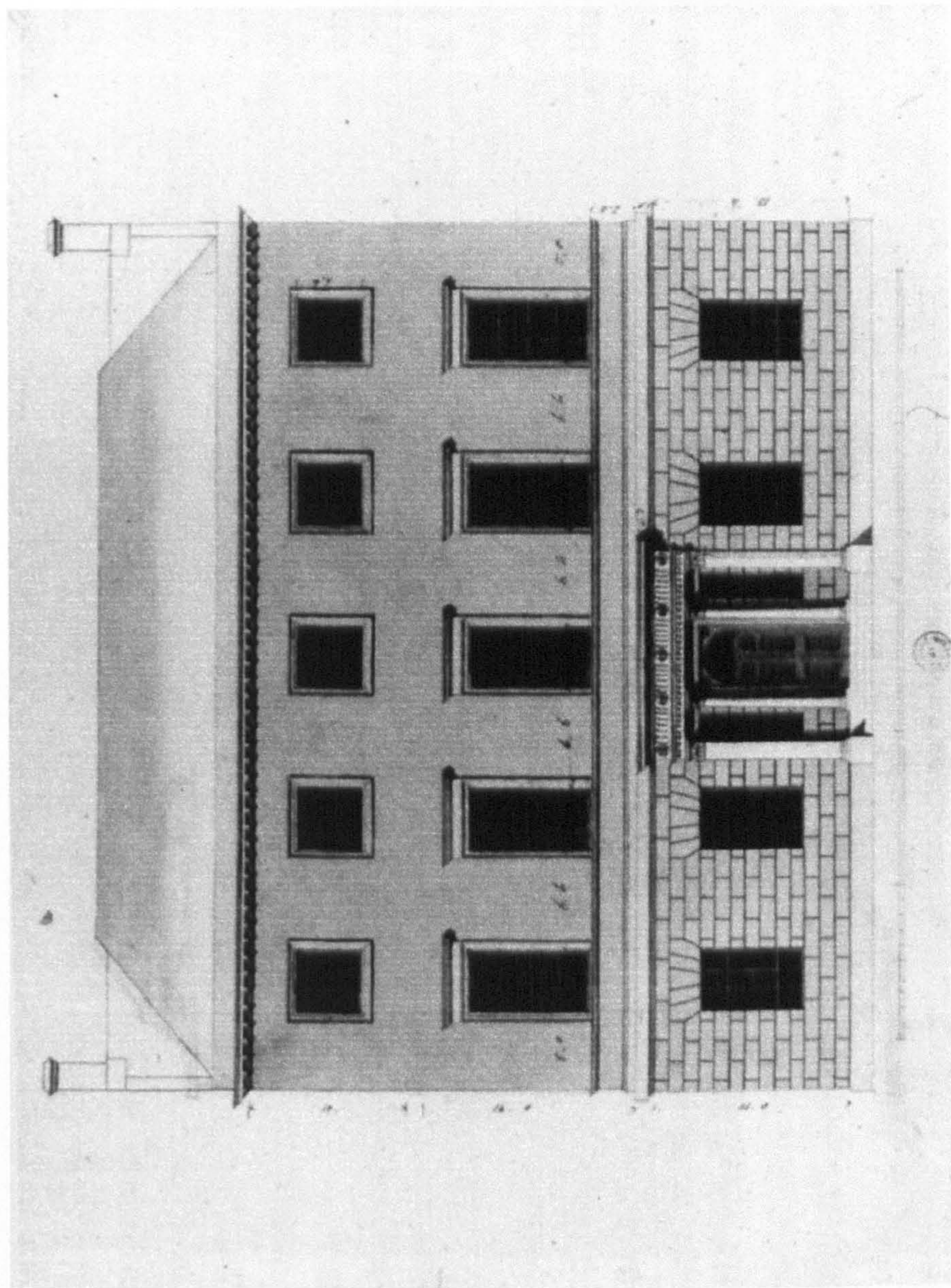


Plate 44: John Adam, Adam Square, Edinburgh, 1761

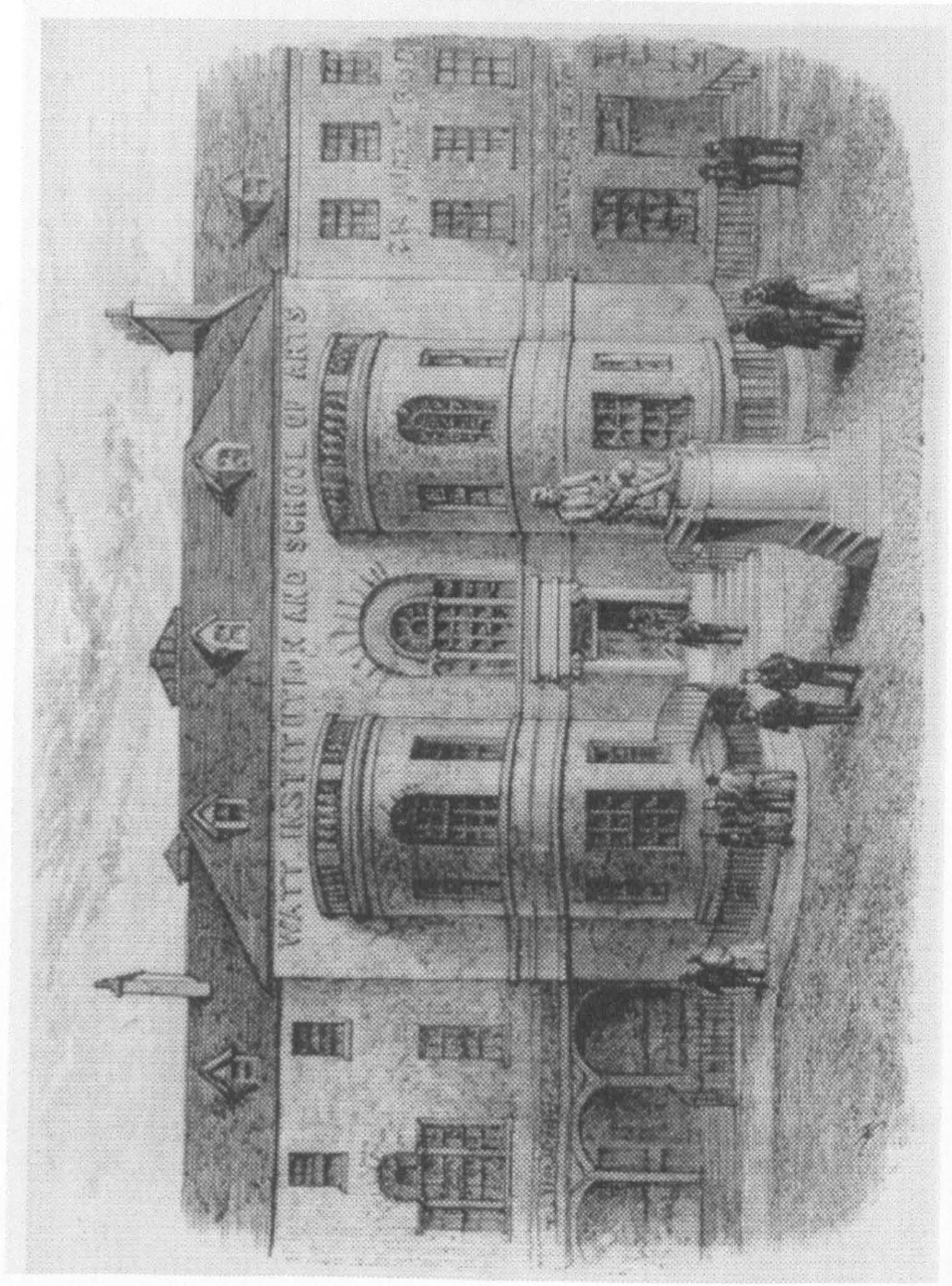


Plate 45: John Hay and John Baxter and John Hay, Castle Street, New Town, 1790

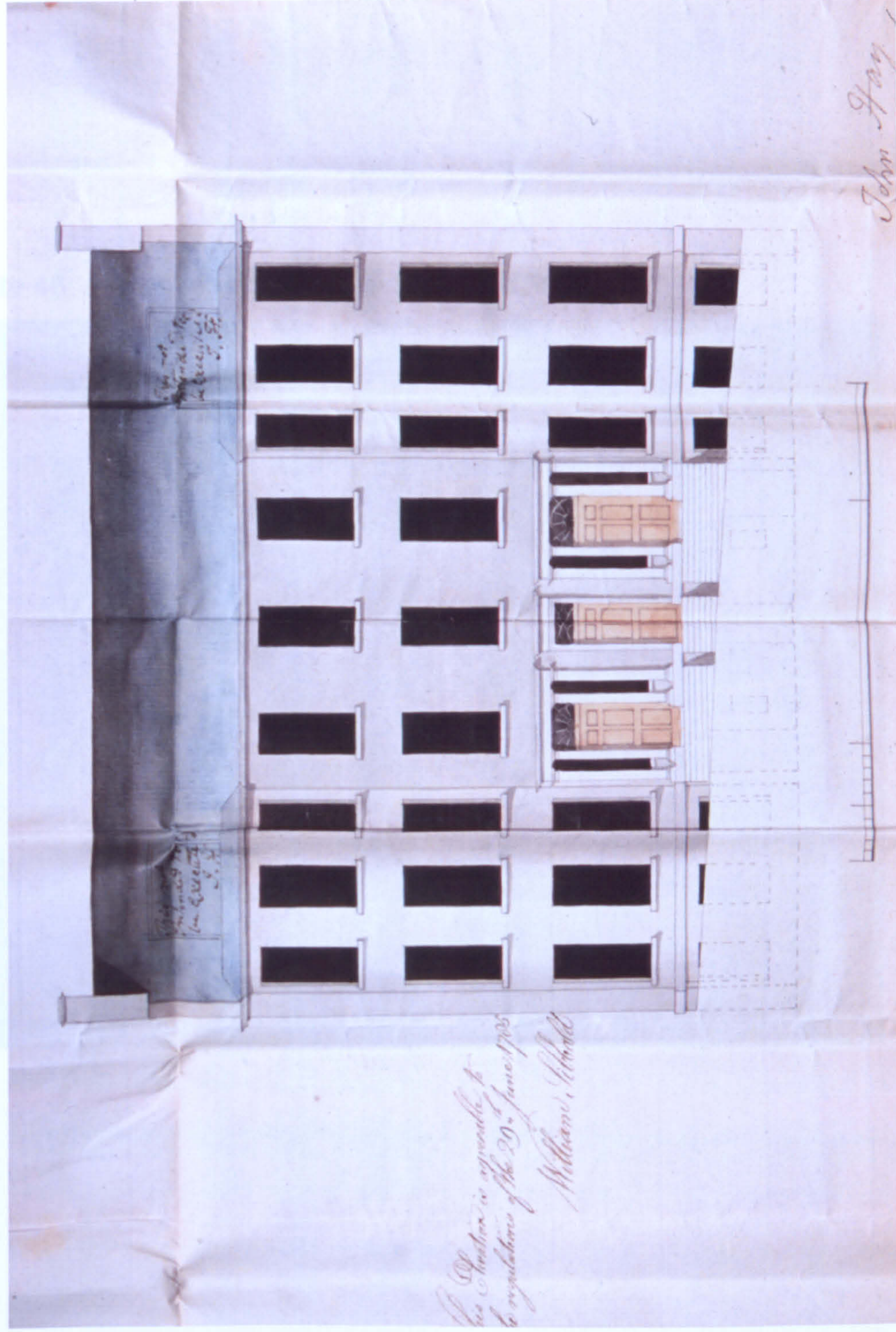


Plate 46: James Nesbit, George Street, 1789



Plate 47: James Craig, Royal College of Physician's Hall, 1775

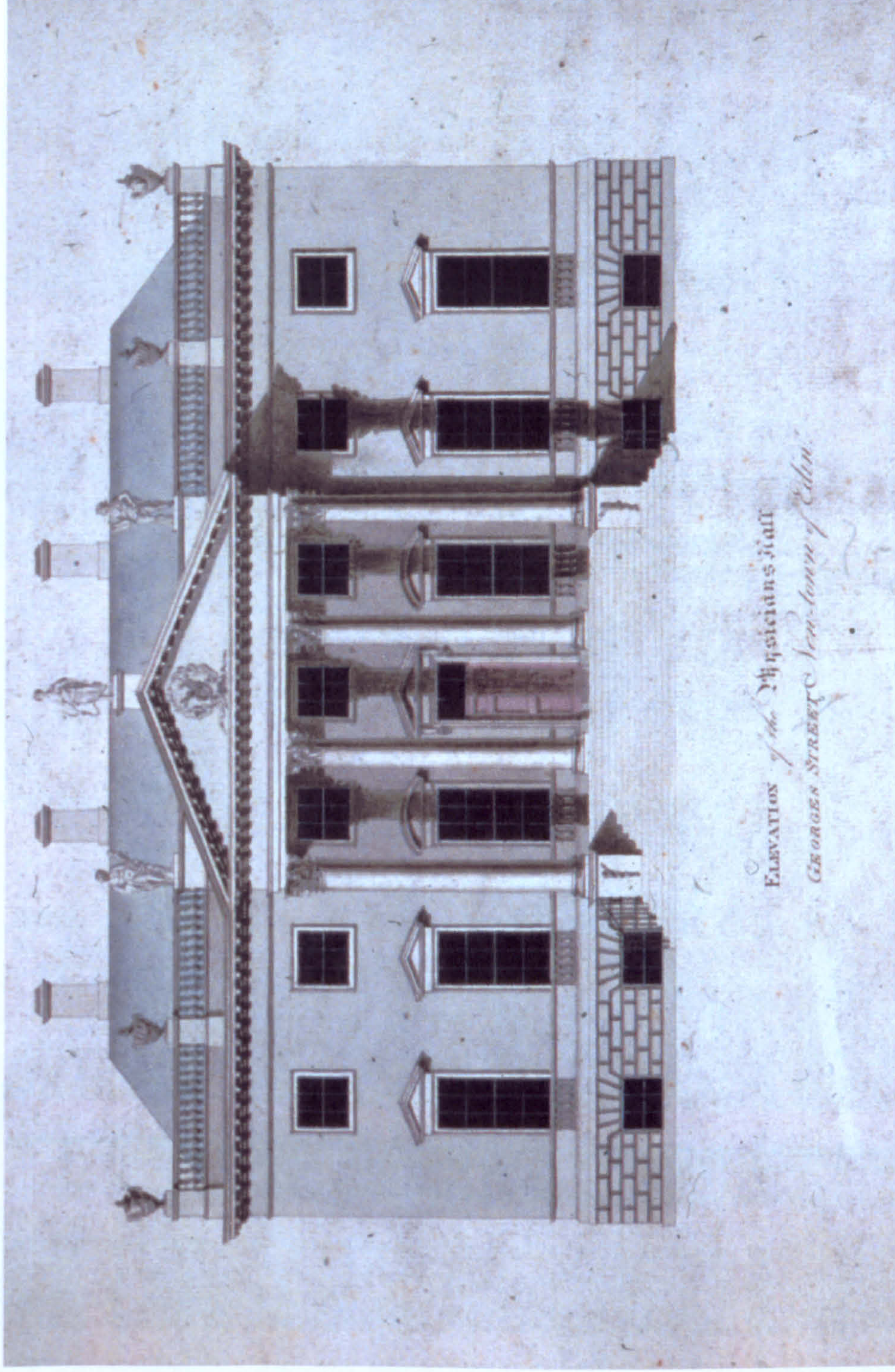


Plate 48: Captain Andrew Fraser and Robert Kay, St Andrew's Church, George Street, New Town, 1781





Plate 49: Sir William Chambers, Sir Laurence Dundas's House, St Andrew Square, 1771



Plate 50: David Henderson, New Town sewer design, 1768

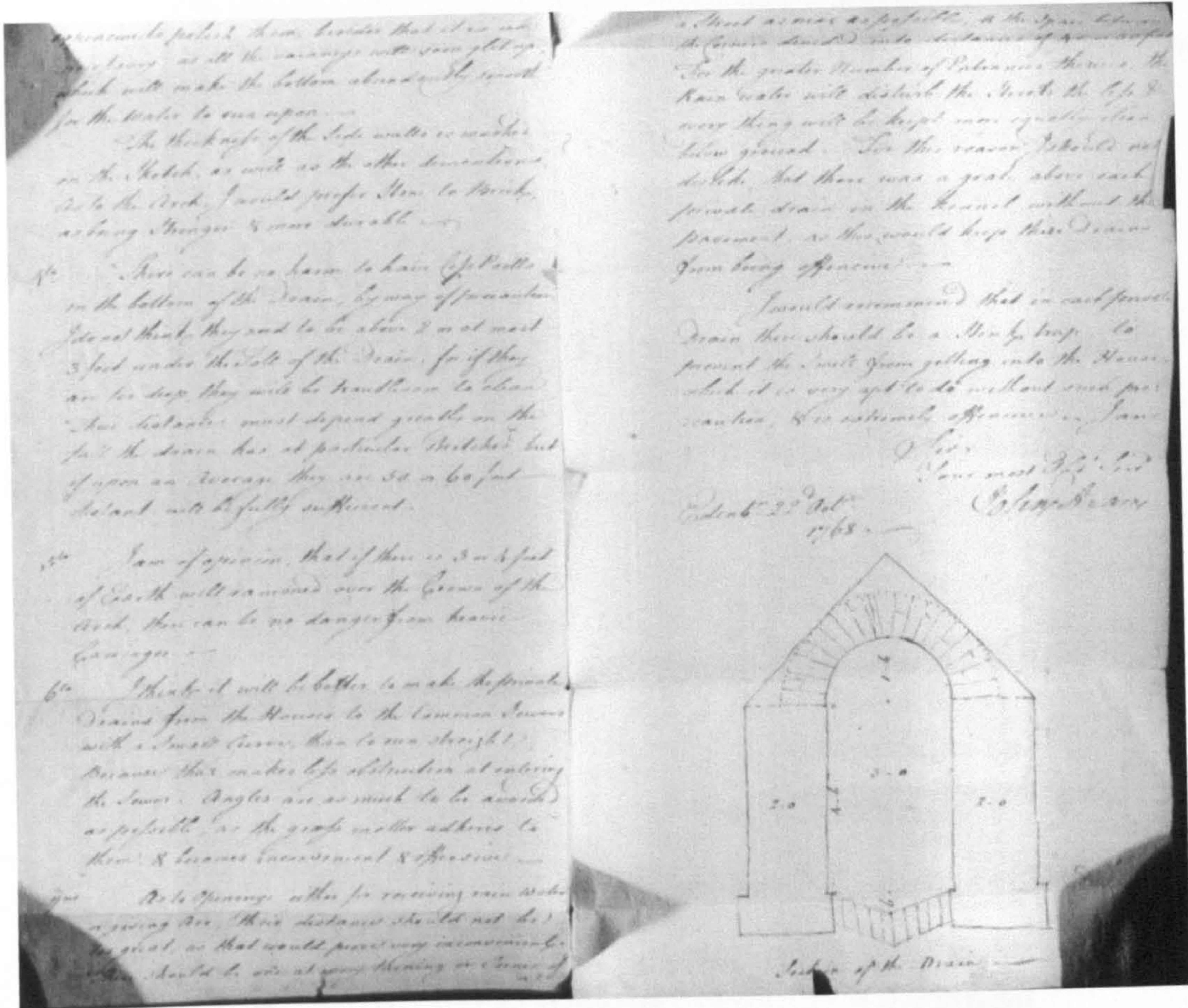


Plate 51: Edinburgh Town Council Level of Debt 1772

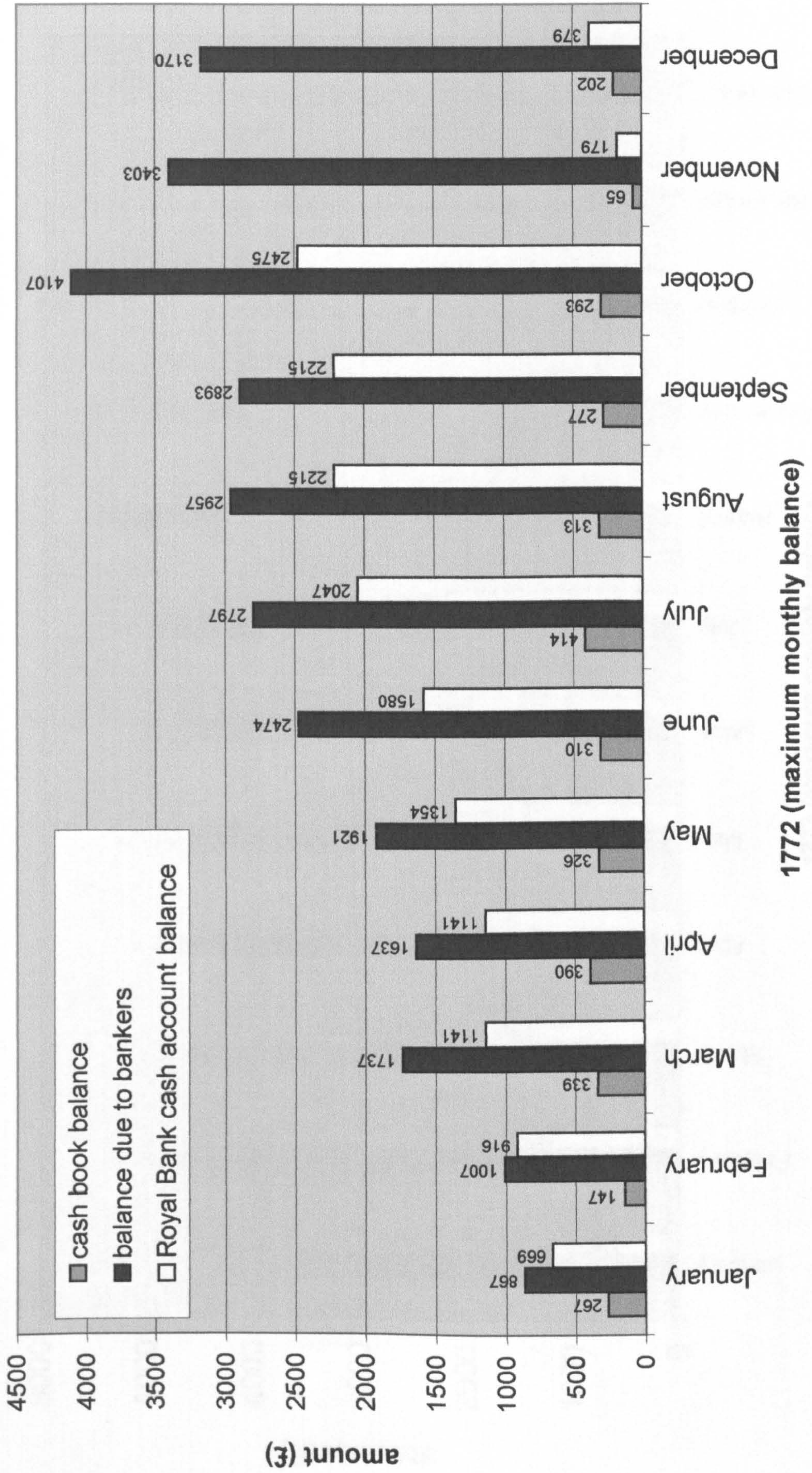


Plate 52: Edinburgh Town Council Level of Debt 1773

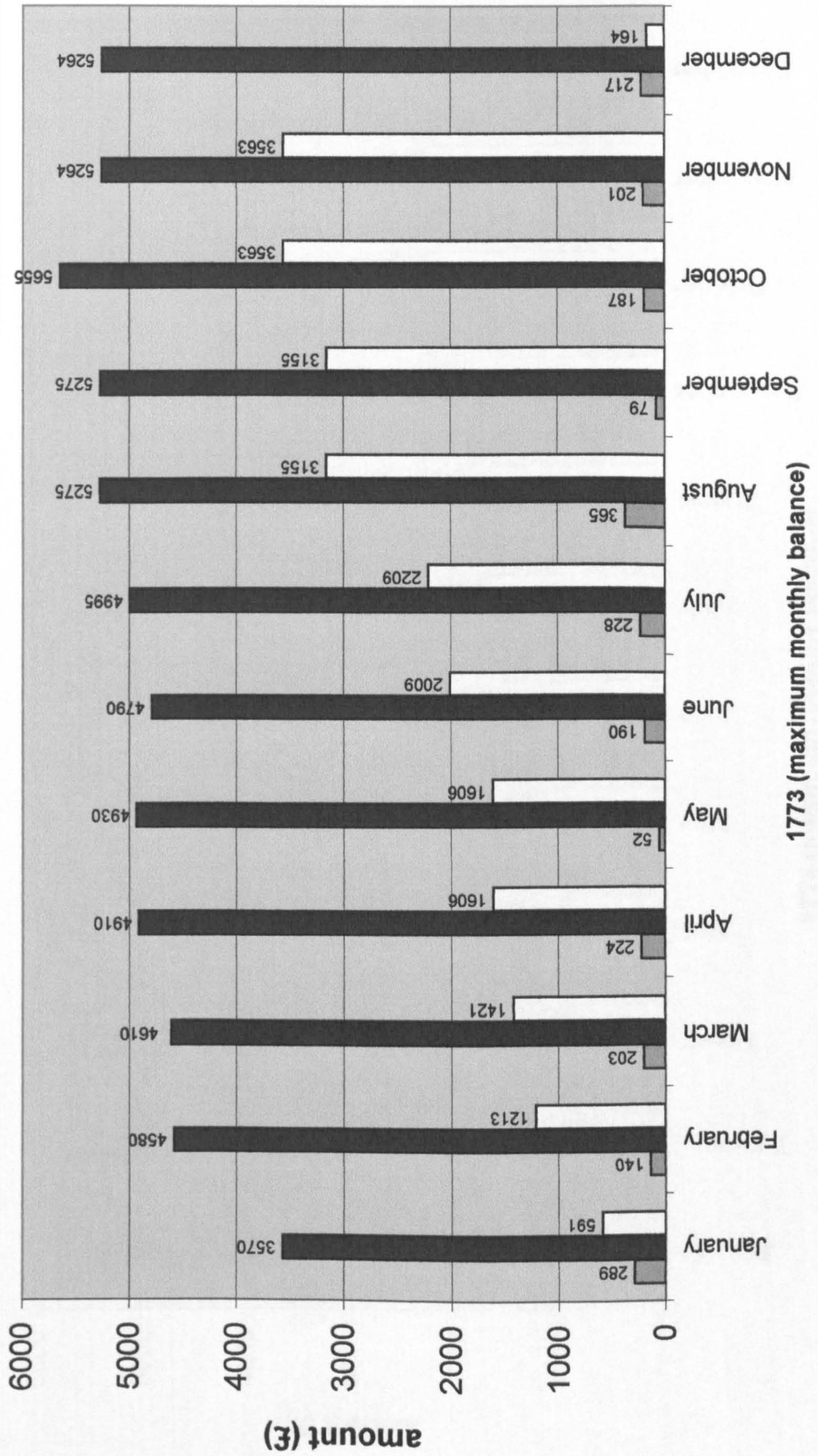
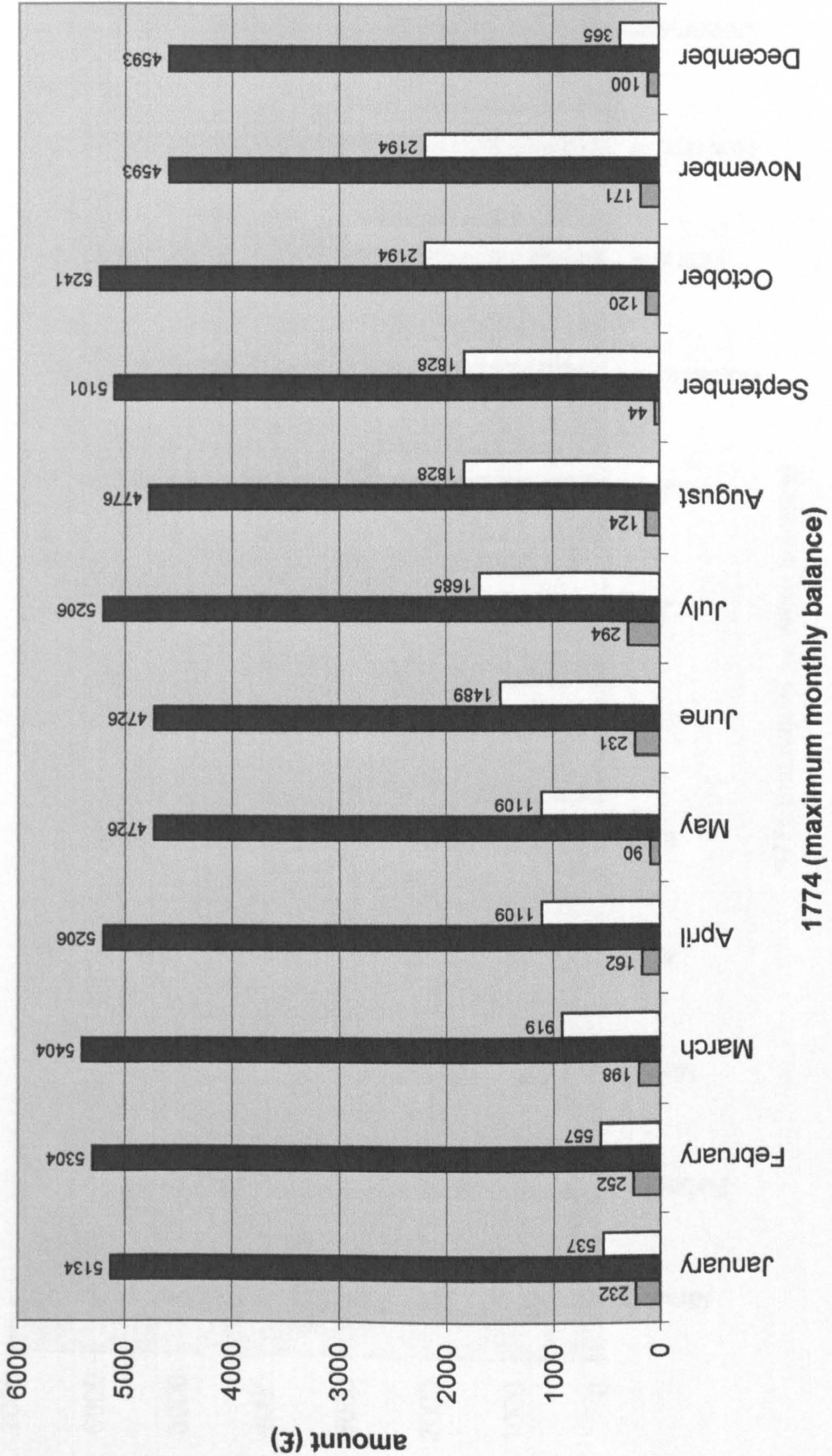
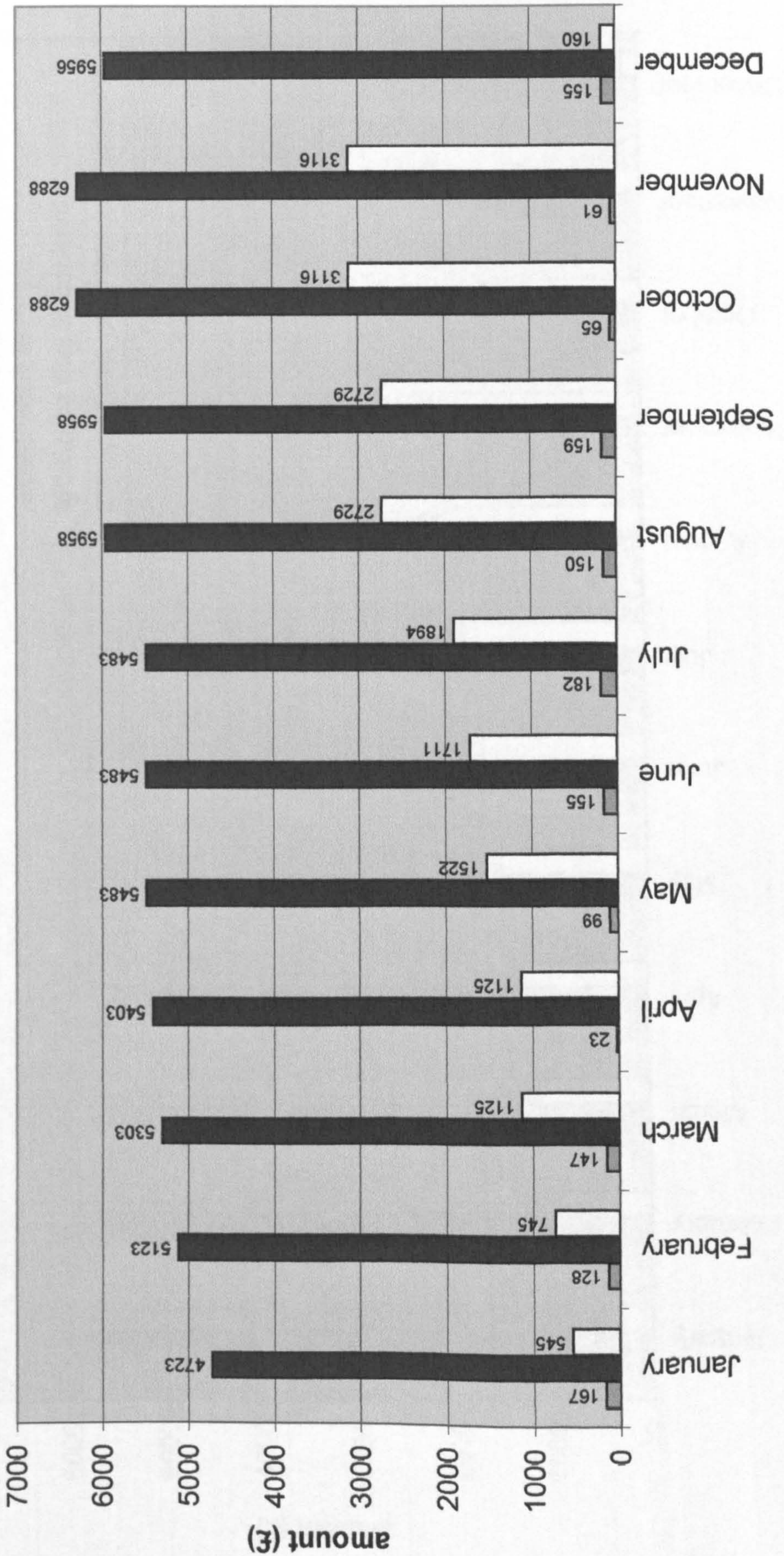


