Appleton's Architects:
Building the University of Edinburgh (1949-65)

A thesis submitted for the qualification of PhD

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The thesis examines and explains the background events to the architecture of the University of Edinburgh during the years 1949-65, when Sir Edward Appleton was the Principal. The four books that constitute the thesis each take different perspectives on the progress of the post-war expansion project.

Appleton had to reconcile Edinburgh's policy to reintegrate dispersed University departments within the city-centre with a rapid and unprecedented expansion in higher education. Selection of sites was the subject of a prolonged and heated debate, which is related in Book One. Aided by a formidable array of architectural talent, Appleton persuaded the local and national authorities that the controversial George Square development, in tandem with a separate suburban site for science expansion, would produce the most desirable outcome.

The second book discusses the style of architecture that was produced, looking at the pre-war background of the Edinburgh School architects: William Kininmonth, Basil Spence, Robert Matthew and Alan Reiach. The influences are traced to Scandinavia and the architects' preoccupation with cultural nationalism. These factors combined with the ethos of reconstruction and the City's ambitions for cultural regeneration to create architecture with a resonance particular to its time and place. How, and why, this is regarded as Festival Style is explained.

The academic and social objectives of the Universities, as directed by Humanists and Christians in influential positions, were crucial to the architectural outcome, and these are investigated in Book Three. A large amenity centre was planned for the University area and an important purpose-built halls-of-residence development achieved at a site near the city-centre in consequence of this. Edinburgh's own tradition, emanating from Patrick Geddes, played a significant part in the development of residences and student amenities, particularly the rehabilitation of a large 17th century building in the heart of the Old Town.
Finally, in Book Four, the relationships between the architects and the theoretical antipathies they encountered are considered. The University provided a forum for interaction between the architects, with Matthew emerging as the dominant figure, advising Appleton on architecture and planning, and ultimately setting up a University Department of Architecture. For him, the University project was part of a social mission and architecture its tool. Kininmonth, the first post-war architect to the University, was displaced by Matthew's arrival. Spence's approach to urban design was crucial in the realisation of the George Square project, and yet he too was replaced when that was achieved.

All of these architects encountered the dichotomies of Modernity and Tradition, and Science vs. Art, though with differing responses. Architects and University ultimately experienced the conflict between pragmatism and idealism. Viewed in its context, the achievement of Appleton was remarkable and, as a result, the University of Edinburgh must be considered the most extraordinary patron of architecture of the period.
Declaration

This thesis is an original work researched and composed by Clive B Fenton.

All of the normal conditions pertaining to theses at the University of Edinburgh are applicable

[Signature]
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Abbreviations

ECA  Edinburgh College of Art
EUL  Edinburgh University Library
PWDC University of Edinburgh Post War Development Committee
RAKP Rowand Anderson, Kininmonth & Paul
RMJM Robert Matthew, Johnson-Marshall & Partners
Spec. Colls. Special Collections
UA University Archives
UDC University Development Committee
UGC University Grants Committee
Appleton's Architects

Introduction

The second half of the twentieth century was shaped by the experience of the 1939-45 war and by a variety of socio-political ideas, beliefs and aspirations that had become influential in the victorious nations. The optimism and idealism of the 1940s, though now rather taken for granted and often regarded as naivety, are remarkable considering the potential for despair that existed. The war had been costly in material and human terms and revealed the horror of man’s potential for inhumanity. There had been a clash of ideologies on an unprecedented scale with Fascism crushed but the peace that had been won became an uneasy truce between the democratic and communist states. This Cold War, which was to dominate world events for the next four decades, soon brought the added threat of nuclear holocaust, as political turmoil around the world continually threatened to drag the new super-powers, the USSR and the USA, into catastrophic global conflict. In 1948 the Christian historian Arnold Toynbee succinctly described the plight of mankind thus:

“...And the evidence for social progress is, of course, impressive in the field of scientific knowledge and its application to technology: in everything that is to say, which has to do with man’s command over non-human nature. This, however, is a side issue; for the impressiveness of the evidence for progress in this field is matched by the obviousness of the fact that man is relatively good at dealing with non-human nature. What he is bad at is dealing with human nature in himself and in his fellow beings”

And yet there is a distinct impression of post-war optimism. Part of this was actually determination that there must be progress towards improving human relations. After the First World War, the victorious nations had occupied themselves with futile attempts to return to their pre-war situation and with extracting reparation. But empires had fragmented and there was revolution, while Europe and America suffered subsequent economic depression. With this experience still in living memory, there was

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universal agreement that there could be no return to the politics of the pre-war world and
that more enlightened approaches had to be found.

The scale of the Second World War had been such that economic, human and
moral resources had been deeply mined. The promise of victory in itself was not enough
to galvanise and motivate these resources and the war had become a crusade for a better
world with greater equity and international harmony. These motives were legitimised
with the Atlantic Charter of 1941, signed by Churchill and Roosevelt. The war aims of
the Allies were expressed as: freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom of
worship and political freedom for all men. In 1945 the nations that considered
themselves the Free World were under pressure to implement their wartime promises.
With humanity itself seemingly at risk, utopian ideals became an imperative rather than
simply starry-eyed idealism. The progressive arguments of reformers, informed national
and international debate. It was in this climate that the United Nations and UNESCO
were founded in order to:

“Contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among
nations through education, science and culture, in order to further universal
respect for justice, for the rule of law and for human rights and fundamental
freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world without distinction of
race, sex, language or religion…”

In the face of daunting international problems, this was affirmation of the belief
in the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind. This belief was underpinned by faith
that the tools available, i.e. scientific expertise and technology, which had proved their
worth in wartime, might be harnessed for the greater good of mankind, if only there was
the political will and ethical intent. Scientific Humanism, the intellectual movement
promoting this view, recognised that science was a morally neutral force that could be
used for either good or evil. How science was exploited in succeeding generations would
determine the future of mankind and the way to have a positive influence upon them was
perceived as a matter of education. Indeed, the University was regarded as the incubator
of society and the agent of its future. For it was here that the research leading to
technological development was carried out and where the future leaders of society had their character-forming experiences. In the light of recent history, instrumentality posed the greatest threat. Dr Hutchins of Chicago University described the situation thus.

"Civilisation can be saved only by a moral, intellectual and spiritual revolution to match the scientific, technological and economic revolution in which we are now living... If it (the University) cannot or will not contribute to this revolution, then it is irrelevant and its fate is immaterial."\(^3\)

In America, a presidential commission of 1948 published a report, the Higher Education Report for American Democracy, advocating expansion and improvement financed by government support. Deliberation was replaced by action only when the USSR put its Sputnik satellite into orbit in 1957. In West Germany, the University represented academic freedom that had been crushed by the Nazis. But the new Federal government prioritised rebuilding, reaching the pre-Hitler level of student numbers by 1955, and doubling it by 1960.

In Britain, the University was no less highly regarded as a moral and scientific hothouse, though the intellectual effort driving its advancement had embraced wider social concerns, acquiring more of a left-wing character with a greater unity of purpose across a range of progressive ideals. Part of the reason for this was the continuation of the sense of interdependency that had been experienced when Britain was under siege.

The impetus for change that had motivated and sustained morale in war propelled the nation into the post-war period of social revolution. In confirmation of wartime pledges for freedom and democracy, the Empire began to be steadily dismantled and replaced with a new co-operative Commonwealth of Nations that, nevertheless, implied a continuing sense of responsibility towards former dominions. At home expectations had been created by government propaganda and by the Humanist reformers capturing the imagination of the public with their rhetoric. Countless articles and pamphlets by professionals and enthusiastic amateurs took the opportunity to portray a New Britain purged of the maladies of the past: poverty, unemployment,

\(^3\) *The Listener* Vol. xxxvi no. 934.
inequality, poor environment, ill-health and lack of education. In January 1941, for example, a landmark edition of the Picture Post, “A Plan for Britain” was virtually a socialist manifesto. Julian Huxley, who was to become the first director general of UNESCO, contributed “Health for All” and Dr Maurice Newfield, “A Real Medical Service”. The architect Maxwell Fry wrote on planning for mass provision of housing, while an expert on working-class homes, Elizabeth Denby, promoted daylight, hygiene and ergonomics. And there were articles on full employment, agrarian and rural reform, and education.

Reconstruction came to mean not simply the repair of bomb damage but an entire restructuring of the nation along socialistic lines. With the creation of the Welfare State, signalised by the victory of the Labour Party in the 1945 election, the government took responsibility for health care and insurance, housing, employment and education at all levels. In order to secure the means of production and control the economy, the nationalisation of key industries was set in train. This post-war policy was informed by a series of government commissioned reports that were unanimously directed towards the modernisation of infrastructure and streamlining of administration with the ultimate aim of a more equitable society.

An important characteristic of post-war Britain was the speed of implementation of recommendations by important government commissions. The perception of post-war optimism is partly attributable to the conviction that the cost of the various programmes would ultimately be borne by the higher productivity that would result.

The Barlow Report (1940), by Sir Montagu Barlow’s committee, examined the state of British industry finding it badly distributed with obsolescence and inefficiency everywhere and a workforce subjected to squalid conditions. Its recommendations made a case for state control of industry and its distribution, population distribution, and for greater health and safety regulations. The Beveridge Report (1942) on social insurance found “Want, Ignorance and Disease” and its recommendations formed the cornerstone of the post-war Labour government’s policy.

Another Barlow Report (1946), “Scientific Manpower”, this time by Sir James Barlow, demonstrated the interdependency of industry, education and national
prosperity. It advocated state sponsorship of research and development and recommended that the number of science graduates should be increased from 55,000 to 90,000 by 1955 if the nation was to become industrially competitive and fulfil current objectives. It was estimated that the government would have to allocate £50m for buildings and sites for the quinquenium 1947-52 alone. This marked the beginning of what was to become a massive expansion of higher education that was not confined to producing science graduates. There was political will as well as moral and economic justification for this expansion, as Sir Walter Moberly, the first post-war chairman of the University Grants Committee (UGC), explained.

"War experience has produced in the public a more lively and sympathetic interest in the universities and a new sense of their value to the nation. This is due to a realisation of the part played by university scientists in winning the war...The backwardness of our industry...The intensified demand for social justice to the individual"\(^4\)

The UGC was given a more pro-active role in academic and physical planning and unprecedented funds were put at its disposal. Other factors contributed to the scale of the expansion required. There was a so-called "bulge" in the population due to an increase in the birth rate during the 1940s. Also, reform of the secondary school system, through the Education Act (1944) meant that an increasing proportion of school-leavers were becoming qualified for university education. The imperatives of social justice and economic necessity made it essential to guarantee grant funding and a university place for all those qualified to take it up. Just as the expansion programme was getting underway, these factors were re-emphasised and magnified by the Robbins Review and Report on Higher Education (1961-63). Previous estimates had to be revised in the light of the fact that only 61% of those qualified to do so were entering university. This shortfall of places was set to increase annually unless something substantial was done. Of the 178 recommendations of the report the most startling was that higher education should be increased by 258%, i.e. to 560,000 places by 1980.\(^5\) In the 1950s and early

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\(^4\) Sir Walter Moberly The Crisis in the University London 1949.

1960s there was a concerted effort to meet such targets and to satisfy the demand for scientists, teachers and all the other professions. Student numbers grew from 50,000 in 1945 to 125,000 in 1964, with a further increase of 100,000 considered possible by 1974. Consequently, existing universities were expanded and new ones founded. The number of universities in Britain increased from 17 in 1951 to 42 in 1968.

Architects and planners were to have a central role in Britain’s new society, and their ranks were swollen with an enlarged public service. Apart from the replacement of war damaged and obsolete buildings, there were the demands of the Welfare State for mass provision of housing, hospitals, schools and universities.

The planning profession had been extremely active during the war, agitating and lobbying, making surveys and plans, publishing pamphlets and reports and influencing reconstruction. Left-leaning groups such as Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction contributed evidence to key wartime government reports that had led to the setting up of a Ministry of Town & Country Planning and legislation culminating in the New Towns Act (1946) and the Town and Country Planning Act (1947). Local authorities were armed with greater power than ever before to control and direct planning and obliged to produce regular development plans to be approved at cabinet minister level. This appeared as a great victory for the professional planners and sociologists who had attributed so many of the nation’s maladies, such as slums, pollution, traffic congestion, and disease, to the unplanned and uncontrolled nature of development in the past.

“And we reject the ideas of the nineteenth century. We reject these bad old towns and in the name of comprehensiveness that has run like a fire through this conference, we set ourselves in this new century to a new way of doing things. It is a rejection of the laissez faire of the past and it is a rejection of the piecemeal” (Maxwell Fry)

The tone of this declamation speaks volumes about the ethos of post-war planning: the all-embracing concept under which it was felt that a myriad of social changes could be wrought, with architecture and town-planning enablers of a virtual
revolution. Observe how Fry refers to the *new* century when it was by then sixty years old. In the passion of the delivery his eschatological and prophetic legacy has been revealed: the devastation of war, or redevelopment, offering a redemptive opportunity for the rebirth of the century.

The journals of the period tell of the concerns of the architectural profession. The immediate post-war debate on the Monumental, in the Architectural Review, in 1938, threw up issues of symbolic values and architectural rhetoric. The victory of "modern architecture" over both period revivalism and the denial of technology was proclaimed. But, in Britain, there was unease about the "modern movement", its foreignness, and the ability of functionalist programmes to express anything other than utilitarianism. Eminent international figures were therefore invited to contribute their views to a symposium. The familiar standard monumentality derived from classicism, which had been so popular in the 1930s, now had associations with totalitarianism that rendered it incompatible with democracy, according to Gregor Paulsson.

"The word monumentality should...be eliminated from the architectural vocabulary as a characteristic desirable for buildings in a democratic society...The totalitarian society has always taken monumentality into its service to strengthen its power over the people, the democratic society in conformity with its nature is anti monumental."*

Sigfried Giedion felt that public architecture had the potential for monumental expression, although he warned that the genuine monumental tradition truthfully expressed the greatness of particular periods and was not to be confused with the pompous pseudo-monumentality that had emerged with Bonaparte. Lewis Mumford, alarmed at Giedion's call for a new monumentality, entered the debate condemning what he called "empty grandeur, pretentious display and over-forced impressiveness." There were fundamental choices, he argued, between ponderosity and lightness, complexity and simplicity, which were not pragmatic and technical but, rather, aesthetic, ethical and

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personal. Lucio Costa considered that there might be a type of modern monumentality, that combines the urban with the natural without being picturesque. This would be an architecture that:

"Does not ignore the part played by trees, undergrowth and fields in the natural setting; for what characterises the modern conception of urbanism...is that it abolishes the picturesque by incorporating the bucolic into the monumental".

Alfred Roth and William Holford agreed that town-planning or, at least, urban form might satisfy the conditions of monumentality. Then there were the monuments of technology: dams, power stations and electricity networks, expressing the greatness of the age. Of course, everyone had a slightly different view of what monumentality either was or should be, although it was agreed that a new architecture for the public realm was required for these times. As the Greek architect and planner, Constantinos Doxiadis, put it:

"The architect now has to build for the masses, creating architecture for everybody and not for a leading class alone".

There could be no absolute answer to the question of monumentality but certain questions were defined and left to architects to answer in their works. Essentially, these were: Does monumentality exist in twentieth century architecture? Is it possible in the face of the hegemony of functionalism? Is it a matter of strong emotional impact? Is it desirable? Does it find expression in a scale larger than individual buildings?

Monumentality, however, could be considered as simply a style and, while the Modernists claimed not to work within a style as such, many architects of the period had trained and begun in practice thinking in terms of style and genre. For them Modernism could also be thought of as a style, rather than a movement, and new technology merely a means to the same solutions as before. For others, however, technology was what led design, although social study provided the brief. This process could be seamlessly linked to standardisation and prefabrication to meet the public's real need for health, education and housing provision. The "light and dry" aesthetic of the CLASP approach, as

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championed by Stirrat Johnson-Marshall and Roger Walters, attracted the attention of
the more progressive young architects during the 1940s. Their system-built
Hertfordshire Schools project (1946) appeared revolutionary to the first batch of
architectural students after the war. This unselfconscious expression of requirements
exemplified the anti-monumentalist movement that had its later iconic manifestation in
the Smithson’s Hunstanton School (1954), which proved an enduring influence
throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Their militant tendency, often termed the New
Brutalists, was critical of the preconceptions of the Modern Movement and its perceived
irrelevance by the late 1950s, provoking the eventual implosion of the Congres
International d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM).

There was a peculiarly British debate on urban design centring on the concept of
Townscape with a semi-satirical nod in the direction of the Picturesque. In 1949 Hugh
Hastings, under the pseudonym I de Wolfe, launched the discussion in the Architectural
Review, advocating overall character and “meaning of parts”, an “easy anarchy of the
streets” and the lack of a controlling hand”: the “Sharawag” principle. Claiming a
connection with the English Radical tradition, this Picturesque Revival, with its
tolerance of buildings of different periods, appeared to fly in the face of the ethos of total
design and the authoritarian planner. This was the first manifestation of criticism of a
planning profession imbued with the spirit of reconstruction and empowered by the 1947
planning act. The Comprehensive Development Area, a statutory process for total
redevelopment, considered so appropriate for the reconstruction of bombed towns, had
seemingly blinded them to any approached that did not commence with tabula rasa.
Many architects were struck by this alternative notion of a visual philosophy – Gordon
Cullen studied it for many years. Appreciation of older buildings and the inherent
practicality of not having to redesign a whole city every time a house burned down gave

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9 The Consortium of Local Authorities Special Project (CLASP) is dealt with extensively in Andrew Saint’s Towards a Social
the Townscape principle of “precedent” a certain appeal and it gradually became accepted into mainstream town-planning.

The British public received its first substantial impression of modern design in 1951 with the Festival of Britain and its South Bank Exhibition, in London. This event is considered as something of a cultural landmark heralding the end of austerity and the beginning of the Welfare State. Its impact was such that much of the conservative resistance to Modernism was relinquished. Politicians and local authority officials began to equate modern design with improvement symbolic of renewal.

The need for urban regeneration was commonly linked to the strong post-war desire for cultural renewal. Also in 1951, the Modernist’s response to the task of rebuilding the ruined urban centres of Europe was expressed at the CIAM’s congress, “The Core of the City”, at Hoddesdon, in England. The delegates attempted to define what was desirable in the city-core and how it might be achieved. Although opinion varied as to what the precise contents should be, there was a consensus on historical examples of good city cores. Piazza San Marco, in Venice, emerged time and again as a civic space of universal admiration. José Sert, however, did point out that, like many Medieval piazzas it was no longer the lively place of religious and civic ceremony that it had once been.

While the delegates agreed that: “The landscape of the core is essentially a civic landscape”, there were further anxieties about monumentality. Jaqueline Tyrwhitt warned that:

“The Civic Centre – that monumental group of buildings standing in isolated grandeur – is not what is meant by the Core”

J M Richards’ contribution was to point out the difficulty of trying to create a city-core entirely from scratch. They already existed, although many were in a dysfunctional state. These had to be re-civilised and improved. For instance, the domination of vehicular traffic was identified as being particularly destructive of civic

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12 J. Tyrwhitt “Cores within the Urban Constellation” p.103 in Tyrwhitt, Sert & Rogers (Eds.) The Heart of the City, CIAM NY 1952.
space. The principle of pedestrian/vehicle segregation became a ubiquitous feature of post-war urban design.

Walter Gropius’ paper at Hoddesdon, “The Human Scale at Harvard”, was particularly relevant to the concerns of the era as it referred to university architecture at the city-core. He cited the Harvard College Yard, where a core was achieved gradually over a period of time, but where all the architects had followed a concept that resulted in a sequence of open courtyards between buildings. Gropius studied the proportional relationship between buildings and spaces in order to inform his design of the Graduate Centre there. Accordingly this took the form of interlocking quadrangles, with the essentially linear buildings linked by covered walkways. The courtyard layout, with its origins in monastic architecture and in England’s ancient universities, allowed the creation of collegiate identity by combining residences with academic buildings. These ideas were influential upon campus design and university architecture at a time of rapid expansion, whether it was a civic university at the city-core or a completely new greenfield development. The covered walkways, ostensibly practical in providing shelter, explicate the circulation and formalise routes that bring students and staff together in a sort of academic procession. They also signify links between academic disciplines and, fundamentally, between science and the humanities, which the Humanist academics were so eager to promote as part of an anti-instrumental policy. Thus, in Britain, where the UGC encouraged architectural individuality for universities as an aid to corporate identity, such different structures as the robust concrete arches at Sussex and the somewhat lightweight timber walkways at Lancaster serve the same purpose. At Leeds University (1960), by Chamberlin, Powell and Bon, street decks and bridges form the linkage.

As Gropius had implied, a university might form a city-core. At, Liverpool, for example, where the decision to develop within the city was made in 1946, the university redeveloped a heavily bombed area. Its precinct might be said to have fulfilled the aim of regeneration and to form part of a cultural core to the city, particularly since it was linked to that of the new Metropolitan Cathedral. There was something of the Oxbridge tradition in the attempt to knit together city and university and, in the retained central
garden of Abercrombie Square and other green space, some emulation of the Cambridge Backs. The part played by trees, greenery and water in creating the environment of Cambridge remained a consideration. No-where was this so obvious as at York (1962) and Stirling (1965), each with a lake and lavish planting by H F Clark, making Cambridge look arid by comparison.

Even where new campuses were created in the countryside, urban precedents were relevant since, by virtue of utopian ideals, they might be considered ideal cities or ideal communities. The relatively large population of these institutions and the maxim of short walking distances guaranteed high density of an urban sort.

While most of the post-war universities had plans aimed at achieving enclosure of varying degrees of intimacy the three dimensional form was usually punctuated by one or more tall towers standing to the side of the complex, a compositional technique that allowed the required density to be achieved. Common academic and social aims unsurprisingly led to similar solutions whatever the location. The Chicago Circle (1962) at the University of Illinois, by Skidmore, Owens and Merill, is a low group organised around a circulation plan and dominated by a tower. In Gabriel Epstein’s design for Lancaster, Bowland Tower overlooks Alexandra Square, an enclosure formed by three and four-storey buildings. At the University of Essex (1963), by Kenneth Capon, groups of residential towers flank a complex of buildings arranged to create courtyards. Basil Spence’s original proposals for Southampton University (1957), with its tower, walkways, piazzas, trees and water features was a forerunner, if not antecedent of all these. The Architectural Review regarded this as a refreshing and enlightened alternative to “gratuitously monumental developments” such as Queen’s University Belfast. And we can see that it embodied certain ideas pertaining to academic requirements as well as to certain design principles that sought to create the right sort of environment. It might even be thought of as an echo of Sert’s prescription for a “Centre of Community Life” which he expounded at Hoddeston.

“Trees plants, water, sun and shade and all the natural elements friendly to man should be found in such centres and these elements of nature should
harmonise with the buildings and their architectural shapes, sculptural values and colour. Landscaping must play a very important role. The whole should be arranged so as to please man and to stimulate the best in human nature"\textsuperscript{13,14}

In coming to terms with the post-war era one has to take into account the foregoing themes: Scientific Humanism with its optimism/determination for sustainable morality, democracy, social justice and cultural renewal. The attempt to aesthetically reconcile these in architecture involved social commitment, technologically led innovation, anti-monumental design and engagement with the natural world.

The aspirations for the universities embodied the ethos of the period. Yet behind each post-war university design, whether a new foundation or an expansion of an existing one, there is a history of specific responses by individuals to the important issues of the era and to the pragmatics of the particular case. Yet any such case can be a vehicle for our understanding of the issues and the difficulties of the post-war condition. This thesis examines such a case history, that of the University of Edinburgh, under its illustrious principal, Sir Edward Appleton (1949-65).