Plate 53: Edinburgh Town Council Level of Debt 1774

cash book balance  
 balance due to bankers  
 Royal Bank cash account balance



**Plate 54: Edinburgh Town Council Level of Debt 1775**



1775 (maximum monthly balance)

Plate 55: Edinburgh Town Council Level of Debt 1776

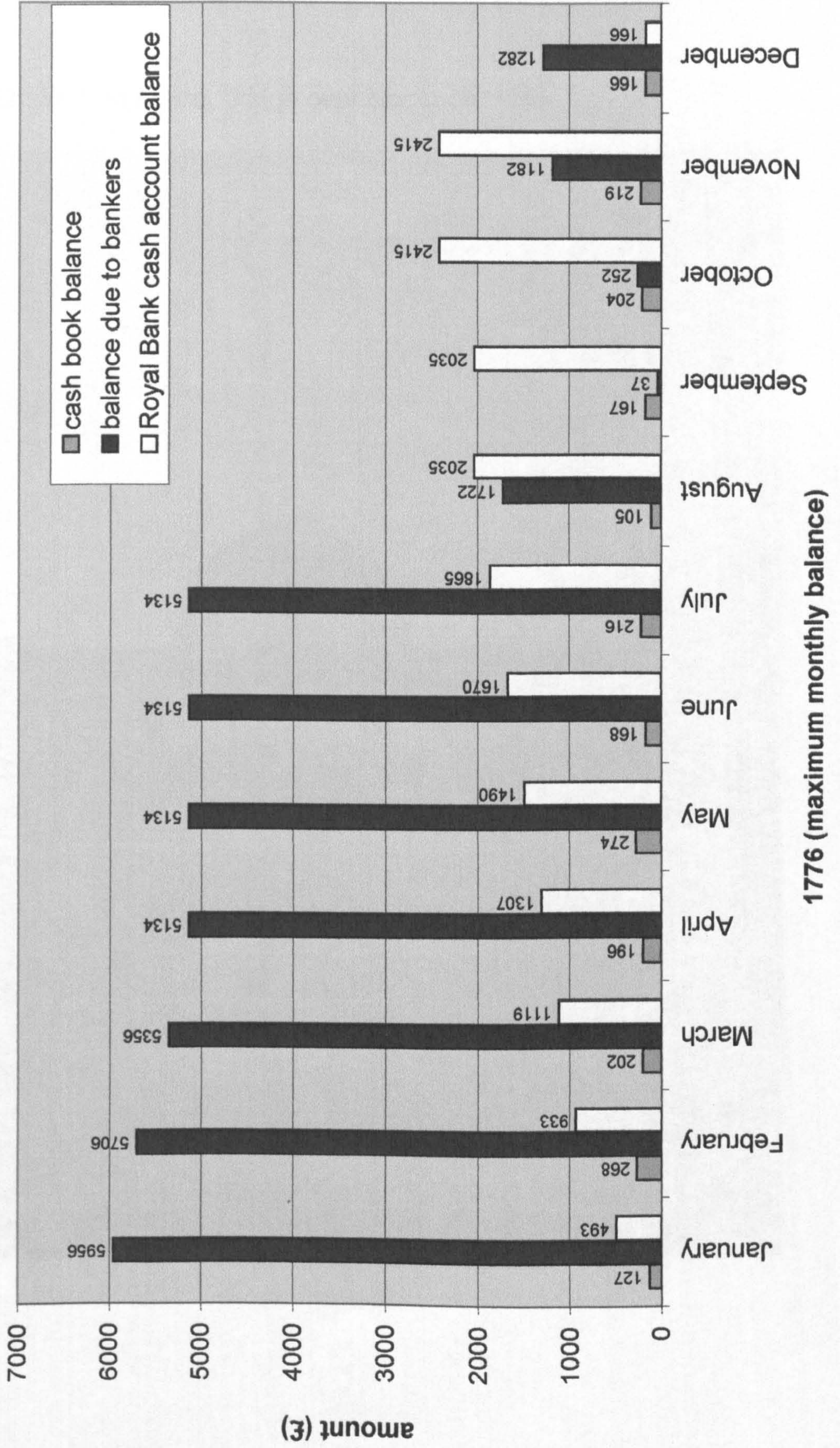


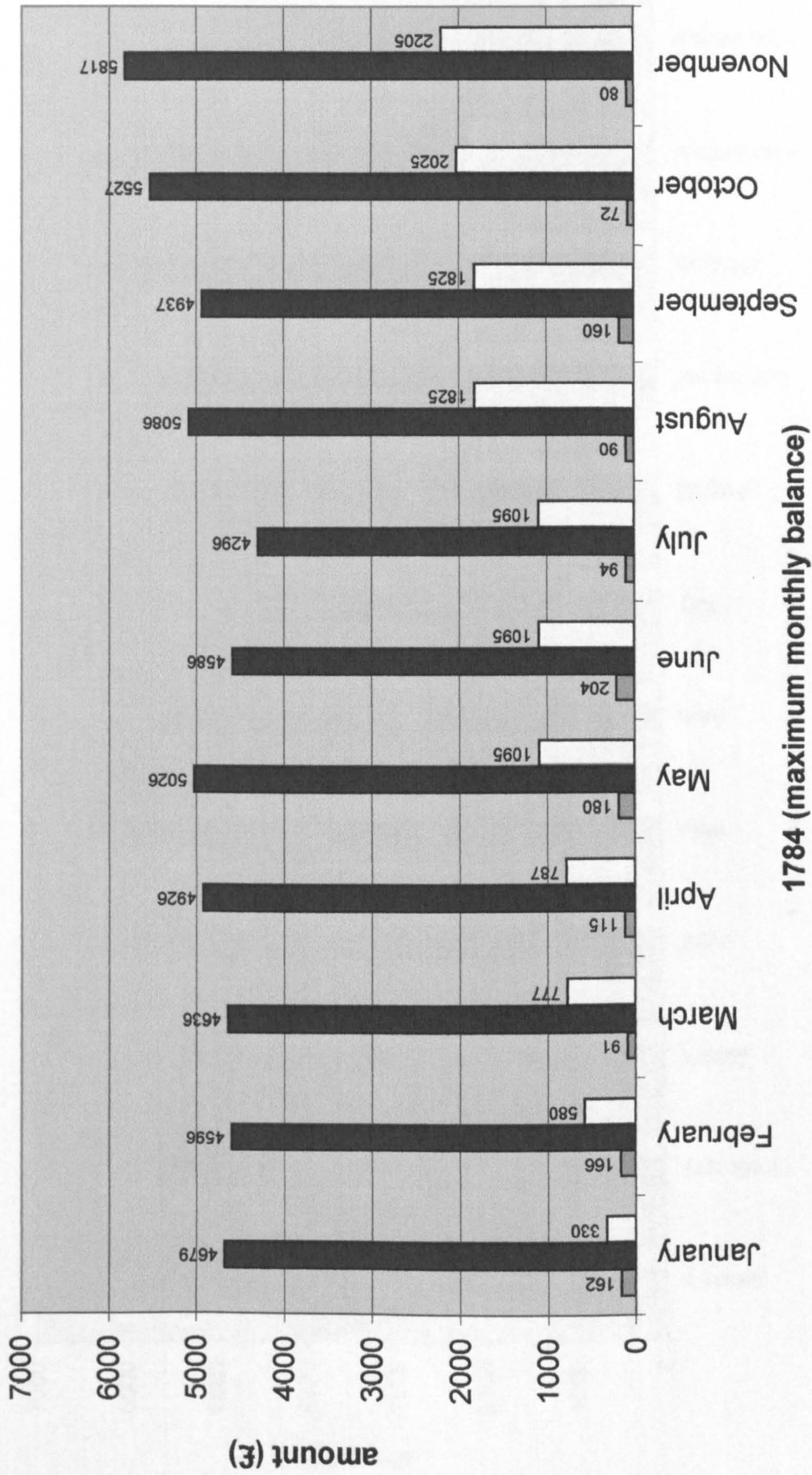
Plate 56: William Mylne, bridge over Nor Loch, 1765





Plate 57: Edinburgh Town Council Level of Debt 1784

■ cash book balance  
 ■ balance due to bankers  
 □ Royal Bank cash account balance



**Plate 58: Edinburgh Town Council Level of Debt 1785**

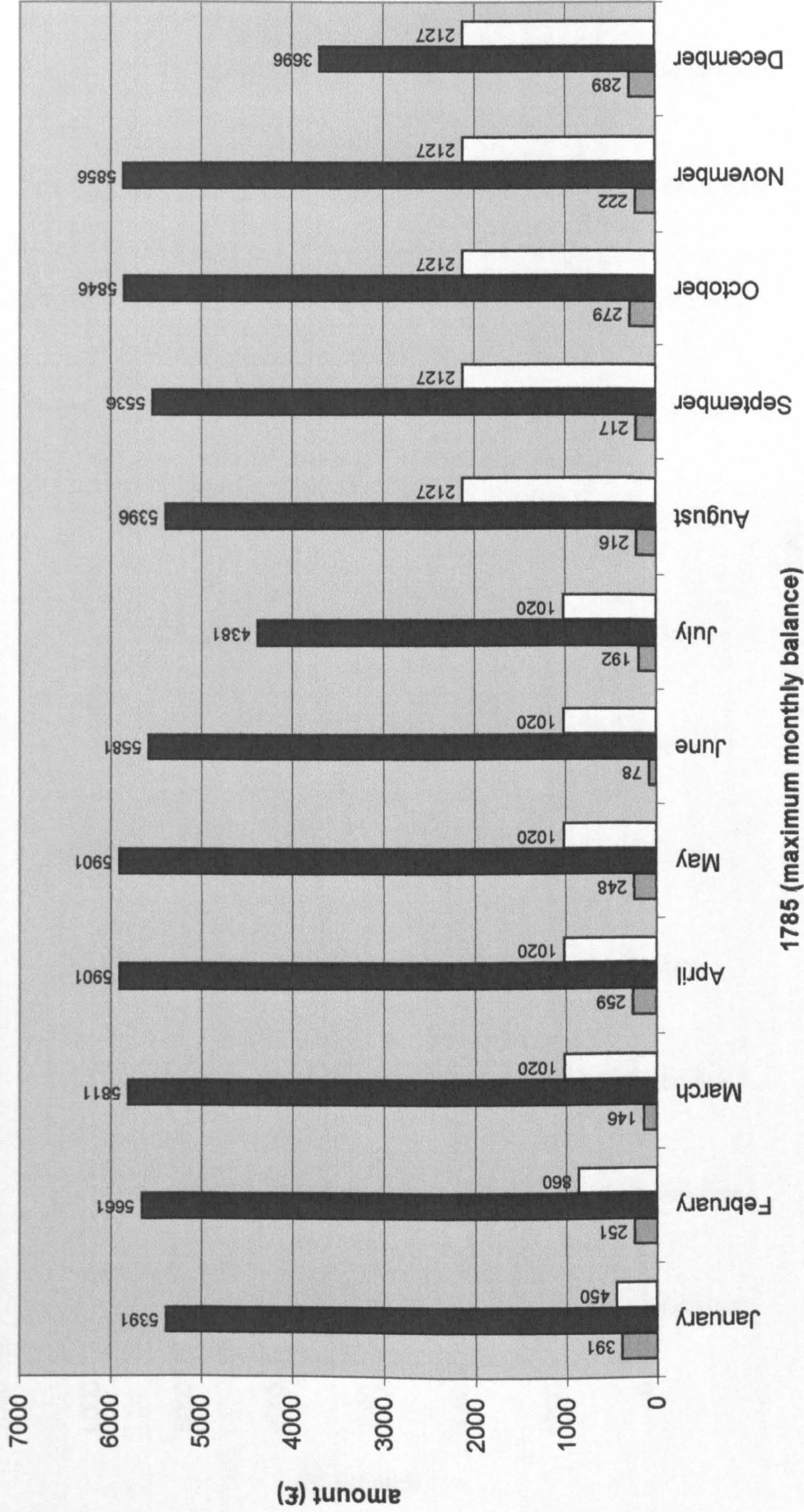
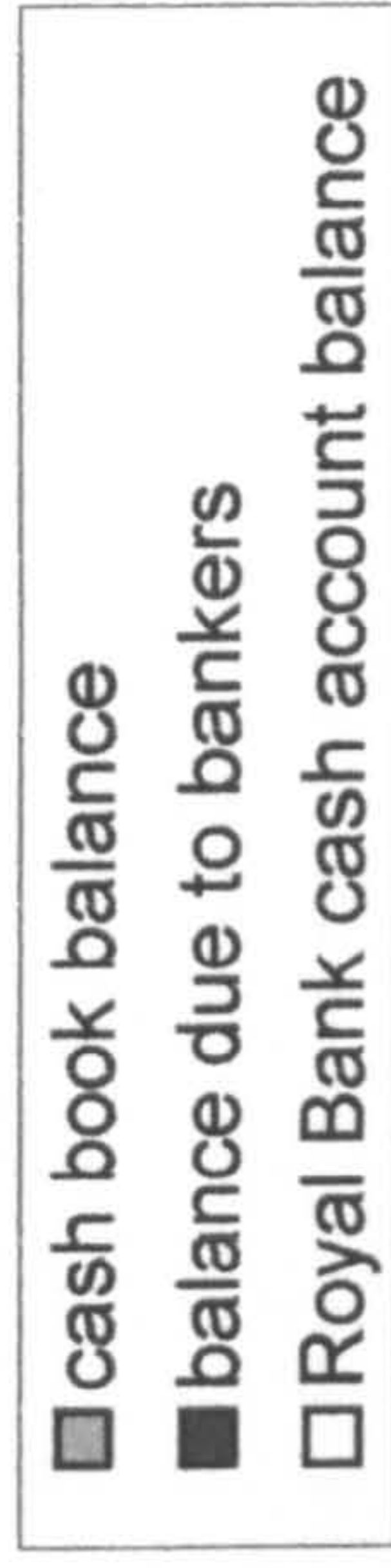
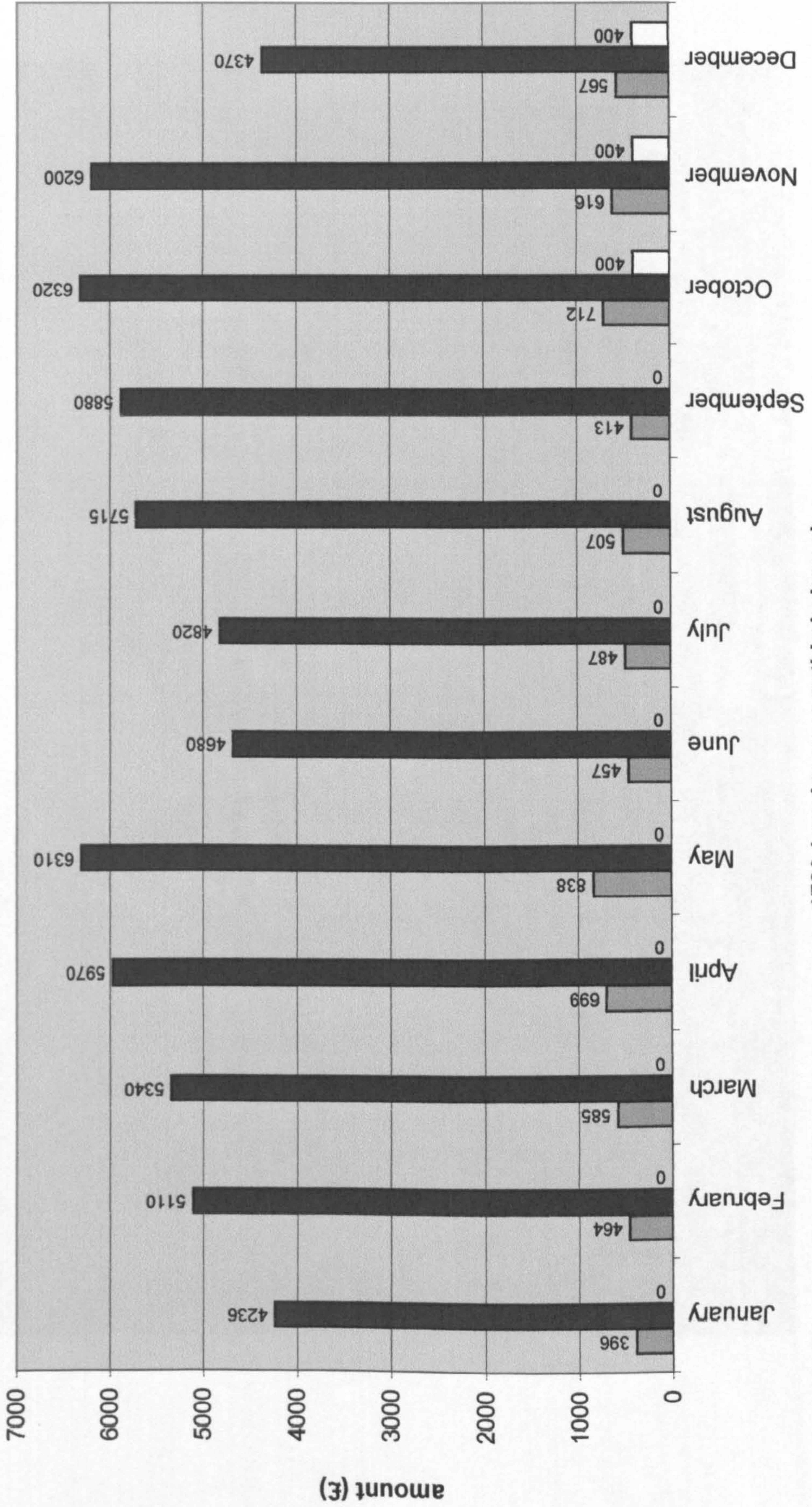


Plate 59: Edinburgh Town Council Level of Debt 1786



1786 (maximum monthly balance)

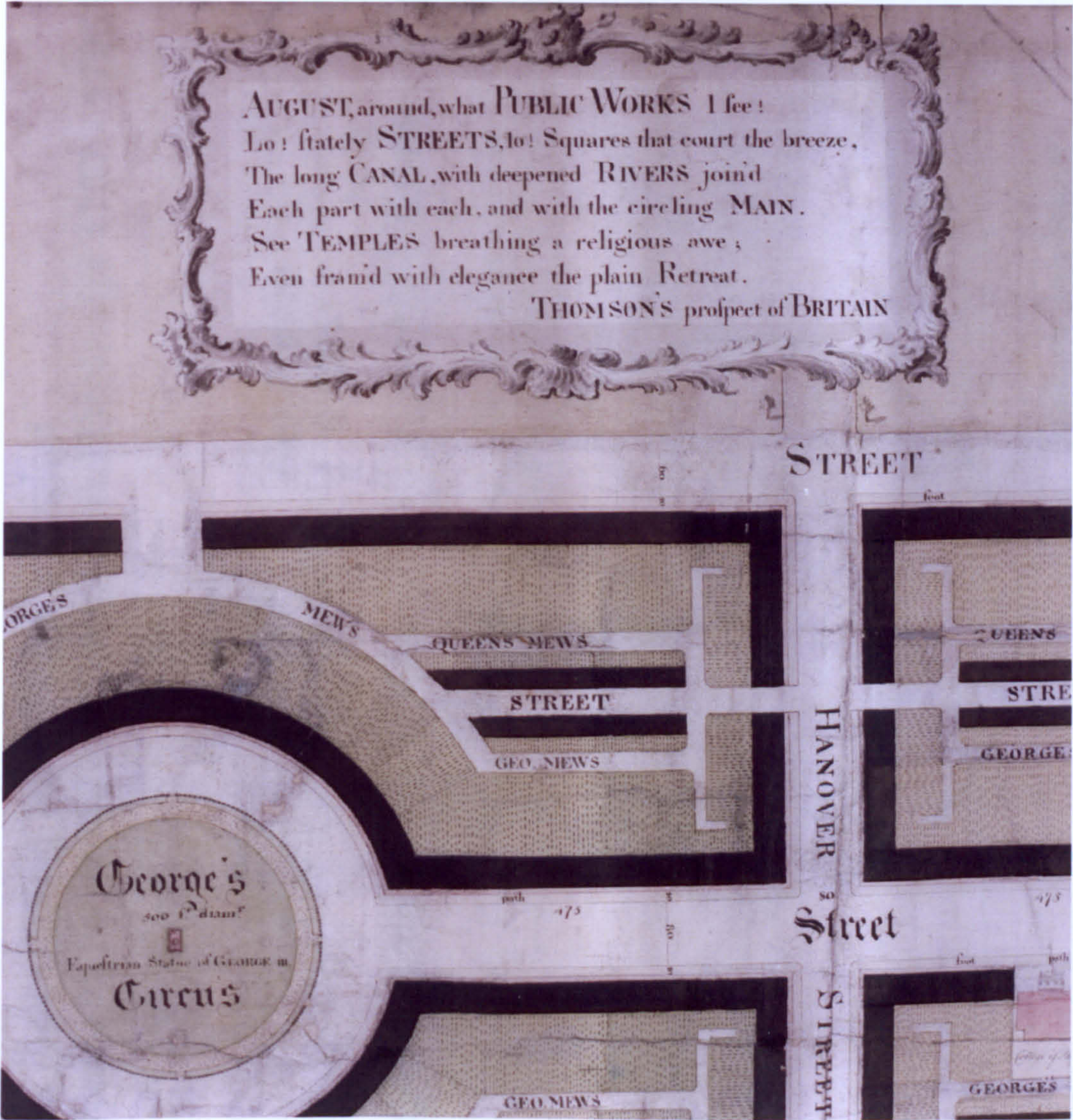
Plate 60: Robert Adam, Charlotte Square, 1791



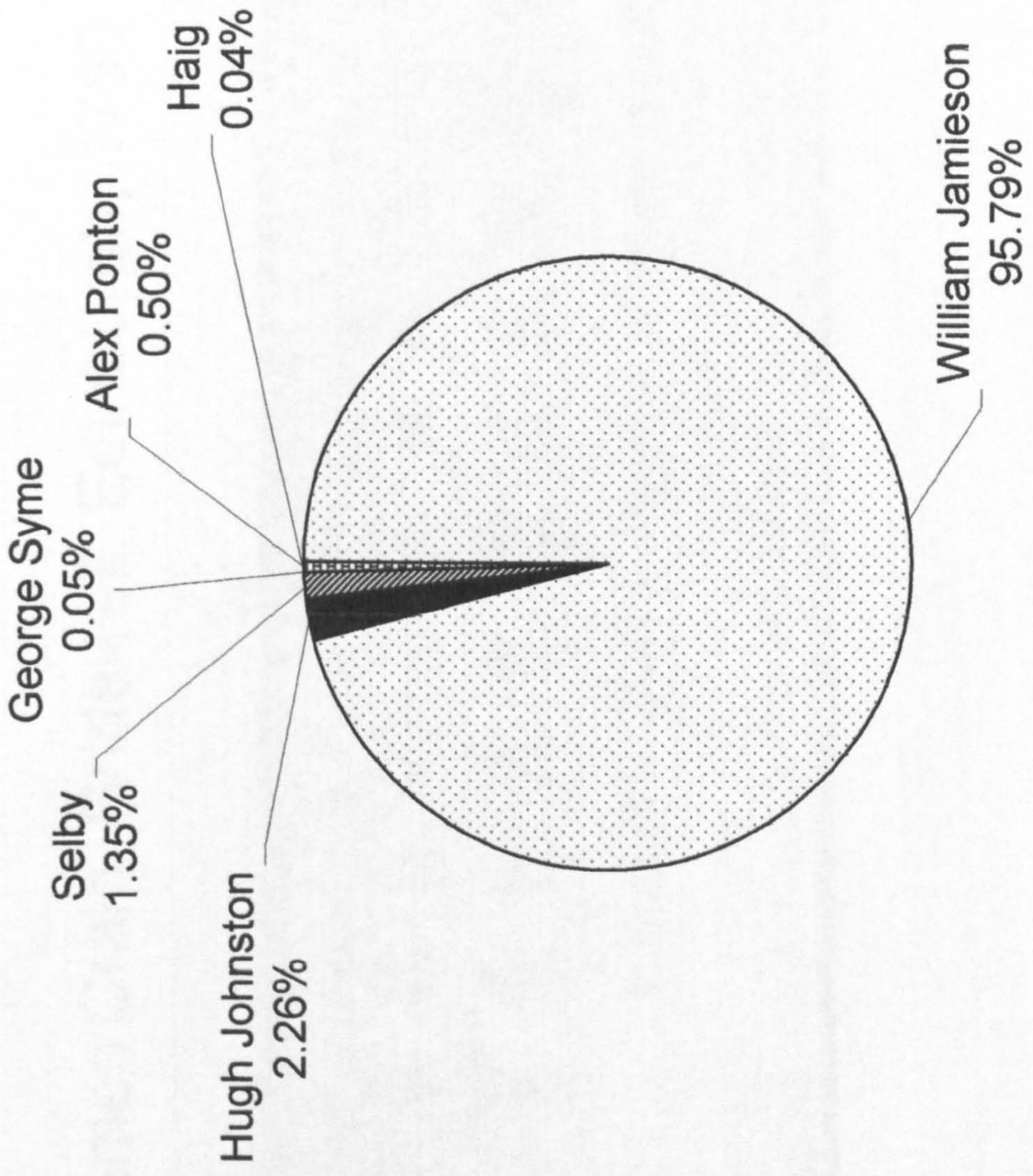
Plate 61: John Adam, Edinburgh Exchange, 1753.