This case, while demonstrating an expansion project involving all the issues of the era, was also prodigious in terms of UK university development, with something of a pre-war history. For, when the University began building after the war, it was informed by its own tradition of involvement in urban design. There was the 18\textsuperscript{th} century South Bridge scheme where a college building was integrated into, and reliant upon, major urban improvements. More recently there had been the influence of biologist/polymath Sir Patrick Geddes. Geddes, the acknowledged pioneer of 20\textsuperscript{th} century town and regional planning, had the metaview and comprehensiveness that post-war planners aspired to. From his Edinburgh headquarters, he preached urban regeneration as a physical, spiritual and cultural process. The University, like the cathedral of the middle ages, was the heart of the city, he asserted. The arteries of its invigorating intellectual influence should be made to circulate ever more freely in a symbiotic relationship with the city. Thus the slums could be cleansed and renovated and communities of scholars

\textsuperscript{13} "Bad into Good" p.234 \textit{The Architectural Review}, Oct. 1957.
\textsuperscript{14} J.L. Sert "Centres of Community Life" p.111. in Tyrwhitt, Sert & Rogers (eds.) \textit{The Heart of the City, CIAM} \textsuperscript{8} NY 1952.
installed to raise the general standard of the population and give a positive example to
the other inhabitants, he argued. His protégé, Frank Mears, produced a city plan for
Edinburgh, in 1931, which cast the University as an element in an ambitious tripartite
scheme. Though his plan would have been considered rather dangerously influenced by
notions of monumentality by the Hoddeston delegates, the idea of a cultural entity
embedded in the city-core would have received approbation.

Appleton was appointed on the eve of anticipated change and growth and,
although the magnitude and rapidity were as yet unknown, he was expected to produce a
fifty-year plan. He was uniquely fitted for such an endeavour being extremely well
connected in academic and government circles. A scientist, awarded a Nobel Prize for
his research into the ionosphere, he worked for the military in the First World War. In
the next war he was administrator in charge of Britain’s atom bomb project. At the time
of his appointment he chaired the government agency, the Department for Scientific and
Industrial Research (DSIR), by virtue of which he was an ex officio member of the
University Grants Committee. He had also sat on the Barlow committee that produced
the influential report “Scientific Manpower”. Appleton was a Christian with a high level
of moral commitment to both the nation and humanity, and he was acutely aware of the
spiritual and scientific roles that the universities might play in an age of accelerating
technological development. He described the two main developments of the time as:
man’s recognition of his responsibility as his brother’s keeper (i.e. the Welfare State)
and man’s increasing power over nature.\(^{15}\)

By the time of Appleton’s arrival, Edinburgh’s student roll had increased to
6,457 from the 1938 figure of 3,826, without the provision of significant additional
accommodation. By 1961 it had 3,600 students and was planning for 7,500 by 1970. In
response to the Robbins Report in 1963, it decided to aim for an additional 3,000 by
1968. The planning and execution of the architecture that this entailed is the subject of
the forthcoming chapters.

\(^{15}\) Sir Edward Appleton “The University and the Community” a speech given at the Conference of University Rectors and Vice
+EUL Spec. Colls. UA Box 151 VE.
Appleton's Architects
Book One. A Planning Dialogue

For the sake of clarifying the succession of events, and as a primer for further consideration of the University's architecture, this, the first of the four books that comprise the thesis is an account of the planning dialogue between City and University during the Appleton period, together with a review of the important decisions made prior to his arrival.

City and University shared a strong architectural tradition. Old College, the University's great neo-Classical quadrangle, was built by the City on behalf of its College. That project was one of the civic improvements arising out of Enlightenment ideals. \(\text{Fig. 1.1}\) Late in the nineteenth century, a substantial new Medical School was erected, and while the city fully supported this expansion, the University, empowered by the Universities (Scotland) Act 1858, operated autonomously in obtaining a site and commissioning an architect. \(\text{Fig. 1.2}\)

The University had made certain important decisions before Appleton arrived in 1949. The most crucial of these was the adoption of the principle of reintegrating the University into the core of the city. This, when linked to the acknowledged need for expansion to meet the demands of the age and the desire to keep Edinburgh at the forefront of new developments in higher education, guaranteed a major planning exercise. In order to achieve these objectives, the University Court had decided that new university buildings would be erected on the site of George Square, in the centre of the city, and that a satellite campus created for the purposes of science and engineering would be abandoned.
Chapter One. Fragmentation and Reintegration.

It is part of the nature of a successful university that it will expand, and the constant search for more accommodation has characterised the history of the University of Edinburgh. Its physical location in a densely built up part of the city exacerbated the problem. (Figs. 1.04 & 1.03) The success of medical teaching and research in the nineteenth century resulted in a specially designed Medical School.\textsuperscript{1}

In order to locate this close to the recently built Royal Infirmary, property was acquired and demolished to clear a site. Early in the twentieth century, when Engineering and Science began to outgrow the Old College, a group of buildings formerly occupied by the town's infirmary lying a short distance to the east, in a sector known as High School Yards, was acquired and converted. (Figs. 1.05, 1.06 & 1.07) This was the beginning of the so-called "centrifugal effect", as the needs for an ever-expanding quota of departments were met wherever property could be found for conversion. The lack of development sites in the city and the unsatisfactory nature of most converted buildings led to the purchase of West Mains Farm where, in the inter-war years, the University erected a number of buildings for Science and Engineering on the site known as King's Buildings. Here, the building designs and site layout allowed for future expansion in a way that seemed impossible in the city. This move, however, proved unpopular. Many of the University's staff and students felt isolated from the city and from the rest of the University. (Fig. 1.08) The idea that the arts and sciences were being segregated also created feelings of disquiet amongst those academics adhering to the Scottish tradition of generalist education.

When the Department of Zoology was allocated a site there, the Zoology professor, Ashworth, demanded a location in the city, at George Square, and he even

\textsuperscript{1}Park Place previously occupied the site. Demolition for the Reid School of Music started the obliteration of this Georgian terrace in 1858 and site clearance for the Medical School completed it in 1880.
led a rebellion. But vacant sites in the city with the potential for future extension were non-existent.²

Feelings of isolation and inconvenience led to calls for re-integration from within the University, but others outwith the University were also unhappy about the centrifugal effect that threatened to ultimately carry all its departments to the green fields of West Mains, where there was adequate room to expand. The motives behind the reversal of this suburbanisation of the University were twofold. The presence of large teaching institutions contributed to economic vitality, while cultural and intellectual vitality had also traditionally depended upon the University.

In the 1920s, the City had problems over and above the impending loss of the University from its midst. In common with most cities, there was a need for improvements to the road system. The advent of the study of city planning as a profession and a discipline in its own right exposed the legacy of the unplanned nature of development over the previous half century. Aerial photography exposed the horror and chaos resulting from unchecked piecemeal development in European cities, with housing, education and industry existing cheek by jowl and ad-hoc

²The Department of Chemistry building was the first to be completed at the new King's Building's site in 1924. In May 1926, when a new Zoology building was being planned for King's Buildings, Professor Ashworth submitted a petition with 19 signatures opposing the move. The objectors won the support of the Senatus arguing that it was not desirable that Zoology be removed from the neighbourhood of the Medical School and its museums. 75% of Zoology students were either graduates of the medical faculty or students within the faculty. Ashworth's memorandum of May 1926 pointed out that it was General Medical Council policy that Zoology should form part of the medical course. He also wrote to the University Secretary reminding him of a meeting the Principal had held with the heads of the various science departments in January 1918. Ashworth claimed that it was the opinion of this meeting that the south side of George Square be utilised for Chemistry, Natural History, Zoology and Geology. No action had been taken at the time and Principle Sir Alfred Ewing purchased the West Mains Site in the same year. Ashworth's objection was opposed on the grounds that: no suitable site near the Medical buildings would be available for at least five years, that such a site would be expensive to purchase and it would entail demolition and a more expensive building. On the other hand, the University already owned King's Building's outright. Time was of the essence since delays would have resulted in the loss of an £18,000 grant from the Carnegie Trust. In June 1926, Lorimer & Matthew were appointed as architects and a site at King's Buildings chosen. Report of the Sub-Committee on the site for the New Zoology Building (11/1/24)/ Ashworth's letter to the Secretary (9/3/25)/ Petition and Memorandum (14/5/26)/ Extract of Senatus motion (March 1926)/ Opposing motion of Court March 1926.

-EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Pt1 list D Box 20 TA
structures encroaching on most of the garden ground. Slum housing shrouded in industrial pollution shamed Edinburgh as much as any other town.

The city actually had a formidable history of improvement schemes from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards. The first substantial city plan of the twentieth century, however, was the outcome of a committee set up to consider re-planning the central area. The architect and planner, Frank Mears (1880-1953), provided the expertise while Principal Sir Thomas Holland (1868-1947) and Professor Sir Thomas Hudson Beare represented the University. Mears, who was a protege of the polymath planning pioneer Patrick Geddes, made clear in the introduction to his report (1931) that the aim of the exercise was to counter "haphazard methods of the past century". In other words he sought to impose order upon chaos. The part of his plan that concerns us here is how he proposed to assist the future development of the University. (Fig. 1.09) Mears devised a tripartite zoning for the city-centre with each zone oriented on an east-west axis. The ancient Royal Mile forming the backbone of the historic Old Town was augmented by what he called the "Business Mile", since that was what the formerly residential New Town to the north had essentially become. Mears felt that all the institutions of further and higher education, which were located to the south of the Royal Mile, should together be considered as "The University". He proposed that they be given preferential consideration in this zone, which he called the "College Mile". Many decayed properties and slum dwellings choked the area, and educational expansion depended upon their removal. Presumably with the full approval of the University's representatives with whom he had consulted, he proposed that several large sites be allocated to the University. Between Old College and the Medical School a large city block was set aside for a library and administration. Then, an avenue, running west to east lined with university buildings commencing with a chapel, was proposed. This avenue with central gardens would proceed to the Pleasance in the east, where it would terminate on a proposed new building to replace the cramped Heriot Watt
College. The north side of George Square, where the University had recently erected a building for its Departments of Forestry and Agriculture, was proposed as the site for extensions to the Medical School. To the east of the main entrance to Old College the fabric of the old city was dense. A shopping street on the main thoroughfare masked streets of decaying Georgian tenements, a public bath-house and two schools, as well as the converted buildings which housed the University Departments of Engineering and Natural Philosophy. All this was to be swept away in a complete redevelopment to the advantage of the University.

As a university expansion scheme this was rather grandiose. Even if the money could be found for site acquisition, there would be an obligation upon both the University and the local authority that consented to such a plan to provide alternative accommodation for the thousands of people made homeless and the dozens of businesses displaced. A massive effort and huge resources would have been required and it now seems rather unrealistic considering the economic depression affecting the country. One can even detect the hand of Geddes in all this. To be fair to Mears, the scheme did have the sort of architectural audacity that had always appealed to the citizens of Edinburgh, and it was clearly a very long-term plan. The Mears Plan, however, was never officially adopted nor was any attempt made to implement its precepts.

Nevertheless, the Mears plan is important to our story in two respects. Firstly, it created the expectation within the city that any new university development would proceed from Old College towards High School Yards in the east. In succeeding years it was constantly resurrected as an alternative to official schemes. Mears' proposal that the north side of George Square should be used for an extension to the Medical School was the other important aspect as it was used as justification this extension. The architect J.R. McKay was commissioned to produce a design for the

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1 The Departments of Agriculture and Forestry occupied the first purpose-built University building in George Square. This was executed in a Renaissance Palazzo style by the University's Clerk of Works, Walter Clark.
first phase, which the University approved in 1940. \{Figs. 1.10a & 1.10b\} As a result of the war, however, the project was cancelled. Instead, the local authority (Edinburgh Corporation) granted a warrant, in 1940, for air-raid shelters on part of the site!^4

Chapter Two. Postwar Planning

During the Second World War, Lord Reith, the Minister for Buildings and Works, urged the nation to plan boldly for the future. In Edinburgh the first outcome of this exhortation was the Clyde Report (1943) with Sir Donald Pollock, University Rector, on the committee. The report was entirely textual but it made specific points following on from the Mears Plan. Crucially, it recommended reintegration of the University into the city-centre.

"We consider that the University should come to occupy one coherent area and that steps should be taken immediately to unite its presently separated parts. This involves a substantial scheme of reconstruction of the area immediately adjoining the present main university buildings, but such a scheme would well repay anxious consideration. While it contains streets that call for redevelopment, it also embraces excellent architectural gems such as George Square, which are well worth preservation. Since our committee was

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^4The site for this building combined a vacant plot and that of two old houses (nos. 14 & 15) used by the Edinburgh and East Of Scotland College of Agriculture. The college had seen its own plan for the same site shelved because of the First World War. In return for giving up its property in the square, the University pledged to provide the college with accommodation in the more suitable rural setting at King's Buildings and to support its grant applications for its share of the cost. This new building was also to house the University's Departments of Agriculture and Forestry, thus freeing more of north George Square for further phases of the Medical Extension. The prime mover behind the Medical Extension project was the Professor of Commerce, William Oliver, who was also convenor of the University's Works Committee. The University Clerk Of Works, James Cordiner draughted plans for the Medical building and for a combined Forestry and Agriculture building, for both the University and the E.E.S.C.A. to be sited at King's Buildings. \{Fig. 1.12\} These plans were presented in "Medical Buildings Extension Scheme: Statement from the University Court for the Information of the Development Commission".

- EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 140 "Medical Buildings Extension File"

A warrant was granted for demolition of nos. 14 and 15 in July 1940, but not taken up, and a new warrant for air-raid shelters on the vacant plot was granted in October 1940.

- Edinburgh City Archive, Dean of Guild Court Records.

The design of the Cordiner and McKay buildings are discussed in Book Two
formed the University has appointed a committee to consider this and other
matters. We recommend the Corporation in co-operation with the University
to carry out the redevelopment of the area around and east of the main
university buildings as one self contained unit."

This report, while advising development to the east of Old College as Mears had
proposed, seemed to be seeking a more pragmatic scheme than the College Mile.
Indeed, the report may have been referring to Mears' grandiosity when it stated:

"The history of Edinburgh is littered with great schemes that came to
naught because they sought to mould the city to a preconceived plan instead
of adjusting the plan to fit a living growing community."

Significantly, the Clyde Committee made a special point of recommending the
preservation of George Square. The square had become something of a university
enclave since the beginning of the century with converted houses containing student
hostels, and there was also the Women's Union, as well as the Departments of
Forestry and Agriculture. Several members of staff also lived in properties owned by
the University. The square was considered an important example of eighteenth
century urban design, the first outside the old city boundaries. And, despite
substantial alterations, particularly on the north side, it possessed a picturesque
quality chiefly because of the vernacular character of the earlier buildings and the

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3 Report of the Advisory Committee on City Development (J.L.Clyde KC (Chair) Sir Thomas B
4 Report of the Advisory Committee on City Development (J.L.Clyde KC (Chair) Sir Thomas B
5 On the north side of the square, George Watson's Ladies College occupied the sites of nos. 3-7; the
University's Departments of Forestry and Agriculture were in a building (1912) on the sites of nos.
8, 9 & 10. The Indian Students Union was at no. 11 while the Muir Hall of Residence was in an
extended original house at no. 12. The Edinburgh and East of Scotland College of Agriculture
occupied converted houses at nos. 12-15.
On the south side, nos. 30-32 had been substantially reconstructed to form the student residence,
Masson House. Nos. 33-37 received a similar treatment in 1927 to create Cowan House, which
required a large extension to the rear.
On the east side of the square, the Women's Union occupied Nos. 52 & 53 with an extension to the
rear.
large mature garden in the centre. The historical associations with Edinburgh society, however, greatly enhanced its perceived value.

Also in 1943, a further specific mention of George Square was made in the exhibition catalogue for "Rebuilding Edinburgh", the architect Robert Hurd describing it as "a striking example of good speculative building". Hurd may have been felt to have some sort of vested interest though, since he lived in a house rented from the University in the square. [Figs. 1.11a - 1.11d]

All this concern about George Square was provoked by the post-war development policy, which the University was in the process of formulating. In response to the Clyde Committee's enquiry, the University provided a memorandum on its future development. First and foremost, the University was determined not to repeat the mistakes of the past when no provision had been made for future expansion. The long-term view was that practically all the land that Mears had designated for the University would be required for growth. The University demanded of the City that no development should take place in a large area between the Royal Infirmary and the King's Park and between Rankeillor Street and Chambers Street without it being consulted.

There was already an assumption that the whole north side of George Square would eventually come under University control since it was the only land on which the Medical School could possibly be extended. The first indications of the coming conflict are in this memorandum. For, while the Clyde Report had called for George Square to be preserved, the University now declared an interest in it and the surrounding streets. And, while the Clyde Committee had mentioned "architectural gems", the University claimed that the properties in the zone required for expansion

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8 Brochure: The Edinburgh Architectural Association "Rebuilding Edinburgh" July-August 1943 at the National Gallery of Scotland. Frank Mears, Ian Lindsay, Rendel Govan and Robert Hurd gave lectures.
- Edinburgh Central Library, Edinburgh Room.
9 "Memorandum on behalf of the University of Edinburgh in reply to a letter of 12 May 1943 from the Advisory Committee on City Development" 19 July 1943.
- EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 141 VE.
were either condemned, likely to be condemned, or of no historic interest. In justification for its claim to a large acreage of the city-centre, the University declared that it was considering abandoning the King's Buildings site, for reasons of inconvenience, in order to move its science and engineering departments to the central area. Thus, the price to be paid for the reintegration that had been called for so vociferously was that George Square would be required as the central element of future University development.

The memorandum also announced that the University was about to receive a donation of property that included practically a whole city block situated between George Square and Old College. Superficially this might have appeared to constitute the first of many acquisitions to clear the ground for new University buildings. But, in fact, Sir Donald Pollock was the donor of the property and, rather than comprehensive demolition, he demanded retention of both the donated buildings and George Square.\(^\text{10}\)

**Chapter Three. Oliver and the Master Plan**

The declared interest in George Square acknowledges a proposal by Professor Oliver that, as a logical sequel to the acquisition of the north side of the square for the Faculty of Medicine, the other buildings on the south, east and west sides should be ultimately replaced by university buildings. This would permit the science departments to be removed from King's Buildings. There was an element of simplicity about the proposal that warranted serious consideration. As Oliver had put it, the square could be developed block by block to form a "magnificent quadrangle".\(^\text{11}\) \{Fig.1.13\}

By the time that "The Clyde Report" was published, the University had formed its Post War Development Committee (PWDC) in order to consider the requirements of

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\(^{10}\) The so-called "island site" donated by Pollock was bounded by Lothian Street, Potterrow and Bristo Street and lay to the north-east of George Square. See Fig. 1.04.

\(^{11}\) William Oliver, "Memorandum on University Extension and Consolidation Scheme" January 1944. -EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 141 VE
faculty committees and make recommendations to the University Court. The first PWDC met in November of that year (1943). Convened by the principal, Sir Thomas Holland, the committee consisted of all the Deans of Faculty as well as Mr. Carlyle Gifford and Professor William Oliver. In a very astute move, Councilor Falconer was chosen as representative of the town. Councillor Falconer, later Sir John, was soon to become the next Lord Provost.

Over and above resumption of the Medical School extension, tentative post-war requirements were identified as a new library, science laboratories, new departments of agricultural engineering and aeronautics, halls of residence and administration facilities. Oliver continued to promote his George Square scheme known as the "Master Plan" until in March 1944 the PWDC recommended that this should be adopted as the basis for future development.

Moreover, University development was not simply a matter of finding sites for new buildings to satisfy a desire for reintegration. The clear objective was that the University of Edinburgh should assert itself as one of the major educational institutions in the country. It was acknowledged that all the best students were going to St. Andrew's University: an intolerable situation. The plan of January 1944, that Oliver had drawn up by the Clerk of Works, is a simple block plan indicating how the Science departments could be accommodated. On south George Square Oliver's plan located Physics, Mathematics, Geography, Engineering Astronomy and Geology, while on the west there is Chemistry (Science and Medicine). The north side is obviously for Medicine with half of it already approved by the City. Administration, a Senate Hall, Examination Rooms and Library found places on the east. As one might expect from the Works Department, a space is allocated for boiler houses and for its own offices behind the buildings on the south. Apart from the siting of Medicine, the rest seems fairly arbitrary, and there appears to be no record explaining the choice of shapes of the particular building footprints. The magnificence of the proposed quadrangle would of course depend largely on
building design, but there were clear advantages in the plan. The square had a garden that would form the centrepiece, and there was a large open green space, the Meadows, providing playing fields a mere shot put away. This parkland area to the rear helped to give the square a certain sense of seclusion and tranquility that was a rarity in the city centre. The essential requirement that redevelopment be carried out in phases could also easily be met following the block by block approach. Oliver cited other practical advantages such as shared boiler house and economical servicing of a rational layout. Disadvantages for the University seemed few. Student residential places would be lost but a gift by Sir Donald Pollock of the land and buildings at Salisbury Green promised convenient replacement. In deference to Pollock's plea to save George Square, however, the University Court delayed its decision on the master plan. Ill health then forced Principal Sir Thomas Holland to retire in September 1944 and his successor, Sir John Fraser (1885-1947), who was equally committed to bring the Science departments back to the city centre, took the chair of the PWDC.

While University reintegration was a universal desire in Edinburgh, the manner in which it might be achieved was extremely contentious. And, while there was certainly a planning dialogue between the University and Edinburgh Corporation, neither party nor the citizenry spoke with a unified voice. Although there was some dissent to the scheme within the University, its executive body, the University Court, had acquired an unwavering resolve. Most of those opposed to the development of George Square looked to the Mears plan and the idea of development to the east of Old College. There were calls from Pollock and others for "Town and Gown" to work together to come up with a solution and for the Corporation to propose alternatives.

12 Correspondence between the Secretary and Pollock regarding alternatives and the University Court meeting of 20 November 1944 where he begged for a stay-of-execution for the square. -EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 141 VE
Anticipating the resuscitation of the Mears proposal, Professor Oliver began compiling a convincing dossier of disadvantages inherent in development to the east of Old College. The steep cross-fall of the land to the north and to the east of 80 feet would certainly have created some architectural challenges; possibly entailing substructure work to create a platform in order to have all the buildings at the same level. Oliver's research showed that industry and domestic fires made this the most soot-polluted part of the city while George Square was comparatively lightly contaminated. In addition, a major traffic artery separated Old College from the adjacent site creating difficulties in terms of road safety, while the resultant noise and vibration from vehicles was considered incompatible with lectures and study, and detrimental to certain scientific experiments.

There were other logistical obstacles to a straightforward redevelopment of that area, which had a large residential population living in overcrowded, badly maintained, rented accommodation. All of these people would have to be found new homes and their circumstances were such that either the University or the City would have had to provide these. The University would never have been in a position to do this and, although the City might ultimately be required to do so under slum clearance legislation, this would bring another time factor into the equation. As it happened, the Corporation was in no position to make any firm commitment over the issue.

It was unacceptable to the University that its future development should be entirely dependent upon a Corporation house building programme that was yet to be formulated. Many years might have elapsed before the site could be cleared. Oliver himself felt that there was a danger that the University would be saddled with the cost of demolishing all of these old tenements. The loss of public buildings was not felt significant at this time, however, and nor was the destruction of several historic
buildings a consideration by any party!\textsuperscript{13} Moreover, the University certainly could not afford to vacate its own buildings there until replacements had been built.