Plate 62: James Craig, New Town plan ( Thomson quote), 1781



**Plate 63: Accounts for building New Town's Drains  
Council Payments received for Sewers and Drainage 1767 - 1795**



- William Jamieson
- Hugh Johnston
- ▨ Selby
- Haig
- George Syme
- ▩ Alex Ponton

Plate 64: James Craig, Bridewell, Edinburgh, 1780

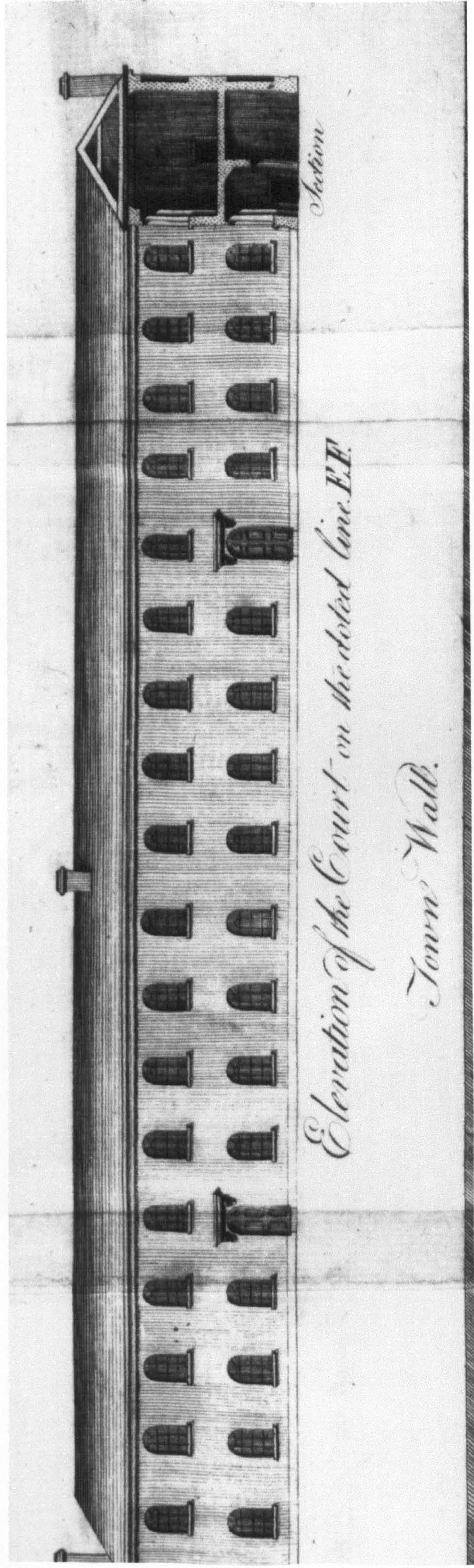




Plate 65: James Nesbit, 27 Queen Street, 1789

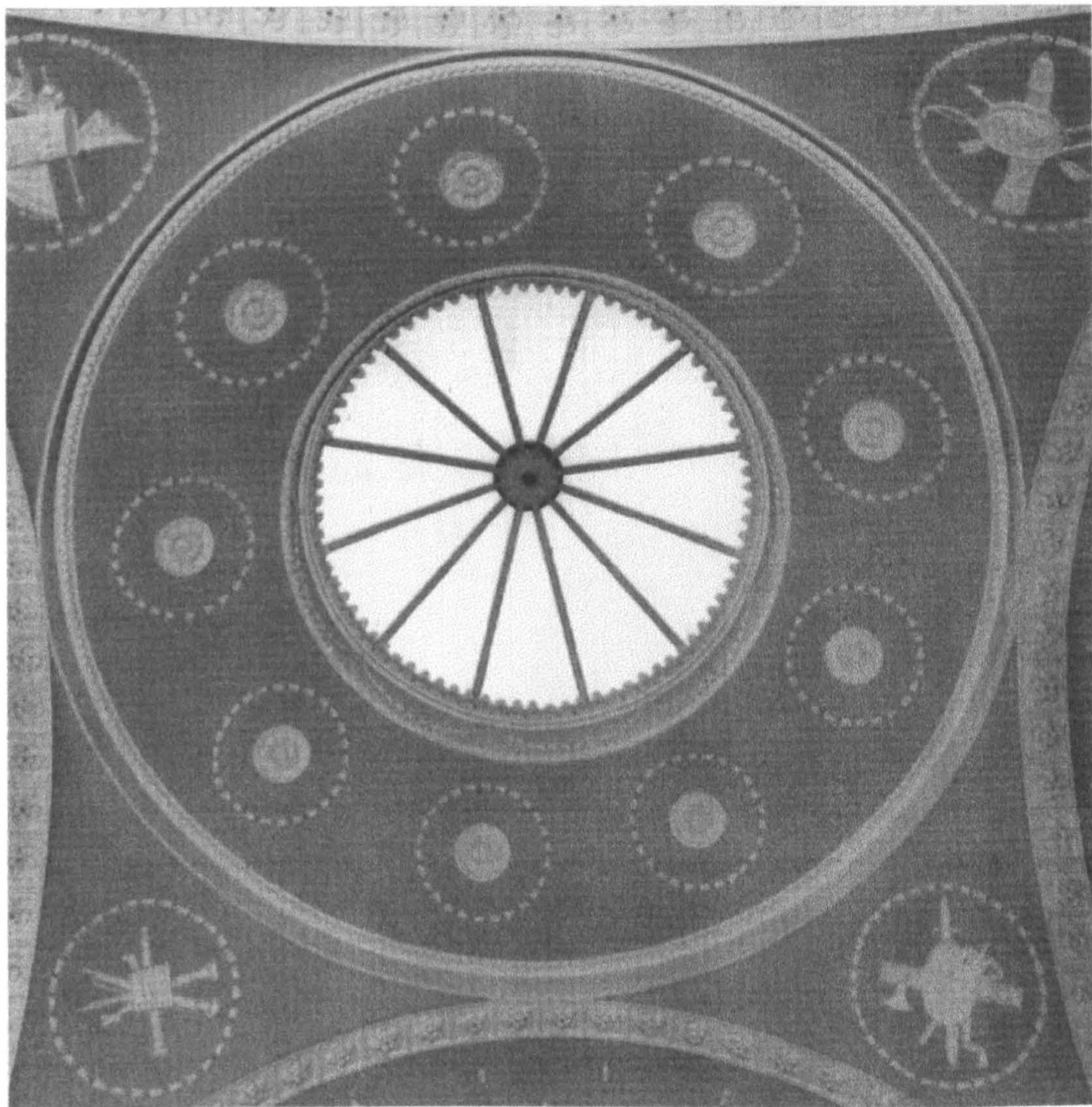


Plate 66: Robert Mylne, Register House, Edinburgh, 1767.

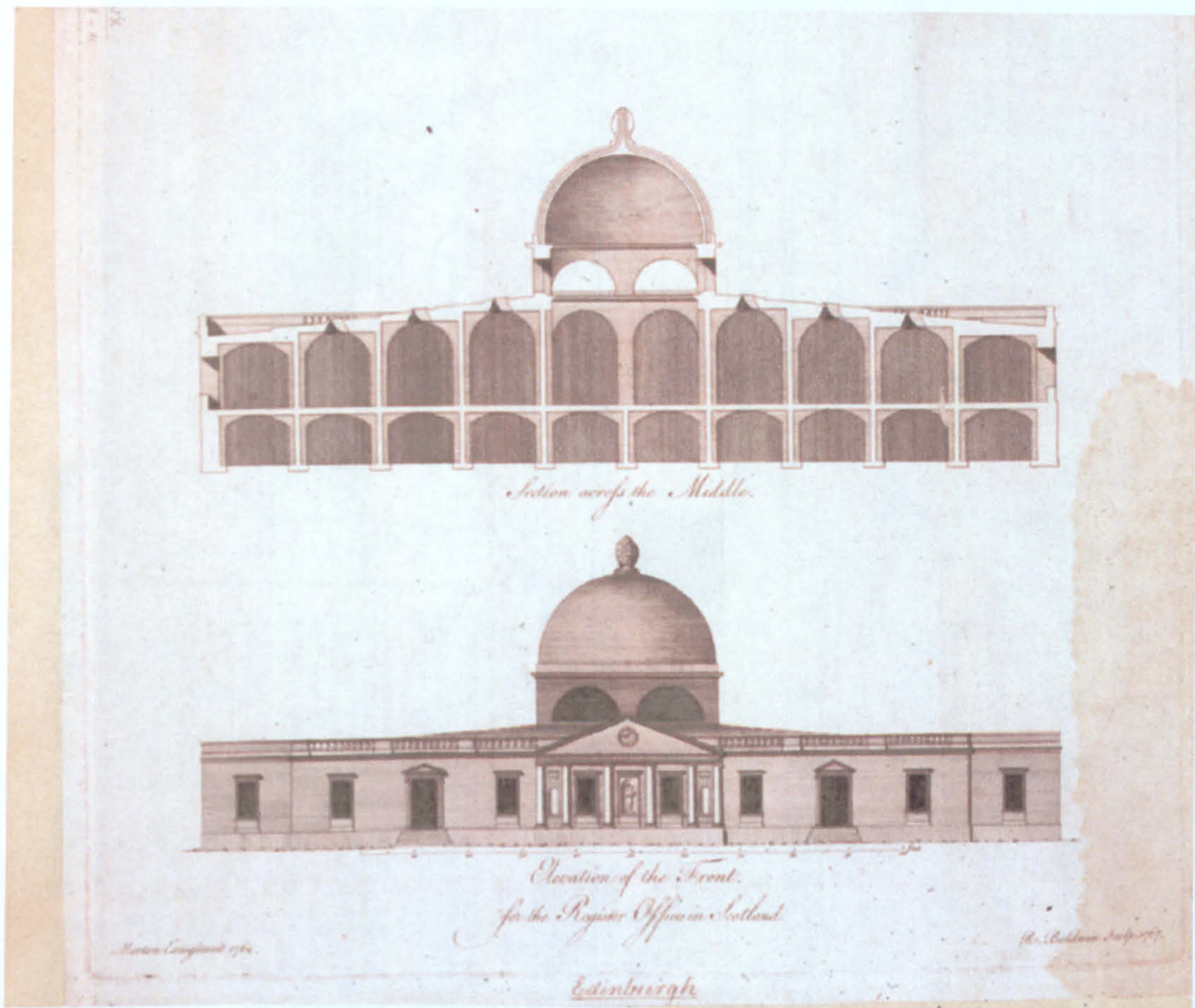


Plate 67: James Craig, Bridge over Nor Loch, 1763.

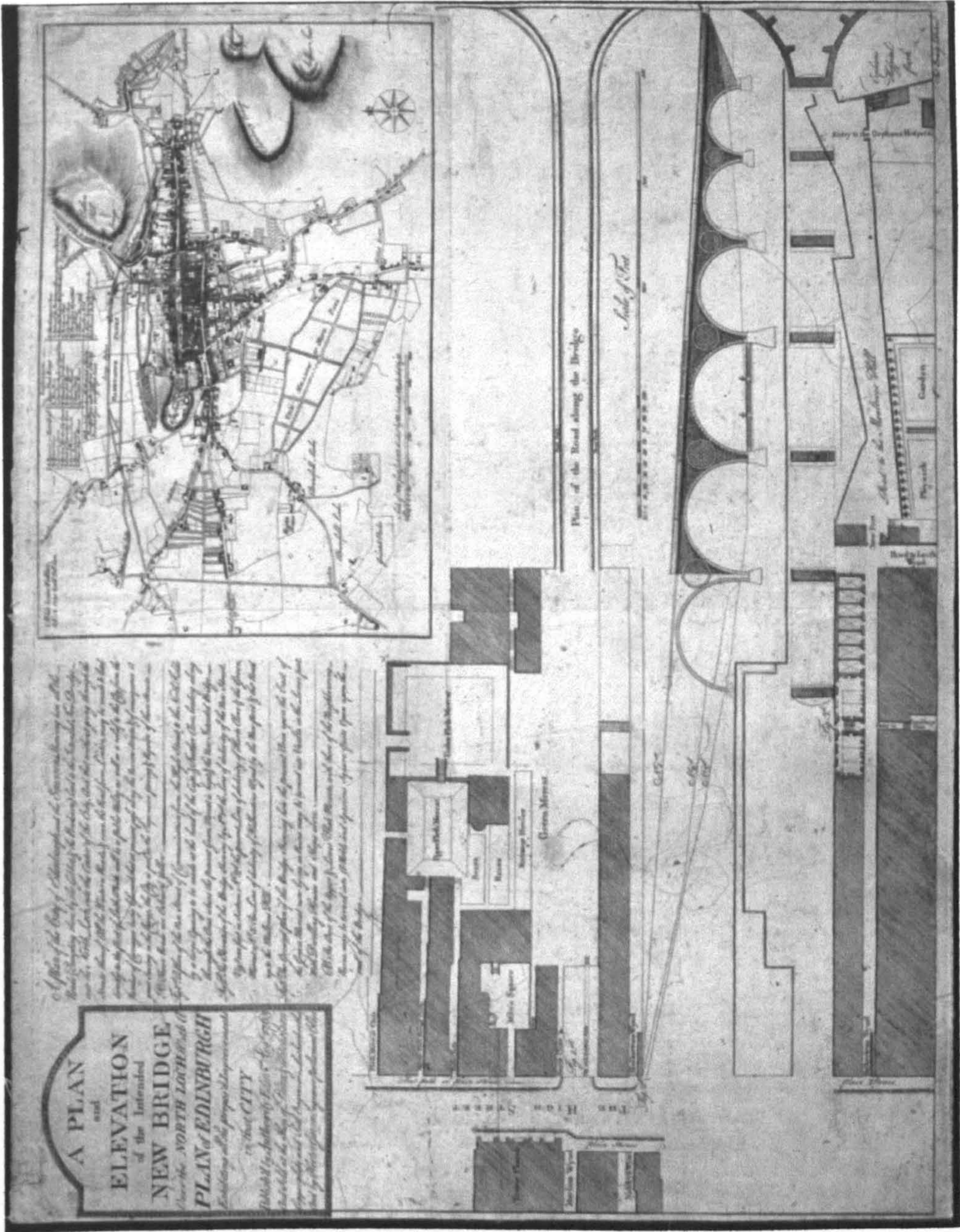


Plate 68: James Brown, George Square, 1766

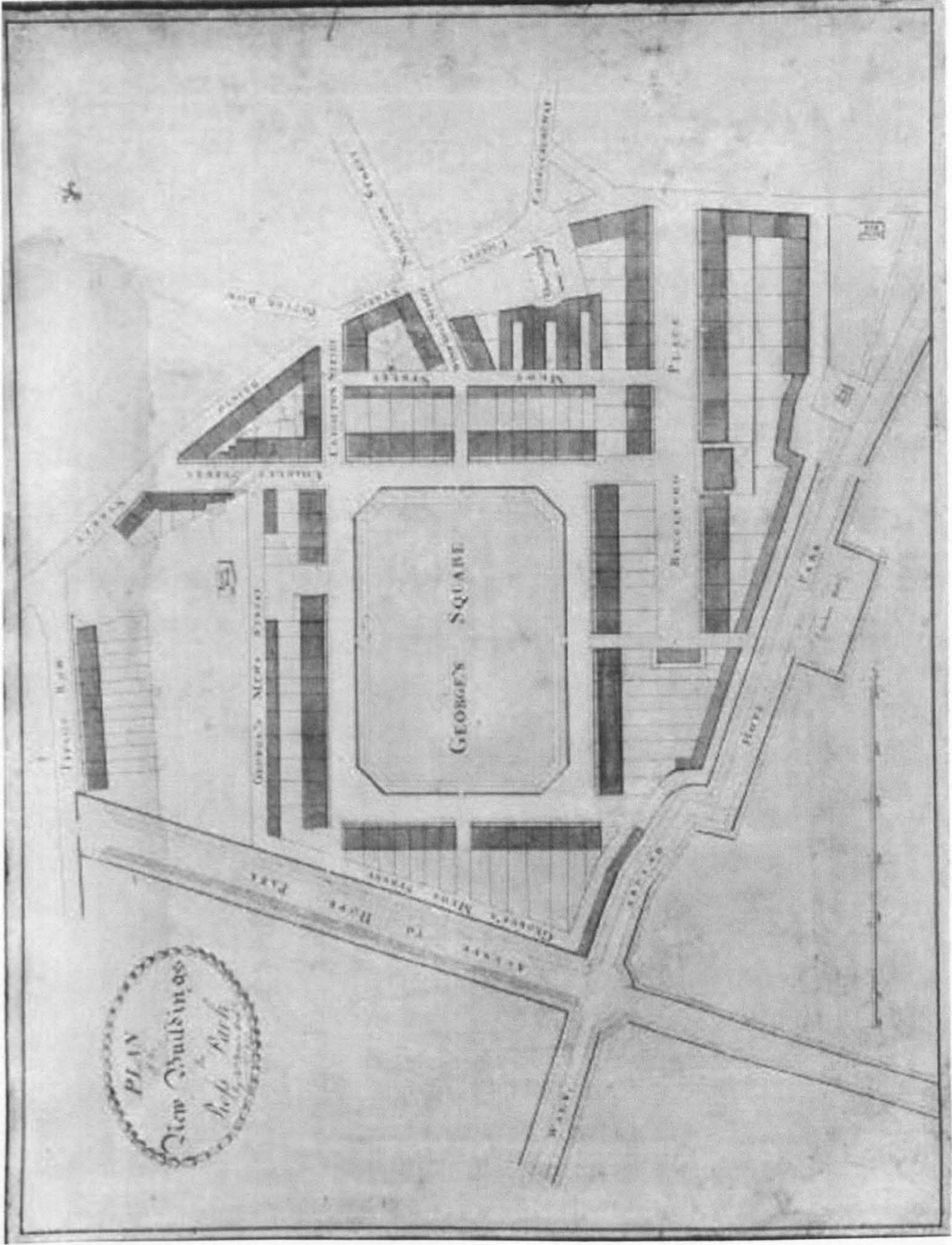


Plate 69: Michael Naesmith, Lady Nicolson's Park, 1762

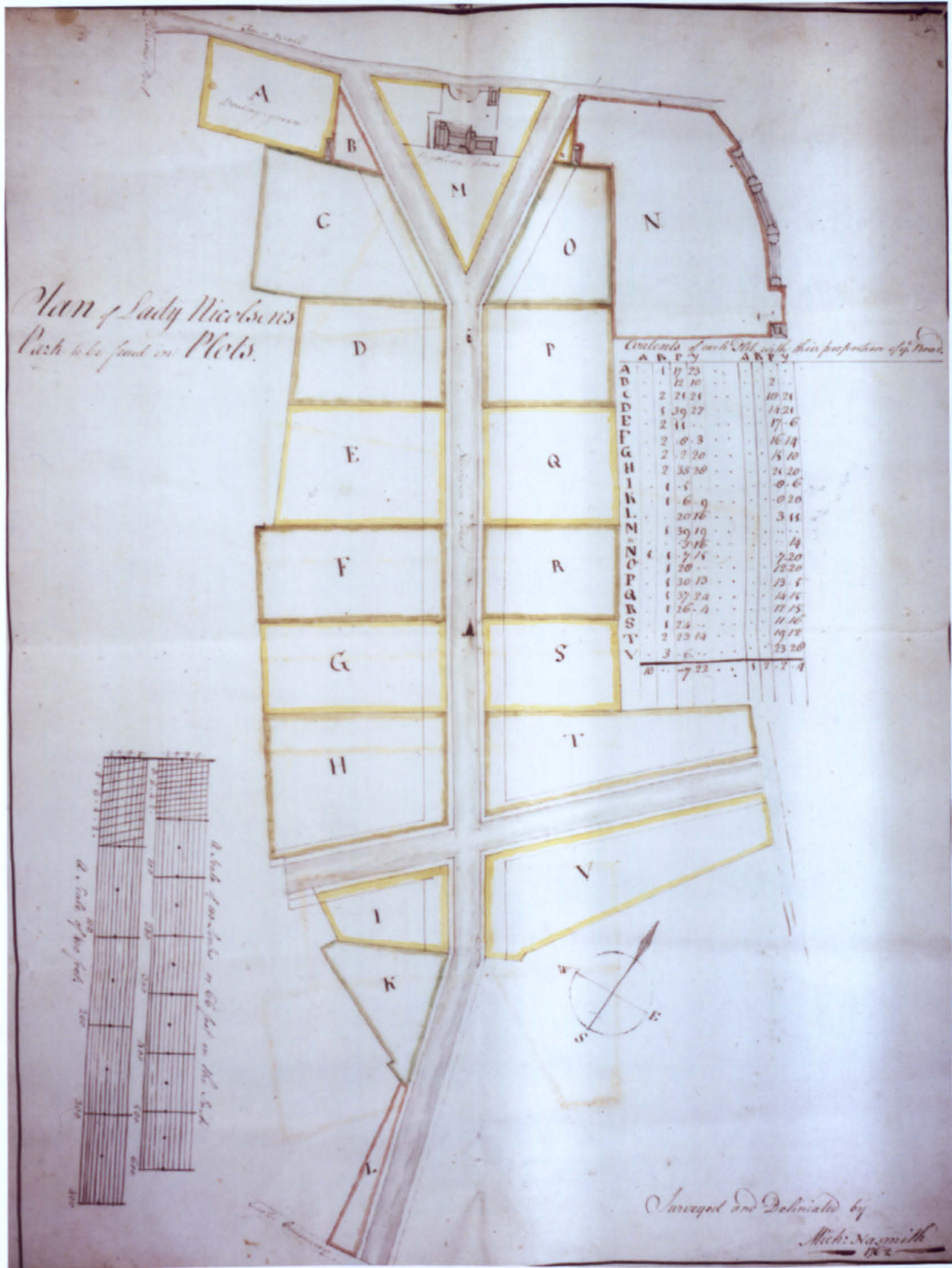
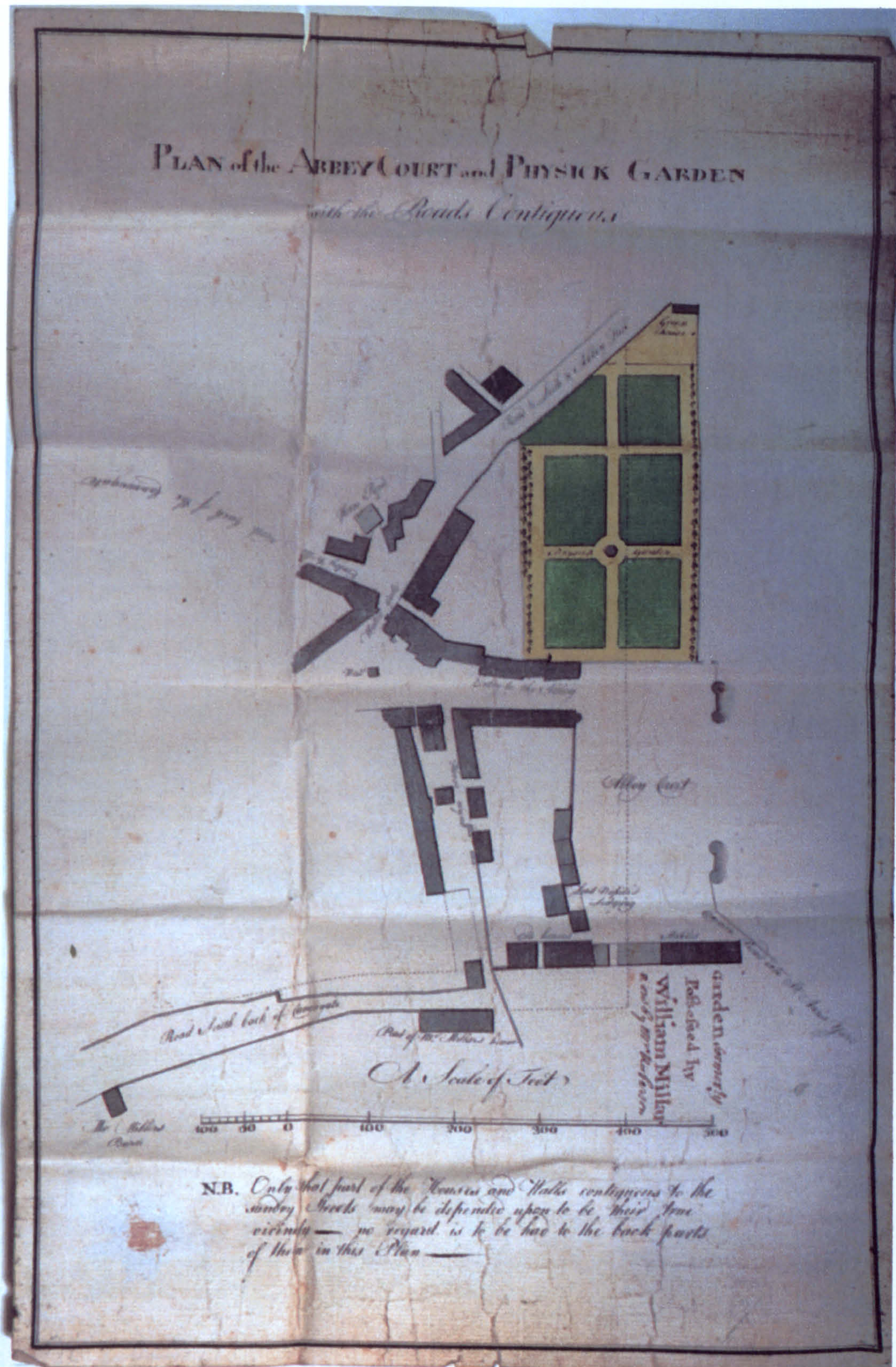
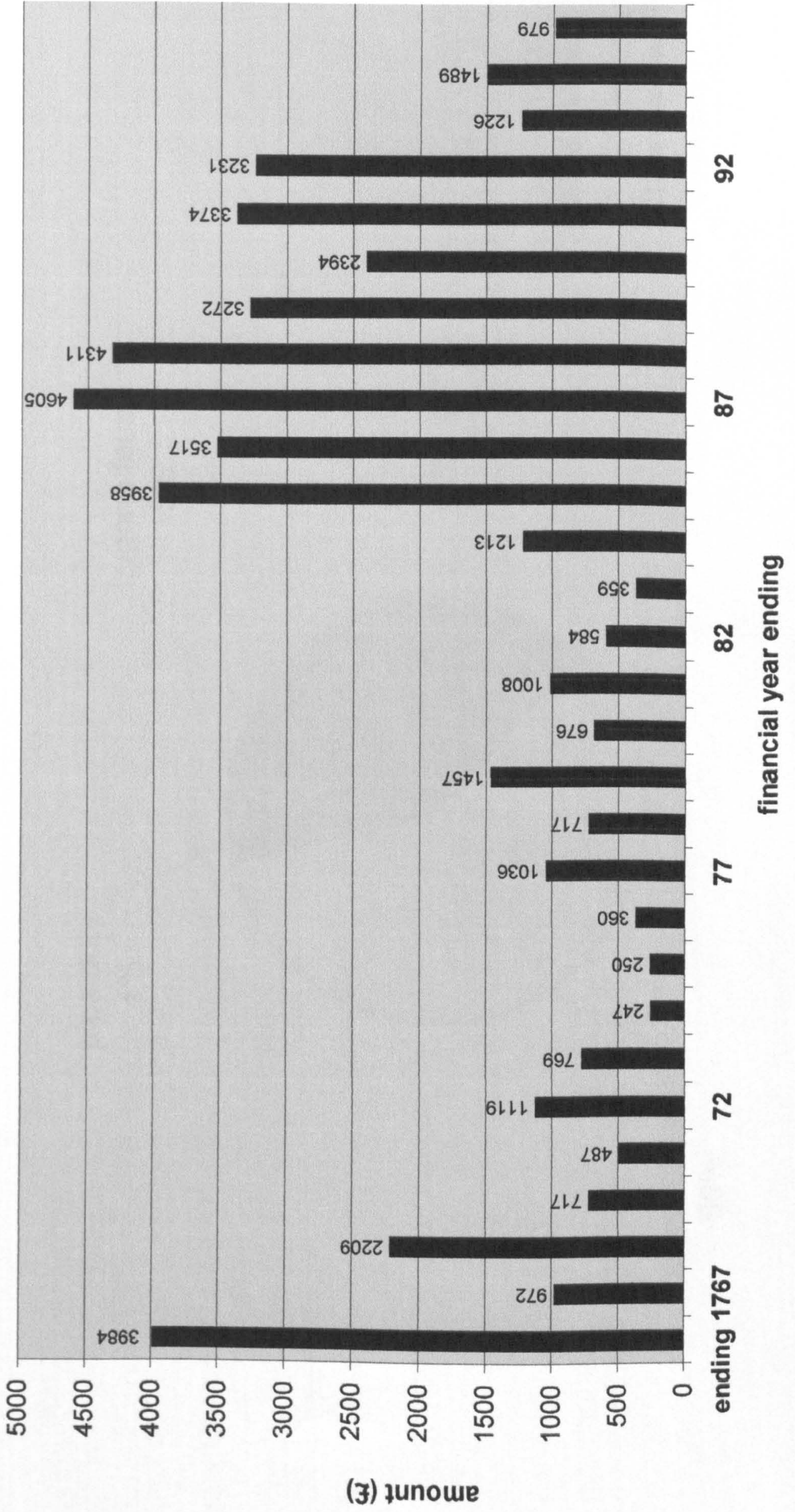


Plate 70: James Craig, South Canongate Road, 1765.



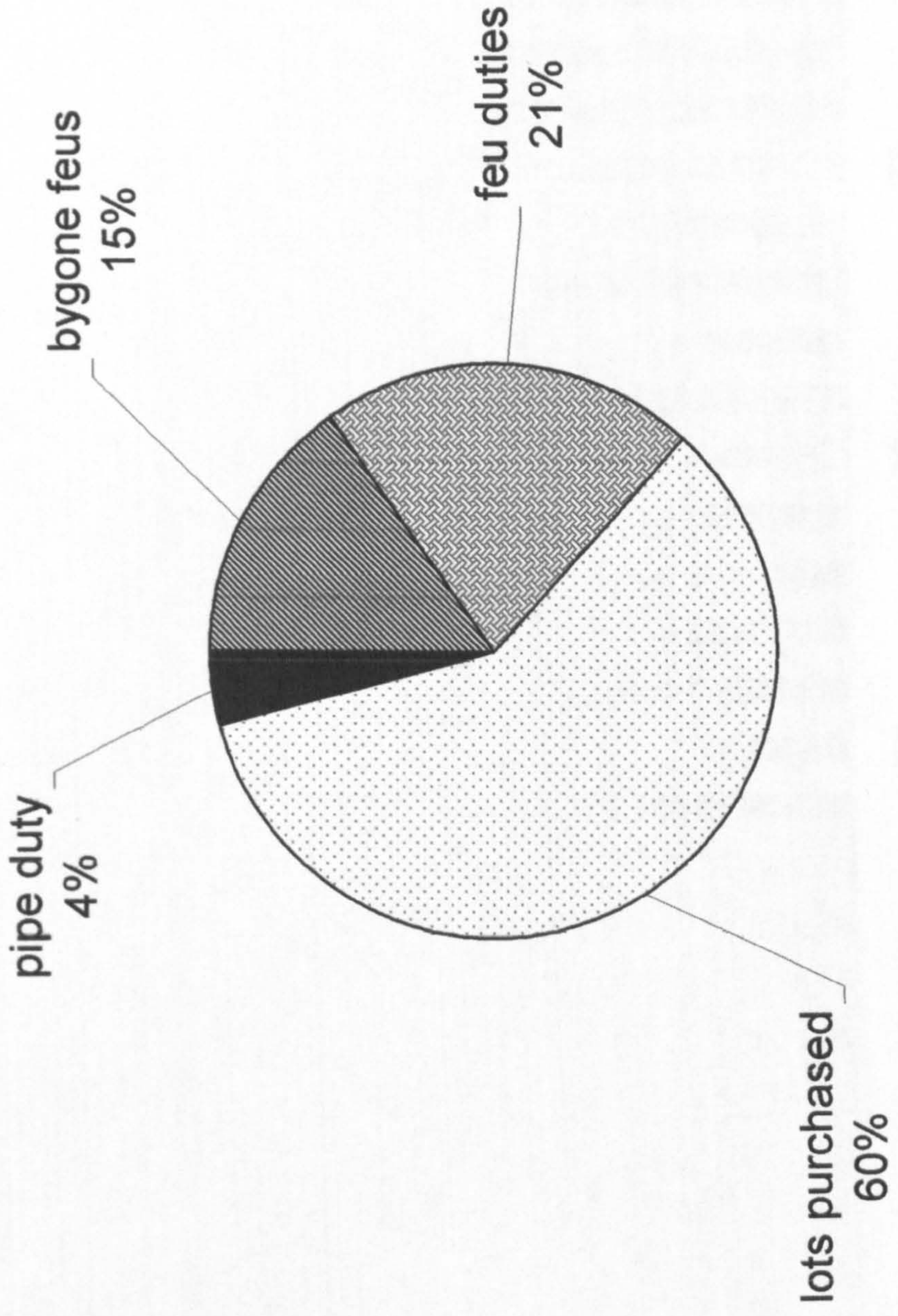


**Plate 72: Edinburgh Town Council  
Income from lots purchased in New Town in extended royalty 1767 - 1795**

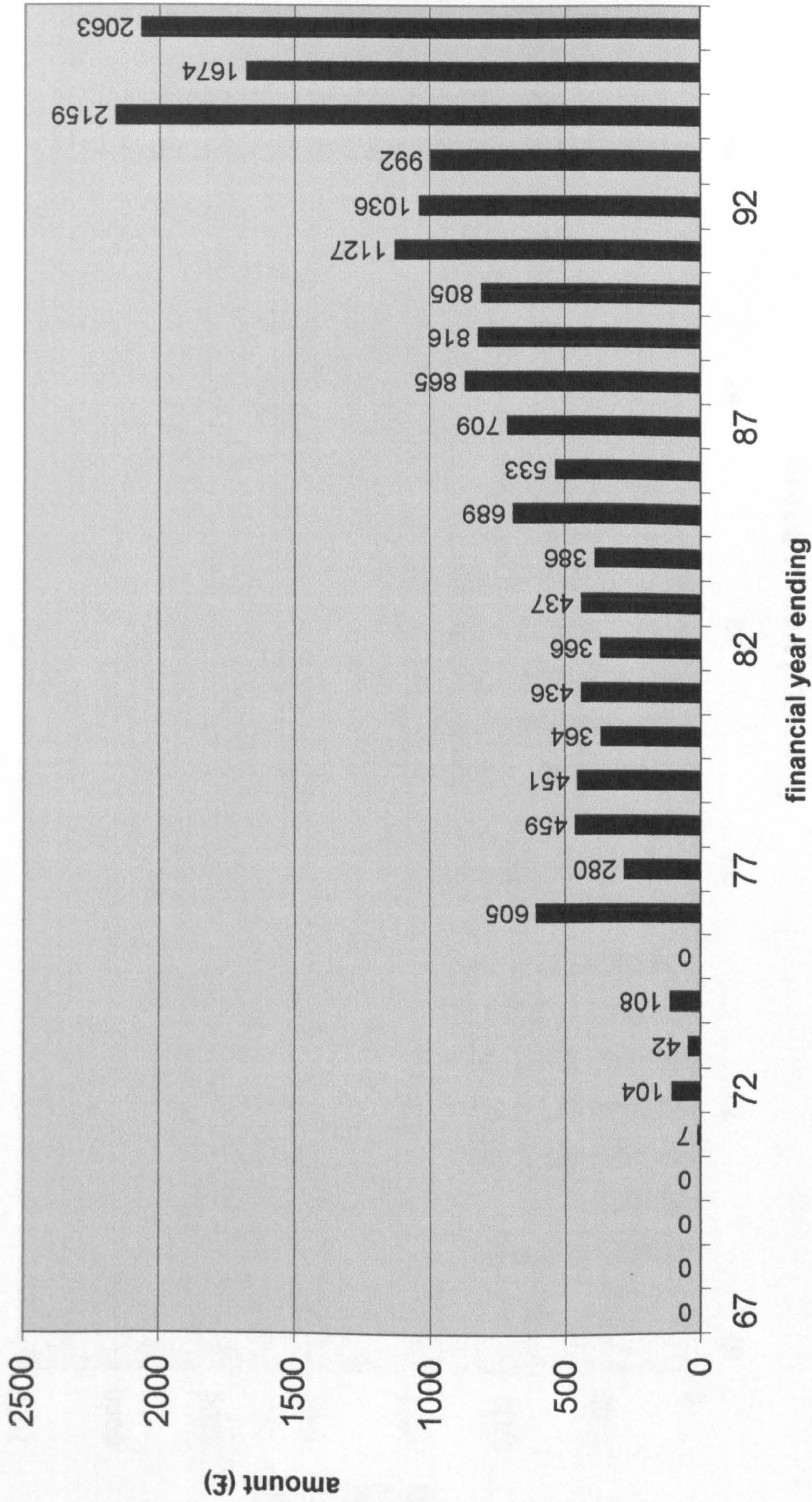




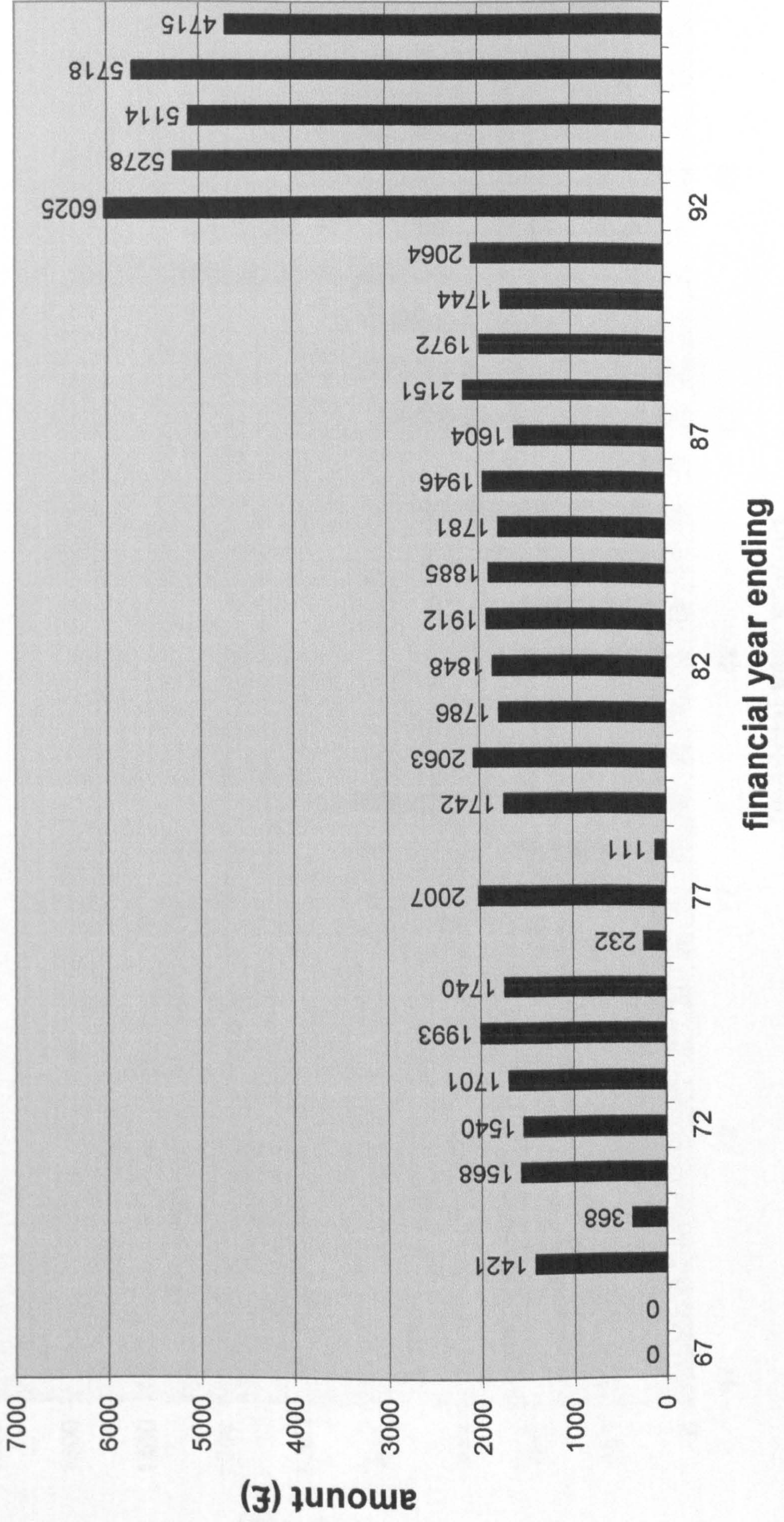
# Plate 73: Edinburgh Town Council Income Generation in New Town (Extended Royalty)



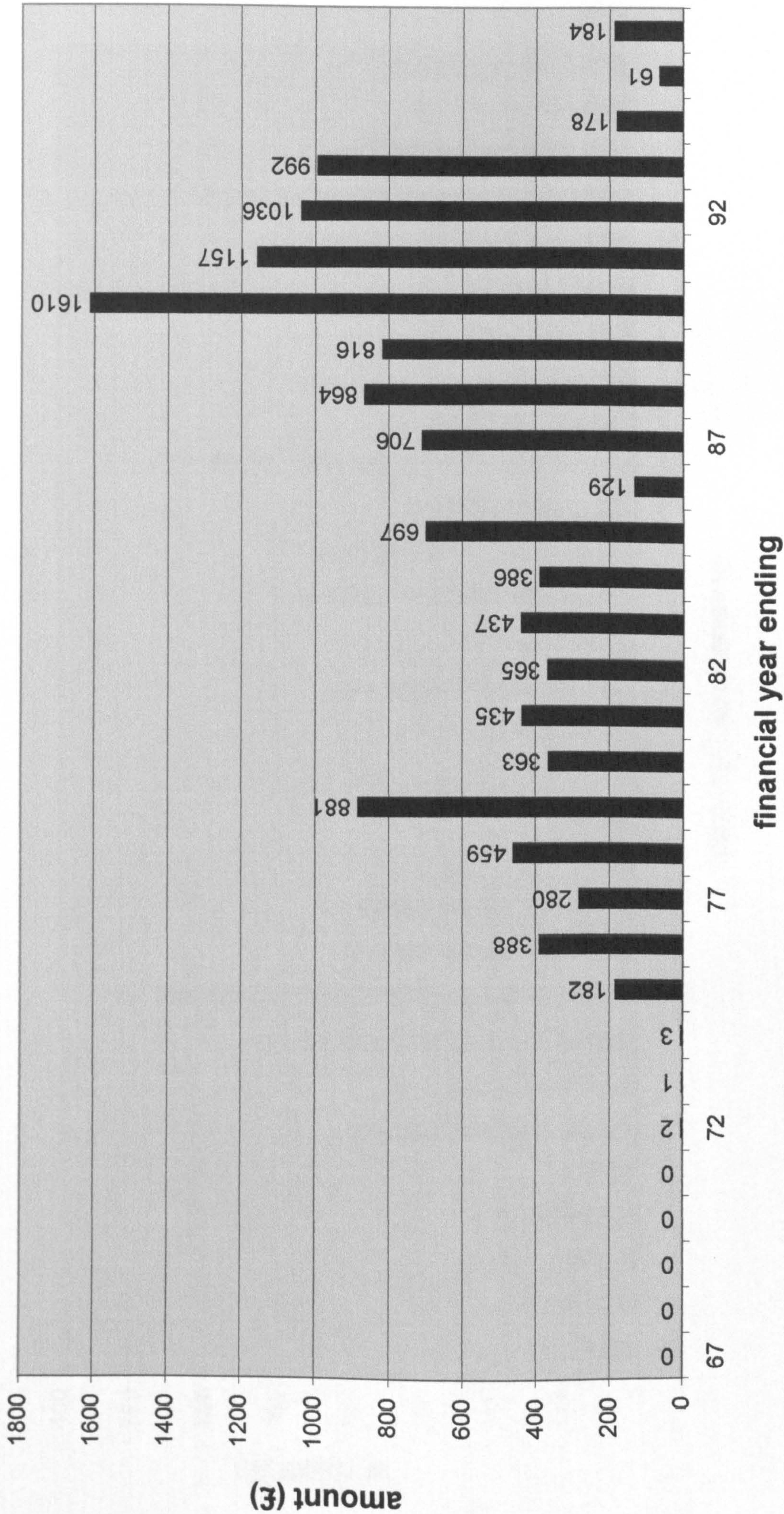
**Plate 74: Edinburgh Town Council  
 Feu Duties in Extended Royalty 1767 - 1795**