Chapter Four. Abercrombie and Holden

The city authorities were under pressure to make some sort of decision but were, as yet, unable to. The Clyde Report could not be considered a bona fide civic survey, and as a detailed report was still some distance into the future, it was not yet clear if the University's scheme might conflict with the City's own plans which were as yet non-existent. The University was pressing ahead, and had taken the initiative; while the city was lagging behind and could only follow or obstruct.

The Lord Provost set up a Special Committee to look at post-war development, including that of the University. It is worth remarking here that part of the uniqueness of the situation of Edinburgh as a civic university is that the post of Lord Provost also carries with it responsibility to the University, for the holder of that title is an \textit{ex officio} member of the University Court. The Lord Provost is also one of four members of the Town Council who perform as the University's Curators of Patronage: the body responsible for academic appointments including that of the principal.

Edinburgh had not suffered bomb damage during the war, but its long suppressed desire for civic improvement had been more keenly whetted by the wartime promise of reconstruction. Lord Provost Sir John Falconer convened a special sub-committee to consider the issues of postwar development, including that of the University. In expectation of town and country planning statutes requiring a full civic survey and local plan, a prompt decision was made to appoint the most eminent town planner in

\textsuperscript{13} Historic buildings at High School Yards that would have had to be demolished were Old Surgeon's Hall (1685) designed by James Smith, the Surgical Hospital (1853) designed by William Bryce, Thomas Laing's High School (1777), Lady Yester's Church II (1805), and the Protester Meeting House in Infirmary Street (1821). All of these are now statutorily listed.
Britain to prepare it. Patrick Abercrombie, the Professor of Town Planning at University College London, who was the recipient of more offers of commissions than he could have possibly accepted, immediately took up the challenge to plan post-war Edinburgh. As Abercrombie explained.

"To accept the responsibility of preparing a plan for the future of a City of such history, tradition and learning as Edinburgh seemed daring in the extreme.... To discover such a city as a visitor is exciting enough but with the help of contemporary civic survey technique, the study of its character becomes more enthralling as each part of the economic and social structure is unfolded.... Edinburgh is the home of the civic survey. The first was launched some thirty years ago by Sir Patrick Geddes but his method was different from the fact finding and planning that has developed in recent years".

Before Abercrombie launched into his task, the Lord Provost's committee discussed the University's proposal and, in response to pressure from Pollock and other objectors, the City Engineer was instructed to look into the issue and to suggest an alternative city-centre sites. The alternative to George Square and the High School Yards consisted of the land between Chambers Street and George Square. However, the Chambers Street properties that were viable for development had been earmarked for an extension to the Royal Scottish Museum since the 1930's. Also, the larger part of the area around Bristo Street had its use restricted by the terms of the Pollock Trust and thus could be used only for student amenities. {Fig. 1.14}

Although the University was careful not to publicly emphasize the economic aspect, it could not be ignored. Oliver's scrutiny revealed that the City's alternative

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14 Sir Patrick Abercrombie was proposed as the city's ideal consultant at a meeting of the Special Sub Committee on Postwar Development (7/2/45)
-Edinburgh City Archive, Lord Provost's Committee Meeting Minutes (1944-45)

15 Local knowledge and assistance was to have been provided by the City Engineer, John Macartney, but he was quickly superseded by Derek Plumstead.


17 Minutes of the Lord Provost's Committee (14/3/45)
-Edinburgh City Archive, Lord Provost's Committee Meeting Minutes (1944-45)
scheme would be far more costly than his master plan. Both schemes involved the purchase of George Watson's Ladies College and the first two houses on the north side of George Square together with the properties between Crichton and Marshall Street, and those between east George Square and Chapel Street. The latter two parcels of land were considered to be future acquisitions by the University in the very long term anyway, but went beyond the immediate scope of the master plan. In order to achieve Oliver's plan, the University only had to acquire two houses on the east, two on the south, and eleven on the west side of the square in addition to the properties on the north side.

According to Oliver's calculations the master plan would provide 900,000 square feet while the City's proposed site was deficient by 328,000 square feet. The area of land that would actually be built upon in Oliver's scheme really only exceeded that of the City Engineer by 27,000 square feet but the open ground between buildings was an important aspect. The gardens of George Square amounted to 350,000 square feet while the 209,000 square feet of open ground in the city scheme required the purchase and demolition of buildings. Oliver was in no doubt that the UGC would not provide capital grants to demolish buildings to create open space.

There is little doubt that the master plan posed the fewest inconveniences to the University but Oliver's assessment at this point was entirely subjective. The smaller area of building ground in the alternative scheme could have been compensated for with higher buildings and, of course, the gardens of George Square would have remained whatever the fate of the buildings around it.

Principal Sir John Fraser, who succeeded Sir Thomas Holland, wasted little time in contacting Abercrombie for advice on the University's predicament. He advised that the University should appoint a professional planning consultant to represent its interests and to liaise with him during the preparation of his city plan. When pressed

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18 Oliver's Analysis of City and University Schemes (22 November 1945).
- EUL Spec. Colls. UA Box 141 VE.
for a recommendation, Abercrombie suggested that either Sir Frank Mears or Robert Matthew would be suitable candidates. Clearly, Mears was not suitable, as he would most likely stand by his original proposals for development to the east of Old College. His membership of the preservationist Cockburn Association was another factor. Matthew was not officially approached, and it is not known whether he was asked privately, although Abercrombie had said that Matthew would leave his Scottish Office job "in a minute". Either Matthew preferred the post as Chief Architect to the London County Council (LCC) for which he was applying or Fraser did not deem him suitable. Instead, Dr Charles Holden was asked to help. It is possible that Holden's opinion would be more likely to be considered impartial in the increasingly heated Edinburgh atmosphere. Holden's membership of the Athenaeum Club was not his only credential as he was professor at the University of London, and had been responsible for carving out a built-up area of Bloomsbury to create a new campus before the war. Oliver was dispatched to London to brief Holden and an interim report was produced. In May 1946, Holden first met with Abercrombie and Plumstead, and in July the Lord Provost's committee gave a general approval without commitment to the area chosen for the University Precinct.

By January 1947 the essence of an agreement had been reached that was to form the basis of the new university campus. By having his campus scheme included in the city plan of Abercrombie, preferential zoning was guaranteed, subject to the public inquiry scheduled for 1954. In this forum, however, the expert opinions of Abercrombie and Holden would be difficult to overturn.19

Holden's task was to draught a plan involving the redevelopment of George Square, which took into account the so called "island site" that was bound by the

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19Holden was appointed in March 1946. By May he had produced an interim report and reached agreement with Abercrombie over the closure and subsequent demolition of Bristo Street. On 31 January 1947 Holden wrote to the University Secretary informing him that Abercrombie was prepared to approve the plan and support the University. Correspondence between Holden and the Secretary: -EUL Spec. Colls. UA Box 142 VE.
terms of Pollock’s trust for student amenities, and to relate these new interventions to Old College. Holden was aware that the City’s alternative development area, of 1945, had to be both subsumed and superseded by this scheme in order to eliminate it as an alternative. The architect’s expedient was to obliterate the clutter of little streets, including the island site that lay between George Square and the Royal Scottish Museum in Chambers Street. This permitted the creation of a piazza in front of the University’s main ceremonial building, the McEwan Hall, and of a group of buildings enclosing what had been Pollock’s island site allocated to "Recreational Facilities for Student and Staff". (Fig. 1.15) Once agreement had been reached with Abercrombie that Bristo Street should be closed off, it was quite a simple matter. To complete the campus, and to ensure adequate space for long-term development, the city block lying between the north façade of the Medical School and Chambers Street was also included. This allowed enclosure of the campus from the north-west and Holden suggested that administration buildings and a chapel might occupy that site. Professor Oliver was pleased that Abercrombie was sympathetic to the University but felt that Holden’s allocation of functions to the proposed buildings was not as good as his. He also thought that Holden’s division of the University buildings into separate blocks would not be economical from the point of view of heating, but he had rather missed the point, as this was a mere detail.20

In May 1947, Holden was with the representatives of the University when the plans were presented to the Lord Provost’s Committee as "A broad outline for long term development’. The scheme was given coverage in the press, provoking a summer storm of controversy and unsolicited alternative proposals.21 The submissions of the previous year had attracted criticism but now the proposals were

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20 Letters of Oliver to Secretary Jardine Brown, 23 September 1946 and 8 October 1946.
-EUL Spec. Colls. UA Box 142 VE.
21 Representatives of the University, including Professors Gray, Sidney Smith and Oliver, together with the Secretary (Jardine Brown) accompanied Holden to present the proposals for consideration to the Lord Provost’s Committee (29/5/47)
-Edinburgh City Archive. Minutes Lord Provost’s Special Committee. 29 May 1947.
more settled and apparently all the more shocking when graphically represented in a pamphlet entitled "Proposals for the Future Development of the University of Edinburgh". The plan showed the arrangement of building blocks as described above and, more shocking still, an aerial perspective showed all the buildings of George Square replaced by monumental blocks and all the streets between Chambers Street and the square replaced by a new layout. (Fig. 1.16) The buildings shown in the perspective were merely indicative yet, not surprisingly, there is a strong affinity with the 1930s classicism of Holden's Bloomsbury campus.

In the pamphlet "The Problem" was simply presented as the need to plan a layout that would ensure reintegration in a precinct on the best available central site. This was for spiritual and practical purposes. In defining the best site, peace and quiet and pleasant surroundings, as well as proximity to the Medical School and Old College, were paramount. Obviously, George Square fitted the bill perfectly and Holden's scheme also allowed space for additional development at the north side of the precinct towards Chambers Street and Old College.

Mears' plan was included in the pamphlet for comparative purposes. It was argued that this was out of date, failed to provide continuity between the future sites of Science and Medicine, and was really just a series of sites rather than a coherent development plan. Problems over the topography and atmospheric pollution of the site to the east were reiterated. While it was accepted that there was some architectural merit in the doomed buildings, it was argued that better ones would replace them. And, crucially for subsequent events, it was announced that the design of individual buildings would be the subject of prize competitions.

"The University is convinced that the plan now submitted is the best possible in any circumstances, and this must be its justification for overriding other considerations. The architectural opportunities of the plan are very great, and it is intended that the design of the buildings should be thrown open to public competition. Assessors of recognised authority will be
appointed to assist in the choice of the best design, and it is hoped that a work of genius will be evoked in which the City of Edinburgh and Scotland will feel a lasting pride."22

This undertaking was intended to win public support, but failed to do so.

The Earl of Selkirk declared:

"To destroy George Square would be a crime"23

The architect, Robert Hurd, admitted that George Square was "not great architecture" but he defended it for being "human in scale"24

The Cockburn Association passed a resolution condemning the destruction of the square and the Saltire Society, the Society of Scottish Artists and the Old Edinburgh Club voiced objections.

In defence of the scheme, the Lord Provost, Sir John Falconer, declared that it was:

"Perhaps the greatest conception which has been submitted to the City of Edinburgh for centuries."25

The University's Professor Sir Alexander Gray, a member of the PWDC, questioned whether:

".... We as a living community should have our freedom of action restricted to keep intact a memorial of an earlier age"26

The editorial column in "The Scotsman" expressed some sympathy towards the University's predicament describing the loss of the square as regrettable, but unavoidable.27
Conflict had been anticipated, though perhaps not on the scale that was experienced. Holden advised the University to adhere to the scheme and thus maintain consistency with proposals advanced in its memorandum of 1943. He strongly advised against offering any alternatives, as this would weaken the case. In fact, Holden had discussed an alternative with Abercrombie and Plumstead who had suggested that land to the east of Potterrow might be developed instead. Holden admitted that equal space could be found there, if the north side of Buccleuch Place and the east side of George Square were included.28

While some within the University, such as Professor Talbot Rice, expressed ambivalence in wanting to support the University yet wishing to see George Square preserved others, such as Sir Donald Pollock, were more forthright. Pollock wanted the square preserved as a residential area for professors. For financial reasons alone that idea was hardly viable. In a speech to the University Court, Pollock pleaded for delay, urging caution for any schemes that had their fruition beyond the lifetimes of those present. 29 His proposal was unacceptable since this was intended as a long-term plan, and yet early commencement also an aim.

Robert Hurd led the opposition in criticising the Holden plan, which he described as being dogged by insurmountable difficulties. He claimed, wrongly, that the pedestrian route Middle Meadow Walk would be opened to traffic, that the terms of the Pollock Trust were an effective block to development, and that the proposed acquisition of the Royal Scottish Museum extension site at Chambers Street would not be possible. He was one of the objectors who appeared at the Lord Provost's meeting in July 1947 and he produced an alternative plan. This plan followed the Mears proposal to develop in the Drummond Street-Infirmary Street area.30 /Fig.

-EUL Spec. Colls UA DRT 95/002 Box 142 VE
29Transcript of Pollock's speech of 18 July 1947.
-EUL Spec. Colls UA DRT 95/002 Box 142 VE.
30Memorandum of the meeting of the Lord Provost's Special Committee. It has not been possible to locate Hurd's original plan, however, a member of the University made a sketch of Hurd's scheme at the meeting, overlaying it on the Holden plan. This has been used as an illustration instead. Both memorandum and plan are at:
Holden described this as a last minute substitute for the Mears plan. Meadow Walk would not be opened to traffic and, while the RSM site was not essential to the plan, Holden revealed that there was a possibility that it might become available to the University in the future. Neither would the terms of the Pollock trust be broken, since the island site would be absorbed by a development for staff and student amenities. Holden claimed that his own plan was flexible and should be thought of as a disposition of open spaces around which individual buildings would be erected.  

When Abercrombie's local plan was published in 1949, it gave full support to the Holden scheme as he had promised. The amenity societies' proposals were branded as unrealistic and the Nicolson Street - South Bridge route was seen as an unavoidable obstacle to their proposals. They also interfered with his new south-north bypass and with his zoning, for residential purposes, of the area to the east of this proposed road.

Abercrombie also questioned the architectural value of George Square. He claimed that there was rather a lot of mediocre Georgian architecture in Edinburgh and felt that George Square contained few good examples. Compared to the monumental excellence of Robert Adam's Charlotte Square, it was found wanting. The amenity societies were surely right when they pointed out that if everything that did not bear comparison with Charlotte Square was to be demolished, then there would be little left! Using a pair of sketches Abercrombie demonstrated the scale of the Charlotte Square buildings in relation to the central garden and concluded that, by comparison, the existing George Square buildings were too small in relation to the gardens around which they were placed. He argued that this architectural mistake could be corrected by replacing the Georgian Buildings with larger buildings such as

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EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 142 VE.

Holden's response to the objections of 18 July 29/7/47.

EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 142 VE.

Letter from the Georgian Group to the Secretary of State 3/9/55.

SRO DD 32/84
those proposed by the University.\textsuperscript{33} (Fig. 1.18) The key issue was zoning however and Holden had secured an interim preferential zoning for the University, subject to review at the Public Inquiry scheduled for 1954.

In December 1947, Sir John Fraser, whose health had been deteriorating for the previous year, died and the next stage in the development drama was under the stewardship of the acting principal, Sir Sidney Arthur Smith. The cast of players changed further in 1948 with a new Lord Provost, Sir Andrew Murray, while Charles Stewart replaced the University secretary, Jardine Brown. At the same time, a new principal was being sought.

Whatever the outcome of the Public Inquiry, it was virtually certain that development for the first phase of the Medical Extension on the north west corner of George Square would not be obstructed. A representative of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Sir Lancelot Keay, attended a meeting of the PWDC in December 1948 to advise on putting work in hand. Keay recommended that no start should be made on the Medical Extension until a design had been created for the entire north side of the square. This was partly to ensure architectural continuity but it was also tactical, since the Corporation would be unable to retract consent once it was given. Keay advised against an architectural competition as he did not consider that the University would get what it wanted in this way. He pointed out that competitions were time consuming affairs and even after a winner was announced there would be a further delay of at least eighteen months before drawings suitable for submission to the local authority could be prepared. The PWDC felt committed to the competition, however. Keay therefore suggested a limited competition open only to invited architects. Various architects were considered and Keay made his recommendations.\textsuperscript{34} It was nevertheless considered necessary to hold an open

\textsuperscript{33} Abercrombie 1949 pp. 71-2
\textsuperscript{34} Keay recommended Farquarson & McMorran or Keppie, Henderson & Gleave. (Minutes of the PWDC 3/12/48). Keay repeated his advice and recommendations to University Secretary Charles Stewart at a meeting in London on 23/2/49. (Memorandum of meeting).
- EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 143 VE.
architectural competition as had been stated originally in order to prevent the University being accused of a breach of faith and failing to fulfill its duty to the City.

This decision was probably provoked by signs that at least some members of the Corporation were succumbing to pressure from the amenity societies. Individual members of the full planning committee were less committed to the University than Sir John Falconer's special committee on post-war development had been, although Murray had been treasurer to that committee and was sympathetic. Consequently, when it was approached on the issue of the Medical Extension, the Corporation resolved that it had no objection in principle, so long as no further development involving the other three sides of the square was contemplated. The imposition of such a condition was unprecedented and the University took legal advice over it. A special meeting of the University Court was held and it was decided not to give any such assurance. Charles Stewart, the University Secretary, responded that it was unjustifiable to bind the University Court and its successors in perpetuity. He suggested that development should be restricted to the north side for a number of years (i.e. until after the Public Inquiry) with no commitment by either side on any further development. He pointed out that the planning authority always had the right to reject an unsuitable planning application but it could not refuse to look at any application or to prevent any as yet unknown developments being proposed.

The Corporation reconsidered and imposed the following conditions on redevelopment of the north side of the square.

1. The scheme must be harmonious with the square as it currently exists.

2. The University should consider alternatives such as the retention of façades i.e. of the other three sides.

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35Letter from Town Clerk (Storrar) to the University Secretary 11/1/49. Minute of a special meeting of the University Court 12/1/49 - EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 143 VE. Letter from Charles Stewart to the Planning Committee 26/1/49. -Edinburgh. City Archive. Planning Committee Minutes.
3. If consent should be granted for the north side, neither party would be committed thereof to a scheme for the whole square.

4. The University would only seek alteration of the other sides if satisfied that there was no other satisfactory scheme.36

This clearly posed a major obstacle to the future of the whole scheme though it was not insurmountable in the long term. If the zoning proposed by Abercrombie was adopted and the Corporation later tried to oppose any planning application based on conditions 2, 3 or 4, the University could appeal to the Secretary of State. In the meantime the Medical Competition could proceed, though it would be subject to the first of these conditions. In February 1949, when the Medical School Competition was about to be launched, the Corporation granted outline consent for the medical buildings, subject to the above conditions.37

Chapter Five. Appleton in the Chair

This was the situation that Sir Edward Appleton found when he arrived in Edinburgh: general agreement with the City for development on the north side of George Square, commitment to hold a competition for the Medical School extension, and a set of conditions apparently calculated to thwart the master plan.

Appleton's appointment was no doubt due to great aspirations within the upper echelons of Edinburgh society and the University. Amongst these aspirations was the effective expansion and reintegration of the University. The Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Sir David Milne, and Lord Provost Sir Andrew Murray were convinced that Appleton had the skill and determination to achieve these aims as well as bringing a high degree of scientific eminence to the University. Murray pursued Appleton until he agreed to resign from the DSIR and come to Edinburgh.

36Restatement of the Corporation's conditions for the redevelopment of north George Square.
- EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 143 VE
37Minutes of the Planning Committee, 3 February 1949.
- Edinburgh City Archive, Minutes of the Planning Committee.
Sir Edward officially took up the post of Principal on the first of May 1949 and he began examining the pressing planning issue. Apparently undaunted, he decided that the fourth condition that the town council had imposed must be dealt with forthwith. Judging from what is known of the character of the man, this was not simply a strategic manoeuvre. Rather, he wanted to satisfy himself of the merits of the Holden plan before he launched into the fray. The new Principal took the chair of the PWDC on 29 June and he called for a fresh consideration of all possible development plans; dividing the committee into sub-groups to consider anew the proposed George Square development and the three alternatives that had been identified. These were defined as:

Plan A: Development to the east of South Bridge, as recommended by Mears and Hurd.

Plan B: Development to the south of Old College on the land between Nicolson Street and Potterrow. This was the suppressed proposal that Abercrombie had discussed with Holden. Clearly Appleton wanted to assess this proposal seriously rather than have it re-emerge later as an unexplored option which might undermine the University's case.

Plan C. This involved abandoning the city centre completely and concentrating all new development at King's Buildings on the outskirts of the city.

Plan D. The proposal based on the master plan of Oliver and the University Precinct of Abercrombie which was to be re-examined.

Appleton insisted that this was to be a serious exercise and allowed until October 1949 for the appraisals to be made.

In July plan B was rejected. While it would have involved displacing fewer residents than plan A, acquisition of the Empire theatre and commercial property would be a slow and costly process. The site was fairly small and therefore one vast

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38 PWDC memo of alternative developments, 29 June 1949. 
-EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 143 VE
building dwarfing Old College and Surgeon's Hall opposite would be required. (*Fig. 1.19*) Such a building could not easily be built in stages. The constrained location between two main roads was less than ideal in terms of atmosphere and there was no allowance for future expansion. North George Square would still be required for Medicine and Old College would require internal remodeling.

Plan A was also rejected, although it was felt that proximity to Old College was a real advantage. The committee conceded that, while the cross-fall over the site was an issue, an architectural solution such as "continental point blocks" might be found, although the site under consideration would have to be enlarged. And, development here would inspire public support for following the Mears plan. The University owned considerable property in the area and the rest was scheduled for improvement. But, while the removal of the slums would be an advantage for all, it was considered that this really was the responsibility of the City. For the University, acquiring the industrial and commercial premises would be costly, while rehousing the residents might take a very long time indeed.

Then there was the atmosphere: damp, misty and grimy; a situation not helped by the gasworks nearby. Furthermore, the area was already bisected by one arterial route and Abercrombie had now proposed a second that would hinder further eastward development.

Plan D, the Holden plan, offered so many advantages that it was deemed extremely unwise to reject it. George Square was contiguous to the existing university buildings and the Pollock Trust site. It was quiet and airy with open ground close at hand, and it had the advantage of the mature central garden. Here a coherent development that was straightforward to maintain and service could be achieved. There was also the possibility of future expansion onto Buccleuch Place to the south. In addition, there would be negligible displacement of population. The fact that the University already owned 65% of the property was an advantage which it was felt should not be cited in defence of the case. This was because the University
wanted to show that it was determined to produce the best development plan rather than simply opting for the easiest solution, as its opponents claimed.

The disadvantages of Plan C, relocation to King's Buildings, included going against the avowed intent of reintegration, and would have involved a break in tradition with the loss of Old College as the University's headquarters. The implications for the Faculty of Medicine would have been serious with dislocation from the Royal Infirmary. For these reasons, total removal could not be recommended so long as there was an alternative. There were some distinct advantages in this proposition, however. Although removing would be expensive and troublesome, that would only be in the short term. There was 112 acres of land immediately available for building and more might be made available if required. The site was almost completely open and no costly demolition or purchase of land would be involved. It was also felt that the site was "untrammeled by architectural tradition". Neither were there any pollution or traffic problems. A sketch plan indicated how the site might be laid out with all the proposed new buildings and replacements for those that would be abandoned in the city-centre. {Fig. 1.20} This scheme included buildings for the Faculties of Arts, Medicine and Science, together with a Graduation Hall, a Library, administration buildings, and Refectory. It was felt that the removal of the Faculty of Medicine from the neighbourhood of the Infirmary could be ameliorated by building a University Hospital there too.