# Plate 75: Edinburgh Town Council Feu and Tack Duties in Ancient Royalty



**Plate 76: Edinburgh Town Council  
Vassals, Composition and Bygone Feus (Extended Royalty)**



# Plate 77: Edinburgh Town Council Vassals, Composition and Bygone Feus (Ancient Royalty)

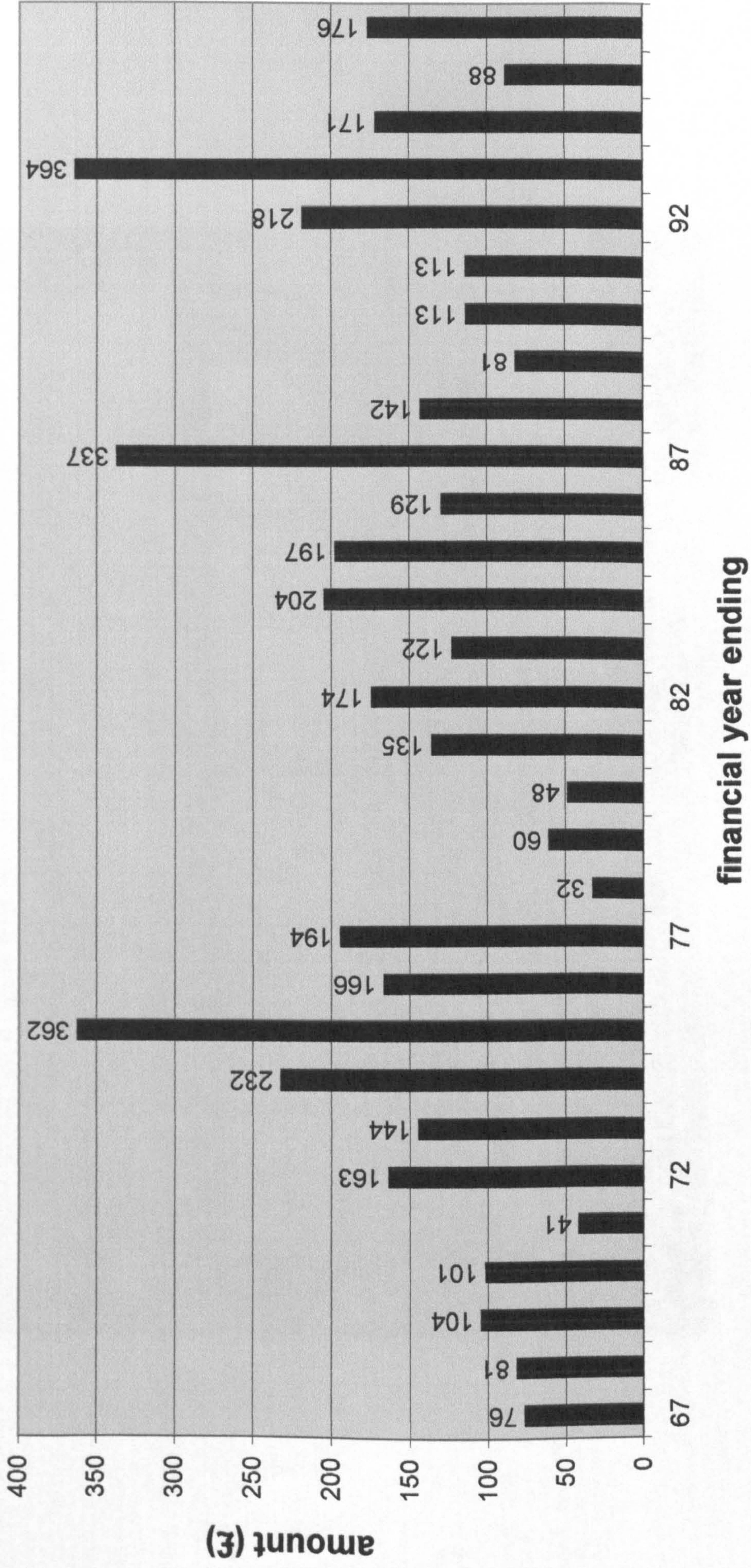


Plate 78: John Brough, cellars

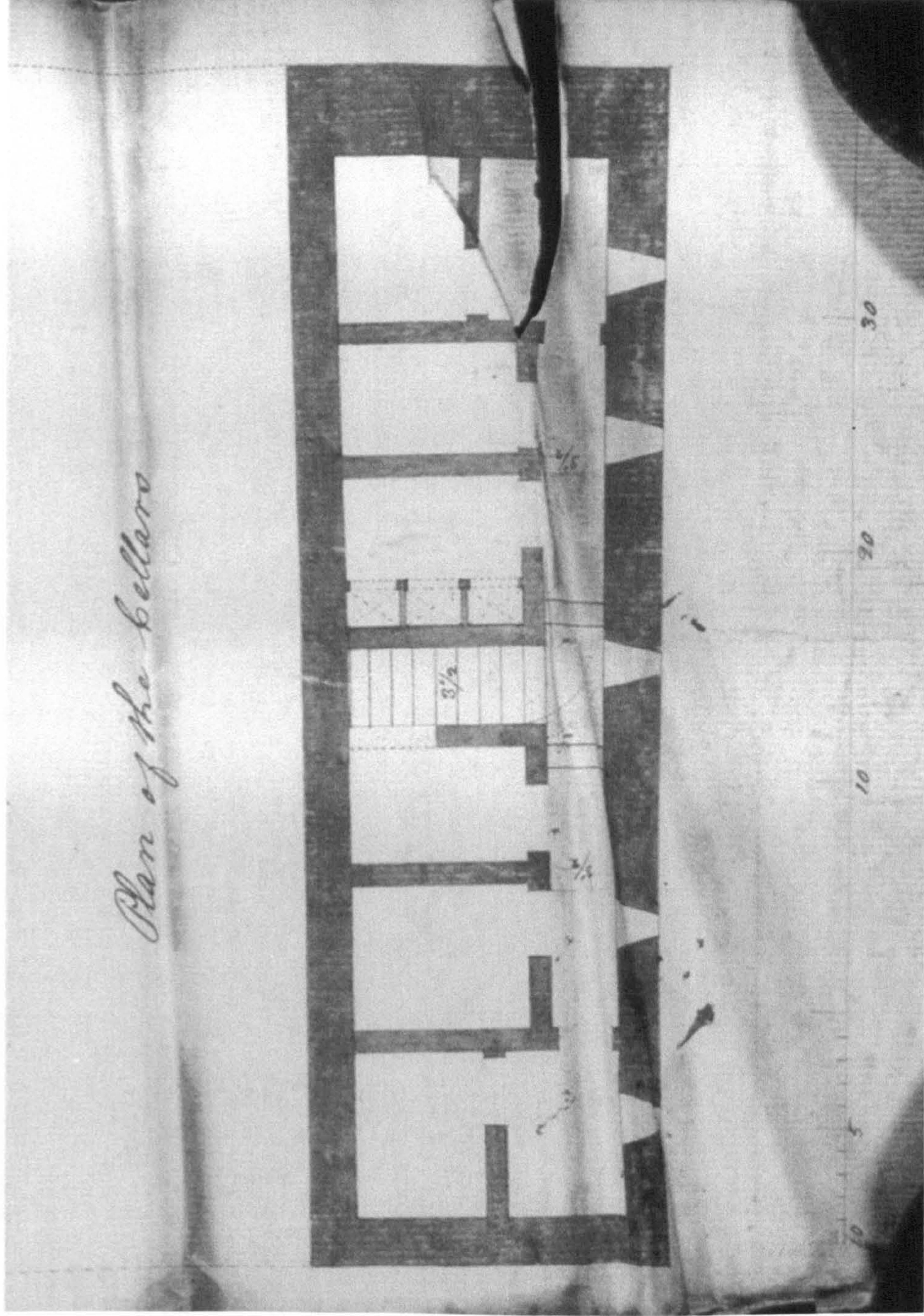


Plate 79: John Brough, sunk storey

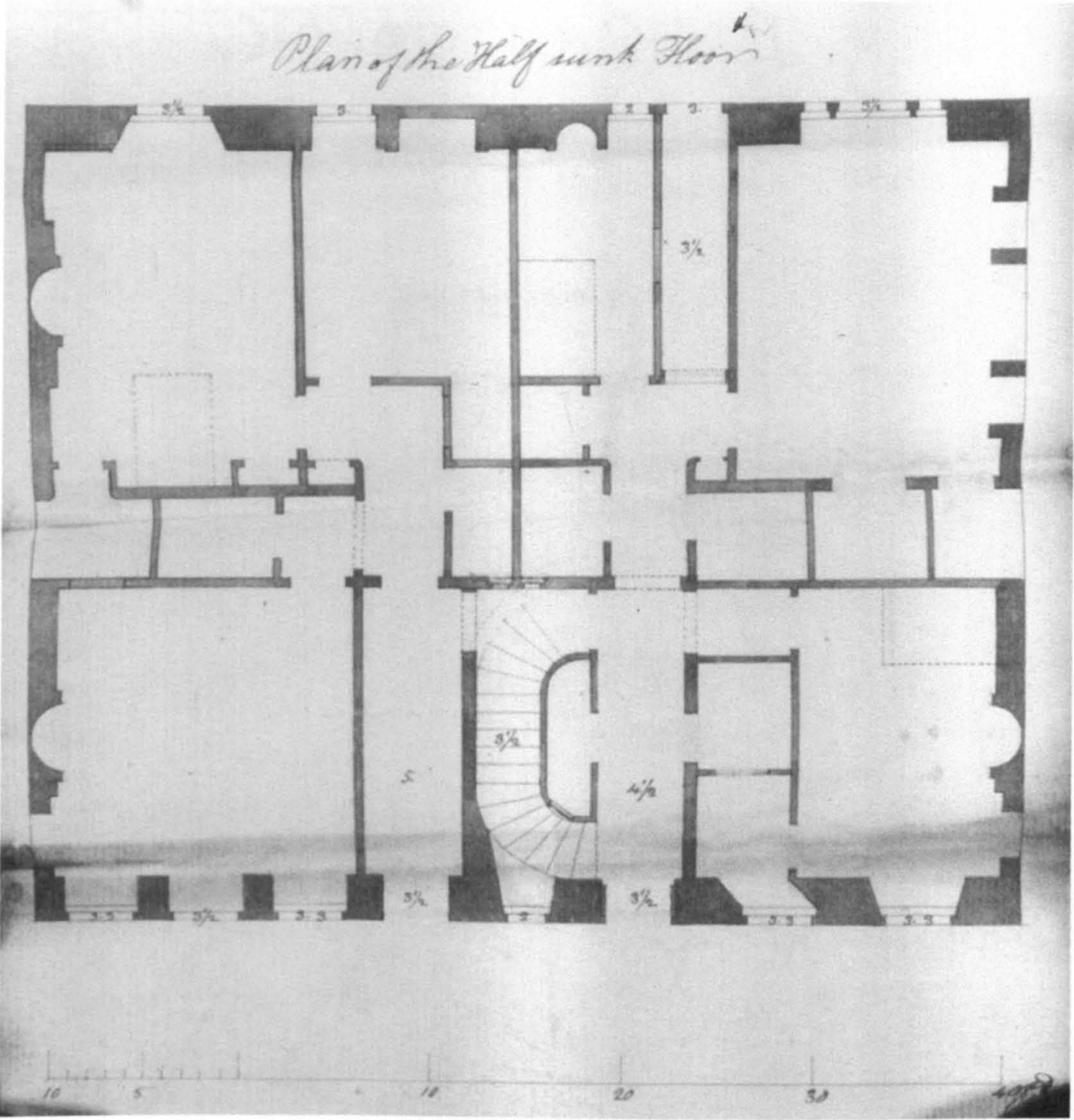


Plate 80: John Brough, first floor

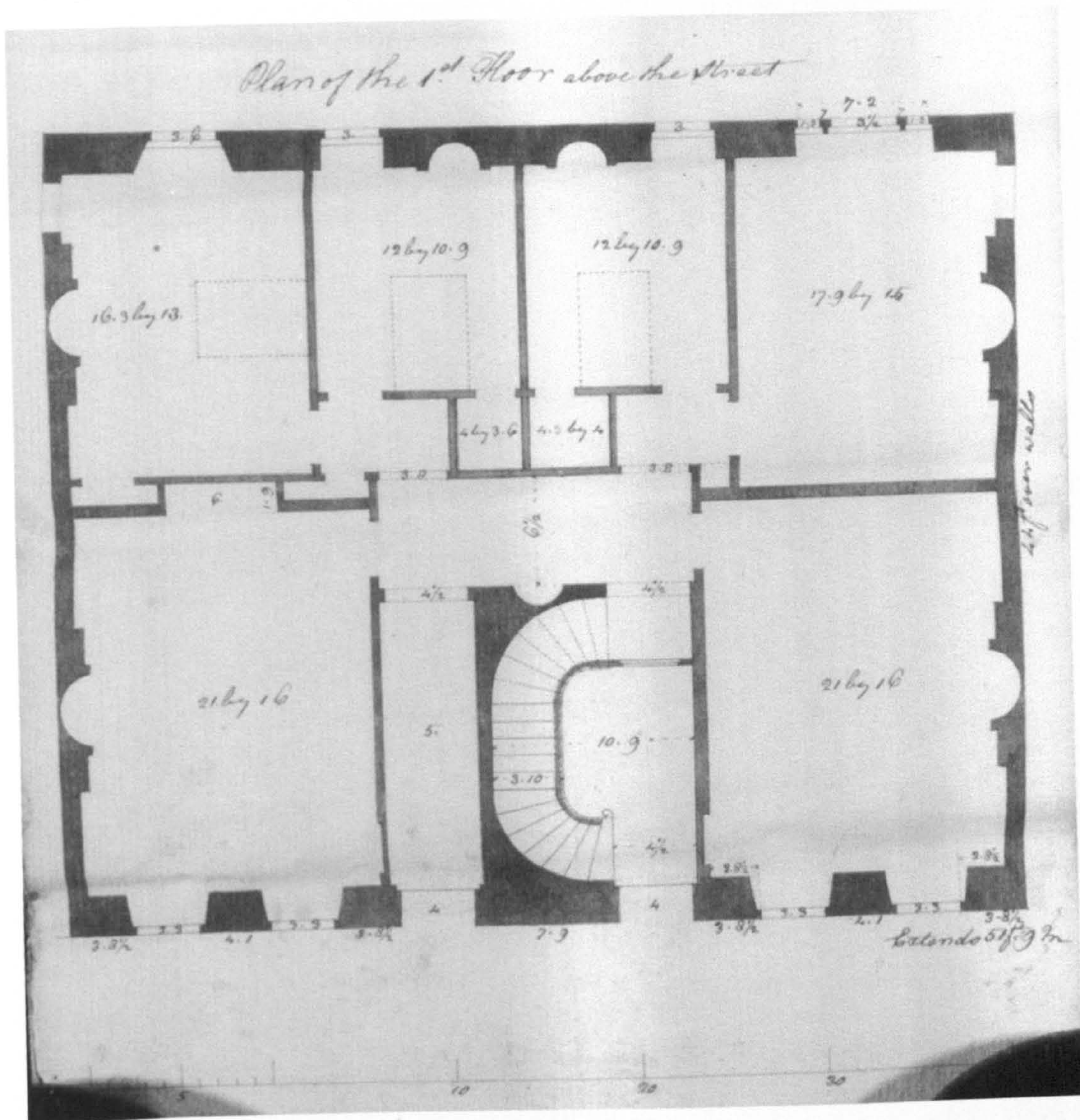




Plate 81: John Brough, second and third floors

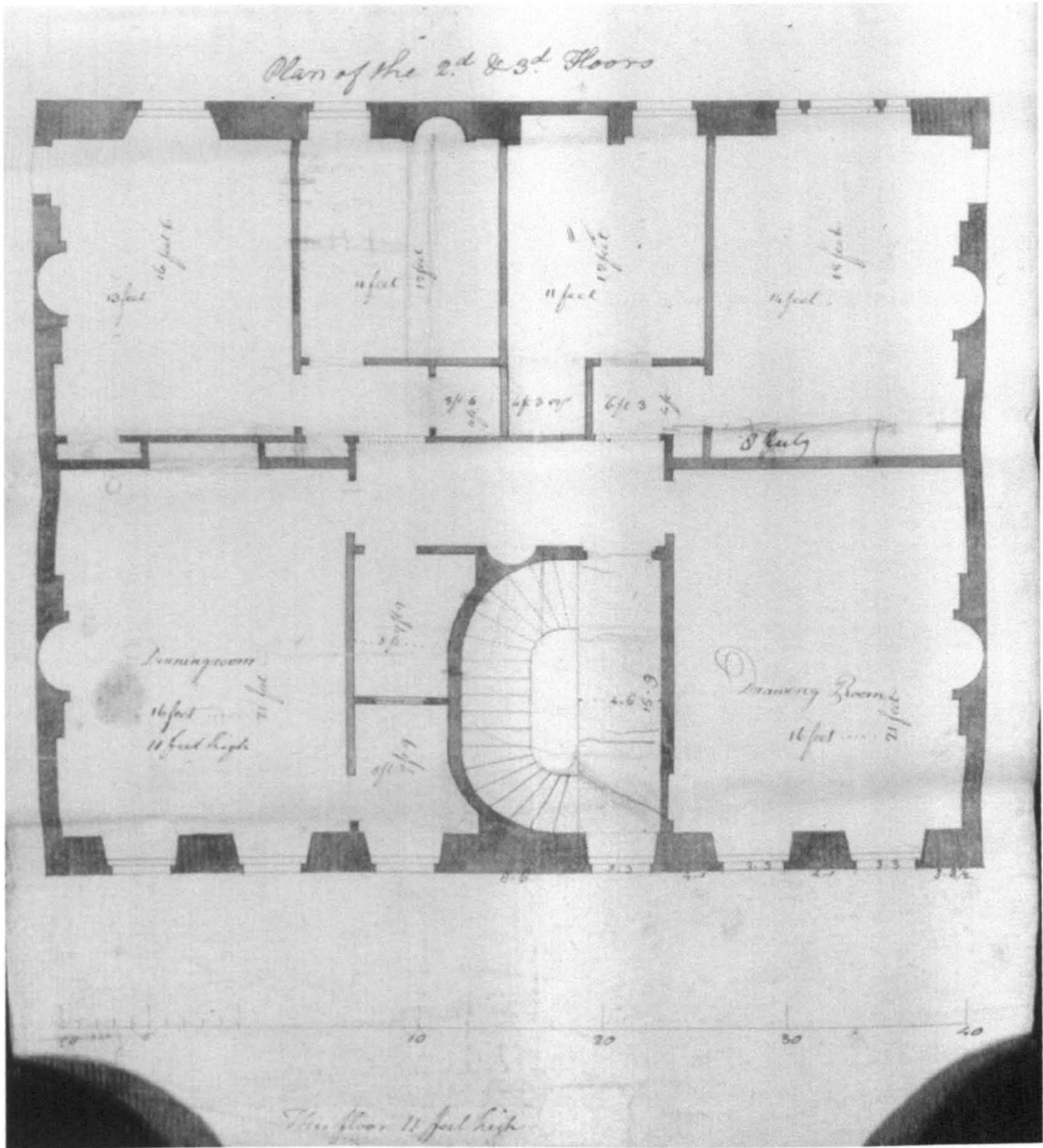


Plate 82: John Brough, elevation

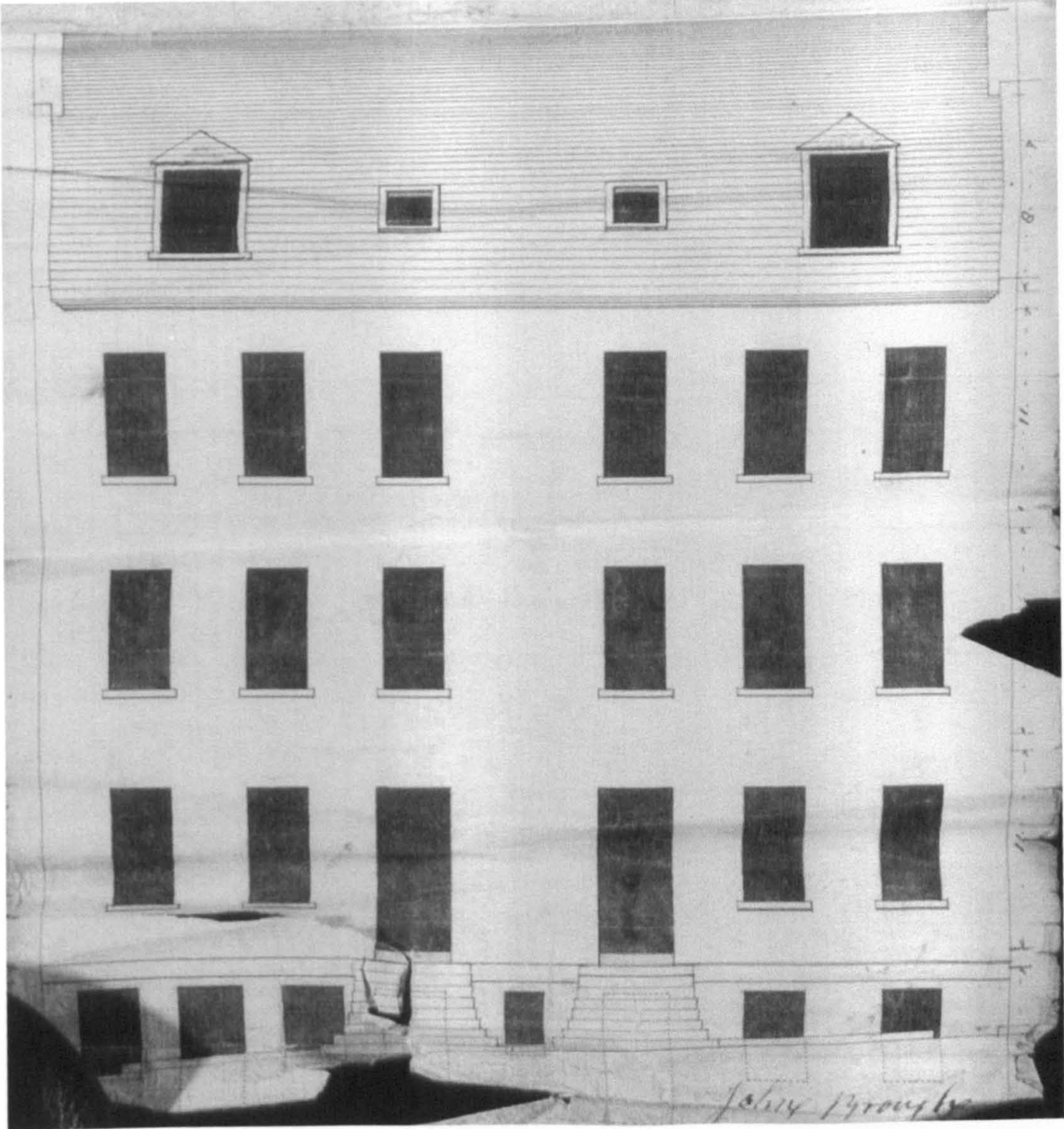


Plate 83: David Henderson, New Street, 1767

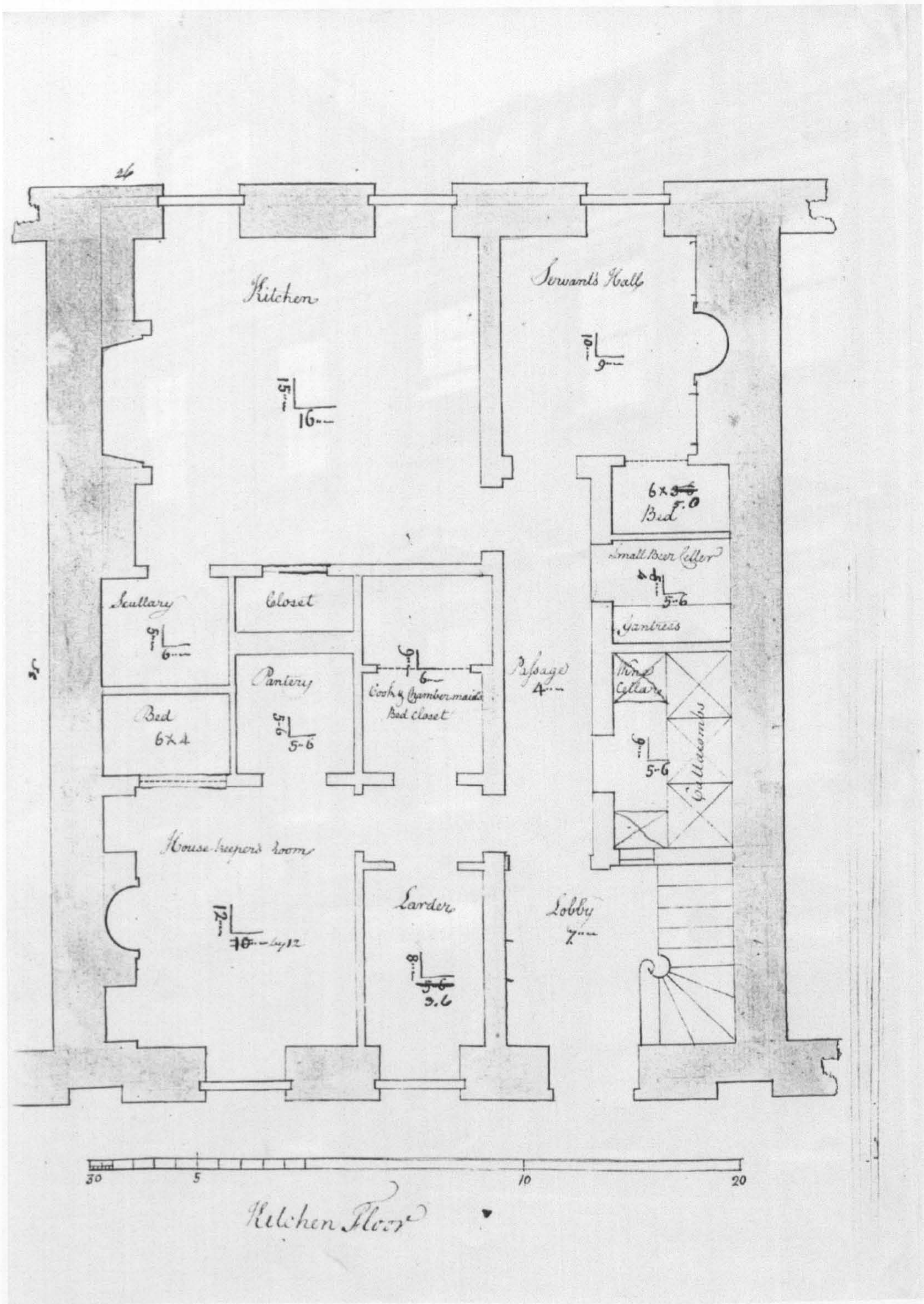


Plate 84: Sir William Chambers, 26 St Andrew Square, 1768.



Plate 85: Alex Crawford, Queen Street, New Town, 1790

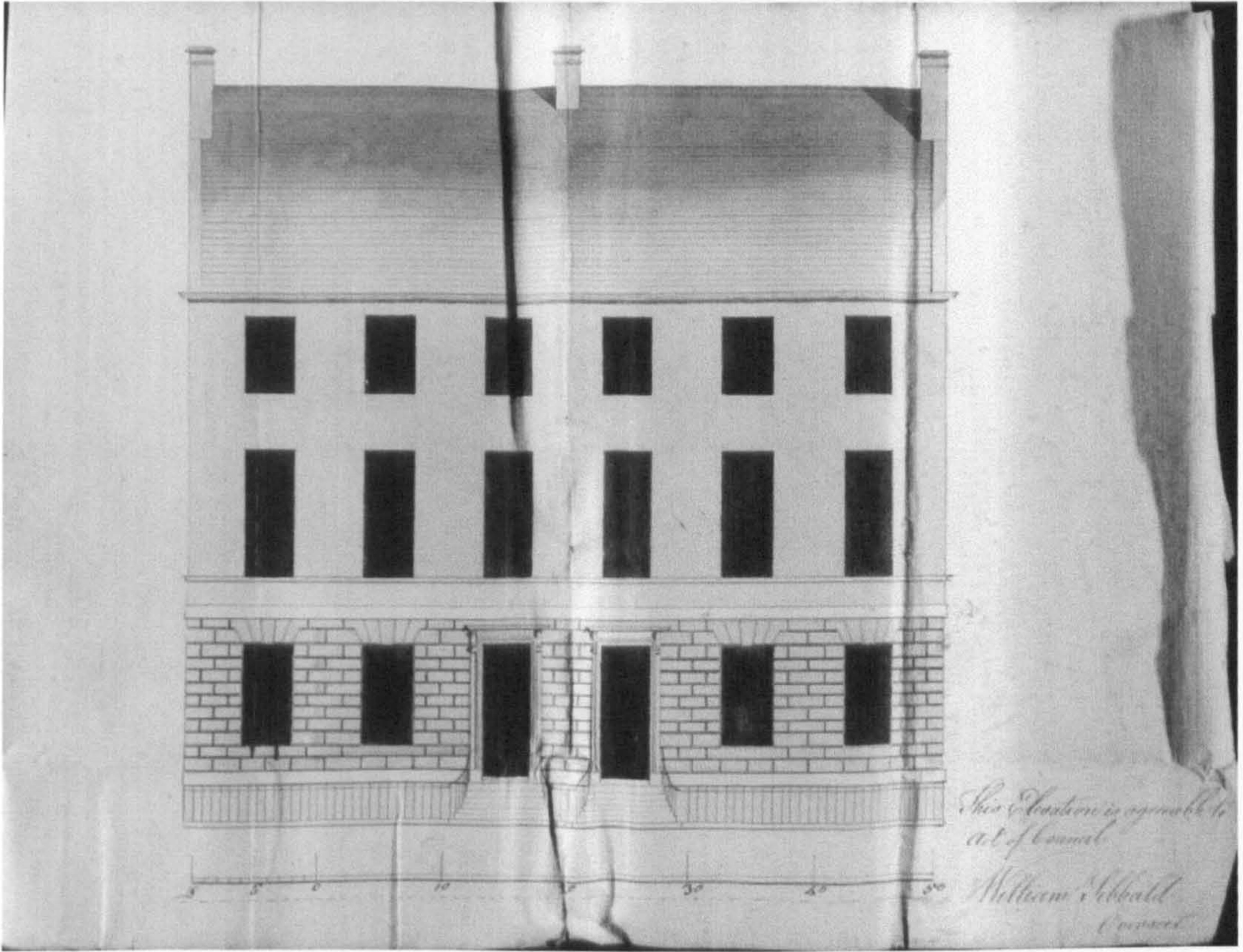
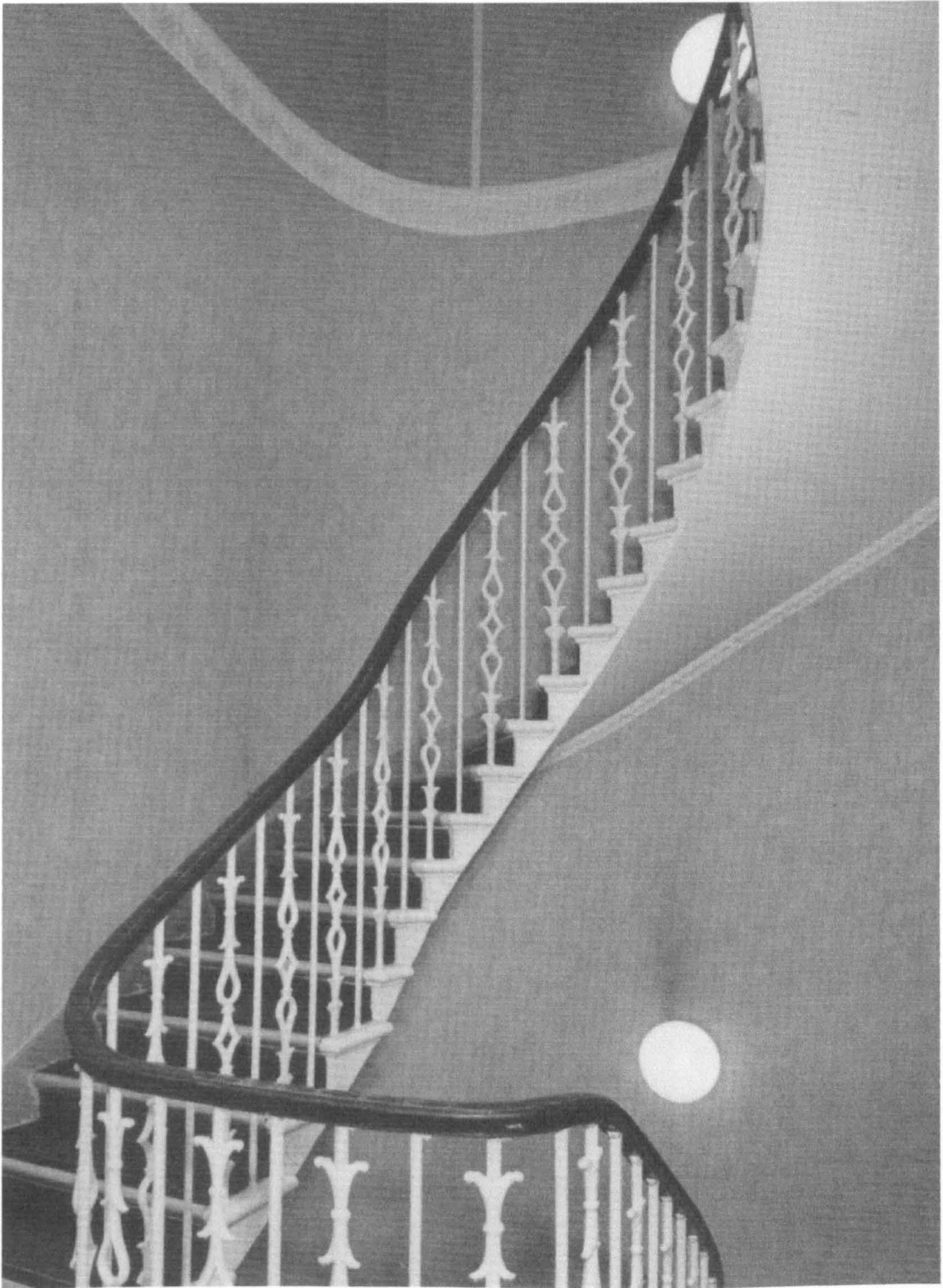
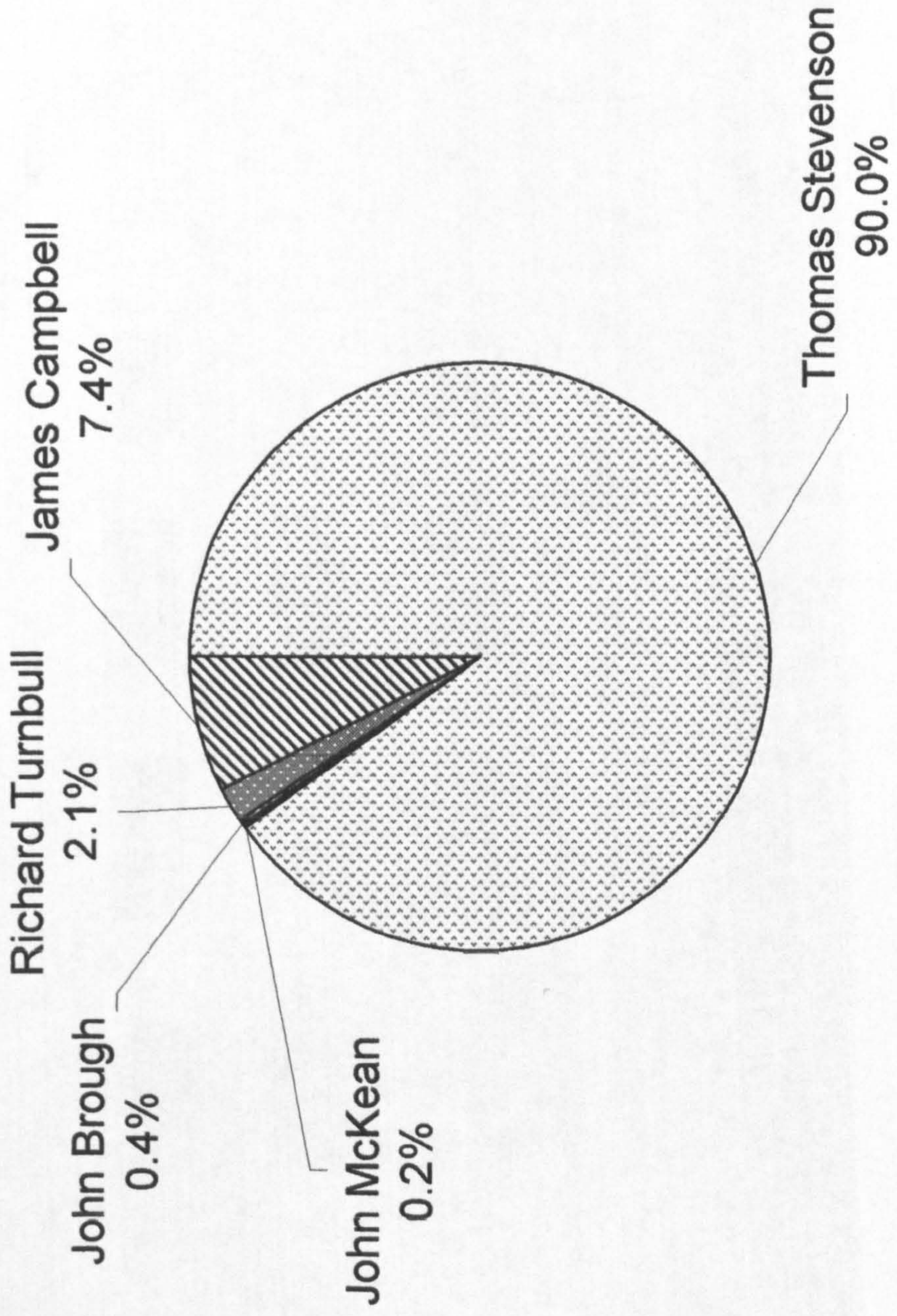


Plate 86: Messrs. Tait, Wright, Neal and Nesbit, 27 Queen Street, 1789



**Plate 87: Edinburgh Town Council  
Payments received by Causeway Layers in New Town 1767 - 1795**



- Thomas Stevenson
- John McKean
- John Brough
- Richard Turnbull
- James Campbell

Plate 88: Mrs Mary Drummond's coach house, 1760

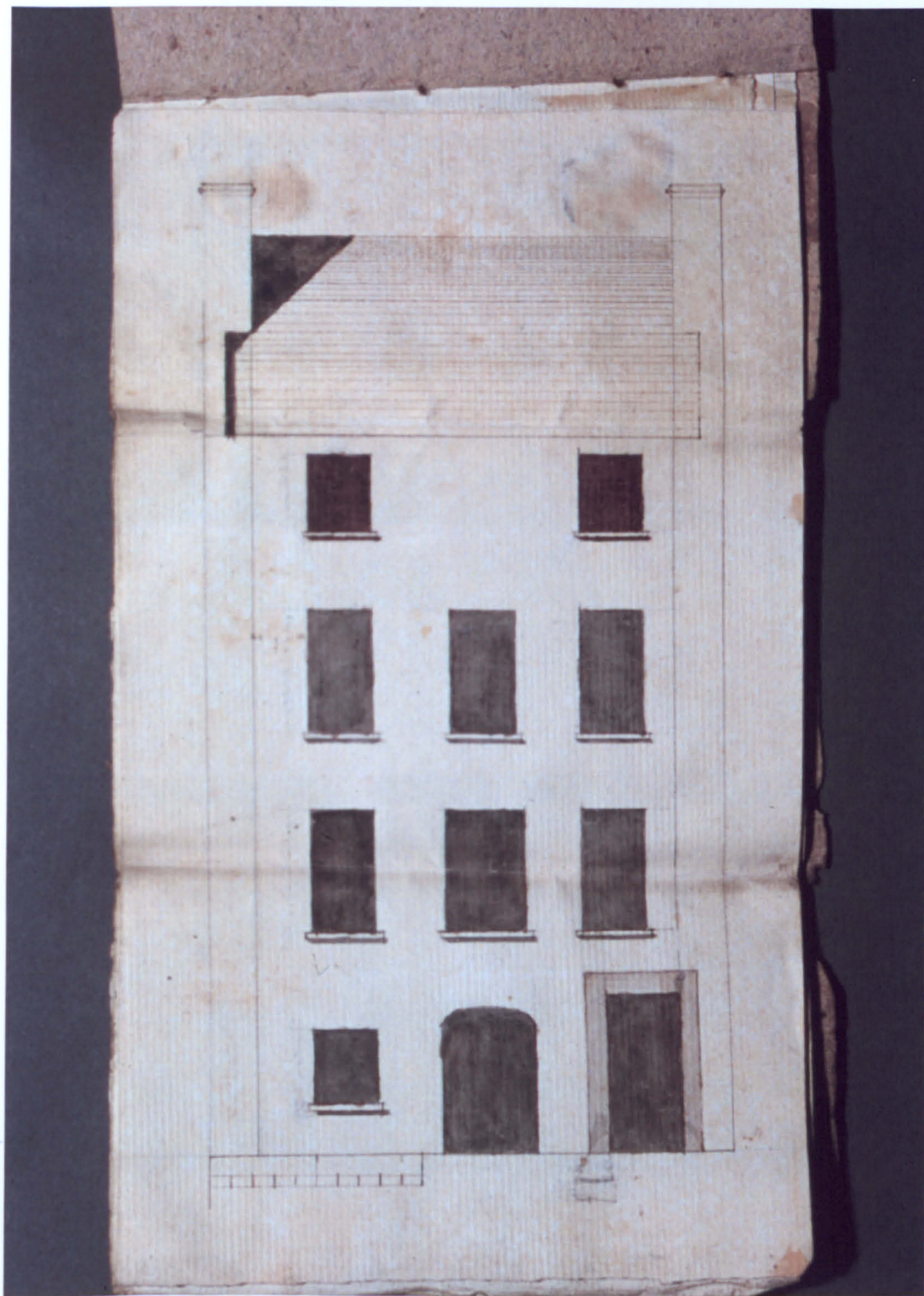




Plate 89: Patrick Jamieson, coach house, 1760.

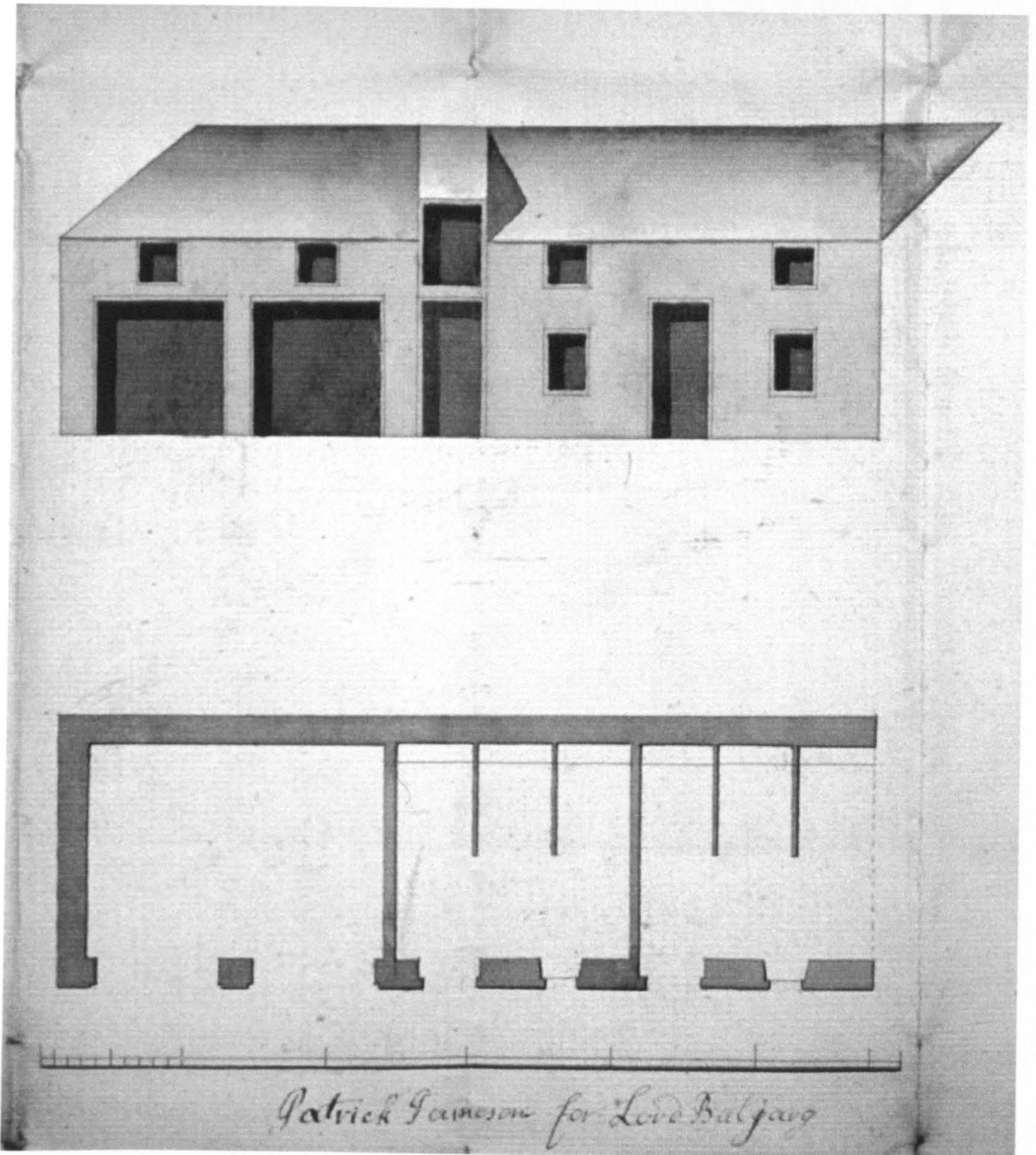


Plate 90: John Home, Princes Street shade, 1780.

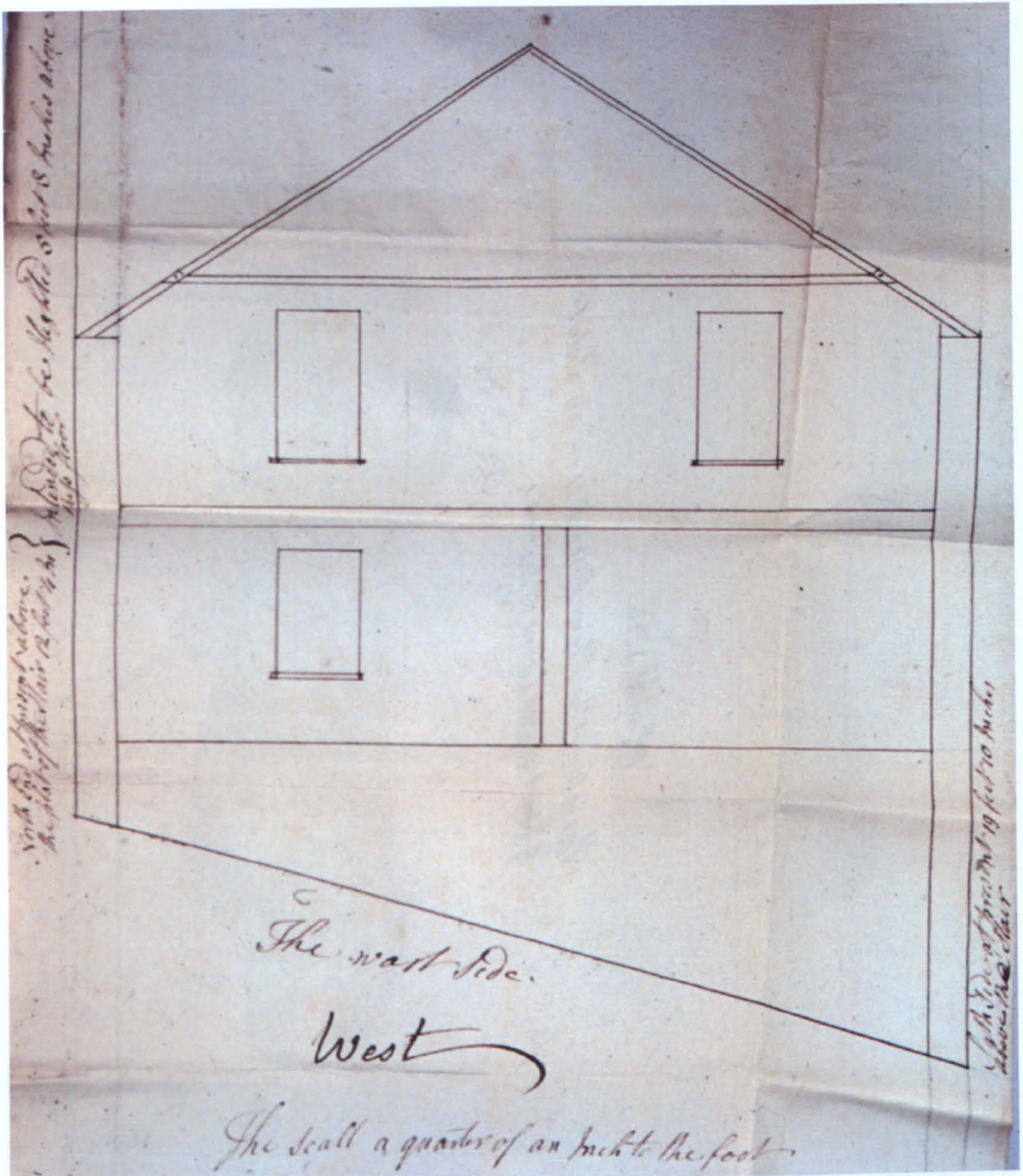


Plate 91: Kay portrait, William Butter ( left hand side)



Plate 92: Kay portrait, Thomas Sommers



Plate 93: Mylne's Court, Edinburgh, 1690



Plate 94: John Weir, Frederick Street and Rose Street, New Town, 1784 - 1786

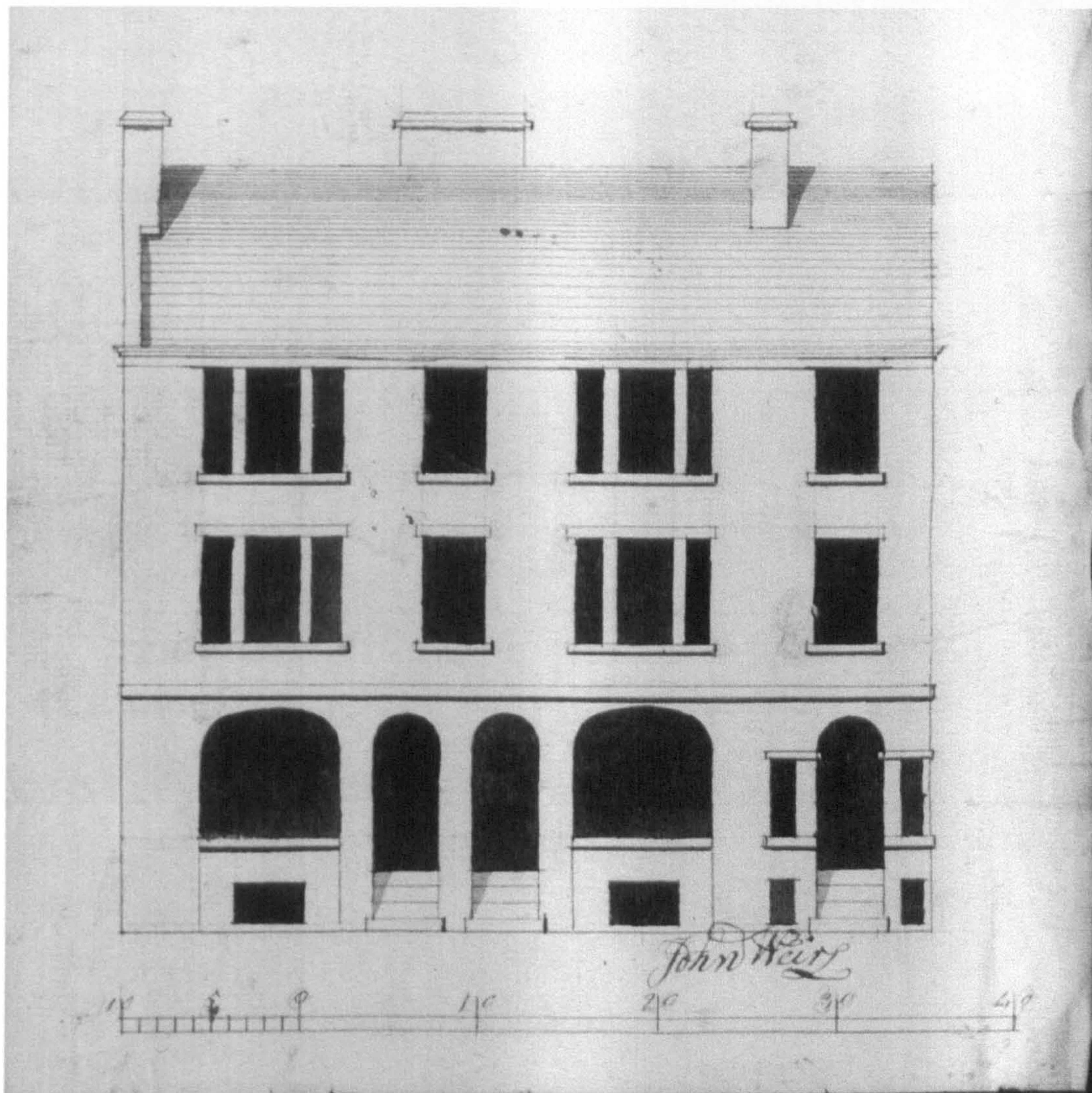


Plate 95: Alex Balfour, Queen Street, New Town, 1790

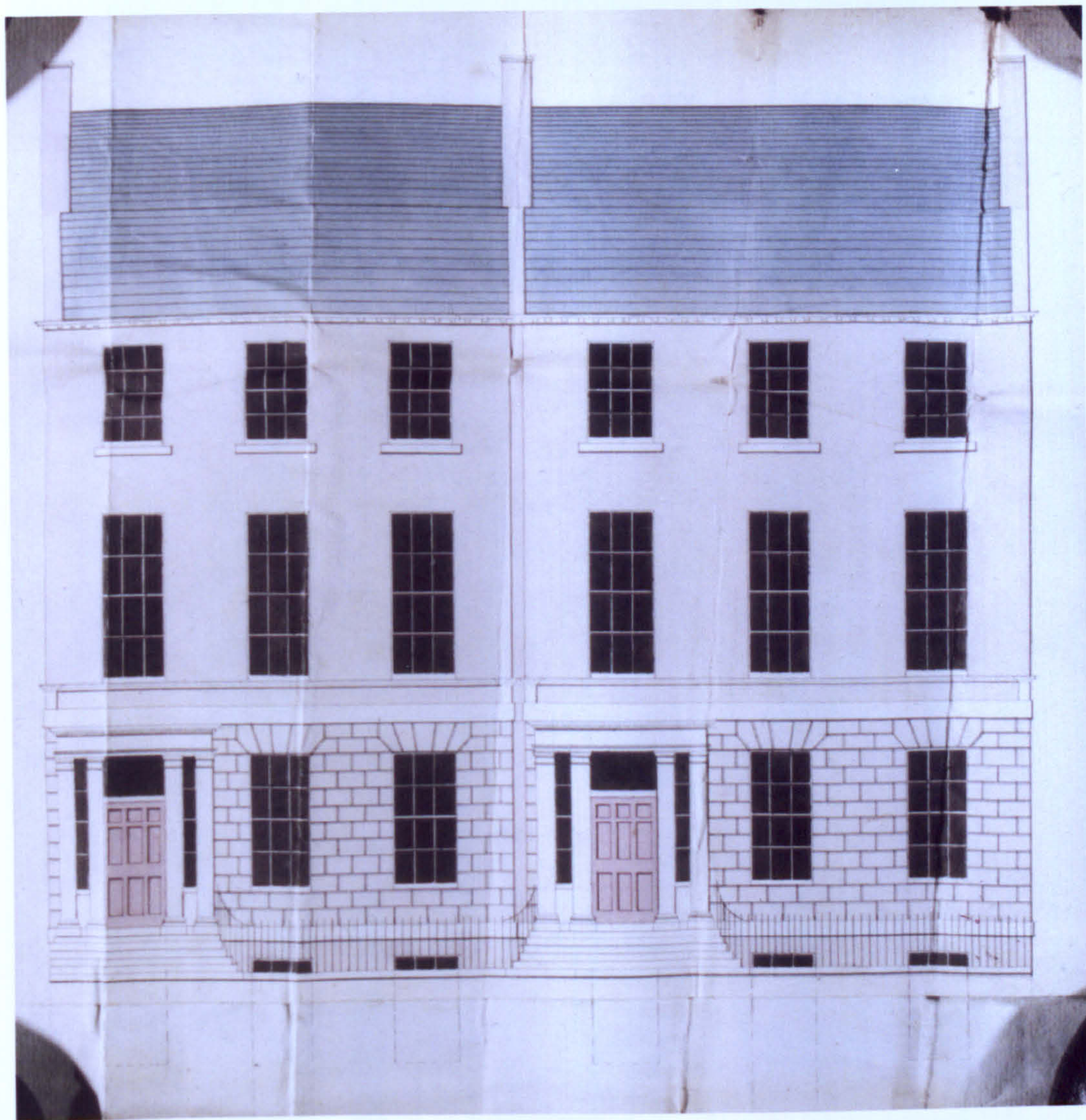


Plate 96: Alex Balfour, Queen Street, New Town, 1790

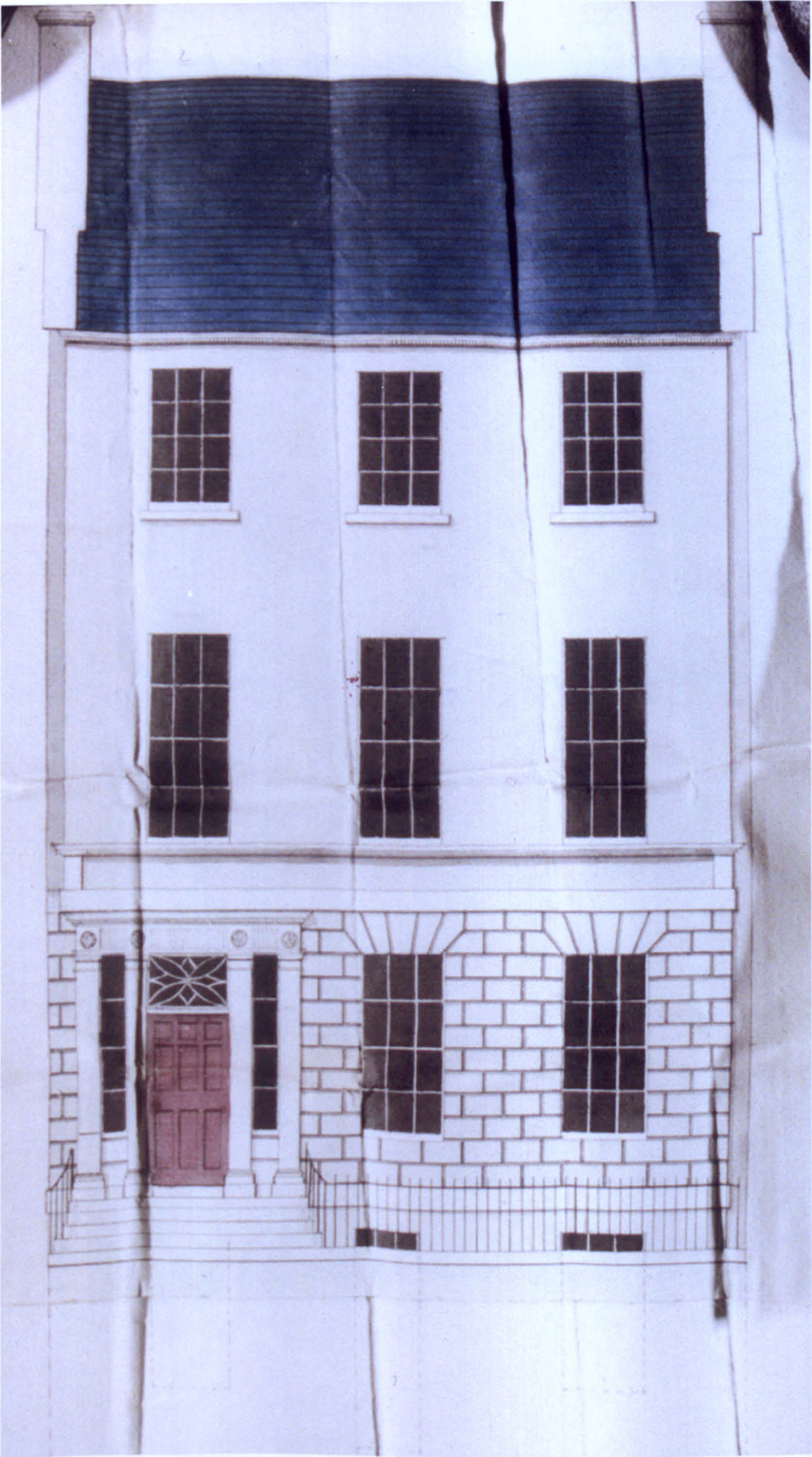




Plate 97: Robert Inglis, Queen Street, New Town, 1790.

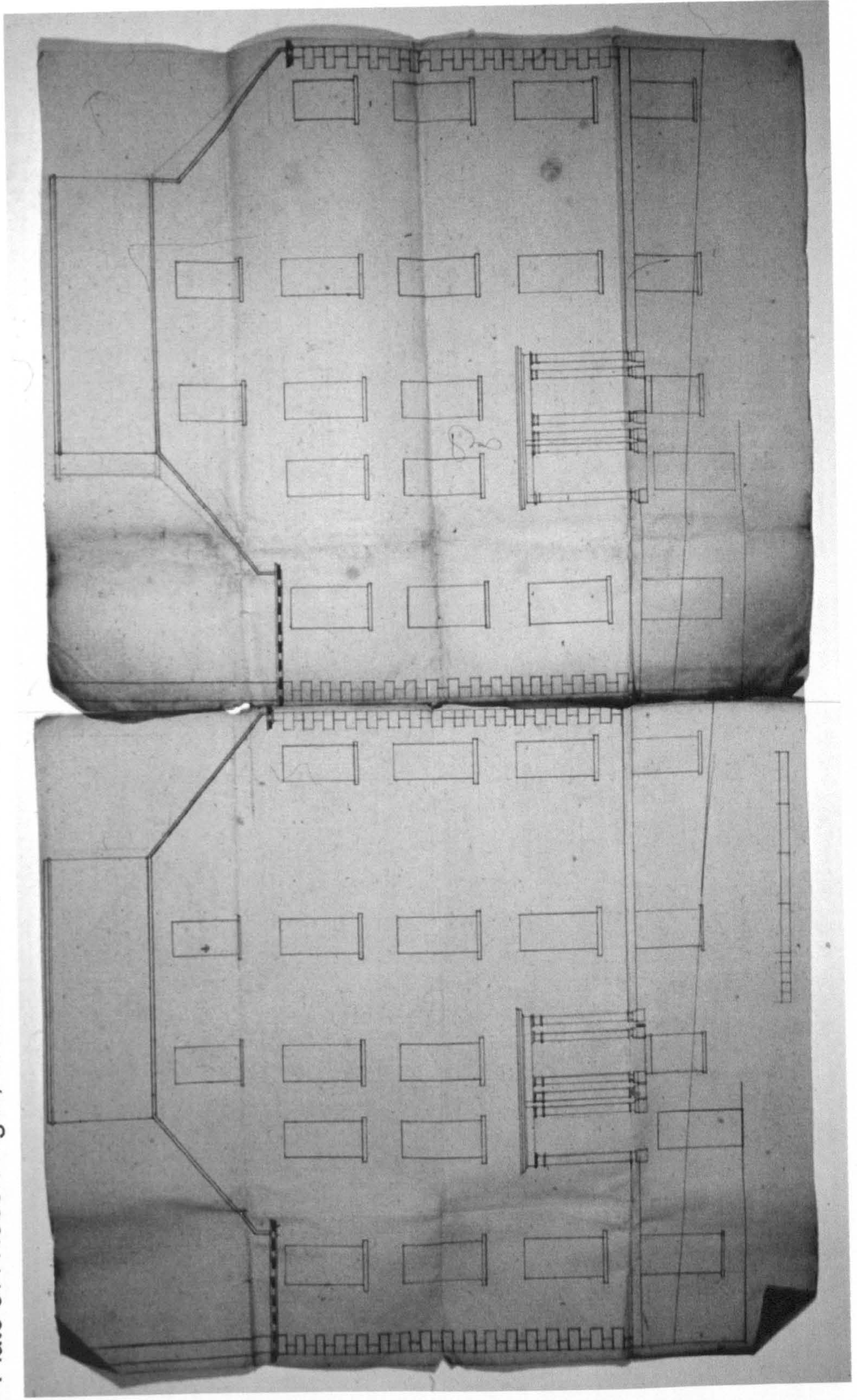


Plate 98: Robert Inglis, Queen Street, New Town, 1790.

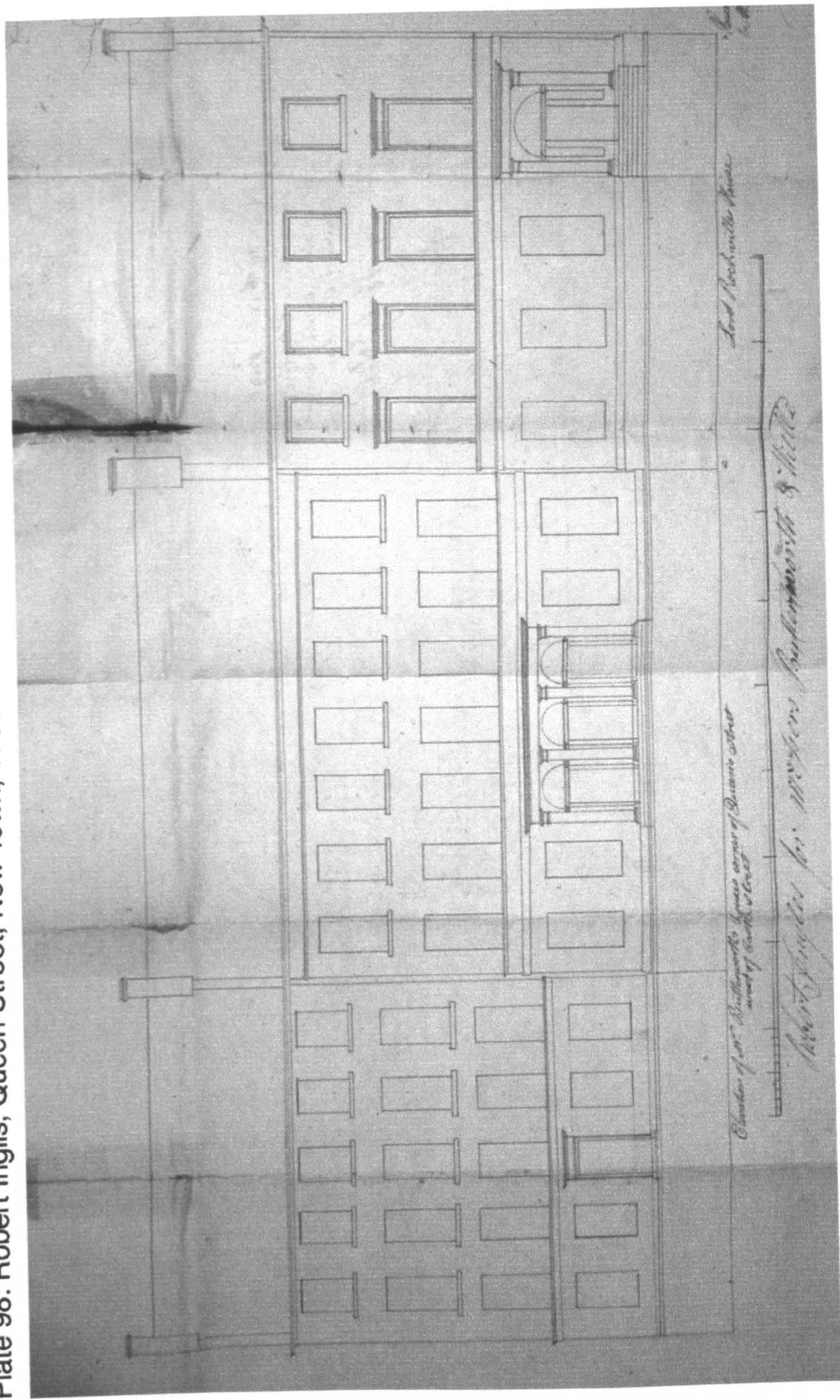


Plate 99: Alex Crawford, Queen Street, New Town, 1791.

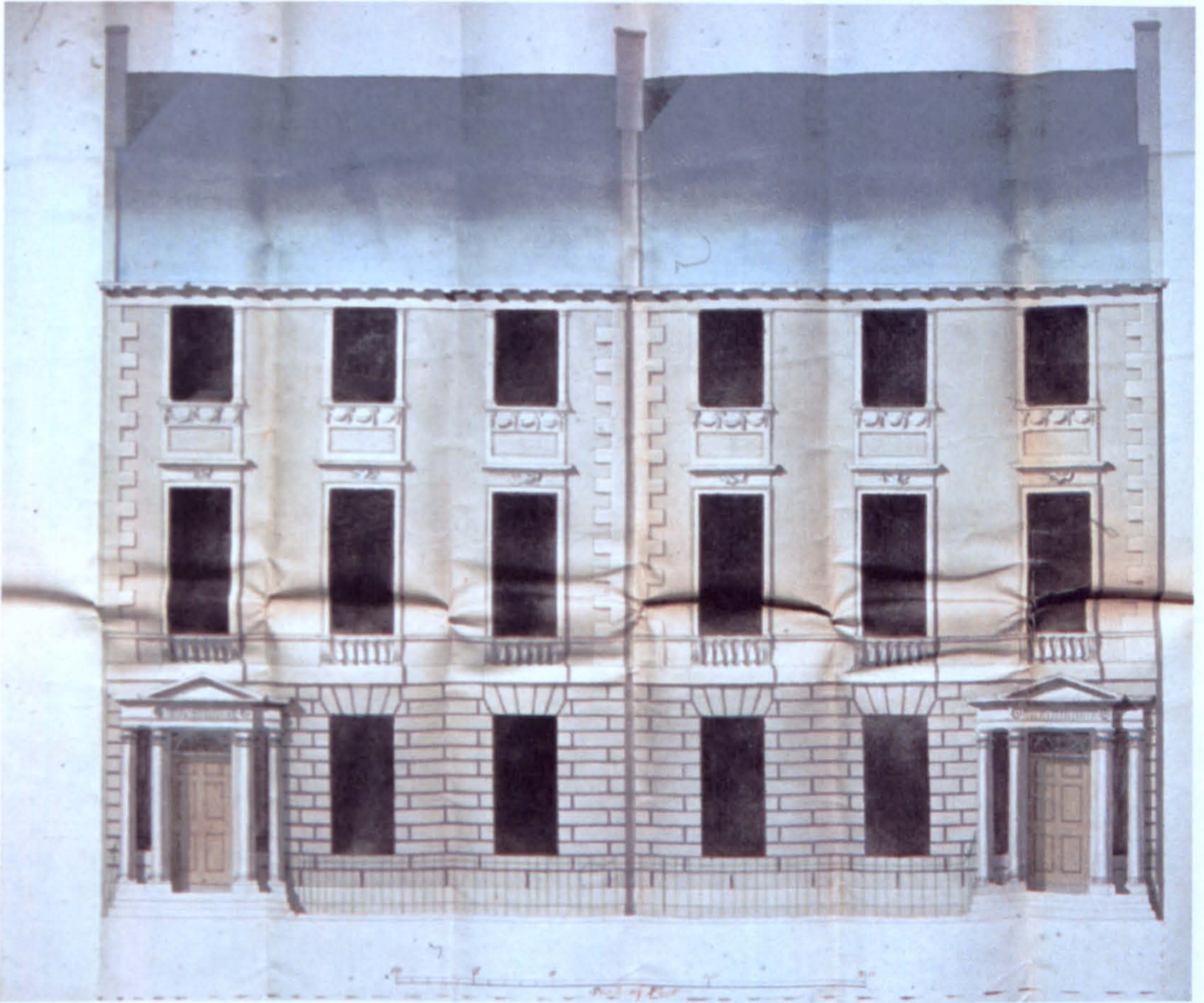


Plate 100: John Williamson, Queen Street, New Town, 1790.

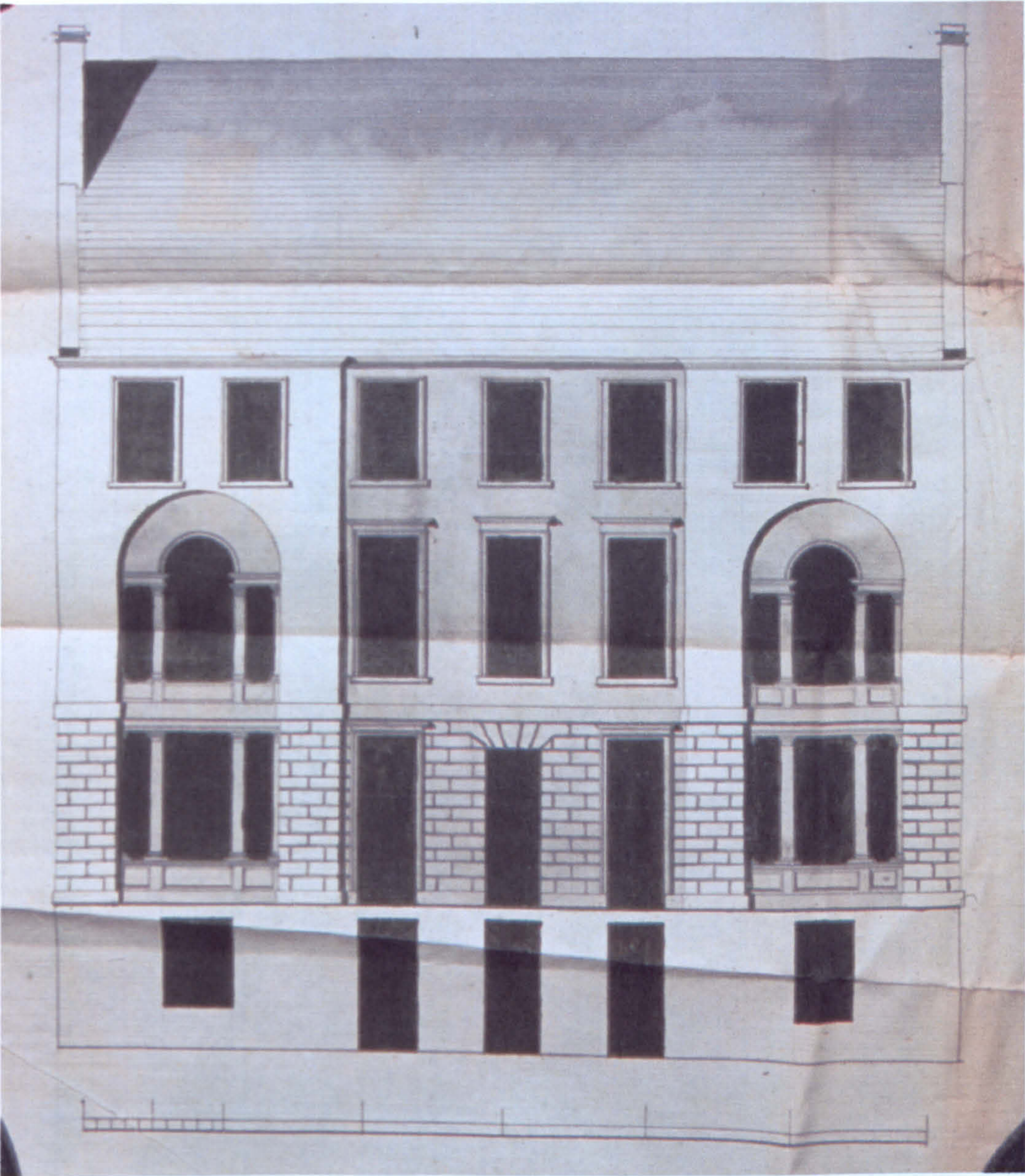


Plate 101: Robert Adam, Edinburgh New College, 1789.

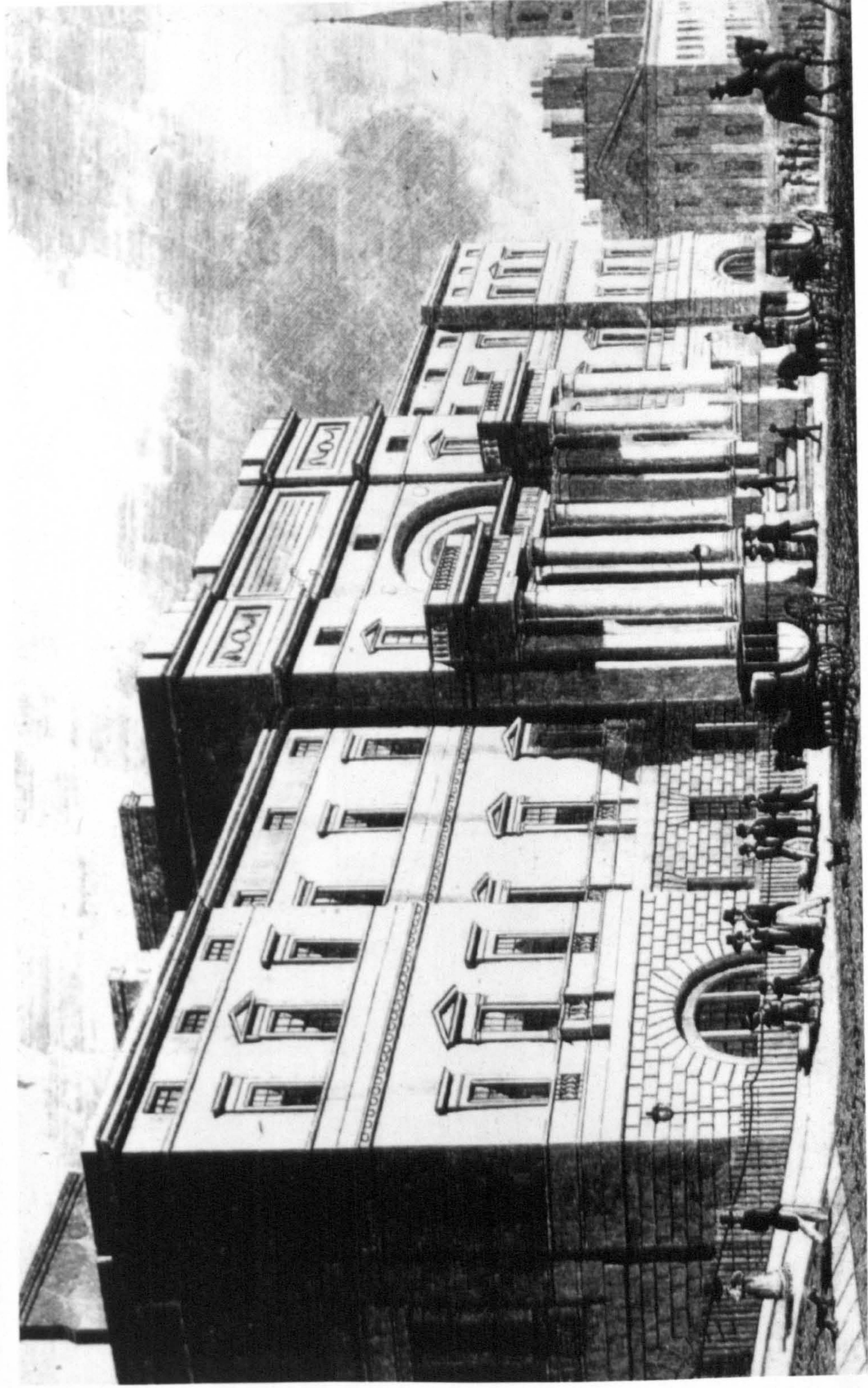


Plate 102: Robert Adam, Charlotte Square, 1791.