Such were the advantages that it was felt that Plan C should be held in reserve as a contingency plan. If the Corporation made it impossible for the University to pursue the master plan then it would be justified in abandoning reintegration and availing itself of the advantages at West Mains Road. Keeping the King's Buildings site meant a reversal in University policy since it had already been resolved to abandon it, but Appleton and his committee realised that plans C and D were not mutually exclusive and retaining the KB site was politically astute as well as farsighted. The threat of abandoning the city-centre was a lever to achieve the
George Square plan since, while there was unanimity on reintegration, the University might achieve the best of both worlds by pursuing "Dual Development" at George Square and King's Buildings. No one could foresee the long-term requirements for scientific research, but few can have been as aware as Appleton of the accelerating rate of technological progress. In the long-term, it looked unlikely that the city-centre could provide for the sort of expansion that would be required for Science and he felt that it would be extremely unwise to abandon King's Buildings. With Dual Development, the best possible advantage could be taken of the University's existing buildings.

The committee unanimously adopted the report and its findings and recommended Dual Development to the University Court on 30 November 1949. It was further resolved that the University should reaffirm its desire to develop in George Square, that the plan should be examined to determine possible individual building locations and that steps should be taken to inform the City of these decisions.

Appleton had ordered such a thorough examination of alternative developments that committee members began to wonder if the master plan was being lost sight of. But Appleton was not simply going through the motions. He knew he had to be certain himself in order to fulfill the City's condition that alteration of the east, west and south sides of George Square should not be sought unless the University was satisfied that there was no other satisfactory scheme. Now the University was satisfied and Court and Senatus approved the report of the PWDC in December 1949.³⁹

With assessment of the Medical Extension competition in hand, Appleton attended a meeting of the Corporation's planning Committee in December 1950 in order to report the result of his re-examination. He invited the Corporation to

³⁹ The Report of the Post War Development Committee was approved by the University Court 19 December 1949. Extract from University Court Minutes: -EUL Spec Collections UA DRT 95/002 Box 143 VE.
schedule the George Square area for development and proposed that the University should begin submitting proposals for planning permission. The Planning Committee was convinced by Appleton's argument and resolved to recommend to the full Council that development should proceed on that basis. In the following January, the Planning Committee heard representations from the Saltire Society, the Cockburn Association, the Old Edinburgh Club, the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, and a deputation of George Square residents including Robert Hurd. All the objectors stressed that they were not trying to thwart the University's development of the square but only trying to assure that those buildings of architectural and historic interest should be preserved. The Planning Committee, nevertheless, adhered to its previous recommendations.

Appleton might have been justified in thinking that the matter was now drawing to a favourable conclusion for the University. The whole of the Corporation was not unanimous in its support for the scheme, however, and the pressure of the so-called amenity societies was unremitting.

In February 1951 the Corporation approved in principle the redevelopment of George Square, but not unconditionally. A motion was passed, as a concession to the preservationists, which insisted that no plan entailing destruction of the façades of the west, east and south sides should be submitted unless the University also submitted a design "by an architect of standing", which retained the façades. This was another unprecedented, and legally doubtful, condition imposed by the Council. And while the Lord Provost, Sir Andrew Murray, described it as a compromise, the Corporation clearly wanted to have it both ways: development and preservation. The University found itself still mired in dispute. It was being asked to submit its planning applications in pairs, with the Corporation apparently having a choice between them. This was quite a predicament since there would not only be the expense of twinned plans, but an obvious danger that the version with façade retention would be chosen. There was the merest glimmer of hope in the letter of the
Town Clerk to the University stating that the desire was for preservation "unless it materially threatens the ultimate objective of a liberated and reintegrated University of proud proportions and commanding design worthy of the city and its ancient college".  

The objectors felt that they had achieved their aim. The north side of the square would be developed as had long been anticipated, while the University would be deterred from submitting twinned plans, and if they did, then at least the facades of the old buildings would likely be retained. But the complacency of the preservationists resulting from this ruling was to cost them most of the square in the long run.

Chapter Six: The Medical Extension Competition

By the time that the decision on dual development had been made, the Medical Extension competition had been launched. A.G.R. Mackenzie, President of the Royal Institute of Architects of Scotland, had been appointed as assessor in April 1949. He prepared the exacting brief which not only had to satisfy the accommodation expectations of the Faculty of Medicine and fall within a cost limitation, but it had to be capable of being built in stages. And, in order to satisfy the city, it had to "harmonise" with the rest of the square as it then existed. McKenzie followed the rules of the competition to the letter, rejecting entries where he felt that the competitors had misread the conditions by making phase one dependent upon more demolition than had been anticipated. He awarded the prize to the Glaswegian architect Walter Ramsay, whose design was flawed, but closest to the exacting requirements. Mackenzie concluded that the design would meet the Corporation's conditions too.

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40 Letter from Town Clerk to University 7/2/51  
-EUL Spec Collections UA DRT 95/002 Box 144 VE
"I find that alone among the competitors the author has designed a façade to George Square which, while not in any way reproducing the existing 18th century domestic architecture yet is entirely in harmony with it so that the general character of the square may be maintained whether the remainder is redesigned or not." (sic)

The winning entry was described in the trade press as: "a modern interpretation of the Classical and Georgian style."

In the bird's-eye perspective of Ramsay's design there is certainly some continuity between the fenestration of his building and that of the gaunt tenements in the surrounding streets. (Fig.1.22) Essentially though, the massing was derived from Holden's perspectives and it conformed to the sketch in the Abercrombie plan. Consequently, the articulation was that of the pared-down classicism of the 1930s and, in truth, the façade was one of unrelieved monotony. (Fig. 1.23) The most interesting part of the design was the part for phase one, which strictly speaking lay outside the building line of George Square as it then existed. Here Ramsay took the opportunity to raise the height to seven storeys. The rest of the building consisted of a five-storey central block linked to a pair of symmetrical four-storey blocks by means of staircase towers, while a bridging building linked the western block to the first phase. (Figs. 1.23 & 1.24)

The University had been advised against holding a competition, but had felt honour bound to do so. Because of this it had been pressurised by the Corporation into attempting to complement buildings that it wished ultimately to demolish. And, although it was by no means a foregone conclusion that consent would ever be granted for development of the rest of the square, this design, if executed, would determine the rest of the development to some extent. The neo-Georgian orientation of the design might even have mediated in favour of façade retention.

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2. Building Industries February 1951.
Then there was the question of the architect. As Keay had tried to explain, the ability of an individual to produce a design that meets the set criteria of a competition is no guarantee that his practice is large enough, or has the experience required, to undertake the commission. This proved to be the case. Any sense of disappointment within the University was suppressed, or perhaps simply overshadowed, by feelings of enormous relief that an architect and plan for the first part of the proposed new campus had finally been acquired.

In the meantime, with outline consent extant for the medical buildings, it appeared that full planning consent for the prize-winning design would be little more than a formality, subject perhaps to some small amendments. At this stage little progress could be made until after the Public Inquiry and the end of the national moratorium on major construction works in 1955.

Chapter Seven. Basil Spence Summoned

1954 was a key year for the University. It had to consider how to put work in hand for the first phase of the medical buildings, while the outcome of the Public Inquiry would determine matters of zoning and thus whether the rest of the George Square scheme had any chance of success at all. The Corporation’s condition for façade retention posed some difficulties although an appeal could be made to the Secretary of State, if necessary, should any planning consent be refused. In this respect the grander picture of national policy was about to overwhelm local issues. The requirements of the National Health Service for graduates in medicine, and a political consensus on an expansion of higher education in general, could not but impact upon university planning in Edinburgh.

Although the George Square preservationists sought to extend their case onto a national stage, in some senses they undermined their own interests. For, while preserving some architecture of historical association was a matter of great concern in Edinburgh, those who saw the University of Edinburgh as only part of a larger picture had other agendas to meet. Despite his inherent archaisms, Appleton was
clearly perceived by the government as a catalyst for change. It was Appleton’s duty to double the size of the University, and he would receive backing at the highest level whichever way he chose to do this.

It was advantageous that Abercrombie and Holden had supported the master plan and now the University proceeded to amass further architectural authority. The new Professor of Architecture, Robert Matthew, had been appointed in 1953 and his expertise and influence was to prove indispensable. His potential value to the development plan may even have played a part in his selection to the chair. Matthew, while something of a preservationist at heart, could not put aside the pressing needs of the nation. A national movement for social progress was in train and Matthew as astute enough to tailor his own approach accordingly.

The University now decided to bring in further architectural expertise in the form of a planning consultant. Matthew might well have fulfilled the post himself since he had the experience of dealing with the Scottish Office prior to 1946, when he had been chief architect to the Department of Health Scotland. In that capacity he was fully aware of the workings of St. Andrew’s House, and his post-war appointment as chief architect to the London County Council gave him unparalleled experience overseeing large projects. Indeed, as we saw earlier, Abercrombie had recommended him to the University for such a position back in 1946. But, Matthew had already taken on a commitment to higher architectural education with the University. He may also have felt that it was wisest to bring in another architect to provide additional expertise and perhaps to divert some of the inevitable critical assaults that were expected. So, instead Matthew agreed to collaborate and liase with the planning consultant on behalf of the University, without fee.\(^4^3\)

The renamed Development Committee (UDC) met in March to consider who might act as the professional advisor who would enable commencement. Several

\(^4^3\) Matthew was probably already certain of his commission as consultant for the redevelopment of the Royal Infirmary, adjacent to George Square. This may have had considerable bearing on the issue.
architects and planners were discussed including Abercrombie, William Holford, Sir High Casson, and J.L. Gleave. Matthew favoured Basil Spence or Holford, and especially Spence since he was "local". It was therefore agreed to recommend Spence for the position. Spence was more of an architectural draughtsman and an exhibition designer than the traditional planning consultant but Matthew and Appleton must have been impressed by his abilities and unerring confidence.44

This was a very shrewd choice. Not only was Spence familiar with the situation in Edinburgh having both studied and begun his career there, but he had also attained a high public profile. This was partly as a result of his work at the Festival of Britain and other exhibitions but more especially by virtue of having won the competition for the new Coventry Cathedral in 1951. This in particular had brought him into the full glare of the media and he had become something of a popular advocate for modern architecture. Spence's theoretical approach and architectural style will be discussed at length later, but here it is sufficient to say that he was possessed of acute negotiating skills and persuasive powers. Matthew knew that Spence would be able to present the University's plans favourably to the public and to win the confidence of the Planning Committee of Edinburgh Corporation.

In November 1954 Spence attended his first meeting with the UDC. The Principal stated that the essential requirement for the new campus was a proper balance between reasonable seclusion and undesirable isolation. The University needed to be able to look in on itself and maintain internal lines of communication while yet remaining integrated with the city. Also, although he did not renounce the intention of using King's Buildings for further developments for the Faculty of Science, he recommended that Fundamental Science (i.e. First-Year Science) should be taught in George Square. Earlier in the year Appleton had made this suggestion, when consideration was given as to what functions were to be met in the square. He

44Minutes of the UDC 11/3/54
-EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 98/005 Box 1
suggested a Library, amenities for students, a Mathematics Institute, Geography, Commerce, and possibly a University Chapel. However, he did not think that staff or student residences, Physics, or Administration should be sited there.

Spence had already given the matter some consideration but confessed that there was little he could do until such decisions had been made. He did, however, outline a six-step procedure for putting the University's plans into action.

As a first step a survey of existing uses was to be undertaken. Then, agreement had to be reached on preferred locations for specific buildings. Thirdly, a block plan dividing the area into suitable sites for development was to be drawn up. A model indicating tentative mass and siting would next be constructed. Presumably after consultations with the City, detailed block plans could then be prepared for specific sites. As a sixth step the designing of individual buildings could commence.

The architect made it all sound so straightforward and Appleton must have felt reassured that the confidence of Spence was already carrying the UDC along with enthusiasm to get started on the job. But what of the Corporation and the conditions they had imposed? Taking into account the design and layout for the medical buildings, Spence pointed out that, contrary to what Mackenzie had felt, it would be impossible to retain the character of the square thereafter. Façade retention would be pointless as well as destructive to the scheme. Façade retention would be pointless as well as destructive to the scheme. Appleton emphasised the point that the University should not feel itself obliged by the force of public opinion to jeopardise the scheme in order to save the façades. On the other hand, Spence felt that it would be viable to retain and restore the entire west side. This would provide accommodation for smaller departments. And, as it was considered to be architecturally the most interesting and least altered side, the interests of conservation would be better served than by retaining the front walls of three sides of the square with new buildings attached to the back. Although it was not stated at the time, retention of the west side could be considered by the Corporation as a desirable compromise. In addition, the old buildings would provide an interesting foil to the
new buildings yet to come. The architect also recommended that the University should begin acquiring property in the area, both for future building sites and for rehousing displaced tenants.

Some discussion on site allocation took place. The UDC agreed that Physics should not be allocated a space in the square and Spence suggested that the High School Yards area could be developed for that purpose to relieve pressure on the square. The committee agreed that a Chapel would have a legitimate claim to a site, and Spence agreed with Matthew that a building for the Department of Architecture should be considered. The Library would be a key building and though it was expected that finance would not be forthcoming until after 1958, the site should be chosen as the first fixed point. The ideal site for this, Spence argued, would be on the western half of south George Square. A political argument for the Library was also advanced within the UDC: it would be difficult for the Corporation to refuse planning permission for a building of such importance and it could not quibble about the scale. It could thus act as a precedent for redevelopment.45

Spence was expected to obtain full planning consent for the medical buildings, but he had some doubts about the design and was given authority to assist Ramsay in altering it. The first phase, Pathology, was a priority, and work had to commence in 1955 to avoid putting the capital grant in jeopardy. But, shortly after Spence had submitted his interim report to the University in March 1955, the Planning Committee of the Corporation refused to even consider an application for consent for the first phase until the University presented proposals for the whole north side, in relation to which the initial building had to be considered. As a result, Spence’s proposals for the redevelopment of the whole square were revealed to the Corporation somewhat earlier than originally anticipated. Accompanied by Appleton and Stewart, and armed with perspectives, plans and photographs, Spence went to

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45 Minutes of the UDC 29/11/54 -EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 98/005 Box 1
the Planning Committee in July 1955 where his powers of persuasion were put to the
test. Spence explained that while the west side could be preserved, the rest of the
buildings in the square would have to be demolished, if the University was to create
a new campus in the area designated in the local plan. It was stressed that George
Square itself was not to be destroyed, only the buildings! The outline plan respected
the building line of the square, but the arrangement was a radical departure from
what Holden had proposed. A Convocation Hall on the north end of the east side was
to counterbalance the bulk of the Library. Other buildings of more slender footprint
than Holden's blocks formed a linkage between these and extended off to the east of
the square, where taller buildings were proposed. (Fig. 1.25) The perspectives,
which were even more revealing, were a crucial factor in persuading the council and
these will be discussed in Book Two.

Spence also explained how the severe façade of Ramsay's design could be
"humanised" with some detailing and with the overall height reduced. Thus, it would
harmonise both with the existing buildings and those that later replaced them.\textsuperscript{46}

The findings of the Planning Committee were later contested by the amenity
societies. They claimed that no consent had ever been given, but it is certain that
Spence convinced the committee with his argument, as it resolved to recommend
that consent be given to the whole scheme, subject to Spence's adjustments to the
medical building and to detailed consideration of the various phases.

"The foregoing recommendation is made by the committee on the clear
understanding to which Sir Edward Appleton assured the committee that the
University were a party, that acceptance of the present proposal is based upon
the University's intention to proceed as opportunity offers with the
preparation of their scheme for the development of the University in
conformity with the broad general lines which were enunciated and

\textsuperscript{46} This last claim is strange, since it would surely be the subsequent buildings that would have to
harmonise with the Medical Extension, and not the other way round.
illustrated by the Principal and Mr. Spence. The various phases and stages of
that development would be the subject of detailed consideration by the
University and the Corporation from time to time.\(^{47}\)

Appleton interpreted this statement by the Planning Committee as not simply
consent, but an obligation to proceed.

It was a bold move by Spence and Appleton in seeking consent to proceed with
plans for redevelopment of the whole area when it was only required that they
submit the scheme for the north side of the square. However, it also had the flavour
of an ultimatum with the unmentioned threat of removal to King's Buildings hanging
in the air, were consent to be withheld. Although the meeting ended without specific
consent for any buildings, the planning committee had given approval in principle,
which it could not retract later.

That the amenity societies chose to interpret this outcome differently, as they later
did is an instance of subjectivity clouding judgement. The south and east sides of
George Square were as good as lost, as Spence had carried the day with his scheme.
Everything else was simply a matter of detail. The conservationists claim to the
contrary implies that the full Council misunderstood the recommendation it was
approving and that it was somehow publicly misled by the Lord Provost. It is
possible that one or two councillors misunderstood, but there was a clear majority of
34 to 16 in favour. It was important for the Corporation that the matter be resolved as
soon as possible and the apparent compromise over the west side was enough to
satisfy many who had previously been uncertain.

Provost, Sir John G Banks later said of his predecessor:

"The Lord Provost said that it was a condition of the general approval in
principle of the University's proposals for the redevelopment of George
Square that the various phases and stages would be the subject of detailed

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\(^{47}\)Minutes of Edinburgh Corporation Planning Committee, 13/7/55.
Edinburgh City Archive. Minutes of the Planning Committee.
consideration from time to time. He wanted to make it quite clear that the subject matter of future discussion could only be on matters of detail and not whether the north, east and south sides of the square were to be demolished and redeveloped on general lines indicated in 1955.

"To proceed on any other footing would be a gross breach of faith on the part of the Corporation who, by their decision of 1955, clearly gave the University to understand that they were free to proceed with the furthering of their proposals with all which that might involve in the expenditure of time and money."\(^{48}\)

The design for the façade of the Pathology building was not immediately given full approval, and this matter will be discussed in Book Two, along with Spence's design. However, the creation of a new campus was now assured, and further objections by the opposition were futile, if something of a hindrance. Calls for work on the medical buildings to be halted and for a public inquiry were made by the amenity societies, in 1956, when they realised what had happened, but these appeals were futile. No objections had been raised over the zoning of the University Precinct in 1954 and the Scottish Office consequently refused even to consider calling in consent for such an important building as that which was now proceeding on the north side of the square.

**Chapter Eight: The Central Development Area.**

By 1959, the projected commencement of buildings for the Faculty of Arts was approaching and a new committee structure was set up to facilitate this. The UDC still steered development in the general sense, making recommendations to the University Court, but a new group, the Major Buildings Committee, now took responsibility for all new buildings since the scale of the work involved was beyond the scope of that traditionally done by the old Works Committee. Matthew was the

\(^{48}\)Quoted in the brochure *University Development and George Square* 1960.
original convenor of the new committee and with Charles Stewart also a member, the Principal's office was able to maintain direct contact with operations.

Spence was now on the fifth step of the procedure leading to development, and with more detailed data on University requirements available, he and Matthew draughted an amended plan. This scheme was larger in scope and approached the scale of Mears' plan in that a crescent shaped area stretching from the Meadows in the south to the Pleasance in the east was involved.\(\text{Fig. 1.27}\) Appleton had warned that the expansion of the University was likely to be far greater than previously anticipated and this took account of that expectation. The area to the east of Old College, described as the Drummond Street Sector, was now included and allocated to Mathematics and Physics. This is interesting since all the objections of Professor Oliver about pollution and difficult site conditions had now been set aside. On the other hand, the followers of Mears could now see that development to the east of Old College could no longer be regarded as an alternative to George Square but as a necessary supplement. The city block between Forest Road and Teviot Place, where Holden had suggested a chapel and administration, now allocated for medical science, was also incorporated. And, as with the superseded model of 1956, Buccleuch Place and the rest of the land between George Square and the Meadows to the south was designated for future projects.\(\text{Fig. 1.26}\) Matthew had the commission for the Faculty of Arts Building and the plan took account of his model which centred that development around a tower block on the south-east corner of George Square.\(^{49}\)\(\text{Fig. 2.58}\) Pre-application discussions with the Corporation were by then in hand and Matthew expected demolition to commence in January 1960.

A last great effort was made by the objectors to thwart the University's plans in late 1959. However, in a rather strategic move, Robert Hurd, the most technically competent objector, had already been appointed by the University to undertake the

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\(^{49}\)The Arts Faculty model was presented to the UDC on 8/12/58. Minutes of the UDC 8/12/58 -EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 98/005 Box 1.
restoration of the west side of George Square. It seems likely that Matthew and Spence intended to undermine Hurd with the promise of this commission since Ian Lindsay, as leading conservation architect, would have been the more obvious choice. Or perhaps Appleton and his architects felt that there was an opportunity to demonstrate the University's magnanimity by hiring a member of the Edinburgh architectural community who had so far been excluded from University's projects.

Publicity in the press on the imminent destruction of George Square revived and influential members of the amenity societies managed to get questions asked in parliament and again called for a Public Inquiry. The University was confident of winning, if it had come to that, since a decision in favour of preservation would have entailed the Secretary of State calling in the outline consent for development obtained by Spence in 1955. That seemed extremely unlikely at the time because of the importance of the University's expansion project in addressing the government's intended 80% rise in the national university student population by the 1970s. In support of its case, the University could plead that its own student numbers had already doubled and staff numbers trebled, with very little additional accommodation provided thus far.

The planning consultant to the National Trust, John McIndoe, claimed that consent had not been granted for development of the east and south sides of George Square, refusing to accept the validity of the consent in to proceed, which the Corporation had given in July 1955. The amenity groups claimed that they had been denied an opportunity to object. It is true that their official objections had been to the Holden plan rather than to the Spence plan, the outcome of which had been the conditions imposed upon the development prior to Spence's intervention. They claimed that they had made no representations at the Public Inquiry in 1954 because only the development of the north side of the square was involved. This was a blunder on their part because Abercrombie had zoned the whole area for University/Cultural uses, and had dismissed George Square as valueless. To have
any chance of success they would have had to have first objected to the zoning principle that carried such force at the time. The conservationists were complacent regarding the conditions imposed by the Corporation in 1951 as tantamount to refusal of all future schemes. They had been rather lulled into a false sense of security by the City Development Plan (as modified), of 1957, which contained a programme map indicating only the north side zoned for development. \{Fig. 1.30\} At the same time, however, the written statement designated 48 acres between the Meadows and the Cowgate for University use, although without indicating the location on the map.\(^{50}\) How was this accommodation to be provided if not in George Square?

The protestors kept the controversy alive, with the Earl of Haddington, President to the Georgian Society, trying to start a debate on the matter in the House of Lords.\(^{51}\) This demonstrates that the conservationists were well aware of what had transpired in 1955/6 and how they had really lost the battle.

**Chapter Nine: The Tripartite Working Party.**

The Corporation was plainly prepared to give consent for the Faculty of Arts buildings, and the future now hinged on the Secretary of State. He had the power to call-in planning consent, but could only be justified in doing so if he first held a public inquiry. Even its almost certain victory in this would have spelled costly delays for the University's programme. The University had a claim on the Treasury for capital grant funding for new buildings and, since Appleton was committed to take more students, the Scottish Office was obliged as a matter of government policy to assist him in so doing. This was the primary aim, whether or not it involved the destruction of any buildings. In an effort to placate public opinion, the Secretary of

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\(^{50}\) City and Royal Burgh of Edinburgh - Development Plan as approved (with modifications) by the Secretary of State 3 September 1957

\(^{51}\) Haddington asked if the Government was satisfied that the development was necessary, as opposed to being merely convenient to the University. The Earl of Dundee answered but the Earl of Home brought the debate to a close and no one was so bold as to table a motion. (House of Lords Official Report (9/7/57) Column 773)

-SRO DD 32/84
State, John Maclay, called the protagonists: the University, the Amenity Societies and Edinburgh Corporation, to St. Andrew's House to try and get them to reach some sort of agreement.