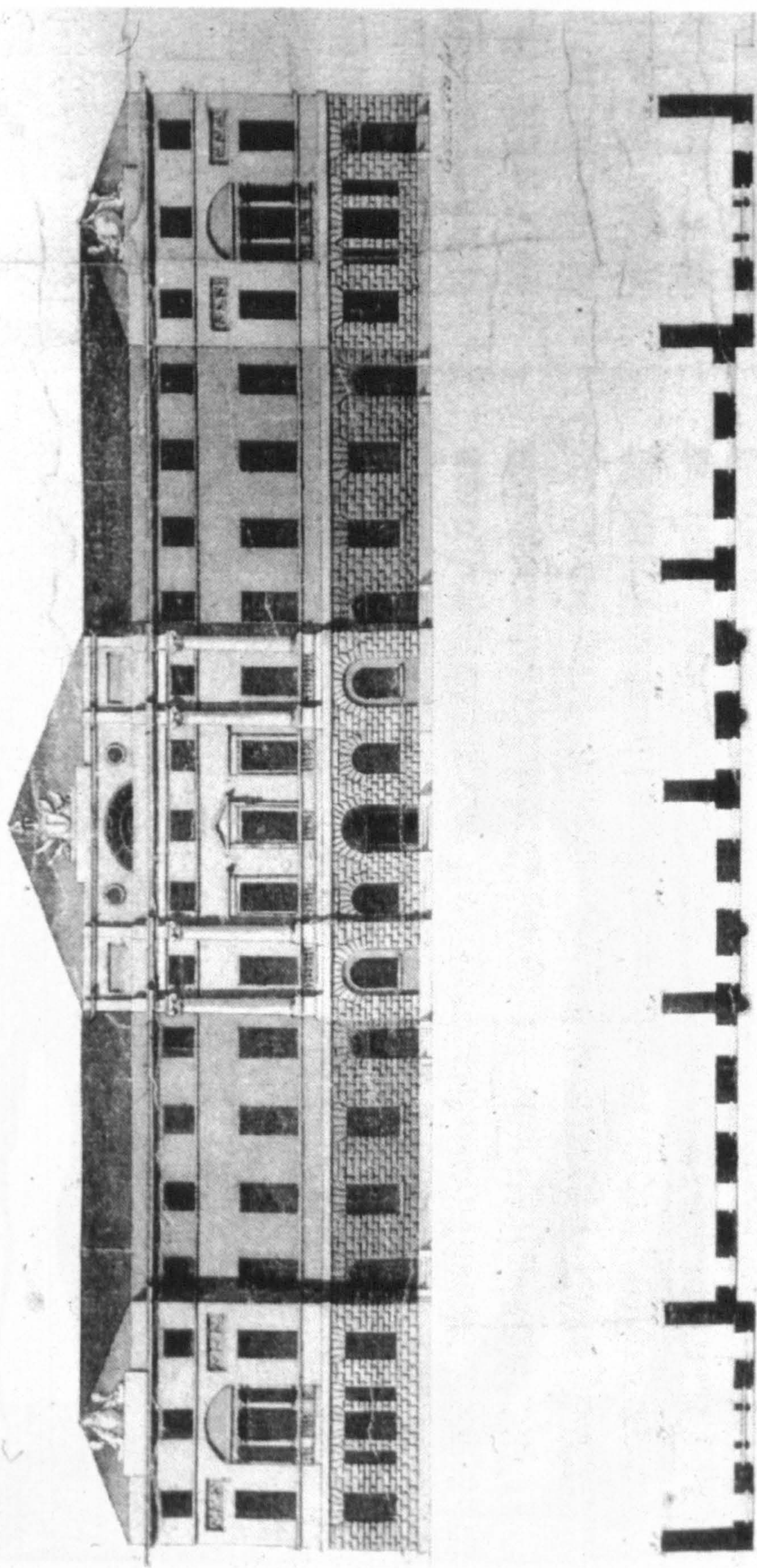


Plate 103: John Kay, Francis Braidwood



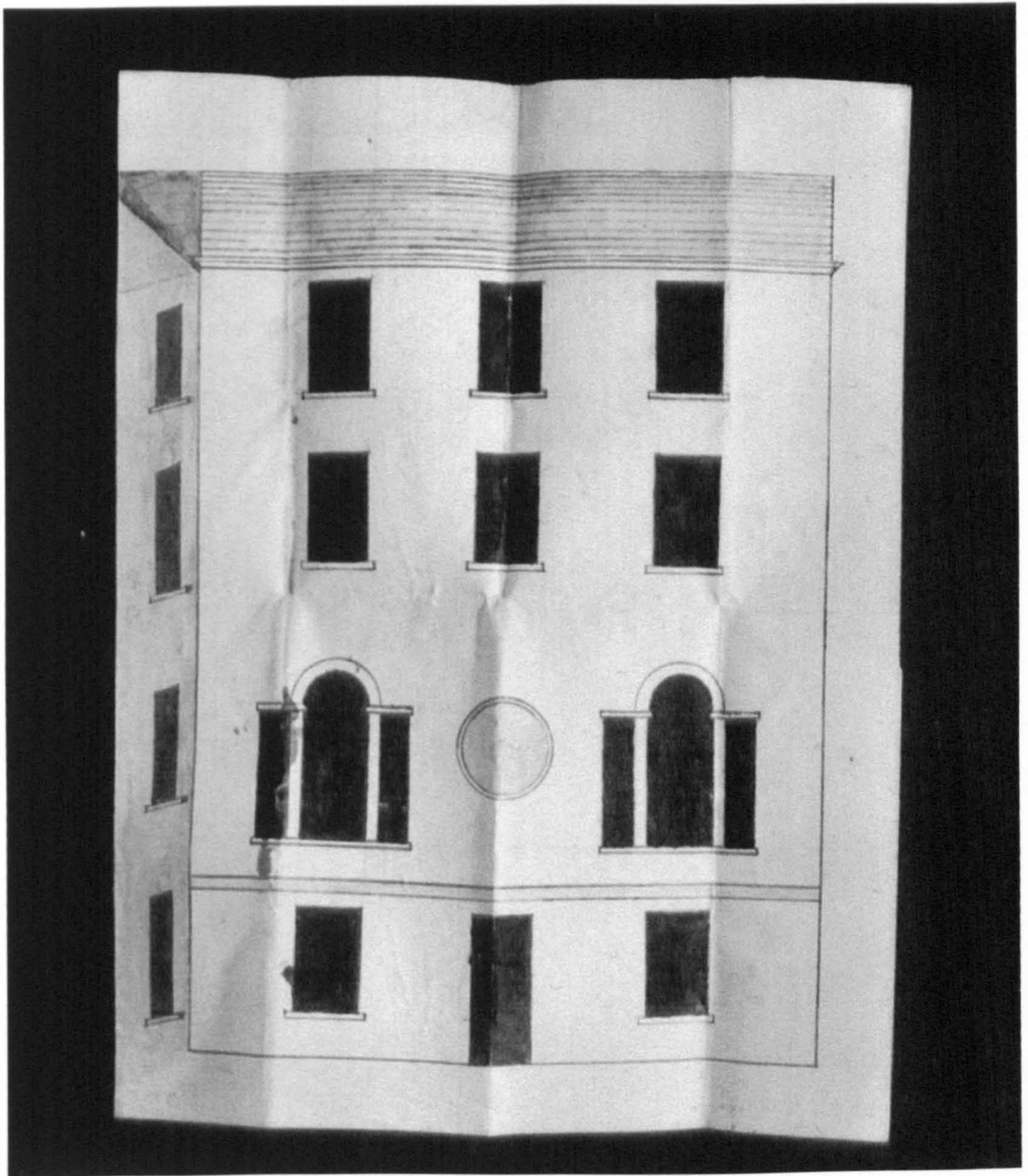
Plate 104: Kay portrait, Assembly Rooms, George Street, New Town, 1780's



*K. J. 1785*  
Thus we poor Cocks, exert our Skill & Bravery  
For idle Gulls, and Kites, that trade in Knavery



Plate 105: James Williamson and Thomas Russell, Journeymen's Lodge, Hodge's Close, 1787



Castle Street, New Town, 1786

Plate 106: John Hay, Castle Street, New Town, 1786

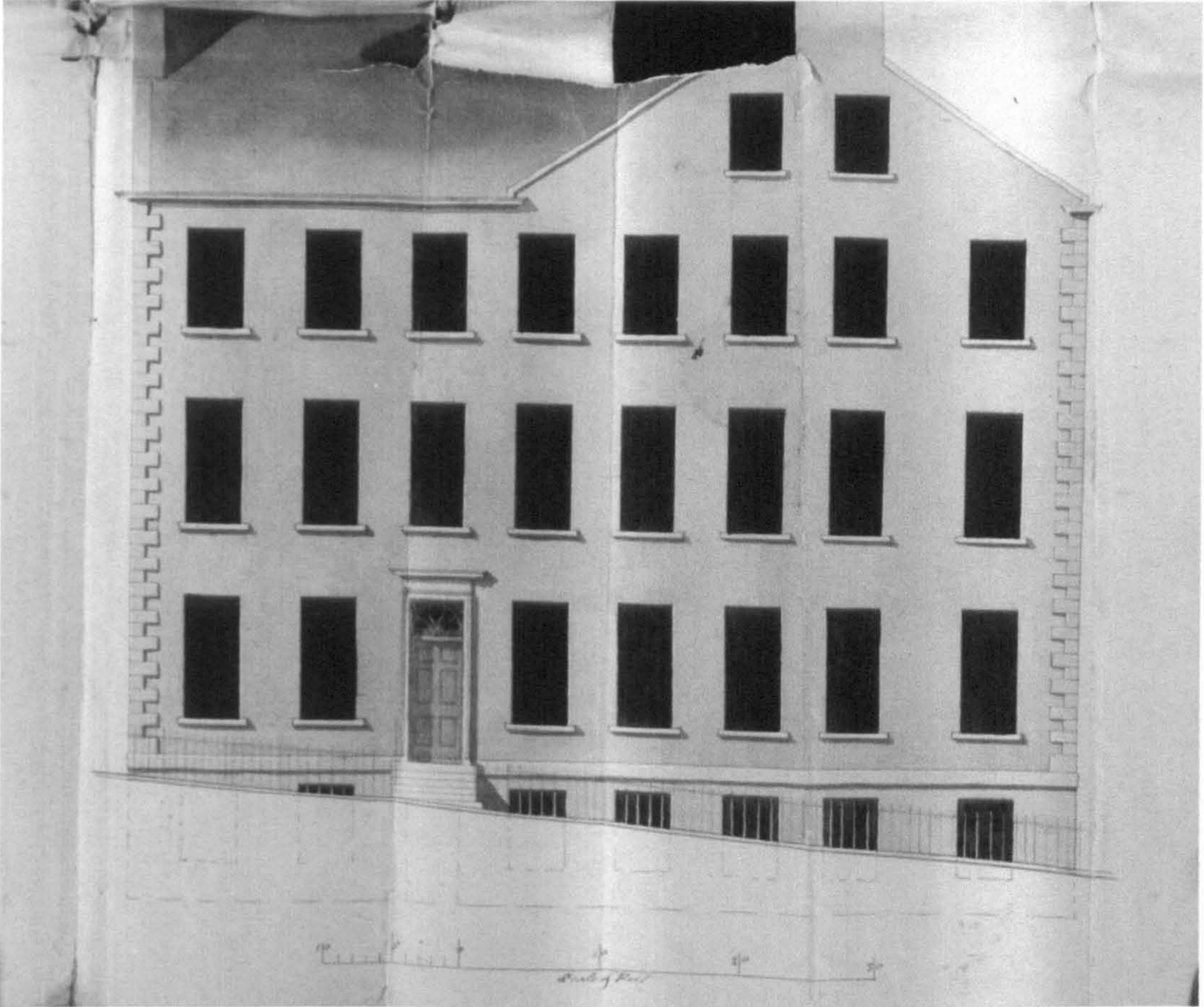


Plate 107: John Hay, Castle Street, New Town, 1791

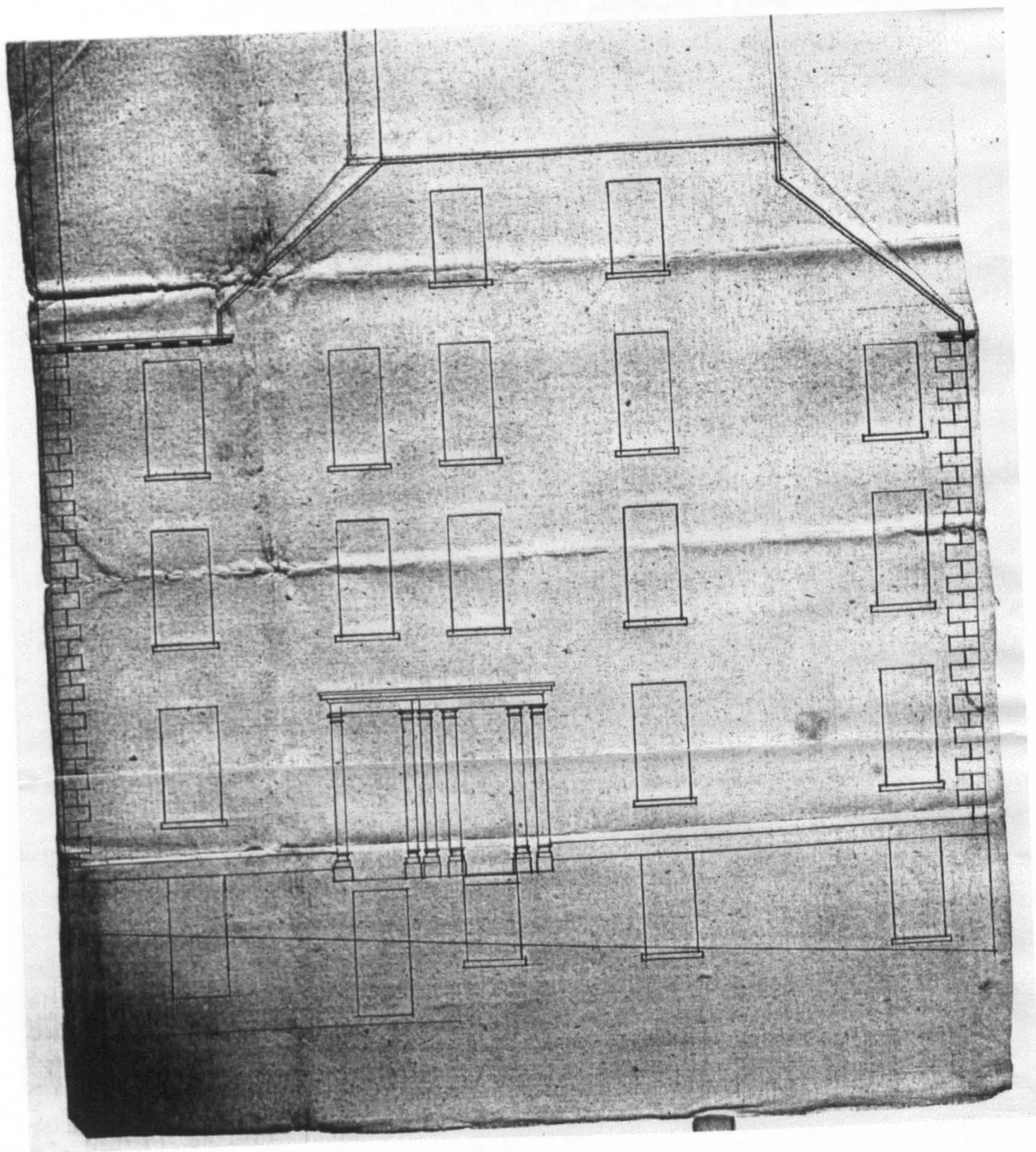


Plate 108: James Nesbit, George Street, 1789 - 1791



Plate 109: James Nesbit, George Street, 1789 - 1791



Plate 110: Sir Hugh Dalrymple, Potterrow, 1772

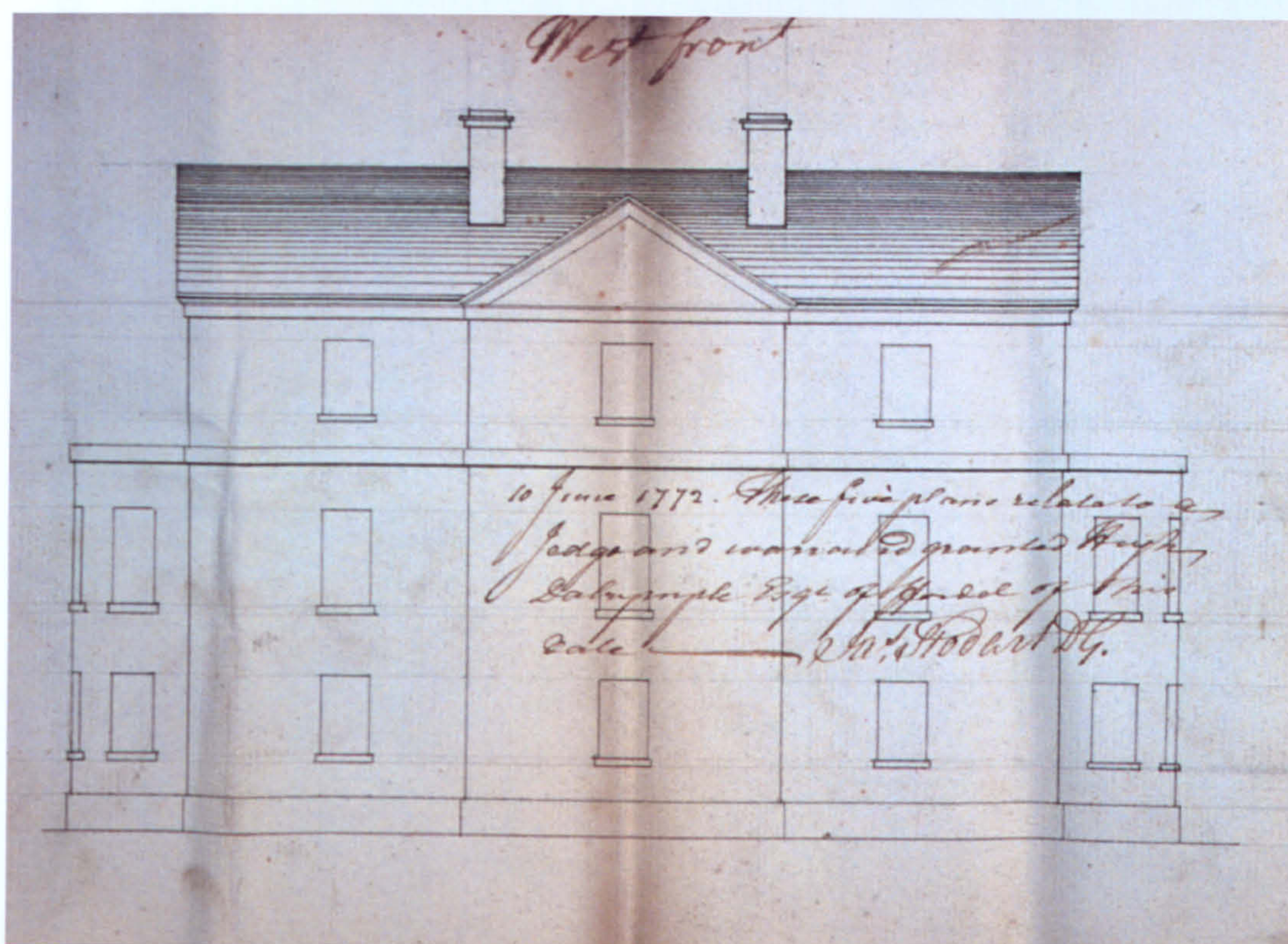


Plate 111: George Richardson, Sir Laurence Dundas's house, St Andrew's Square, 1776



Plate 112: James Nesbit, St Andrew's Church, 1783 - 1785

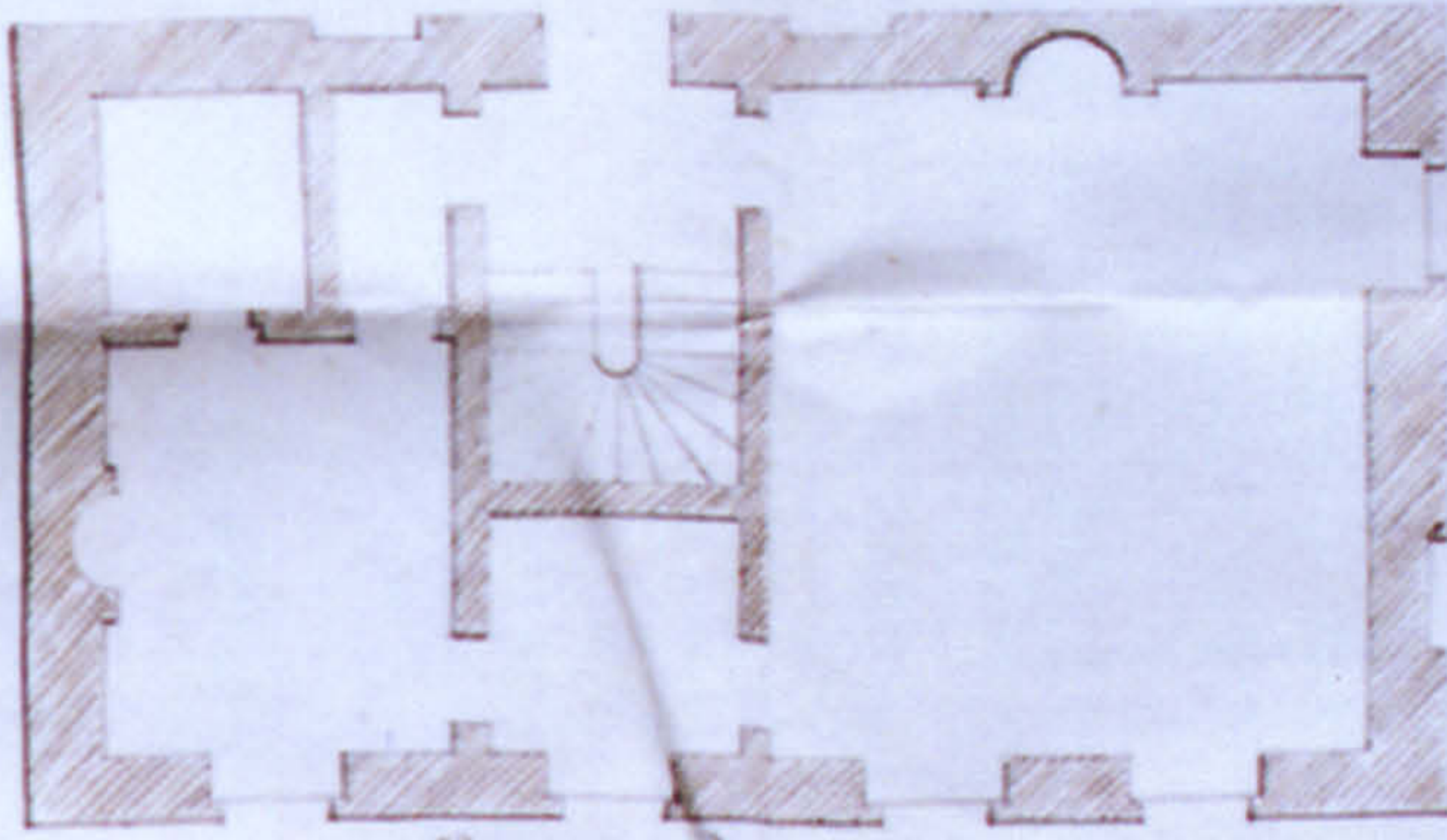




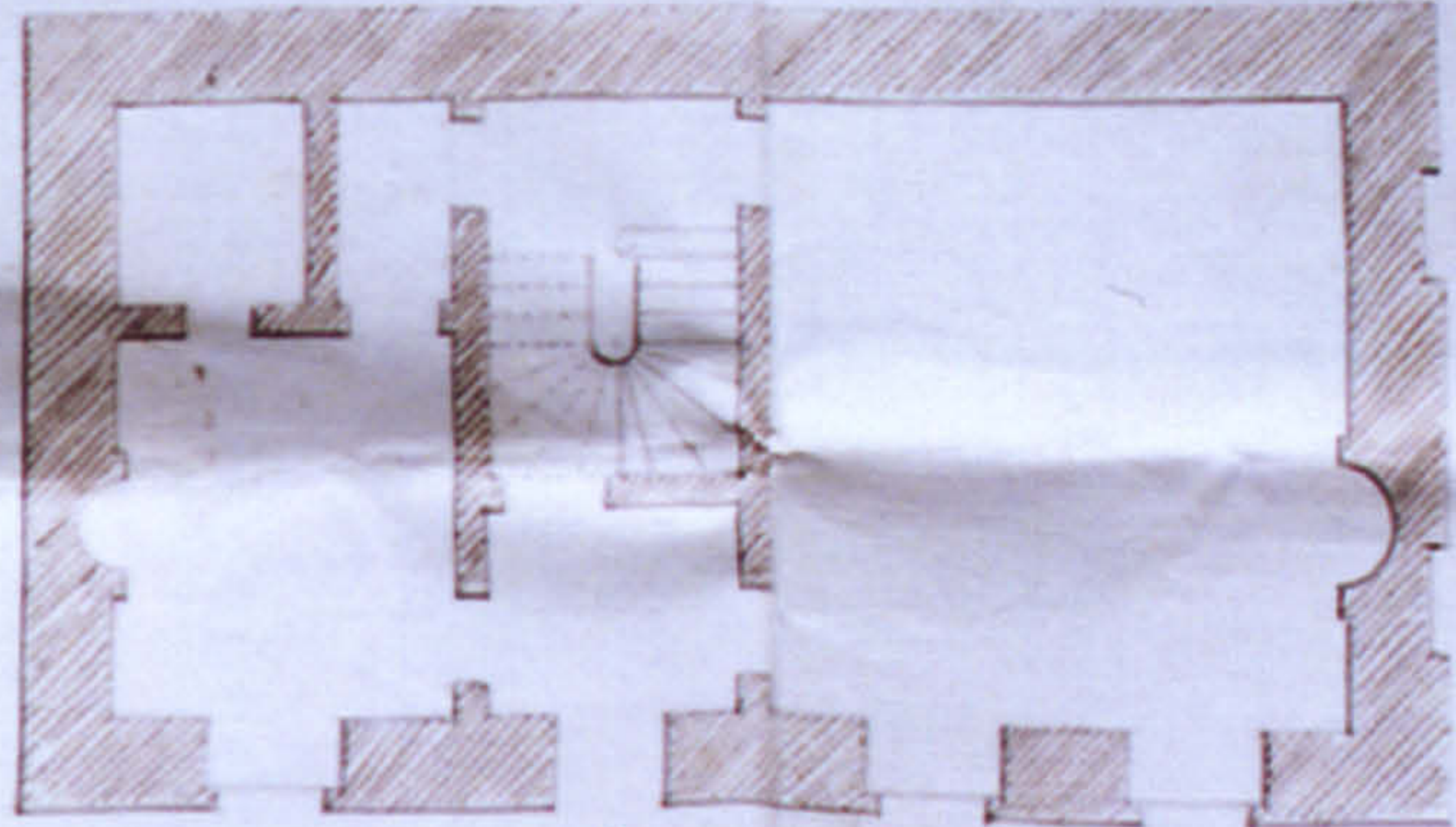
Plate 113: Alex Laing, Counting House, 1779



*Elevation of St. William Forbes & Co's  
Counting House, Fronting South.*



*Counting Room Floor. — Two  
more floors comes on between this & the floor below.*



*Ground Floor*

Plate 114: Robert Hunter, Theatre Royal, Shakespeare's Square, 1768

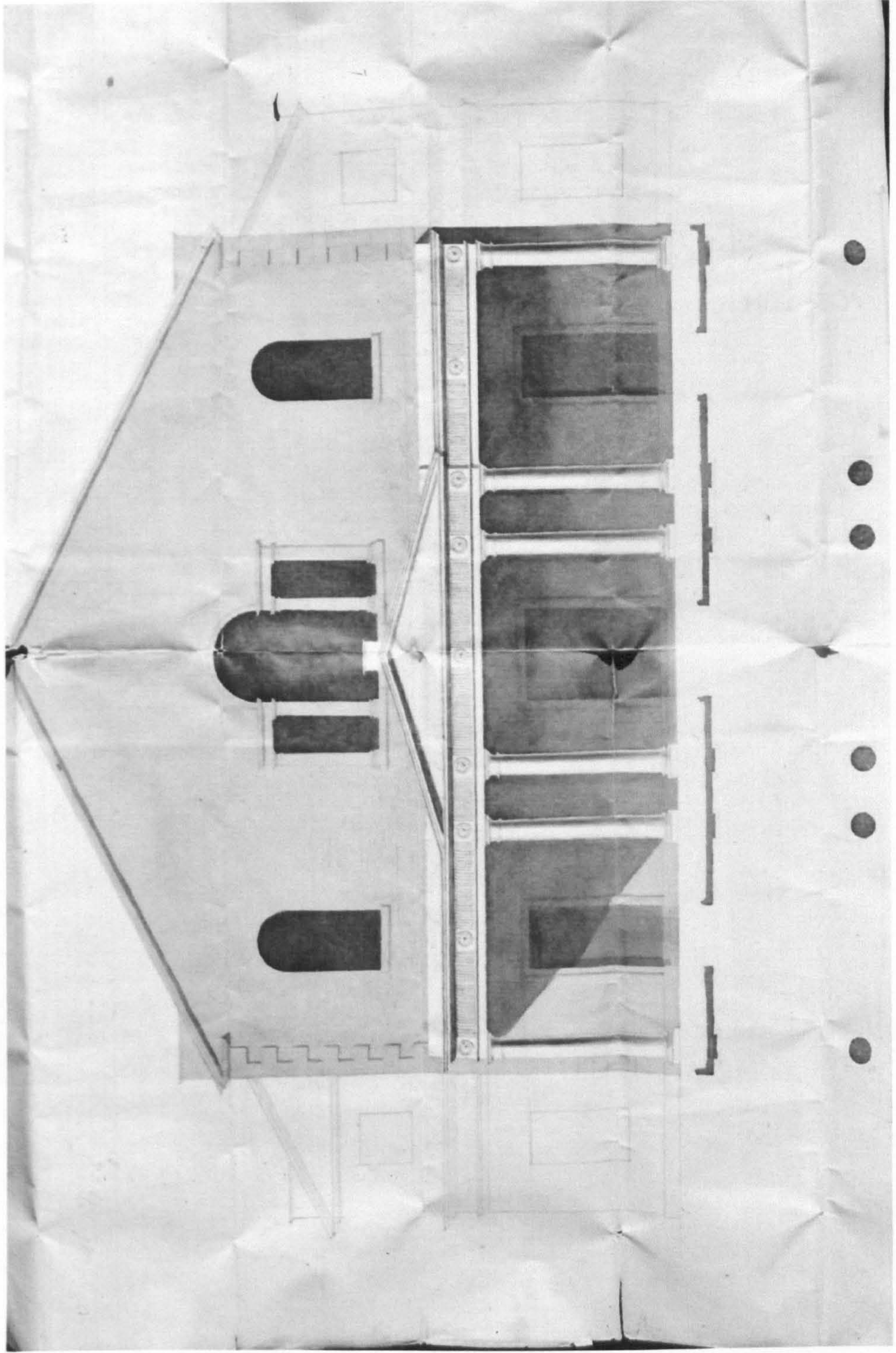
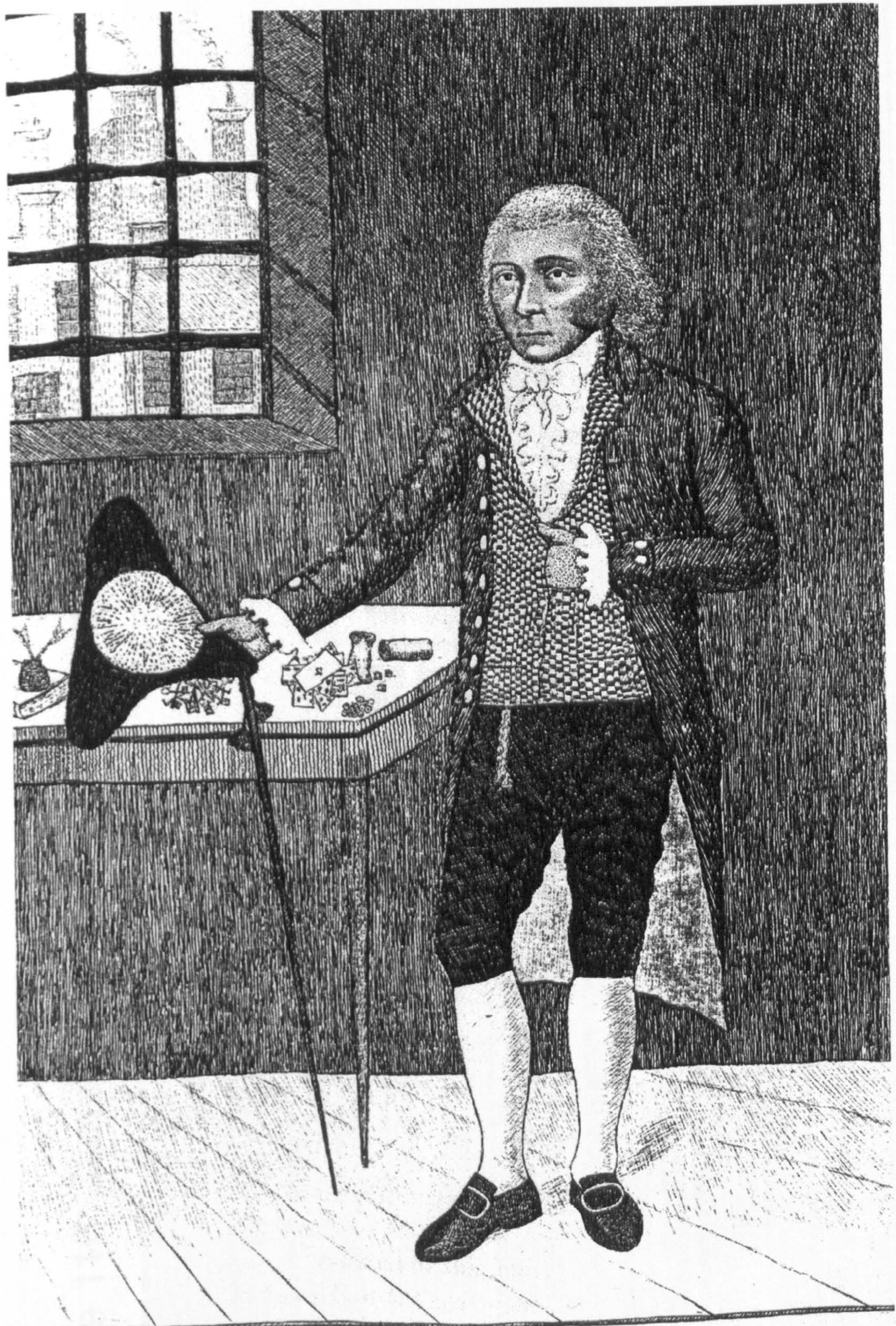