Matthew's plan for the arts faculty group consisted of a fourteen storey point block on the south east corner of the square flanked by a pair of long four storey buildings on the east and south sides. Also on the south side there was a lecture theatre to seat six hundred students. (Figs. 1.29 & 2.58) These buildings were to be mounted on a podium with basement parking and refectory accommodation at the lower level of Buccleuch Place. All this required the demolition of half of the Georgian buildings on both the east and south with the remainder of the south side earmarked for the University Library. A tenement block on north Buccleuch Place also had to be demolished for the first phase.

In December 1959, a meeting was held in St. Andrew's House between Scottish Office staff, Edinburgh Corporation, the University, and representatives of opposition groups. The common points of agreement from which negotiation could begin were established and two months were given for the working party to report. All parties agreed that:

1. University development was a matter of urgency.

2. Expansion should take place in the central area and the existing zoning was accepted.

3. George Square is part of that area and that it had never been suggested that it should not be used for university purposes.

4. The amenity societies were not opposed to the University or its development.

This agreement demonstrates the weak position that the amenity societies found themselves in. As Charles Stewart pointed out at the second meeting of the working group, burden of proof lay with the amenity societies to demonstrate how the University's accommodation needs could be met in the George Square area, without
delay and with a positive outcome for the survival of the existing buildings.\textsuperscript{52} Unfortunately for Hurd, he was duty bound, together with planner McIndoe, to provide a solution. As Hurd had already agreed to undertake restoration of West George Square for the University, he thus he found himself working for both sides.

The University was represented by Secretary Charles Stewart and his assistant, Matthew, and Hardie Glover, Spence's partner. Messrs. Hewitson and Kerr represented the town, with Hurd, McIndoe and A.T. Crawford representing the amenity societies.

Unfortunately, some confusion arose in the mind of McLay, and possibly Appleton, for the Principal initially agreed to the working party on the condition that the first phase, the fourteen-storey tower, could proceed notwithstanding negotiations. Now, Matthew had set the tower back from the square so that, technically speaking, the footprint of the tower did not actually intrude upon that of the main buildings on east George Square. McLay understood that survival of the old buildings was not incompatible with the arts tower and he claimed that Appleton thought this also. Matthew stated that under no circumstances would he have been associated with the suggestion that the tower could go ahead without demolition. McLay even made a misleading statement to the House of Commons in December 1959.\textsuperscript{53} All the architects involved had realised that the old buildings could not be retained if the tower was to have that site, but the Secretary of State had apparently not. It does seem very strange that Appleton would not have realised that demolition of the Georgian houses was absolutely essential in order to create the podium on which the tower would stand. Presumably there was simply a misunderstanding by McLay when Appleton proposed his conditions for participation, and perhaps

\textsuperscript{52}Minute of meeting of 2/12/59
\textsuperscript{53}Copy of letter from McLay to the Earl of Wemyss (NTS) 7/2/60
Appleton was too distracted due to his wife's illness to ensure that McLay really understood the implications.

Charles Stewart's statement to the University Court makes the position clear.

"The Principal is extremely anxious that all members of the Court should understand that this commits the University to nothing except joint examination while at the same time it does allow it to proceed with its new arts building."54

There was also confusion over statutory listing. The amenity societies claimed that the whole square had been given the highest listing of "A". The University claimed that the Georgian buildings there only had a C listing which at the time had no statutory force. The University was correct, but Ian Lindsay had only recently put the buildings on a provisional list for regrading. This undermined the conservationists somewhat.

Hurd and McIndoe did manage to produce a plan for the area that involved retention of the external walls of the south and east sides of the square. {Fig. 1.31} As the plan shows, substantial demolition to the south and east of the square was involved and the old buildings would have to have been gutted and internally reconstructed. This hardly constituted conservation, as the Scottish Office architects pointed out.55

Eventually, after six meetings, all parties agreed to the following points.

1. The tower was incompatible with the houses on the east of the square.
2. Resiting the tower would mean replanning the whole scheme.
3. Replanning would delay the University's programme.
4. The only site where the University could build immediately was at the south-east corner.56

54 Letter from Charles Stewart.
-Signed Minutes of the University Court (14/12/59)
55 "The Alternative Scheme" -SRO DD 12/2724.
56 This was due to ownership including the fact that all the other buildings owned by the University were needed until the Arts Tower was complete.
5. It should now be decided whether the University's development plan was to proceed or be abandoned and replanned.

Thus, the Secretary of State was presented with a simple choice: allow the scheme to go ahead by refusing to hold a public inquiry, or accede to the conservationists' demands that the square should be saved at all cost. The first phase of the Arts Faculty was acknowledged as urgent, and Matthew pointed out that replanning the whole scheme would involve the delay of a year, which was not compatible with the University's agreement with the UGC. McLay disagreed with Hurd's claim that his alternative scheme would be quicker and cheaper, and he followed the advice of the DHS architects that there would be problems of structural unsuitability, deficiencies in circulation and ancillary provision, as well as a fire risk. The town-planning officer had also pointed out that it could not be assumed that any such scheme would receive planning consent. The Secretary of State thus rejected reconsideration, essentially on the basis that the Scottish universities had to create 5000 new student places by 1965.\(^{57}\)

Inevitably there was some bitterness. The Earl of Wemyss claimed that the case had not been impartially judged, but there was no recourse for appeal. Hurd described the tripartite working party experience as "unpleasant" and felt that the outcome had been decided before it started and he suggested to Spence that he ought to resign the job of restoring the west side. Spence, however, saw no reason why that was necessary.\(^{58}\) Hurd had also expressed disbelief that an architect of Spence's standing could have lent himself to such a scheme. Spence had not actually taken part in the working party himself, but he retorted:

\(^{57}\)Minutes and reports of the George Square Working Group (7/1/60 - 11/2/60)
Glendinning Collection. Robert Matthew Papers University File.

\(^{58}\)In a letter of 11/12/59 Spence raised no objection to Hurd also acting for the amenity societies. In a letter to the NTS (25/1/60) Hurd described the negotiations "beset with traps" and claimed that the University was not sincere in its participation.

NMRS Hurd Rolland Collection. HR 14/8
"I am bound to say that I am disappointed by your attitude, especially as I worked hard to secure your appointment for the west side.... You stated in the press that I had 'lent myself' to the project. I never have and never will lend myself.... After mature consideration, I took on this project because I was sure that this generation could put in George Square better buildings than one sees now. I am convinced that the charm of George Square is due to its atmosphere created by the height of its buildings and its trees. I am certain that Edinburgh must be given something from this generation to preserve in the future. As Robert Adam did when he destroyed Kirk o' Field to create the Old Quad."  

Thus it appears that the spirit-of-age of the post-war era had triumphed over the spirit-of-place of historical association. Consent from the Corporation was received for the Arts Faculty buildings in March 1960 and the first phase of development according to the 1959 plan was assured.

As a final observation on this episode, it is interesting to note that although Hurd made his survey and recommendations on the restoration of the west side it was never carried out as such. Hurd died in 1963 and when his partner, Ian Begg, enquired as to the commencement of the work he was told that the appointment had been a personal consultancy awarded to Hurd and there were no immediate plans for rehabilitation.

Chapter Ten: The Comprehensive Development Area

The last incarnation of the University's central development plan that Appleton oversaw was the now infamous, Comprehensive Development Area (CDA). This

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59 Letter from Spence to Hurd 23/3/60. 
- NMRS Hurd Rolland Collection. HR 14/8
60 Robert Hurd "Preliminary notes on Restoration" 28/7/60. Letter from Charles Stewart to Ian Begg 28/1/65. 
- NMRS Hurd Rolland Archive HR 14/8

Restoration according to Hurd's recommendations were perhaps not that desirable for the University at the time since, over and above the expense of the operation, there would have been a net loss of floor-space as attic conversions were reversed to bring the buildings back to their original state. As all the University owned buildings on the west side of the square were currently in use and others still had to be acquired, work could not have commenced for a considerable time.
project demonstrated the University's acquisition of a rather inflated confidence probably resulting from its success in the planning battle to achieve a new campus at George Square. Part of the background to this was the repeated assessment of national university expansion. One overriding reason for the Secretary of State supporting the University's existing plan was the government's education policy. At the beginning of 1960, when the UGC wrote asking for the University's proposals for 1964-68, it warned that student numbers for the UK for this period were likely to be 35-40,000 higher than previously anticipated and Edinburgh's share might be 1000. The Spence and Matthew Central Development Area Plan of 1959 had allocated enough space for such an expansion in the Buccleuch Place and High School Yards sectors; these might now be developed far sooner than expected.

The other background factor was rehabilitation of the urban fabric around Old College and George Square, in the area known locally as the South Side. The conservationists had fought ferociously for George Square, but as we saw with Hurd's alternative plans, little else was deemed worth saving. In this period of mass provision, clearance of sub-standard housing was generally carried out by the local authority, which would obtain compulsory purchase orders and commission replacement housing for the slum dwellers.

With University development assured and housing renewal a statutory matter, one important aspect of the South Side had still to be addressed. Industry was to be zoned-out of the area, according to Abercrombie's findings, but commercial developers were expected to take a great interest in derelict sites and the replacement of obsolete commercial property in this busy central district. In such a situation, there was the danger of that evil most feared by town planners: piecemeal development.

Consequently, in December 1960, Matthew convened a special meeting of the Major Buildings Committee to discuss the "Question of University Planning". Matthew had clearly already spoken tentatively to the Lord Provost on the matter of
the South Side, and now suggested that there was a strong case for creating a Comprehensive Development Area. This was a designation under the Town and Country Planning Act by which a city area could be commandeered by the local council and stripped of all its buildings. This enabled redevelopment according to a coherent plan, in this case as the University / Nicolson Street Comprehensive Development Area.

The CDA proposal was presented as having emerged from an idea that the City might wish to build a new swimming pool at Boroughloch Square. Should the University be prepared to co-operate and surrender some property rights it had in the area, the City would reciprocate by re-housing tenants displaced by the Fundamental Science project. There had been a forewarning of this in Matthew's 1960 Town and Gown lecture, "The Changing City", and he had even stated that private capital was ready to participate in development. Curious as it now seems, the proposal was felt to offer the opportunity to heal any wounds left over from the George Square battle by virtue of the University's participation and co-operation for the common good.

This level of participation in city planning would involve the University much more closely in city development, with a heavy burden of surveys and consultations. Matthew doubted if Spence would be interested in this. At the next meeting of the UDC Matthew explained further. Spence was not permanently in Edinburgh, whereas the University had a resident expert on Comprehensive Redevelopment in its Professor of Town Planning, Percy Johnson-Marshall.

Johnson-Marshall was well known in planning circles: a left-wing advocate of municipal authority and planning control. Prior to coming to Edinburgh he had worked under Matthew supervising London's Comprehensive Development Areas (1949-59).

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61 Minutes of a Special Meeting of the MBC 5/12/60.
- EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 pt.1 Box 56.
It is true that Spence had not recently been attending University meetings, delegating this role to Hardie Glover. And, although he had been personally requested to participate in the tripartite working party, a promised appearance had not materialised. Spence was becoming an extremely busy architect with many other important commissions, such as the consultancy for the new University of Sussex. In addition, he was now also President of the RIBA. Now that planning consent had been secured and demolition work for the George Square development had commenced, his services were to be dispensed with. Matthew suggested that he could always continue as “architectural consultant” to the University in recognition of his earlier role.\textsuperscript{62}

As it happened, Spence was not even offered the opportunity to serve as consultant to the University CDA. Charles Stewart wrote explaining that the situation was such that the University would find it increasingly difficult to acquire the properties it needed without compulsory powers of purchase.

"Dear Basil.... We feel we cannot ask you, based as you are in London, and with your many and very varied responsibilities to undertake this rather specialised work"

Spence replied:

"I know it is my duty now to retire as gracefully as possible from the planning scene.... I have booked 13 January (1961) for a visit to Edinburgh so I can appear at the meeting when I will commit hari-kiri (sic) gracefully"

And, Stewart acknowledged:

"I am sure that nobody can commit hara-kiri, fejo de se, or even simple murder more artistically than you."

\textsuperscript{62}Minutes of the UDC 13/1/61, EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 98/005 Box 1
Spence did not attend that meeting, where it was agreed to recommend Johnson-Marshall, and his retirement was announced. Sir Basil Spence was reported to have resigned his appointment as planning consultant to the University in view of the fact that his particular task had been completed.

A complete survey of the area was the first step towards a CDA, and this was to be followed by a phased plan. Early in 1962 Johnson-Marshall made his progress report to the UDC. Acting upon his experience with the LCC, he had been in continual liaison with the City Planning Officer concerning the necessary technical submissions and with the City Engineer over the proposed future road pattern. He had also consulted with all the major and minor institutions with premises in the area in order that conflicts of interest might be avoided. He foresaw no difficulty with the interests of conservation and reported that he had spoken on the matter to Ian Lindsay, of the Historic Buildings Panel. Of the existing buildings, Old College, the Reid School of Music, and the McEwan Hall were to be retained. So was St.Cecilia’s Hall, the eighteenth century concert hall that Lindsay was restoring for University use. However, he did not recommend retention of the old University Union once a replacement had been built. At High School Yards, only the High School itself warranted mention as a candidate for façade retention. The grandeur of Playfair’s Surgeons Hall at Nicolson Street was acknowledged and, in conformity with Mears and Spence (1959), an open space opposite Old College was proposed to provide a suitable setting.

Johnson-Marshall also reported that two large commercial developers were already interested in redeveloping the properties on both sides of Nicolson Street and warned that without co-ordinated development the new University campus would be confronted with the undesirable rears and service entrances of shops. This could be

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63 Letters from Stewart to Spence 22/12/60 and 4/1/61, Spence to Stewart 30/12/60, and Minutes of the UDC 13/1/61.
- EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT98/005 Box 1.
64 "University of Edinburgh Gazette" January 1962;
avoided if University and commercial developments took place being treated as integral parts of one overall urban design. To the east of the commercial corridor and in compliance with Abercrombie's zoning, the redevelopment was to be for residential purposes.

The major design principle outlined by Johnson-Marshall was traffic segregation with pedestrian circulation on walkways safely above the vehicles. It was proposed that this walkway system should link up with the podium level of the Faculty of Arts. All new buildings in the area would therefore require terraces or decks at first floor level. Pedestrians would thus be able to walk from George Square to High School Yards without encountering any traffic, although this would require lightweight bridges to traverse the carriage-ways.\(^65\) {Fig. 1.32 & 1.35}

It is likely that two aspects of the CDA proposal won Appleton over to the idea. The promise of Compulsory Purchase Orders to assist the University to buy additional property at the relatively low prices set by the District Valuer. Then there was the undesirable prospect that the George Square precinct might become hemmed in by unsympathetic commercial development, as the Principal announced in a special publication, "University of Edinburgh Comprehensive Development Area", which accompanied an exhibition:

"In the course of its own development, the University will have to replace many back-street areas, not in the best state of preservation. It hopes to replace them in due course with fine new buildings which will deserve to be seen, and which will provide the right sort of accommodation for those young people, still increasing in number, who are fortunate enough to receive their higher education in Edinburgh. It is reasonable, I suggest, that such buildings should not only be well built in themselves, but that they should also be built in the proper setting, that the access to them should be safe and easy for

- EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 Box 56
pedestrians, and that there should be a clear and uncluttered flow for vehicular traffic.... The University has no commercial or speculative interest in non-University buildings. It has no desire to dominate or to control areas of commercial or residential development. It is entirely content that the whole of the Comprehensive Development Area, and in particular the commercial and residential part be under the control, as it all must be, of the Town Planning Authority, that is to say, of the City of Edinburgh."66

Of course Johnson-Marshall had some financial incentive since he had recently begun his own planning consultancy, moving, like Matthew from public service into the private sector. The CDA by virtue of its scale and scope, was a far more lucrative proposition than a university consultancy by itself. The CDA was to involve another tripartite working party. This time it was to be the University, the Corporation and private enterprise with each party contributing a third of the cost of the planning consultant's fee.67

Johnson-Marshall commissioned perspectives and a 1:500 scale model demonstrating what the new South Side might look like after the most advanced techniques of city-planning had been applied. {Figs. 1.33a - 1.33b} He amended Spence's campus layout with a return - in some respects - to the Holden proposals for the area between George Square and Old College. Here, where Spence's model had left the street layout around Bristo Street intact, the Johnson-Marshall scheme involved obliterating the old street lines completely in favour of a formal square enclosed by new University buildings in front of the McEwan Hall. {Fig. 1.34c} The consultant also ruled that there should be no further tower blocks after Fundamental Science and that the University buildings with frontages onto George Square be

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66 This text was adapted from a speech made to the Corporation's Planning Committee 7/6/62
67 In the 1962 report two companies, Messrs. Cotton & Clore and Murrayfield Development Trust were cited as participants. In the 1963 report Murrayfield Real Estate Ltd is the sole commercial partner in the enterprise
faced in stone to ensure uniformity. It was also suggested that, in the area south of Buccleuch Place, the University should consider erecting some residential blocks.

Chapter Eleven: Stasis

Johnson-Marshall’s initial negotiations seemed to hold promise for the future but reports produced over the next two years failed to resolve various fundamental issues and the City Planning Officer perpetually deferred full consideration. It had been anticipated from the time of the Abercrombie Plan that there would be a new relief road running north to south through the Pleasance on the eastern edge of the proposed CDA. Johnson-Marshall was frequently perplexed that the Corporation seemed unable to make a decision on this, despite the fact that the expectation of it blighted the area and caused uncertainty over the loss of some buildings used by the University there. Worse still was the announcement that the city was considering whether it might be necessary to build a six-lane motorway from east to west through the University area to link up with this road, should it be built.68 The University warned that it would certainly object to this and Johnson-Marshall proposed an alternative east-west route through the Grassmarket and Cowgate.

By the end of 1963, the Corporation was uncertain whether there should be a commercial zone in the University area at all in view of the City's own commercial development at St. James Square.69

The City also found it difficult to commit itself to authorise a feasible site near to the High School Yards for the proposed Physics and Mathematics building and this project had to be transferred to King's Buildings.

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68Minutes of the UDC 2/3/63 and 19/6/63
- EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 Box 56
69P Johnson-Marshall Report to the Development Committee 8/11/63
P Johnson-Marshall Report to the Development Committee 27/2/64.
- EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 Box 56
At the time of Appleton's death in 1965 there had been no further progress with the CDA although the recommendations of the Robbins Report (1963) appeared to justify the expansion of the University along the lines proposed.

For sixteen years Sir Edward was working towards the creation of a fifty-year development plan. This was visionary, if over-optimistic, given the inevitable political changes over such a period. It is unlikely that he expected development would proceed exactly in the manner anticipated, yet it did provide leverage for his immediate successors, allowing them to complete a reduced version of the development plan.

Appleton lived long enough to see the arts tower completed, the science tower commenced and sites cleared for two teaching blocks, the lecture theatre and the Library. There were other architectural achievements too, such as: the Staff Club and Adam House, which will be discussed in the next book, together with some other buildings and conversions. And, unhampered by either development control, conflicting ideals or highway planning, there were several important developments at King's Buildings, the site that was almost abandoned prior to Sir Edward's arrival.

**Postscript**

During the period in which the CDA was still considered a possibility, the University continued steadily, if more slowly than expected, with its development at George Square. By 1970 the Arts Faculty buildings had reached their present form, as had the one and only phase of the Fundamental-Science buildings (i.e. the Appleton Tower). The second phase of the medical buildings, for Pharmacology, was complete, and work was about to commence on the first of two phases for student amenity buildings on Pollock's "island site", which had been cleared of its buildings.

By this time the commercial party to the CDA Joint Development Committee had been taken over by a larger concern and all its resources redirected to the City's
St. James Centre development. The planning dialogue reverted to a position similar to that of the early 1950s with a conservationist lobby, both within and outwith the University, raising voices of dissent and demanding retention of what old architecture remained in the university development area, and the City wracked by indecision and internal conflict.

From 1965-67 the City was engaged with the preparation of the review of the development plan of 1957 and there was such controversy over the proposals for an inner ring road that the Reporter to the 1967 Public Inquiry ordered a further study of traffic proposals.

In the atmosphere of the late 1960s and early 1970s the calls for conservation were more universal than in the 1940s and 1950s, when the destruction of old buildings, to some extent, symbolised progress and improvement leading towards measures leading to social justice. Disillusionment with the town-planners and their solutions and with their authoritarian approach had set in.

In Edinburgh, derelict sites and the crumbling remains of buildings, either condemned for proposed road building, or boarded-up in anticipation of redevelopment, provoked public hostility. This was often directed at the University in particular, as well as at the insensitivity of town-planning in general. A new urban disease: "planning blight" was identified, and it replaced the "urban decay" of the previous era as the commonest civic malady.

The University became extremely concerned about the bad publicity that it constantly received in the press. Happily, perhaps, Appleton was spared all this additional grief. An article in Country Life magazine struck hard. A University lecturer in Fine Art described the University as a "cuckoo in the nest"; referring to its displacement of the hatchlings of Edinburgh's grand historical heritage as well as its residents from the city-centre. The judgement of the University's architectural advisors was called into question. In respect of areas such as the South Side which had a considerable history and substantial architecture Professor Rowan argued:
"In these cases it is recognised that even modest buildings of no great architectural pretensions are essential to a complete effect and therefore better than any new structure could be." 70

Rowan was quite prescient in demanding that instead of a Comprehensive Development area, a Conservation Area should be established. And the assertion that the old was always better than the new marked a complete change in the cultural climate that had dominated the post-war era. None of those who opposed the schemes of Spence and Matthew would have claimed that there was anything wrong with modern architecture or with the principle of demolishing dwellings that were considered insanitary. In seeking to preserve continuity with the past, Rowan was asserting spirit-of-place over spirit-of-age.

Some buildings in the Bristo Street area, long condemned, and expected to be demolished for proposed university uses that lay immediately to the north of Crichton Street, were claimed as vital heritage. Rowan and his colleague, Duncan Macmillan, demanded that they should be rehabilitated rather than demolished. They felt that this block in particular i.e. Crichton Street- Bristo Street-Potterrow could provide valuable and valid student accommodation. Although they had been condemned, the buildings were of some historical interest but preservation would have had severe repercussions upon academic development. The protests were now being taken seriously by the University but the cost of student residences was critical. At £3,000 per head, the UGC would not finance such a scheme. If some way of financing it could have been arranged, other sites would have to be found for the remainder of the First-Year Science buildings and for a gymnasium to replace one expected to be demolished for the City's road scheme. The estimates were challenged but the protestors had no currency other than invective. 71 In any case, all the legal

70 A.Rowan "A Cuckoo in the Nest" Country Life 25/12/69.
71 Minutes of the UDC 26/3/70.
- EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 Box 56
procedures had been already been completed by the Corporation and the tenements were destroyed in 1971. Nothing has, so far, been built on this site, however.

Principal Swann, who succeeded Appleton, found himself caught between Rowan and Macmillan, who were attacking the CDA and the University's development policy, and Johnson-Marshall and assistant secretary Maxwell Young defending it. Macmillan claimed that the CDA concept of "architectural unity" was counter to tradition, while Johnson-Marshall cited the tradition of Robert Adam and his South Bridge project, and re-iterated the chaos that had been caused by lack of planning. Johnson-Marshall refused to accept that there was such a thing as "planning blight". The decrepit state of the South Side was due to "planning decisions", he argued. Macmillan attacked the principle of a "monolithic" University area, favouring mixed-use areas, but Johnson-Marshall argued that the CDA was a mixed-use area. Throughout this controversy, Johnson-Marshall appears increasingly anachronistic: a man of the 1930s, both in his appearance and attitude, and no longer understood. Rowan described his CDA prescription for total demolition thus:

"This is nonsense; as planning it is far too doctrinaire and in 1969 depressingly old fashioned".73

Interestingly a similar view had been expressed directly to Johnson-Marshall in 1961, on the eve of his CDA scheme, in discussion with the architect, Minoru Yamasaki, about the design principles that might be applied to a complete redevelopment of Detroit. As Yamasaki insisted:

"I think any individual should only do so much...There are many American Architects who want to do whole cities. I think that is a terrible mistake, because the city becomes wonderful by the vitality of the ideas that come into being.