Plate 115: Kay portrait, William Brodie



KAY DEL. SULP. 1788

MR. BRODIE

Plate 116: James Craig, New Town plan, December 1767

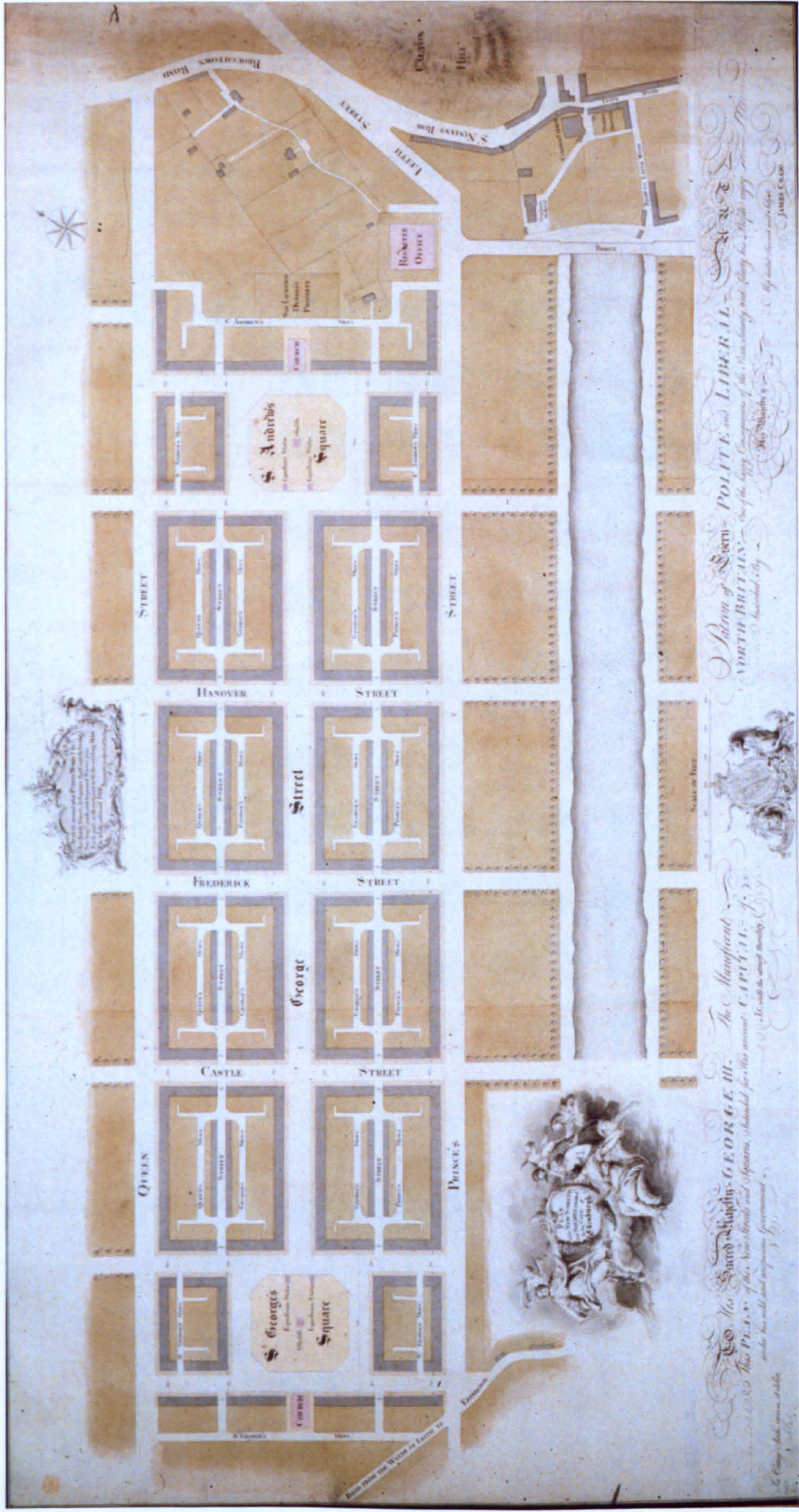


Plate 117: Robert Wright, Queen Street/ Fredrick Street, New Town, 1788

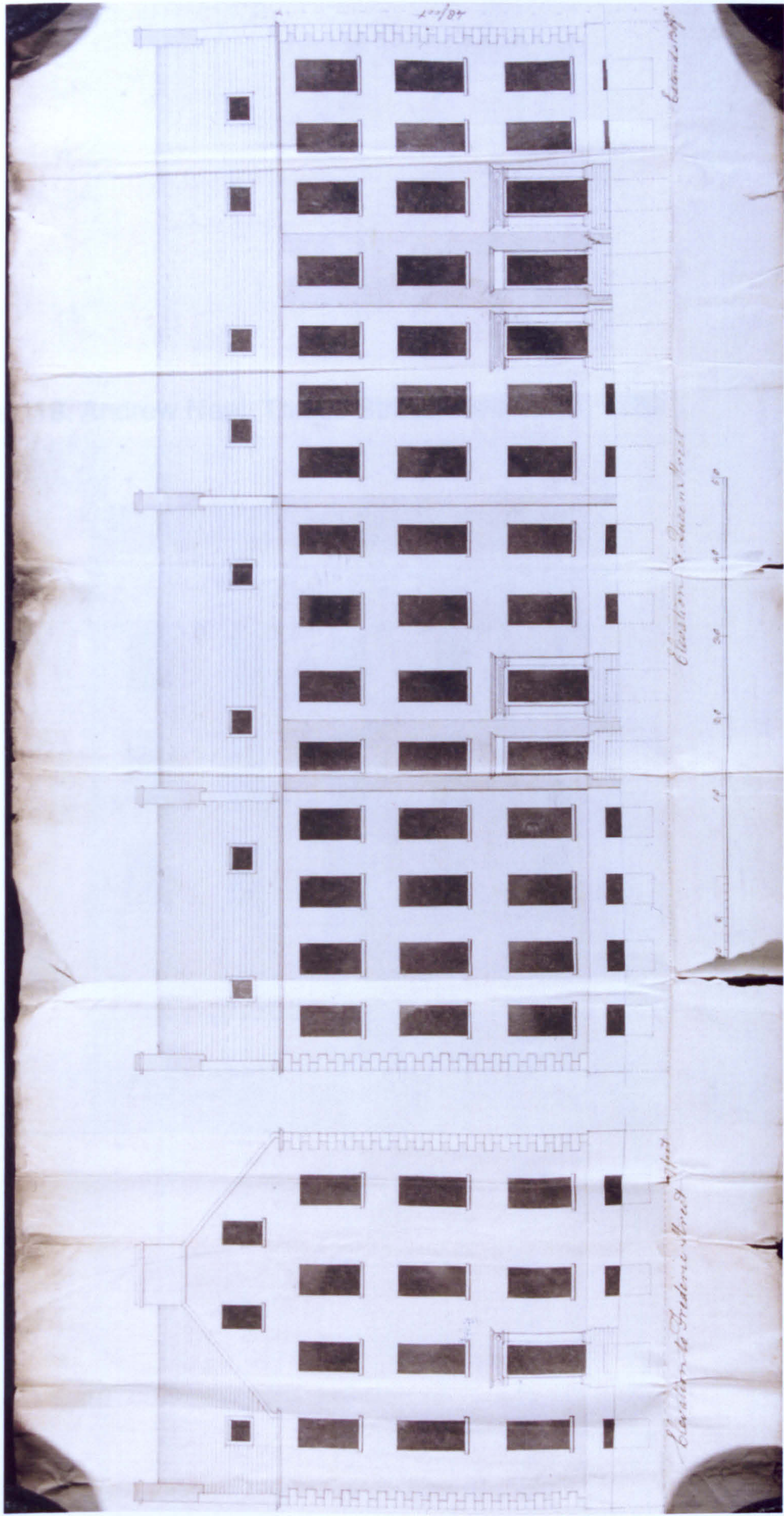
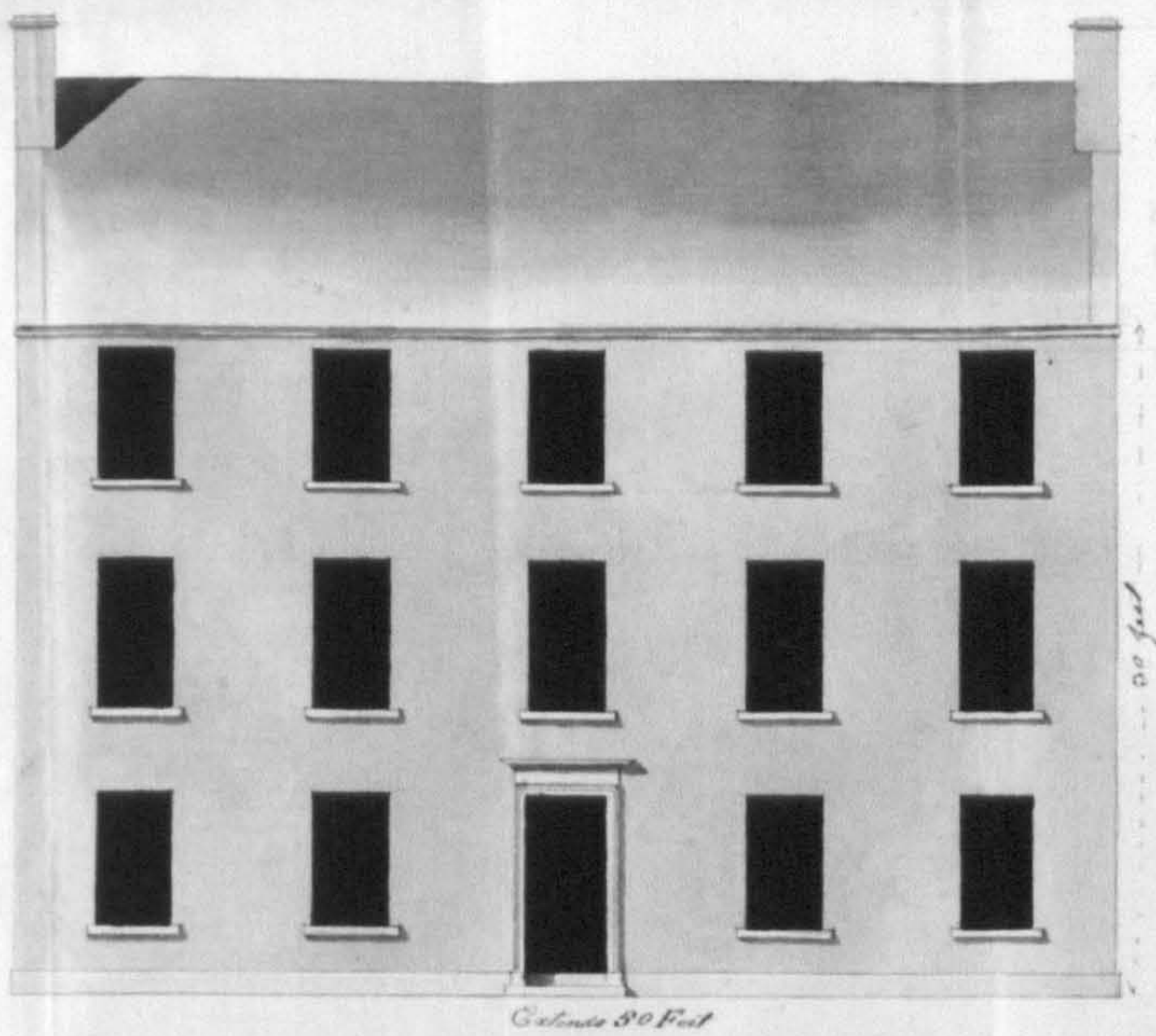


Plate 118: Andrew Neal, Thistle Street, New Town, 1789



10 20 30  
Scale of Feet

This is the Elevation of Houses to be built on the front part  
of the ground on Thistle Street applied for by Lord Rockville.  
And<sup>rs</sup> Gill

Plate 119: William Parks, Princes Street, 1786

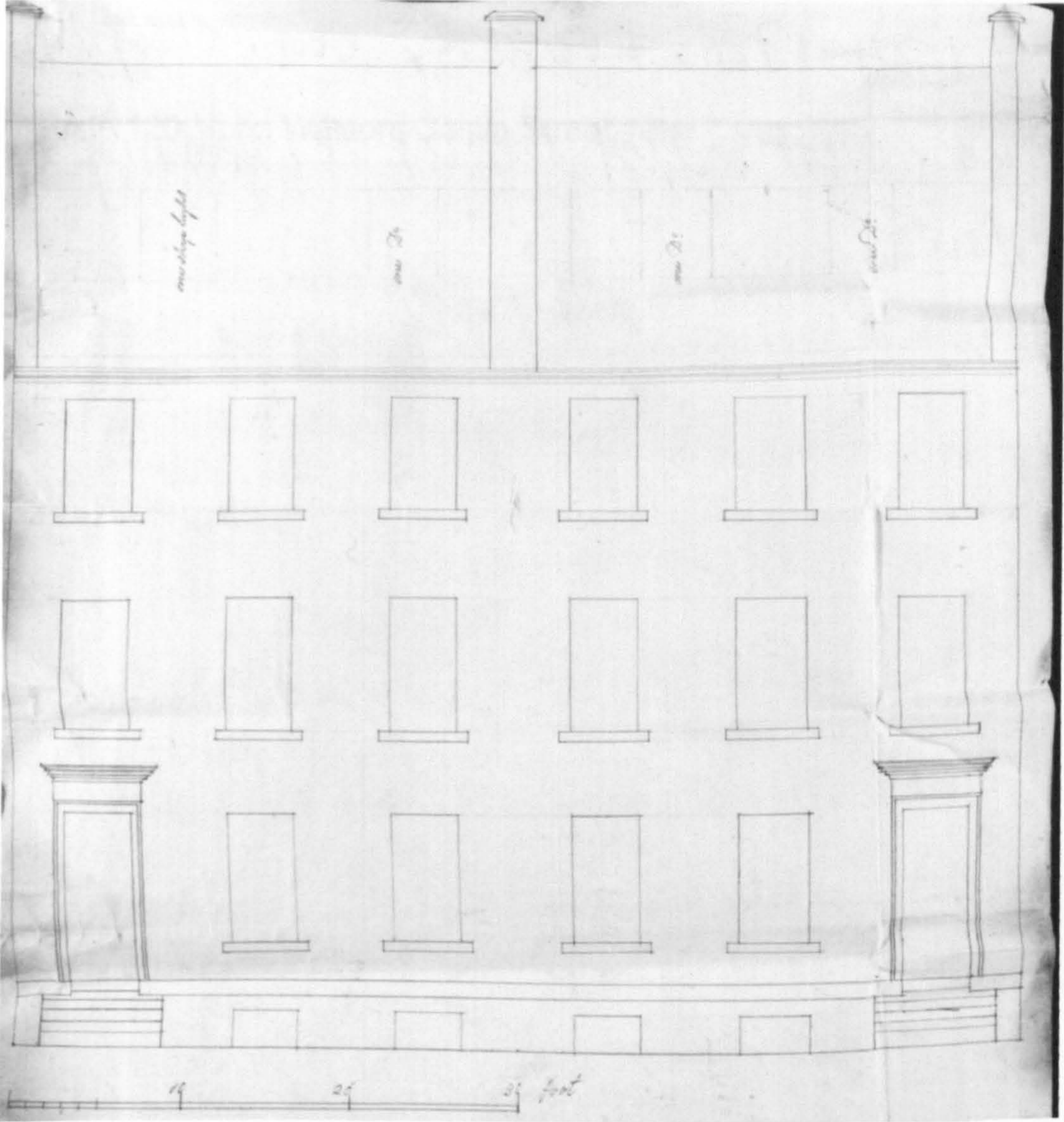


Plate 120: John Watson, Castle Street, New Town, 1791

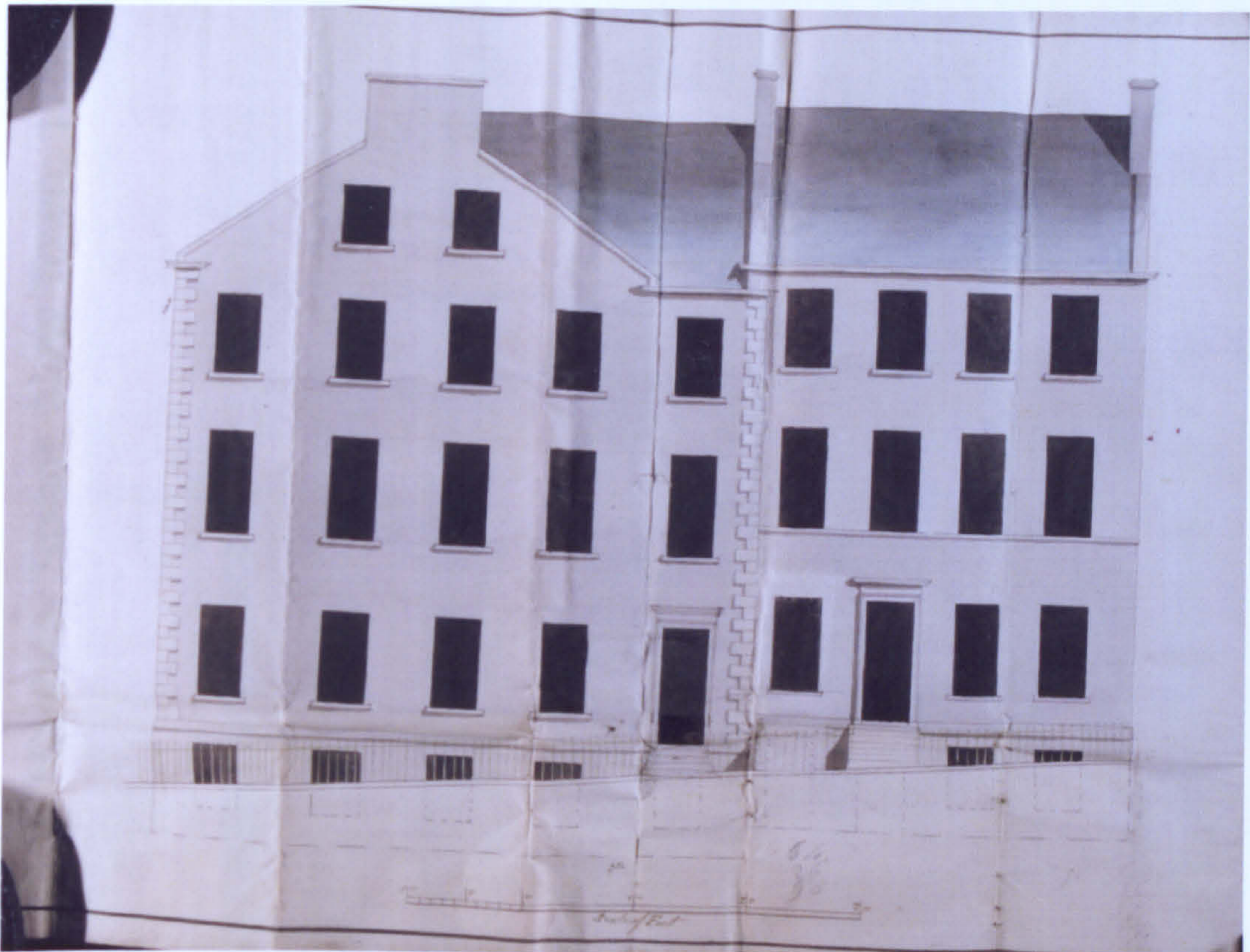




Plate 121: Alex Laing, Hanover Street, New Town, 1788

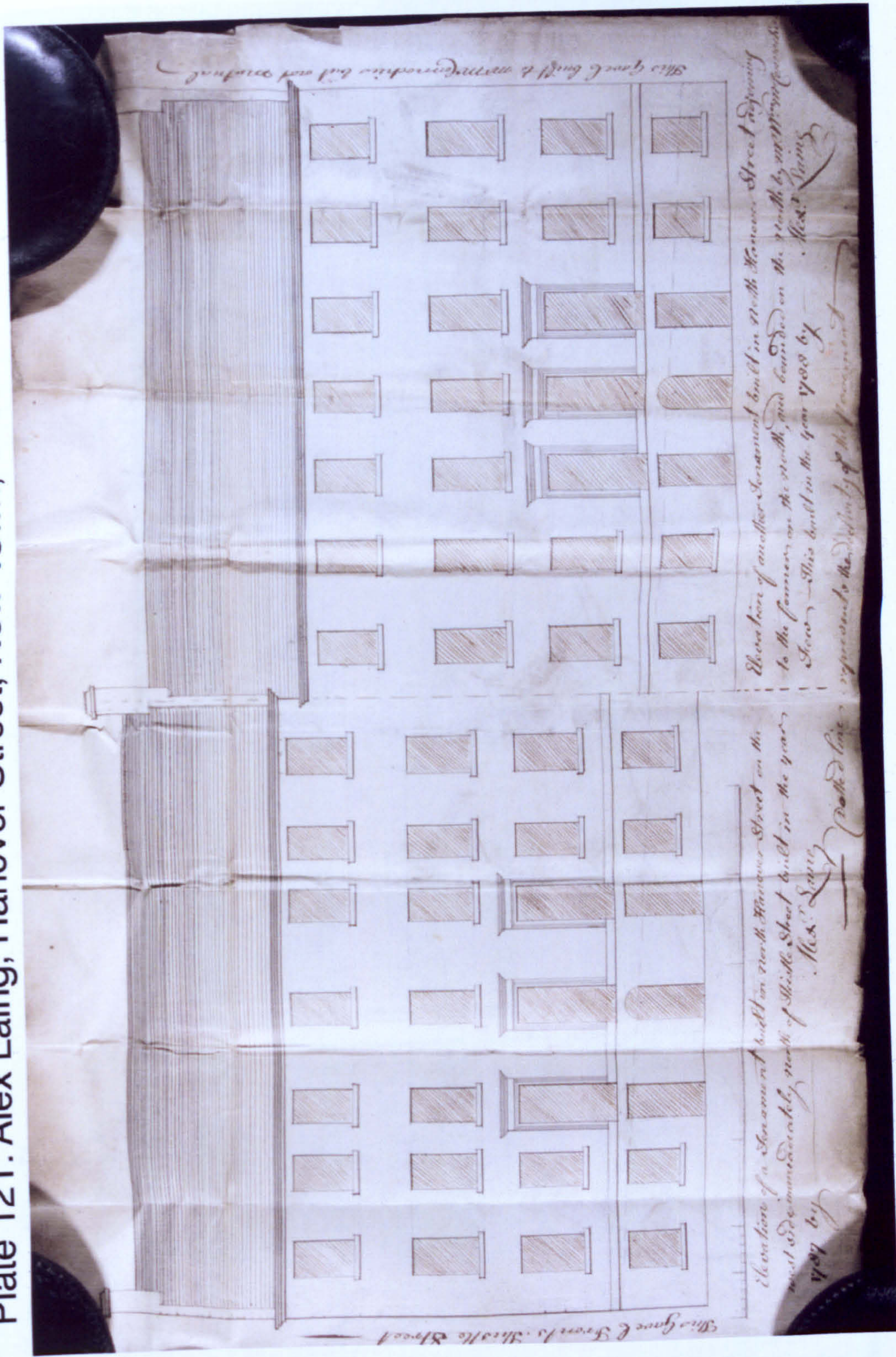


Plate 122: Shop front, Fortune's Close, 1783

Plate 122: Shop front, Fortune's Close, 1793

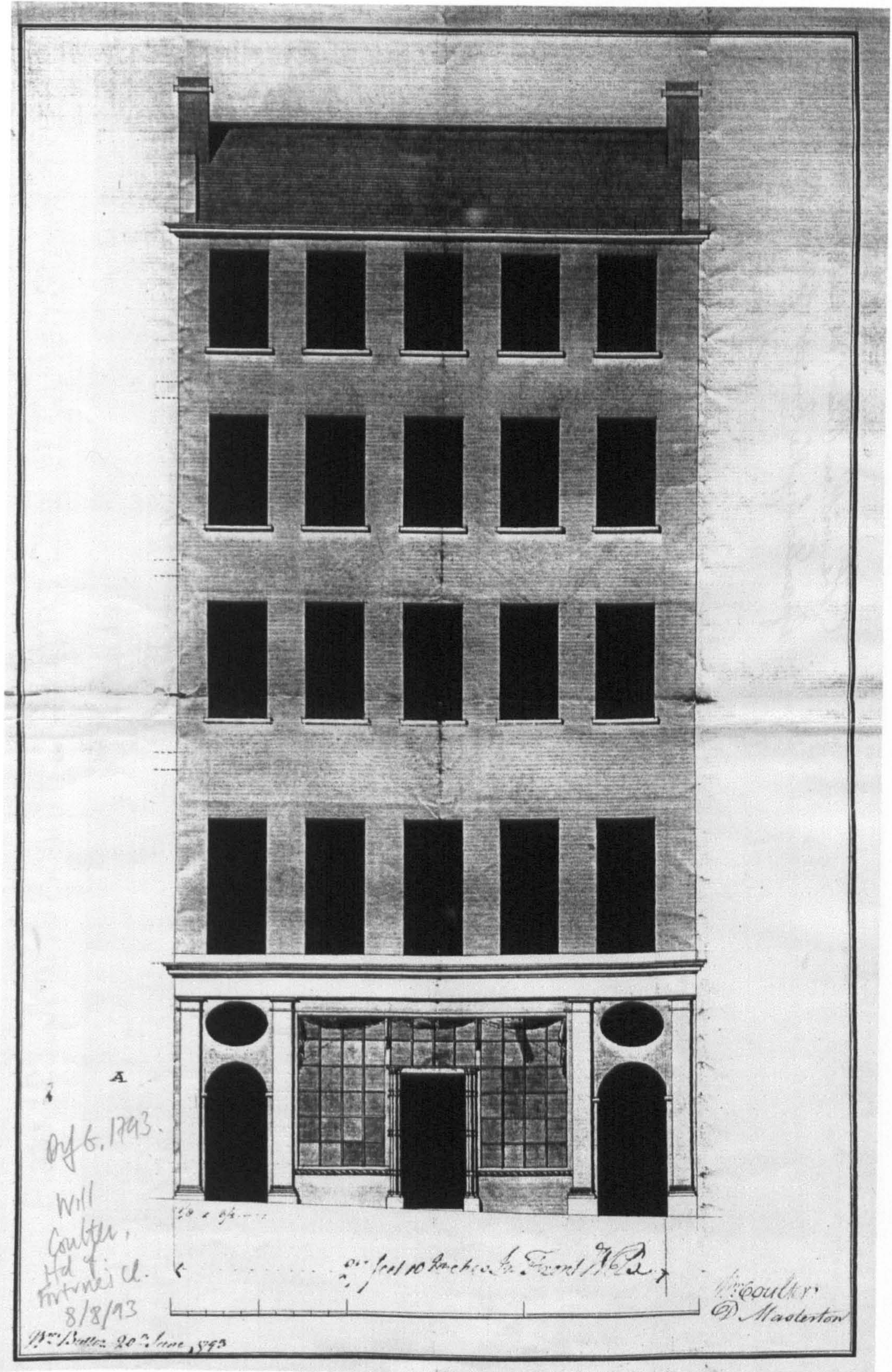


Plate 123: James Adam, St George's Chapel, Queen Street, 1791

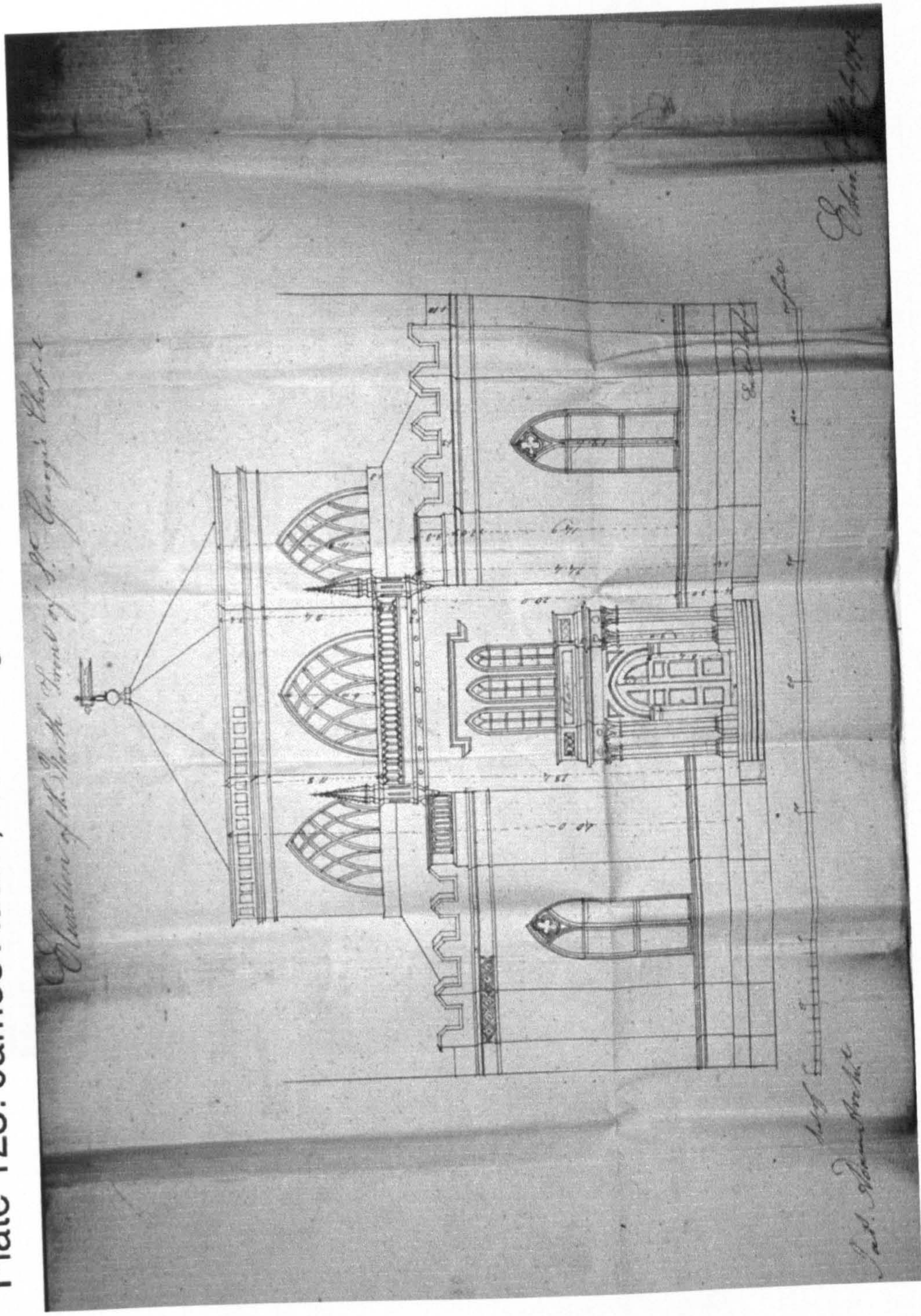


Plate 124: Frederick Street, New Town



Plate 125: Frederick Street, New Town



Plate 126: Castle Street, New Town