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73 A. Rowan "A Cuckoo in the Nest" Country Life 25/12/69
through the work of many people, and the imposition of a man or group on a complete environment is a kind of Fascism."\textsuperscript{74}

Two factors combined with the conservation movement to undermine completion of the planned University campus and the implementation of the CDA. Both of these were national phenomena, which in Edinburgh acquired a local flavour. The growing militancy of community groups who demanded their say in what should become of them, challenging the need for their removal to peripheral housing estates. This resulted in a reassessment of residential zoning. For example, residents of houses owned by the University at Lauriston Place effectively prevented their demolition for the proposed new Dental Hospital and School.\textsuperscript{75} And, although a new site at Crichton Street/Bristo Street was allocated for dentistry, delays had carried the project into a period of recession and it was ultimately cancelled. The other factor: lack of financial commitment by government to the capital funding of higher education, left Edinburgh's campus incomplete at a time of increasing hostility from staff, students and citizens.

Scheduled demolitions were, by this stage, routinely challenged and the significant protests to the demolition of buildings on the north side of George Square had the flavour of bitter irony since it had been universally accepted by the 1950s that this side would ultimately be cleared for Medicine. Obtaining the funding for the third and, as it happened, final phase for Biochemistry was a prolonged struggle for principal Sir Hugh Robson, the success of which provoked protesters demands that nos. 10-14 George Square should be saved from destruction.\textsuperscript{76} In the light of public opinion, Johnson-Marshall considered alternative siting for the medical buildings.\textsuperscript{77} However, a warrant for demolition was granted in July 1976 after the University

\textsuperscript{74}Lecture by Minoru Yamasaki and subsequent discussion. RIBA Journal January 1961.
\textsuperscript{75}Minutes of a Special meeting between the UDC and The South Eastern Hospital Board 25/7/73. -EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 Box 57 Bundle 5
\textsuperscript{76}This consisted of the Forestry building of 1912 at No. 10 and the four surviving original, though much altered, houses all in University use. The house at No. 15 had been destroyed prior to commencement on the first phase of the Medical Extension.
correctly assessed that the Corporation would not breach faith by refusing consent and that the Secretary of State would not call-in consent for such an important project.\(^{78}\)

The pressure to conserve resulted in the remaining block of houses on the east side of George Square being reprieved. This was much to the chagrin of the Faculty of Science since the site had been earmarked for the second phase of the Fundamental Science project that would have consisted of a tutorial block to accompany the Appleton Tower. Thus, the houses survive in a now rather incongruous setting at the foot of the tower: something Matthew had been determined should not happen with the houses adjacent to the David Hume Tower, in 1959/60. The remainder of Buccleuch Place was also retained although no project for the site had ever got onto a building schedule.

During the 1970s, studies and reviews of the University area by Johnson-Marshall's company demonstrate an increasing need to accommodate conservation and rehabilitation and the University even set up its own Conservation Group which was given the task of dealing with work on older buildings. \(^{[Fig. 1.36]}\) Derelict properties that had been acquired by the University in expectation of development became an embarrassment to be disposed of as quickly as possible. Then there were demands from the University Court and from the public that there should be an announcement to the effect that the CDA had been abandoned, however it automatically lapsed with the re-organisation of local authorities in 1976.\(^{79}\) This was an ignominious end for a project that began by being described as "Another New Town", which was launched at a press conference to the accompaniment of cheers and foot stamping.\(^{80}\)

\(^{78}\) The Secretary of State announced that he did not intend to call-in planning permission and listed building consent for Nos. 10-14 was given by the Town Council. Minutes of the UDC 15/11/76 -EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 Box 57 Bundle 7

\(^{79}\) Minutes of the UDC 11/12/74 and 17/3/75. -EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 Box 57 Bundle 6

\(^{80}\) Michael Laird "Another New Town"  \textit{Architectural Journal} V.135 June 1962.
All that was ever achieved in conformity with Johnson-Marshall's University scheme, over and above what had been planned before he arrived, was the plaza in front of the McEwan Hall, the specific orientation of the Student Centre flanking it, and the re-routing of the road beside it. These projects will be discussed in books Three and Four.

Of the CDA itself there is no visible trace on the face of the city. Some further demolition took place, as empty buildings became unsafe. But, as subsequent road plans came and went without implementation, the CDA receded into Edinburgh history together with the Mears plan and other grandiose dreams.

In modern times the evidence suggests that the impetus to pursue any perceived end can only rarely be sustained for more than one generation. Appleton was probably aware of this, and his acceptance of the CDA scheme was presumably tempered by the knowledge of the inevitability of revision. And, despite an obvious commitment to mid-century planning theory, Johnson-Marshall also knew that numerous obstacles lay between plan and implementation. In a series of articles, "Comprehensive Redevelopment" that he published in 1959 he quoted Aristotle describing the Ideal City:

"There ought also to be temples erected at proper places both to Gods and Heroes but it is unnecessary to dwell longer and most minutely on these particulars for it is by no means difficult to plan these things, rather it is so to carry them into execution; for the theory is the child of our wishes, but the practical part must depend upon fortune"81

Book One provided an overview of what might be described as a planning dialogue enacted between the City and the University. I now wish to discuss how the architects were able to respond to the challenges that the University provided. This will involve broadening the context in order to consider how architecture was used to address the long-nurtured expectations shaping the general character of the British during that era. The particular character of architecture, and indeed most works of art and design in the fifteen or so years following the Second World War, is associated with the events and ideas that were considered important. While there is no logical inference between any spirit-of-age that one might identify and the particular sort of architecture that results, neither is it an arbitrary matter. And few would dispute that it is the times that shape the architecture. Thus, certain events of national significance require to be related to the architectural responses. Also, the architects themselves - who had presumably spent the war years anticipating the buildings that they would create when peace came - did the actual shaping. Their background experience must therefore be taken into account too.

As the first post-war buildings began to appear, they were labelled "New Look", just as the first post-austerity women's fashions were. This was a term of mild approbation, rather than a rallying call, and it represented little more than acceptance by a fairly conservative press and public that non-traditional design was acceptable and worthwhile. In 1951, with the Festival of Britain and South Bank Exhibition, and then the Coventry Cathedral competition, certain design characteristics gained favour. Inevitably, the "New Look" was dubbed “Festival Style”. Then, for a short time, centred on the Coronation in 1953, for which South Bank architect Hugh
Casson designed the decorations, a "New Elizabethan Style" was proclaimed. {Fig. 2.01} The latter designation presuming to make a play on the adventurous age of the first Queen Elizabeth, drawing similarities between say Sir Edmund Hillary and Sir Walter Raleigh, and comparing Renaissance discoveries with modern technological achievement. But, this idea of a new Elizabethan architecture was soon dissipated. Perhaps, architecture had finally become divorced from such symbols of permanence and perpetuity as might be associated with a particular reigning monarch. Certainly, the young architects entering practice in the early sixties were anxious to distance themselves from their predecessors. So, Festival Style quickly became an object of derision; branded as archaic, or worse, by a new generation that challenged even the notion of style in itself. However, the architectural manifestations of such a specific episode in our history are all the more interesting because of their brief currency and the reactions they precipitated.

For the University of Edinburgh, this period saw its ambitious long-term development plans begin to bear fruit and the commissions for the buildings that were to be executed up until the late 1970s were awarded. Indeed, the first architectural statements - whether as solid architecture or as designs on paper - were made during the 1950s. Unsurprisingly, several of the buildings produced in the Appleton era are described, or rather dismissed, as "Festival Style".¹

Edinburgh's immediate post-war university architecture was unique in being the product of a predominantly local architectural scene. The architects who secured university commissions by 1960: Sir Basil Spence, Sir William Kininmonth, Alan Reiach and Sir Robert Matthew, were leading figures in a mid-twentieth century Edinburgh School. All had trained at the Edinburgh College of Art with careers interrupted by the war. Furthermore, these same architects worked in traditional practices that had pre-war connections with the University. And, although Matthew

¹ Holland House, Adam House, the Student Union Extension and the David Hume Tower are the chief examples.
had migrated in 1946, with Spence moving to London in 1951, the clarion call of Appleton at the University brought both back to the city for one of Scotland's major architectural projects of the period. As I discussed in Book One, Matthew, as Professor of Architecture (from 1953), played a major role in the University's architectural endeavours, while Spence was the planning consultant from 1954-9. Reiach also secured major commissions, while William Kininmonth inherited the Rowand Anderson connection with the University and designed its first post-war buildings.

Yet the Festival Style was more than simply the design outcome of that specific official national celebration organised in London and launched in 1951. For reasons of aspirations, both civic and academic, and because of the architects involved, Edinburgh has an unrecognised, yet special, place in the history of Festival/New Look/Elizabethan Architecture.
Chapter One. Elizabethan architecture takes shape

Our first consideration must be the creation of the aspirations and architectural expectations of the period. As the reconstruction programme began to assume momentum, the harsh and austere economic climate abated only gradually. It was imperative that the programme -at times frustratingly slow - maintain a credible public profile throughout the process of preparing and approving local development plans, initiated during wartime. Progress towards realisation of the New Britain was sporadic in the final years of the 1940s. A general rationing of goods, shortages of manpower and materials, and an insecure global situation were clearly obstacles to success. Faith in the nation's great enterprise was essential to prevent the situation becoming fertile soil for the seeds of political discontent. Despite the opening moves of the Welfare State, public morale was still a crucial issue, especially for the governing Labour Party (1945-51), at pains to demonstrate its effectiveness as a social reformer. The machinery of propaganda, and the statutory process of preparing regional development plans were used to project images of an attainable future. Planning and political propaganda posters promising new housing, hospitals and schools, proposed an architectural environment that the new society would inhabit. In this way architectural images raised expectations while creating acceptance of the - still fairly novel - appearance of contemporary design.

The graphic artists involved in preparing propaganda often had few valid examples of a future social architecture to draw upon, but the essence of their task was to explicate the functions of the buildings and the fact that they were actually new. These representations were often in a sort of short-hand "Moderne" which was sketchy and plain, relying on captions such as "School" "Hospital" or "Health Centre" to convey the message.
A more specific example of planning propaganda, produced during the last days of the war by the artist Abram Games, featured the Finsbury Health Centre (1939) designed by Berthold Lubetkin's Tecton practice. The poster itself was banned by Churchill because it also featured a child with rickets, but the building had been featured in the architectural press and its design was considered appropriately progressive to its function to serve as a model for future social architecture. Interestingly, Churchill is attributed with the statement:

"We shape our architecture, and it shapes us"

The health centre is symmetrically arranged with two glass fronted lozenge shaped wings enclosing the central pavilion, and set at 100 degrees to the main block, thus giving the impression of an opening embrace. It is set in its own landscaped garden with a ramp leading up to a gently curved façade where the foyer is fronted by a wall of glass bricks. Inside, a mural by Gordon Cullin includes the topical slogan:

"Fresh air, night and day!"

For a large number of architects in the post-war period, Tecton's work in the 1930s provided the most viable prototypes. Lubetkin was certainly an inspirational figure. A product of the European avant-garde, he introduced Britain to a Modernist architecture that was at one with its ideology, as opposed to the fashion conscious Moderne idiom, incorporating applied machine age detail, that had supplemented traditional architecture in this country in the 1930s.

Lubetkin had the social commitment required for reconstruction projects, but unlike many planning propagandists he was able to fuse ethics with aesthetics, and in terms of construction he was genuinely progressive in exploiting the latest in

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2 The banned poster, by Abram Games, is reproduced in A.J.P. Taylor History of the 20th Century (Ch.79 pp.2195)
concrete technology. At both Finsbury and the Highpoint flats, in Highgate, he worked with engineer Ove Arup in pioneering the use of concrete load-bearing walls. {Fig. 2.04} Such technologies were in themselves imbued with promise for the post-war period.

**Festival City - Cultural Renewal at Edinburgh**

The general proposition of Cripps, Morrison et al that led to the 1951 festivities seems to have been integral to contemporary consciousness. The first event was the exposition of British industry, organised by Cripps under the punning, ambiguous banner: "Britain Can Make It", at the V&A in 1946. This was a celebration of tenacity against the odds, and of the nation's technological capacities. It hardly addressed cultural concerns though and, by demonstrating desirable commodities reserved for the nation's export drive; it might be seen as tantalising a consumer culture yet to emerge. However, despite the importance of technology and industry, culture was a matter of great concern. Then, as ever, celebrations of the survival of European culture and propositions for its future found their most favourable reception in festivals.

One outcome of the festive impulse that anticipated the national event of 1951 occurred in Scotland and it had considerable impact on urban redevelopment and architectural design. With the inauguration of an arts festival in 1947, a spark of spiritual renewal was ignited, albeit for the cultural elite. This event cast Edinburgh as a new Salzburg under the direction of Glyndebourne impresario Rudolph Bing. The city had been chosen as a picturesque and romantic setting, unmarked by the ravages of aerial bombing, in which western culture might begin to reassert itself. Bing and his associate, Wood, enlisted the support of the Duke and Duchess of Roseberry and Professor Newman, and soon Lord Provost Falconer was convinced of the benefits. Falconer summed up the aspiration thus:
"Edinburgh has always been regarded as a city of culture. If she could invite the world to a festival regularly, that would be practical proof of her abiding genius for the arts. We would once again find Scotland maintaining her place in the forefront of those things which are akin to her spirit".  

Notwithstanding a shortage of hotel accommodation, due to government requisitions, and a meagre supply of venues, the first festival brought international attention to the city. And, it was judged an artistic success worth repeating on an annual basis.

Along with this new found attention came an increase in civic self-consciousness, however. The economic depression of the 1930s and the war that followed had constrained ambition and investment in architecture and urban improvement. The Mears Report (1931) and the less architecturally ambitious Clyde Report (1943) had called for sweeping improvements. The media spotlight of the International Festival really brought home to the citizens the inadequacies in the provision for cultural events as well as just how run down and shabby the fabric of the city had become.

Now, local institutions were unanimous that a scheme of regeneration, worthy of the city's status, was required. The city authorities took steps to ensure that Patrick Abercrombie, Britain's most respected planner, was commissioned to draft the city development plan. Abercrombie was advised to make adequate provision for an annual festival in his scheme, and this gave Edinburgh's plan a particular flavour: a festival city development plan. The proposed University re-integration scheme was complementary to the festival, in that it promised to replace urban decay with new

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5 The Edinburgh Evening Dispatch 12 December 1945.

6 Preliminary Suggestions Prepared for Consideration by the Representative Committee in regard to the Development and Replanning of the Central Area, Sir Frank C. Mears, March 1931. All the city's major institutions were represented, with Sir Thomas H. Holland (Principal) and Professor T. Hudson Beare representing the University. Report of the Advisory Committee on City Development, J.L. Clyde, Sir Thomas B. Whitson & Sir J. Donald Pollock. 1943.
buildings in the creation of a cultural zone in the heart of the city. Staff and students were likely to be patrons of the arts, and University facilities could further enhance the Festival. Appleton even tried to get the Edinburgh Festival Society nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize on the grounds that it was:

"A potent force for international peace and understanding in that it appeals to the similarities and not the differences between nations".

Consequently, the Abercrombie Plan, published in 1949, suggested new civic spaces with cultural buildings at both the east and west ends of the city centre. Although a city plan generally contains no projected building designs per se, there can be little doubt that the illustrations here created expectations as to the city's new architecture. Something akin to the poster artist's idea of modern architecture emerges in suggestive sketches. To the east of Princes Street, the principal shopping thoroughfare, a new National Theatre was proposed. This would involve redevelopment the eighteenth century St. James Square. The existing derelict Theatre Royal and the Roman Catholic Cathedral were to be demolished and replaced by modern and efficient versions. Sketch elevations are provided, presumably in order to guide the city authorities and to prime the citizenry for the new architecture. (Figs. 2.05a & 2.05b) According to the text, the character of the centre was to be expressed in steel, glass, and stone dressed concrete. This was an unusually specific prescription of materials. In Abercrombie's model, the new theatre looks like a less elegant sister of the Royal Festival Hall. (Figs. 2.05b & 2.07e) The latter was yet to be built, but Abercrombie had no doubt seen the designs since he was very well acquainted with its architects, Robert Matthew and Leslie Martin.

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7Quoted in R Clark Sir Edward Appleton Oxford 1971, pp.201
The replacement cathedral is something of a curiosity, somewhat Byzantine in appearance, thus suggesting that architectural historicism might still have a place in post-war Edinburgh.

To the west of Princes Street, which was itself to be completely remodeled, a railway goods yard was earmarked for redevelopment in order to create a suitably festive setting for the Usher Hall, the city's main concert venue. An additional theatre adjacent to the Usher Hall was proposed while, to the west, an open square was to replace the railway lines and associated buildings. A sketch shows the concert hall viewed from this new piazza which is enclosed by housing. [Fig. 2.05c] These are low-rise flats of planar simplicity with pilotis, and corner windows - that favoured motif of thirties modernism. There is some relation in form to buildings being erected on many housing estates in the period. They bring to mind, for example, similar buildings at Lansbury [Fig. 2.08d], or perhaps the new Coventry town-centre. Indeed, the castle rock rises up as a picturesque backdrop behind the Usher Hall, in the same way that the new pedestrian shopping centre in Coventry provides a frame for the vista to the steeple of St. Michael's. [Fig. 2.06]

The sketch of the proposed Festival Square seems to suggest rubble cladding to the walls of the houses. Presumably this is a reference to the tradition of rubble stone construction. The contrast with concrete slabs is presumably an analogue for the blending of old with new.

As urban architecture for the centre of Scotland's capital, such a scheme would now be inconceivable. Perhaps this is because the spirit of those times has been lost, and the idea of a piazza with social housing forming part of a cultural area now seems naively idealistic. Thirty years later the goods yard site began to be developed as a business district, and the current "Festival Square", while it does provide a view towards the Usher Hall, is a corporate space: dominated by large financial institutions.
We can thus see that, by 1949, the civic leaders had firmly grasped the concept of Edinburgh as a festival city, with its own festival architecture paralleling developments in London and Coventry. And, of course, the central hub of all this cultural activity was the University. I have dealt separately with Charles Holden's negotiations with Abercrombie on behalf of the university, and the establishment of a University/Cultural Zone immediately adjacent to the Old Town. Holden's proposed piazza in front of the University's McEwan Hall should be thought of as augmenting the festival spaces with a semi-public space forming the link between the university enclave of George Square and the historic city-centre.

By 1949, the London County Council's (LCC) reconstruction programme for London was well advanced, under the leadership of Robert Matthew. Most of the resources were directed towards housing and traffic circulation, but Matthew's team also devised a cultural precinct for the derelict docklands on the South Bank of the Thames. The South Bank scheme was a long term project but the site was set to become a focus of national attention as the location of a temporary exhibition which, by all accounts, entirely captured the spirit of time and place in 1951.

This manifestation of the festival impulse, like the "Britain Can Make it Exhibition", was set in motion by the evangelical liberal, Stafford Cripps. He proposed a modern rerun of the 1851 International Exhibition. The idea was then promoted by News Chronicle editor, Gerald Barry, as a victory celebration, and subsequently modified by politician Herbert Morrison into a morale boosting national festival, for which he achieved government and royal approval. With Hugh Casson as the organising architect, competitions were held for the design of the temporary buildings and exhibits, and Robert Matthew with Leslie Martin accepted the challenge to create the Festival Theatre in time for the event.

The precise reason for the festival remained a matter of speculation, and although comparisons with the Great Exhibition are difficult to justify, a certain element of
wonder, at least was recaptured. Retrospectively, it came to be considered an appropriate celebration of the new Welfare State and as a symbol of the end of austerity.

"The Tories suspected it was the first steps of advancing socialism; the Left believed it to be elitist-middle-class intellectuals telling ordinary people how and where to enjoy themselves (both were right)." 8

But most importantly the Festival purported to provide a glimpse into the future, as well as acknowledging the past. Indeed, for a specific generation it might be said to have completely informed their definition of modern architecture and design. Colin Cross remarked that from this point onwards "pre-war" no longer meant superior quality; it meant "obsolete". 9

"But enshrined in memory the South Bank remained the popularly accepted idea of 'modern' for a whole generation: braced legs, indoor plants, colour rinse concrete, lily-of-the-valley spays of light bulbs, cane-work, aluminium lattices, Cotswold type walling with picture windows, flying staircases, blonde wood, the thorn, the spike, the molecule: all these became the Festival Style." 10

Although there was the predictable controversy about public expenditure, most of those who visited the South Bank at the time were impressed by the evocation of gaiety and colour transposed onto an otherwise grey and bleak canvas of a London that had just endured its worst smog in history. No one seems to have felt that they were being subjected to propaganda, however, the outgoing Labour government may have regarded it as something of a visual manifesto.

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9 Colin Cross "The Festival of Britain" (pp. 2212) in A.J.P. Taylor (Ed) History of the 20th Century.
10 William Feaver, "Festival Star" in A Tonic to the Nation (pp.54)
"On a fine May morning the South Bank must be the gayest spot on earth... It seems worthwhile trying to put this visual language of the mid century into words. Its foundation is engineering touched with magic, or in other words the marriage of science and art. The visual result, given the capabilities of our materials, is light as thistledown. A puff of wind one feels, would blow it away. Paper thin planes of concrete float in the air. Supports are spindly, often attenuated to a point at the base. For contrast, thick slabs of the solidest masonry, even chunks of rock and earth are introduced with a fine disregard for the impermanence of exhibitions.

This contrast between transparent or opaque sheets of glass, canvas, aluminium, and deliberately heavy slabs of wall, is a recurrent theme. Anything intermediate is avoided. The thick slabs are generally isolated and dramatised by adjacent transparencies, as when glass meets rubble, or stretched canvas meets flint, or stair treads float without risers. Pretty steel balustrades make a lacy edging and a repetitive linear pattern.... For all their lightness, the exhibition buildings are tough, and given more durable finishes and cladding could be permanent. They must, therefore, be taken seriously for they undoubtedly foreshadow the public architecture of the fifties."

Lional Brett's prediction that the Festival was defining the architecture of the decade had popular assent for a time, and the visual marriage of continuity and change, or tradition and modernity, that the Festival celebrated received further exposure with Casson's decorations for the Coronation in 1953.

The South Bank event itself produced a certain amount of innovation. The mother of this innovation was necessity, for shortages of materials demanded that every available material was utilised.

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11 Lionel Brett. The Observer. May 1951.
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Of the temporary structures, several were surprisingly prescient. Ralph Tubbs's Dome of Discovery was a conceptual fantasy with a didactic function, interesting in terms of construction but probably overloaded with educational exhibits. {Fig. 2.07a} It is a curious antecedent for Rogers' Millennium Dome, of the year 2000, both in form and content. Few in 1951, however, could have suspected the fantasy-oriented culture of fifty years later that would produce such a creation as a marker of the second Christian millennium.

The peculiar "Skylon", of Powell and Moya, was an expressionistic exercise that suggested space exploration. And, although it was never clear whether it was actually architecture or sculpture, it seems to have been accepted as a perfectly acceptable representation of the future of the nation, while yet suggesting that the future would bring constructions and concepts yet to be grasped. {Fig. 2.07b}

One of the most memorable installations was the "Sea and Ships" pavilion by Basil Spence, who was by then a seasoned exhibition designer. While it impressed visitors with its apparent modernity, it might now be thought of as an example of historicist architecture - if it is architecture - for Spence seemed to allude to the forms of Russian Constructivism. With grounded ships as the central exhibit, the other elements floated around them on tensile steel cables. Abstract fabrications and wall planes were suspended from girders and pylons around the ships creating the ambience of some arcane dry dock or naval installation. {Fig. 2.07c}

We shall probably never know if Spence deliberately alluded to Constructivism, or if, as is more likely, he was merely casting around for interesting compositional ideas. Nevertheless, some of the circumstances could be said to gently parallel those of post revolutionary Russia: the devastation of war, shortages and rationing, but coupled with a will for change and a sense of optimism. Judging from contemporary reports, there was a genuine sense of newness and a feeling that great changes were afoot.
The only permanent structure on the South Bank, described by Casson as a "triumphal concept", the Royal Festival Hall, was a tangible standard bearer for urban renewal and cultural regeneration as the first post war public building. To the public it demonstrated that reinforced concrete had applications other than for military installations, and also that large civic buildings could be non-rhetorical. Its riverfront façade, generously glazed and inviting, appeared to hang beneath the arched roof evoking that mysterious feeling of lightness, which Brett described. The suspension of the auditorium over the entrance foyer and the absence of load bearing walls imparted the message of hope of the concrete structural skeleton. It was as if to say that the genius of science and invention so recently dedicated to war had turned to a new mission for civilisation. Indeed, with the so-called scientific wonders on display, the exhibition advertised the new peace-time role for the "boffin". {Figs. 2.07d-2.07f}

Social Architecture at Lansbury.

As part of the Festival of Britain, it was decided to include an early example of practical reconstruction, or "Live Architecture" as it was called. Lansbury, part of the Stepney-Poplar Reconstruction Area, was chosen. As an entirely re-planned area in the heavily bombed East End, it was an appropriate model for postwar British social architecture. The scheme was the product of the inter-war generation of planners who had inherited the mantle of the garden city movement. Therefore, the planned neighbourhood principle was adopted. The new Lansbury was a working class area consisting of housing, churches, shops, market place and school, designed in an attempt to re-establish the old community, but with a far higher standard of accommodation and facilities than previously.

In consistence with the socialistic ethos of planners such as Percy Johnson-Marshall, Group Planning Officer for the North East London Group, the architects employed a specific scale of buildings, together with what was known as "people's
detailing", in their designs. For the first phase of development there was a height restriction of six storeys, with two and three-storey format predominating. Terraces of two-storey brick houses with low pitched slate roofs were recognisable as worker's houses and therefore unthreatening either to the proletariat or the status quo. {Fig. 2.08a} Unlike the back-to-back terraces they replaced, however, the layout is generous with open space in the form of hard paved courtyards and communal green areas.

In many ways entirely traditional, in both construction and approach, these houses were regarded by their creators as spiritual descendants of the Red House. Within the LCC the belief was prevalent that the roots of modern architecture lay in Britain with the Victorian reformers and specifically with William Morris.\(^{12}\) For the more extreme left-wing architects, however, this represented "Social Realism" inspired by Swedish examples, yet consistent with the tenets of the Russian architect Zhdanov.\(^{13}\) Social Realism provided an alternative to Beaux-Arts academic architecture and, in some senses, a more acceptable proposition than that of an avant-garde who demanded a revolutionary social consciousness that was completely divorced from working class tradition and expectations.

Only the Old People's Home by Judith Ledeboer can be said to display an explicit link with Morris. {Fig. 2.08b} The home is far more regular and less idiosyncratic than the Arts and Crafts villas of say Webb or Shaw, but the mixed stock bricks and the eccentric high chimneys create an atmosphere evocative of country cottages and a rural idyll.

\(^{12}\) The source for this conviction was Niklaus Pevsner's Pioneers of Modern Architecture, (1936), which was required reading for the radical student of architecture in the 1940s.

\(^{13}\) In The New Brutalism (1966) by Reyner Banham (pp.11), the author describes how Zhdanov's rules for domestic architecture, i.e. 4 storeys, or less, and pitched roofs etc. formed the doctrine of the older LCC architects. However, in 1954 Kruschev rejected these principles, thus ideologically undermining the British Communist's doctrines. Nevertheless, Sweden provided the principal examples of Welfare State architecture.
For the market square, the architect Frederick Gibberd maintained the urban tradition of flats above shops. \( \text{Fig. 2.08c} \) Concrete panels and brickwork are combined, and the accommodation is raised up above the street on pilotis in a manner similar to Abercrombie's proposal for Festival Square at Edinburgh.

Interestingly, at first floor level there are projecting windows that can only be described as oriels. This may have been an inadvertent historicism, although this Tudor element had also been part of the repertoire of the Arts and Crafts movement.

Where three-storey blocks of flats break away from the formality of street layouts and adopt L-plan layouts and balconies after the Swedish pattern, the engagement with the vernacular continues as brick walls and pitched roofs are maintained. The clock tower, the vertical landmark feature, exemplifies the collision of Constructivist experimentation and traditional elements.

For institutional buildings, however, "people's detailing" and references to vernacular tradition were hardly appropriate. The appearance of the new East London schools, with their acres of windows and boxy informality would have been regarded by the inhabitants as revolutionary; accustomed as they were to the heavy stonework and the Gothic or Renaissance costumes of Victorian school architecture. These new educational buildings actually followed a tried and tested formula, pioneered at the Hertfordshire schools, where glazed components form the facades and an air of lightness and informality is successfully achieved. It is worth noting that Stirrat Johnson-Marshall, the brother of Percy, was a key player in the development of the Hertfordshire programme. The Hertfordshire schools exemplified Gropius's industrial agenda and, appropriately, the massing and layout of the Lansbury Catholic School advertises its own debt to the Bauhaus at Dessau. \( \text{Fig. 2.08d} \)

Due to the publicity surrounding the festival, the Catholic Secondary School at Lansbury served as an antecedent for new schools throughout country. Its success as a model due in no small part to the "quick dry" construction method that was felt to
address both the social reality and economic necessity of educational reform. The development of building systems, while producing new design challenges, had a political and ethical dimension too.

**Coventry**

The first really prestigious British architectural project in the post war period was the rebuilding of Coventry Cathedral, with Basil Spence the winner of the competition for a new design, in 1951. *(Figs. 2.09a & 2.09b)* The outcome of the competition was of great significance, not the least for the architect who had acquired such a reputation as an exhibition designer that he despaired of building anything permanent and seriously considered emigrating. But now his status as one of the country's leading architects seemed assured. Spence's Coventry coup, together with Matthew's LCC work, including the Royal Festival Hall, confirmed that the 1951 festival was more than an empty promise of renewal. These two major works of public architecture were felt to symbolise the start of a new era. Morale soared for the public, and for at least some of the profession. Press headlines captured the excitement:

"The Cathedral of the Atom Age"

*(The Daily Mail 11 April 1951)*

"Britain's First Space Age Cathedral"

*(The Manchester Evening News 11 April 1951)*

These events were a cause of some elation in Scotland, and in the capital in particular, which gave the title of Spence's subsequent book a sort of triple significance. "Phoenix at Coventry " signified not merely a cathedral arising reborn from the ruins, but it also symbolised the irrepressible will of the nation in overcoming the difficulties of the war and its aftermath. Furthermore, it represented the renaissance of a once proud tradition of Scottish architecture. The ascendancy of
the Edinburgh School architects, Matthew and Spence, appeared to rekindle that flame which had burned so brightly when Adam, Mylne, and Chambers established British Neo-classicism in the eighteenth century. Coventry Cathedral and the Royal Festival Hall demonstrated the Scots producing indisputably symbolic architecture, irrespective of the circumstances of chance and intention that made it so.

But, it was not all adulation and elation within the profession. Spence later acknowledged that his design was: "Too modern for some - not modern enough for others". He believed that this was because it was intended for the ordinary person.14

"Exhibitionism at its worst. It is not Christian. ...It is Holywood"15

Few architects get the opportunity to build anything as auspicious or as permanent as a cathedral and Spence seized the opportunity to reassert architecture as the mother of all arts. He always insisted that the project was an act of faith, and consequently he commissioned as wide a range of artists and craftsmen to contribute, as would have been the case with the great cathedrals of the Middle Ages. He selected those considered to be the leading artists of his own generation: Sutherland, Epstein, Piper.

The architect's emphasis on tradition alienated a cadre of younger architects who saw it as an attempt at a Gothic revival; perhaps fearing that British architecture would revert to historicism. To be sure, Spence had employed stone - signifying permanence - as the principal medium, and he used the module of the original building to generate his plan.

15A newspaper cutting of a letter published in The Telegraph was enclosed with a letter from Spence to G. Maufe. Spence believed that A.E. Richardson was behind this attack. The Royal Fine Art Commission was split with Maufe in favour of Spence's design and Richardson against. Quoted in Campbell 1987 pp.83
The critics were part of a trend, later to become known as the New Brutalists, who eschewed applied decoration of any sort and despised the British architectural profession for its traditionalism and parochialism. These were the same architects who derided as trivial the so-called "people's detailing" of public authority housing. The New Brutalists were to emerge later in the decade with what they saw as a tougher type of architecture, which they felt was based entirely upon structural integrity and purged of sentimentality, triviality and effeminacy. Spence's artistic programme at Coventry was anathema to them. There was an element of sour grapes in the attacks, for the Smithsons, enfants terribles of the puritanical group, had entered the Coventry competition too. (Fig. 2.09c) Of course, had they actually won the commission from such an establishment institution as the Church of England, their credibility as revolutionaries would have been severely compromised.

But Spence triumphed, for the moment, and there was certainly a lot more to his cathedral than just tradition and rhetoric. He insisted upon having the leading structural engineer in the country, Ove Arup, to ensure that the expressive potential in his design was exploited to the full, and that it did indeed have structural integrity. (Fig. 2.09d)

The interior of the nave is spectacular in the way that Gothic interiors were, but its vaulted canopy is only superficially Medievalist. Rather than replicate Gothic vaulting, Spence used the Gothic principle of expressing structural dynamism and the daring drama of its conception. This was partly achieved by the surprisingly thin columns tapering to the ground on which the vaulted canopy of the ceiling is carried. Arup's involvement was crucial, for here was a man who saw engineering as an art. Spence admitted that the delicacy of the interior and its air of freedom from solid supporting members were due to Arup's idea of treating the interior and ceiling as separate from the exterior and roof. Thus there is a combination of eggshell brittleness in the interior that contrasts with the imposing massivity of the external walls.
Such epithets as "Space age cathedral" now sound curious, but they evoke accurately the character of the times, which embraced an uncertain present hypnotically poised between the past and a future where Science offered a road to salvation.

Chapter Two. The Edinburgh School

In order to account for the success of the architects of the Edinburgh School in 1951 and their subsequent work for the University some discussion of the context from which they emerged is required. In this chapter the pre-war work and the critical background are examined.

A Manifesto for Post-war Scottish Architecture.

While issues of town and country planning attracted most of the attention during and immediately after the war, there was clearly a desire to address more specifically architectural questions. During the war the architects Alan Reiach and Robert Hurd produced Building Scotland (1940 & 1943), a treatise of photographs with minimal yet polemical text expressing opinions more representative of the general view within the profession than either its concise text or its nationalist patronage might imply. The book borrowed its format and tone of moral and aesthetic superiority from A.W.N. Pugin's Contrasts. {Fig. 2.11a}

Reiach had been a friend of Robert Matthew at college, and he followed him, first into the Lorimer and Matthew practice as an apprentice, and then into public service with the Department of Health for Scotland. Matthew and Reiach also collaborated on various competitions such as those for the public baths at Ilkeston and for Watford Fire Station. The Englishman Robert Hurd arrived in Scotland in the early thirties, and set up in practice with Andrew Neil. In contrast to Hurd's anxiety about the vernacular tradition, the practice however built some modernist flats at Ravelston Gardens (1935) in a vaguely Tecton mode for developers in Edinburgh. {Fig. 2.10}
By presenting a series of contrasts, Scotland's architecture was subjected to close scrutiny.

The text proclaimed:

"The houses of our ancestors were well designed, simple and unassuming"

This was perhaps an unusual claim for what was ostensibly a modernist text, notwithstanding similar sentiments expressed by Adolf Loos in reaction to both the excesses of the Baroque revival and to Art Nouveau. Reiach and Hurd then identified an architectural and social malaise, or "fall from grace", in the nineteenth century, when industrialism and bad architecture went hand in hand.

The authors castigated the previous two generations for producing architecture that was either mean, ludicrous, or sordid. Victorian public buildings were regarded as either "grim and pompous" or "dreary and inefficient". \{Fig. 2.11b\} Nineteenth century commercial and industrial buildings were ridiculed for their fancy dress: whether castellated, classic or baroque. More recent architecture such as the ubiquitous 1930s bungalow, and the white Art Deco roadhouses and swimming pools were dismissed as vulgar trash. \{Fig. 2.11d\} It must have been a matter of some concern that some of the most startling and inventive creations in Scotland were the fantasy architecture of cinema proprietors. Moorish castles, Viking ships and other unlikely forms, excited the audience, while appalling those with more rationalist pretensions or traditional inclinations.

Mackintosh, on the other hand, was regarded as a prophet in some sort of mystical connection with the tradition of Scottish architecture. That tradition, it was claimed, had produced vernacular cottages of great simplicity, the modest terraced streets of the burghs, the austere piety of the white harled highland churches, as well as the unostentatious eighteenth century town houses of classical proportion. \{Figs. 2.11e & 2.11c\}
The manifesto demanded adherence to traditional house forms for rural and small burgh locations. In essence, this policy seems broadly compatible with that of the communist/communalist "people's detailing" that had been taken by the LCC. Reaich and Hurd did not shy away from the opportunities offered by standardisation either. A Swedish prefabricated house was described as neat and pleasant. Indeed, the Scottish vernacular tradition was presented as a type of standardised building programme.

A housing scheme in Zurich, whose buildings look remarkably similar to Mackintosh's Windyhill, was used to demonstrate a "pleasant grouping" of terraces at right angles to a suburban street. (Figs. 2.11f & 2.11g) As a solution to inner city congestion, low blocks of flats with balconies in the suburbs of Copenhagen and Stockholm were proposed. (Fig. 2.11h) In fact, almost all of the examples of good modern architecture cited were Scandinavian, Swiss or American. The exhibition hall at Helsingfors, which looks remarkably similar to the Royal Festival Hall, was presented as an example of imaginative design based on courageous thinking. (Fig. 2.11i) As a unique British example, a London Underground station of the 1930s, by Charles Holden's, practice was illustrated. The station building was said to exemplify "modern construction, clean lines and plenty of light". This accolade sums up what Hurd, Reiach and many of their contemporaries demanded for public and institutional buildings.

As a display of civic spirit, Stockholm Town Hall (1911-23)\(^\text{16}\) was chosen by the authors as a worthy example, while it was severely regretted that Scotland had allegedly produced nothing of similar dignity since the burgh townhouses of the seventeenth century. The inclusion of the Stockholm building now appears incongruous, as it is both historicist and eclectic. The interior in particular, with its extravagant mosaics seems to display preoccupations generally associated with both

\(^{16}\text{Stockholm Town Hall, by Ragnar Östberg.}\)
Art Nouveau and Art Deco. Nevertheless, the waterside setting and the apparent evocation of civic consciousness seems to have enthralled Reiach and Hurd. Or, perhaps they recognised its affinity with the seventeenth century Crail Town House, also illustrated in the book, to which the tower of the Swedish building bears more than a passing resemblance. \{Figs. 2.1j & 2.1k\}

In the game of contrasts, Scottish hospitals and schools came off particularly badly when compared with Modernist examples from the continent. Edinburgh's Royal Infirmary, with its smoke blackened stone walls and tiny windows appears as a prison in comparison to a hospital in Czechoslovakia where patients sit in deck chairs on long balconies traversing an almost entirely glazed façade. \{Figs. 2.1l & 2.1m\}

Universities are not specifically mentioned, but the authors do assert that:

"Schools and libraries do not need to be either grim or pompous. On the contrary they should be cheerful and inviting - oasis to refresh the mind." \{Figs. 2.1n & 2.1o\}

Finally, this treatise, both traditionalist and modernist, turns attention to the great public works of infrastructure, then at the early planning stage: hydro electric power stations, dams, and bridges. For these future monuments to national ingenuity, architects and engineers are exhorted to work as a team to produce:

"A new and vital beauty in the highland landscape".

Ultimately the impression is of Scotland as part of a Northern European/Scandinavian culture but that its architecture and social programmes had fallen behind Sweden. Scotland's architectural tradition was presented as a thread of continuity somehow severed in the nineteenth century. Ironically, one of the major symptoms of the fall from grace was seen as the nationalistically inspired Victorian Baronial style.

The careful avoidance of the work of their contemporaries - good or bad - is in itself an interesting aspect of Building Scotland. Questions are unavoidably raised as
to whether Reiach and Hurd were trying to avoid direct confrontation with fellow professionals, or if perhaps they aimed to bring influence to bear without the friction of personal criticism.

If the explicit agenda of Building Scotland was to be taken up, much of Scotland's architecture would have to be replaced. The imperative was for a new approach taking inspiration from modern architecture in other countries, but incorporating traditional virtues. Even allowing for the massive hiatus of the Second World War, it would be unrealistic to expect an entirely clean break with the past, in which the architects would put aside their training and influences and relearn fresh skills. Indeed, the dual vision of modernism and traditionalism, underpinned with a nationalistic element, was actually an international phenomenon of the 1930s that had been conditioned by political and social concerns of the time.

**The Monumental and the Picturesque**

Before discussing the work of the Edinburgh School, some consideration of the wider theoretical issues in British architecture is necessary. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, there were two distinct issues of theoretical debate and the beginnings of these were integral to the polemic of Reiach and Hurd's book. The first was of an international nature and concerned Monumentality. Important public buildings had traditionally aspired to monumentalism through a variety of means. Scale itself, though facile in theoretical terms, evokes the idea of the monumental. Then there was Classicism. In the interwar period, perhaps as a result of instability and political and economic insecurities, reinterpretation of the Classical idiom was popular. But the Monumental, particularly the latter variety, fell into disrepute due to association with the dictators. Public architecture, including the architecture of institutions such as universities, became problematic for the democracies after the war. No-one wanted to build architecture reminiscent of Hitler, Mussolini or Stalin. For those who considered themselves part of the Modern Movement the issue was fraught with problems as they wanted to assert victory, rather than acceptance of the precepts of
the old order. A symposium in 1948 was attended by Lucio Costa, Walter Gropius, William Holford, and others, to address the future of Monumentality.17

Many points were raised, but perhaps the most relevant one was the question of dignity and decorum. The essence of the Monumental was identified by Alfred Roth as a transcendental quality that expresses the greatness of an epoch. In the context of the period this should represent democracy rather than the power of tyrants. No definitive answers to this arose from the debate. Hitchcock spoke of "buildings endowed with Monumentality" while Giedion spoke of "great spectacles capable of fascinating the people" but Gregor Paulsson failed to see the relevance for western democracies. Giedion sought the reconquest of monumental expression in order to serve public aspirations. Interestingly, Holford was sure that one would have to appeal to the senses through the intellect, rather than the opposite. He thought that perhaps the urban macrocosm might provide monumental expression. There was, nevertheless, agreement that a new Monumentality should arise and that it must transcend mere utility.

Giedion, together with Sert and Leger, abandoned earlier principles in favour of "human scale, spontaneity and a synthesis of arts" at the CIAM conference hosted by MARS at Hoddesdon, in 1951. The idea expressed earlier, by Holford, that the urban form could provide a means of expression seems to have gained acceptance. The title of the conference was "The Core of the City", and centralisation headed the priority of needs in order to create an architectural environment to serve as a controlled city core. Here, there would be an opportunity for expression and the co-operation of architects with sculptors and other artists. The "Core" would be of the motor age and be served by transport, but it would be essentially traffic free, as in Antiquity. We can see how such precepts might possibly lead to megastructural solutions.

17 "In Search of a New Monumentality "Architectural Review. September 1948.
The other debate, around the time of Hoddesdon, was of a purely English nature that sought something in recent tradition that was identifiable in the pleasing variety of good examples of urban landscape. These had not actually been planned, it was claimed, but took a more evolutionary approach by drawing on the character of existing buildings as a foil to the latest composition. Variety and interest were the key factors, and there was an appeal to democracy in this non-dogmatic stance. Because the concept had most affinity with the landscape and architectural design of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century it was presented as the tradition of the Picturesque. In an article by a writer who called himself I. de Wolfe the serendipity of the architecture of a provincial town was presented as the epitome of a happy outcome for English urbanism. The author, Hugh Hastings, provocatively cited Uvedale Price and what he called "sharawag" principles. He believed that he had identified a schism within the functionalist Modern Movement with a French tradition seeking Rational or Classic solutions and a German tradition pursuing Romantic or Organic ones. Hastings was sure that there was a third way, however. This was an English Radical tradition with a certain incapacity for theory, preferring instead Empiricism and objectivity. Like Uvedale Price, this tradition was more comfortable with a practical approach taking advantage of existing features and tolerant of individuality.

The choice of the term, Picturesque, ensured that the debate was short lived. And many who actually practiced its precepts, treating architecture as a subject worthy of a landscape painting, were loathe to admit it. The art of Townscape discussed so frequently in British journals of the period had some affinity with Hastings' ideas. It must be said, though, that one major aspect of the original Picturesque movement was suppressed or ignored. This was Associationism, the analytical philosophical

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conclusion that the mental process of association conditions one’s taste in architecture.

The enthusiasm for burgh architecture and distaste for Victorian institutional buildings evident in Building Scotland reveals despair with the Monumental and sympathy with the Radical tradition. Indeed, some of Hastings’ enthusiasm for whimsy may have been transmitted to the Festival of Britain exhibitions.

**Robert Hurd and Ian Lindsay**

Hurd's was a new practice, with no tradition to maintain, set up in Edinburgh in 1931. The flats at Ravelston Gardens (1935), although not exactly avant-garde by this date, were quite a departure for the suburbs of Edinburgh.\(^\text{19}\) \(\text{Fig. 2.10}\) There is no apparent connection with a recent tradition here, and this must have been all the more striking when the building was new and stood aloof on open ground, between the final phase of the Georgian New Town and a picturesque estate of large Arts & Crafts villas. A little of the influence of the Weissenhof exhibition has permeated to Scotland, it seems. While it has fewer affectations than much of the so-called White Architecture of the sea-side towns of Southern England, the trio of blocks are neither structurally advanced, nor particularly well proportioned. There is, however, avoidance of such embellishments as machine age motifs, attenuated classical derivations, or the geometric decorations that architects used to interest a fashionable “smart” clientele. Perhaps in order to appeal to the staid Scots bourgeoisie who would have nothing to do with Art Deco styling and its mass culture associations.

By 1937, however, Hurd had already launched a career in specialist restoration, with work on the historic Ascheson House in Edinburgh, for the Marquis of Bute.

Hurd's engagement with the Scottish building tradition became gradually less theoretical and more actual. Notwithstanding the importance of his power stations of the late 1950s, the ultimate realisation of his principles was the restoration and

\(^{19}\) According to Charles McKean, in *The Scottish Thirties* (1987) Andrew Neil was the designer.
replacement scheme for Edinburgh City Council, at the Canongate, with the aim of continuing the Scottish urban tradition of burgh architecture within its social context.

A former student friend of Hurd from Cambridge mined a similar seam. The Scot, Ian Lindsay, brought an aristocratic tone to the architectural scene in Edinburgh. Hurd and Lindsay, might have formed some sort of conservation coalition but they fell out while seeking Bute’s patronage. Lindsay’s company was the larger and his commissions more extensive, however.\(^\text{20}\) He received several University commissions for conservation and rehabilitation including work on Old College, St.Cecilia’s Hall and Mylne's Court. This patronage effectively neutralised him as a possible opponent of university schemes considered destructive to architectural heritage. The latter project is discussed in Book Three.

**Matthew and Reiach**

Some of Robert Matthew and Alan Reiach’s first professional experiences of architecture were as minor players at the University’s King’s Buildings campus - some drawings are signed by Reiach.\(^\text{21}\) The Lorimer & Matthew practice was engaged there from 1926 until the late 1930s with commissions for Geology, Zoology, Engineering, Animal Genetics and a Students Union. Lorimer himself preferred country house commissions, and Robert Matthew’s father, John, appears to have been virtually in charge of the University project even before Lorimer’s death in 1929. \(\text{(Figs. 2.12a-2.12d)}\)

In common with most institutional architecture of the period, the University buildings seek dignity from modified classical elements, and there is much use of load bearing masonry. But, considering the rest of the practice’s output: domestic Arts and Crafts, or the neo-Gothic War Memorial and the Thistle Chapel, this classicism tells us more about the University’s image of itself than it does about the

\(^{20}\) Interview with Prof. David Walker, June 2001

\(^{21}\) The original petition for a building warrant for Zoology (1/6/27) has a petition for a deviation (April 1929) signed by Reiach.

- Edinburgh City Archive. Dean of Guild Court Records.
architects. Only the trademark miniature balconies and the curious pediments above the entrances reveal the parentage, and these sit uncomfortably within the idiom.

In a slightly different mode, relying on the proportions, rather than the detail of Classical, is the Animal Genetics building (now the Crewe Building). Within the Lorimer oeuvre, this might easily have been a church establishment, or even a cottage hospital. Its harled walls rise from an ashlar basement storey, it has multi-astragal neo Georgian windows, and yet the gabled pediment is distinctively Lorimerian. (Fig. 2.12d)

Despite the attempt at an appropriate gravitas and decorum to these institutional buildings, Arts and Crafts detailing was unavoidable if Lorimer had the commission. Here, the decoration struggles to be relevant: a Neanderthal with a fossil represents Geology, (Fig. 2.12e) while Phyllis Bone's concrete roundels of animals decorate the façade of the Zoology building. The classicism of the buildings appears somewhat resistant to Carrick and Bone's interpretations.

A building more stylistically typical of the practice's repertoire was a small project usually attributed to Robert Matthew (possibly with Reiach's involvement). The Wheatsheaf Inn, Balgreen Road Edinburgh, was firmly in the Arts and Crafts/Garden City vein and entirely romantic in conception. (Fig. 2.13) However, it is difficult to find a connection with any traditional Scots forms for this suburban tavern, with its gables, sweeping roofs of red pantiles, expressive chimneys, and casement windows. Rather, it acknowledges the works of Norman Shaw and Lorimer himself, both of whom were Scots with a penchant for English cottages and manor houses.

It should be observed that, although the craft tradition flourished with Lorimer, who made extensive use of woodcarvers and sculptors, the social radical impulse of the Arts and Crafts movement was absent from his theory and practice. He was clearly a man of the establishment, however artistically inclined. Notwithstanding his
participation in such diverse designs, Robert Matthew obviously saw architecture as an instrument for social intervention, choosing to move into public service with the Department of Health for Scotland. While his father had risen through the ranks of architecture - so to speak - Robert Matthew had the advantages of a reasonably prosperous background and a superior education. At college he had come under the powerful influence of Geddes disciple, Frank Mears, and he subsequently won the Arthur Cates medal for town planning (1937). This carried him beyond the somewhat restricted sphere of the traditional architectural practice and ultimately into a position from which he could influence national planning policy, architectural education, and contribute to international professional policy.

Kininmonth and Spence

As if to emphasise the paucity of opportunity for young architects in traditional practices, as with Reiach and Matthew, two other former Edinburgh College of Art students also operated a partnership for small private contracts from within an established firm. Basil Spence and William Kininmonth joined the office of Rowand Anderson and Paul when they qualified. During the founder's lifetime, commissions for Neo-gothic churches and large institutions had filled the order books. Following the competition, Anderson designed the University's Medical School and subsequent McEwan Hall (1878-88). After that prestigious monumental work, Anderson's office enjoyed favour with the University and was given the prestigious task of "completing" the Adam/Playfair college building by surmounting the entrance front with a Baroque dome that some considered superior to the original Robert Adam design.

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22Matthew had to share this honour with Basil Spence.
Principal Sir William Turner awarded him a further University task of converting several older buildings in the area known as High School Yards (1905-7). The commission for the Chemistry building (1920-24) at King's Buildings was the last University job for the practice before the Second World War, however, before the Lorimer and Matthew commissions.

Anderson himself did much to influence the training of architects and craftsmen, but most of his large projects relied on an eclectic use of architectural ornament. Late secular Gothic was a specialty, while the Medical School appealed to a contemporary taste for Renaissance Venice. A few of his houses, however, are an attempt at a specific Scottish idiom that had as much, or perhaps as little, to do with the Baronial style as Mackintosh.

Within the Anderson office, Spence and Kininmonth worked on some local authority housing schemes and an extension to a hospital for the Church of Scotland, in Edinburgh (1934). (Fig. 2.15) The Deaconess Hospital scheme in particular demonstrates an awareness of the interwar work of the City Architect's Department, under the leadership of James Williamson and Ebenezer MacRae. The City Architects received none of the artistic acclaim meted out to Lorimer or Anderson, but their work was socially informed and committed to urban issues - MacRae led study trips to examine housing in the Netherlands, Germany and Austria. Their response to the city's housing problems took a dual approach. Some slum dwellers were decanted to cottages in pleasant garden suburbs, but on the other hand Edinburgh's historic social mix and the communal life of the traditional tenement were maintained in order to keep the city centre alive - the new tenements had bathrooms however! This was entirely in line with Geddesian principles of conservative urban surgery, and indeed MacRae is known to have attended events at Geddes's Ramsay Gardens. Many of the City Architects' suburban houses are

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24 James Anderson Williamson was City Architect from 1908-1925 and was succeeded by Ebenezer J Mac Rae from 1925 until 1946.
actually four-in-a-block flats with overhanging eaves and hipped roofs decidedly non-urban. For social housing, they are generous in detailing, but they have little to do with the Scottish vernacular. *(Fig. 2.16)* The layout of these estates is informed by Garden City theory. On the other hand, his tenements eschew both Baronialism and Classicism and take a cue from their plain eighteenth century forerunners, but with a reduced height to bring down site density. *(Fig. 2.17)* The common feature of their architecture is the walls of irregularly coursed stonework with hungry jointing.

The Deaconess Hospital has similar stonework coupled with traditional slate roofs, and a Lorimer inspired gable. Taken together with some nearby tenements by MacRae and some similarly styled community buildings for the Pleasance Trust, *(Fig. 2.18)* the hospital might be seen as part of a unified approach to renewal of a run-down area of infamous slums.\(^{25}\)

Another example of social architecture with consideration of tradition was the fishermen’s housing scheme at Dunbar (1935), which Kininmonth and Spence designed on behalf of the main practice. This was essentially romantic in its architectural conception; drawing upon the vocabulary of the Scottish coastal burgh, but predicated upon a revitalisation of the fishing industry, providing homes of a traditional type for fisher folk. For practical considerations the architects eschewed the genuine traditional construction of rubble walls, internally plastered and externally rendered, in favour of a brick load bearing construction. But, the random stone dressings for either base courses, or basement storeys allude to vernacular architecture. The smooth harled upper walls and pantile roofs were specific references to the coastal burgh tradition. Window frames and railings are entirely contemporary, while the traditional external fore-stair was been adapted to provide

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\(^{25}\)The Pleasance complex of buildings began with the Gymnasium of 1913, in a sort of Scottish Arts & Crafts idiom. The Welfare Clinic (1925), the Little Theatre (1932) and the street-front range with its crow-step gables (1937) followed this. The architect was J.Inch Morrison. These buildings were gradually acquired by the University, in the 1960s and 1970s, and now provide a home for its societies. Interestingly, Sir Frank Mears had earmarked this whole area for educational development in his 1931 plan.
balconies and deck access.\textsuperscript{26} Despite the informal groupings of terraced blocks, the regularity suggests social housing, while features such as the arched shared doorways of the first terrace reveal the architects' penchant for Lorimeresque cottages. \textit{(Figs. 2.19a & 2.19b)}

Although this scheme could be considered entirely in keeping with the principles of \textit{Building Scotland}, the authors chose not to include it in their book. However, after being augmented with more houses in 1952-4, the Dunbar scheme won an award from the Saltire Society, publishers of Reiach and Hurd. In view of later antipathies within the enclosed world of Edinburgh architects, the omission might be indicative of cliques forming.

The Kininmonth and Spence team prided themselves on a broad repertoire: something both men had learned during a year spent in the London office of Lutyens (1929-30).\textsuperscript{27} And, it appears that they were prepared to look further afield for ideas than the homely vernacular houses of the Scottish burghs. Their informal partnership allowed the pair to seek commissions outwith the Rowand Anderson office and Spence journeyed far into Lorimer territory with a replica of a seventeenth century country house. Broughton Place (1936) in Peebles, with its crow-step gables and cream harling, is quite a convincing essay in Scottish Renaissance architecture and thus demonstrates that a historicist approach was still professionally viable in the period. \textit{(Fig. 2.20)}

In an entirely different vein is Gribloch (1938), in Stirlingshire, a country residence in Stirlingshire, with a functionalist programme of health and sunlight considerations dictated by the patron. \textit{(Figs. 2.21a - 2.21c)} The evolution of the building design indicates a meticulous approach to meet the equally rigorous demands of the client, a wealthy industrialist who served with Spence on the Scottish

\textsuperscript{26}Spence augmented the scheme with more houses in 1952.

\textsuperscript{27}Interview with Richard Ewing, of the Rowand Anderson Partnership (June 1998). Ewing is the son-in-law of Sir William Kininmonth.
Committee of the Council for Art and Industry. The restraint in execution gives the building an engineered look that puts it in a category with continental modernist houses designed for industrialists. Metal framed windows, often extremely large, are set in smooth rendered walls, and there is a complete absence of architectural ornament on the elevations. The plan, however, appears far more responsive to climatic conditions than its European counterparts where the square and rectangle exerted more control.

In contrast to the external austerity, the interior has a more opulent ambience achieved through surfaces of natural materials and architectural detailing. One wonders whether the so-called Hollywood Regency style achieved here owes more to Spence or to Perry Duncan, the American architect, whom the client also consulted on interior design. In fact, the final design is a collaboration between Spence, the Colvilles and various design consultants. The rope mouldings around the hall doorways seem almost perversely anti-modern and may be a deliberate Scottish reference, since the motif occurred in some high status castles in the sixteenth century. Meanwhile, the elliptical plan staircase from which the internal plan is generated is more Baroque than Functionalist, although Spence's original concept employed his trademark use of the cylinder staircase motif.

In Scotland, as elsewhere, larger civic projects of the inter-war period tended towards monumental classicism, but the Kininmonth & Spence team had no such commissions, so we cannot say how they might have responded to the challenge.

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28 Spence is credited with the design, but Kininmonth played a role, taking up correspondence with the Colvilles at one point. Letter from Kininmonth to Colville (26/5/38). Richard Ewing Collection. Cited in C.A. MacGregor "Gribloch" Architectural Heritage V. 1995.

29 The vocabulary of the elevations is reminiscent of houses by Adolf Loos and even of the Vienna town house by Paul Engelmann and Ludwig Wittgenstein, built for the latter's sister, Margaret Stonborough-Wittgenstein.

30 The ornamental ironwork window grills were to Colville's own design, but felt by Spence to be inappropriate. C.A. MacGregor "Gribloch" Architectural Heritage V. 1995.
Student design exercises followed Beaux-Arts practice and certainly prepared young architects for the monumental approach, while other modes were learned at work placements in professional offices.

With the possible exception of Gribloch, Kininmonth and Spence's private houses fall into two groupings. On the one hand there are those in the Lorimer/Lutyens tradition of the arts and crafts. Much play is made of gables, low eaves and pantiles, stone detailing, multi-paned windows with external shutters, and battered chimney-heads. The other type is the "white architecture" which made a brief appearance in Scotland in the 1930s. One suspects that Hurd and Reiach might have branded these as "vulgar trash", as they are poised halfway between the fashionable styling of Art Deco and the progressive Modernism of Villa Savoye, which both Kininmonth and Spence claimed as an influence. The Corbusian influence should not be overstated as none of the "white houses" employ pilotis, for instance, and the motor car and its role in the lifestyle of the bourgeoisie is never a generator of design. Nevertheless the two Scottish architects share an affinity for geometrical purism with the Swiss maestro in that the purist massing is achieved with interlocking cubes and cylinders.

Kininmonth in particular is known to have been a great admirer of Le Corbusier's designs. He and Spence were excited by what they saw in journals while they were in Lutyen's office and Kininmonth visited the Swiss Pavilion at the Cité Universitaire in Paris.

The self-consciously progressive house for Dr King, in Edinburgh, is the epitome of its type, with its flat roof, terraces and nautical handrails. Yet notwithstanding the contrast it created with its sober neighbouring villas, Lismhor (1934) still related, in terms of its anti-urban approach, to Lorimer's "Colinton" type. The client was familiar with the work of Behrens and Gropius and wanted a house that would reflect his progressive attitude. The way of achieving this at the time was with white walls, flat roofs and horizontal bands of glazing. (Fig. 2.22) The 1930s preoccupation with
health is justified in this case since Mrs. King suffered from TB, therefore her husband wanted a house flooded with sunshine. In order to achieve this all the main rooms are south facing.

The use of windows that turn the corner of the building are in a sense anti-traditional since they undermine the notion of the corners as structural support; perhaps a deliberate perversion of stone quoins transformed into panes of glass. Lismhor is a far remove from the typical perky 1930s bungalows of the speculative developer. Yet, the bow-fronted drawing room with flat roof was something of a tradition in Scotland. In the mid-eighteenth century, many such rooms were added as extensions to older houses. That form in itself may have become ingrained within bourgeois consciousness.31

Kininmonth's own house is a more modest version of the King house. {Fig. 2.23} Again, cylinder and cubes interlock to create terraces, and the brick walls are rendered in white.32 Uniquely, for an Edinburgh architect of his generation, most of whom owned Georgian houses, Kininmonth lived in this house of his own design from 1935 until his death in 1978. The absence of subsequent alterations suggests that he considered the idiom to be entirely straightforward and functional, and not just part of a passing fad.

Spence's Causewayside Garage certainly addressed the motor age, and would probably have been caustically referred to as "smart" in Building Scotland. {Figs. 2.24a & 2.24b} There is no reference to tradition here as Spence who addresses an urban gap site with vigour. Stepped back between traditional tenements, its white walls and banded glazing derive much of the impact from the contrast. Nonetheless, it captures a moment in history full of promise for a motoring elite. As such, it

31 Prestonfield House, Edinburgh, has a pair of such rooms with Rococo mural decoration by the Norrie family, while nearby Salisbury Green (now a university hall of residence) has a single example.
32 Kininmonth's house at 9A Dick Place, Edinburgh, is still in existence, and unaltered.
belongs within a conjectural international network that embraces Autobahns and Mediterranean villas, rather than as an element of a dour Scottish street.

Spence, Kininmonth, Matthew and Hurd were typical of their milieu in having a broad repertoire. It is debatable whether this should be thought of as strength or as a weakness. Lack of commitment is, of course, a weakness, but as design was still very much considered to be a matter of style, a reluctance to uncompromisingly pursue one particular architectural dogma might be seen as open-mindedness. Because of the depression, large urban projects were not a feature of the period, and therefore there was no imperative to promote conformity. Practising a variety of architectural approaches should not be confused with eclecticism, which is a deliberate mixing of elements from different styles within a particular design. Kininmonth and Spence probably considered their housing at Dunbar and their White Houses as pure, although in different ways. The former being purely traditional, and the latter purely modern, although it is now difficult to accept either type as anything but eclectic. It must be said, however, that further reassessment is always possible, and caution is needed if buildings are to be judged on their apparent stylistic purity, or lack of it.

Eclecticism in Practice.

The clients of inter-war architects were confronted with a choice between non-traditional designs. That can be further subdivided into two distinct Art Deco and Modernism. These classifications are made with the considerable benefit of hindsight, with the International Style doctrine of Hitchcock and Johnson as the first serious act of censorship. Thus, architecture that is considered influential on the subsequent architecture of the post-war period is now assigned to the polemical Modernist stream. Scottish architecture of the 1920s and 1930s has few claims to any influence upon progressive Modernism and therefore could be considered Art Deco, or perhaps Moderne.
That sub-category itself had many different manifestations and was not really an artistic or architectural movement; having no manifesto and emanating from no particular school of thought. It would be difficult to cite a pure Art Deco building for eclecticism was never far away. And, while the architects appeared to be eminently flexible in response to their clients wishes, the choice of modern or traditional was a false one, for they could have neither.

Clearly, the modern/traditional dichotomy in the 1930s was a pan-European condition which, in Germany for instance, produced a juxtaposition of modern concrete Luftwaffe bases and Autobahn service buildings with folksy houses with steeply pitched roofs and barge boards. Here, the former was a creation of ruthless rationalism, and the latter a manifestation of 'blood and soil' nationalism. But of course, once a tradition is dead, it is gone forever and any sort of revival is actually a style that is itself a response to the condition of modernity. Interestingly, Scottish architects in the 1930s appear to have been desperate to distance themselves from the cultural nationalism of the nineteenth century that had produced Baronialism in the wake of Sir Walter Scott.

The Edinburgh Architectural Association organised a tour to Czechoslovakia, in 1937, where it could be seen how the Czechs were able to take Secessionist art as a starting point and then, via Expressionism, find fresh inspiration for art and architecture in their native culture. Kininmonth and Spence's interpretation of the vernacular tradition at Dunbar in the mid-1930s, like MacRae's tenements, might be seen as similar engagement with cultural nationalism after a period of experimentation with non-indigenous styles. These efforts demonstrate that at least some Scottish architects were trying to regain the ground lost earlier in the century.

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33 EAA 1936 Tour notes.  
-NLS Stewart Sim Collection Acc. 11125.
when Mackintosh disappeared along with the Art Nouveau, and Lorimer confined his vision to the country house idyll.

In twentieth century Scotland, tradition and materials were difficult to separate. With few exceptions, the long-standing Scots tradition had been for building in stone. This had caused some perplexity to Lorimer who felt that the medium was tired - in Scotland, anything with a brick facing is considered non-traditional. However, Lorimer's stone-built Arts and Crafts villas are not exactly traditional either, since the designs belong to an international style. In fact, there is some justification for the claim that style is necessarily international since it is exportable and not dependent upon local skills or indigenous materials and neither are its forms determined by climate. The derivatives of Lorimer's suburban dwellings that Matthew, Kininmonth and Spence produced - usually in rendered brickwork - have no connection with the local vernacular tradition. This was the real crisis of modernity in Scottish architecture, which Reiach and Hurd felt compelled to address in *Building Scotland*. Industrialisation, and its concomitant wars and depressions had finally wiped out the vernacular building tradition. The traditional stone mason-builder hardly existed, while most of the work for the craft was creating ashlar monumentality for prestige projects.

Being determined by the materials and methods of construction, the everyday work of building naturally follows the indigenous methods. But, with imported materials the most economical, this could not but change. For most, there was no need to adapt the vernacular tradition, and the availability of quality facing-bricks was considered the major innovation of the era. Balfour Paul's Chemistry building for the University (1919) employs brick in a way that the architect probably felt was rather daring in its nakedness. Nevertheless, stone sculptural work and detailing were extensively used on the façade, presumably to bestow some institutional dignity by virtue of the mason's craft. *(Fig. 2.25)*
Stone was still a material of choice for churches in the 1920s, with Leslie Grahame Thomson, one of the more accomplished designers, producing varieties of Gothicism little altered since 1900.\(^{34}\) And, just as economic considerations began to favour brick, there was also an anti-historicist trend within religious institutions eager to be regarded as contemporary and relevant to the times. Several Deco-esque ecclesiastical creations occurred as a result.\(^{35}\)

In the 1930s, with three-quarters of building activity in Scotland in housing, four-fifths of that in low budget public housing. The pressures of Modernity fell upon the whole profession. To meet a substantial deficit, architects and builders were becoming increasingly encouraged to employ Swedish type timber construction, and in some cases in-situ cast concrete walls. Much of Robert Matthew's work at the Department of Health for Scotland involved devising and importing housing designs that could be quickly and cheaply erected. By 1939, Kininmonth and Spence were also engaged in designing timber-framed housing, at the village of Forth in the Central Uplands. These monopitched terraces follow a Swedish pattern that was thought so outrageously novel that the local authority decided to screen them with trees. \(\{\text{Fig. 2.26}\}\)

The Scottish interest in transcending the emasculated nineteenth-century eclecticism had primarily involved the psychological trawl through the symbolic possibilities of Celtic culture by the Glasgow School. That investigation inspired a few mural decorators and supplemented the vocabulary of the applied arts, but it produced nothing in the way of architectural forms that might indicate a tangible direction. Notwithstanding the subsequent deification of Mackintosh as a "pioneer of

\(^{34}\)Thomson frequently employed Basil Spence as a perspectivist. A perspective of Thomson’s Reid Memorial Church (Edinburgh 1928) in the NMRS is attributed to him. NMRS Leslie Graham Thomson /MacDougal Collection.

\(^{35}\)The Wilson Memorial Church, by J.M.Johnston (1930) and St.Aidan’s by J Inch Morrison (1933) - both in Edinburgh - demonstrate a creation of new forms in brickwork.
Modernism", it must be admitted that his interiors are resolutely Art Nouveau, his churches Gothic derivations, and his houses a sort of Baronial-Nouveau hybrid.

Similarly, Geddes' Scottish Renaissance had produced only eclectic architectural historicism that blended Norman Shaw’s English rural idyll, with historical reminiscences of "Old Edinburgh". Ramsay Garden and his other interventions in the Old Town of Edinburgh, while socially important, were both historicist and yet historically inauthentic. These provided romantic embellishments to a skyline, which was already considered picturesque. {Fig. 2.27a} In a way, these buildings relied on ignorance, since the associative nature of appreciation would lead the informed viewer to dismiss them as forgeries. Happily the Romanticism of that era is more appreciated today than it was for most of the twentieth century.

When Reiach and Hurd mourned Mackintosh, they did so believing that there had been a failure in Scotland to follow Art Nouveau innovation with an artistic and socially enlightened architecture. After the Symbolist/Art Nouveau experiments came more revivals: Francois I, Neo-Baroque, "Free Renaissance" (i.e. eclectic), and it seemed that architecture had returned to the same situation as in the 1880s. Then the trauma of the First World War had drained the artistic vitality of the nation – the omission of Lorimer’s National War Memorial from their book was significant.

By this time, the Netherlands had both an avant-garde and a progressive mainstream, while the countries of Eastern Europe were pursuing a cultural nationalism in parallel with their more cosmopolitan interests. Scotland had been forced to adopt ideas from the continent. Later MacRae tenements even abandoned the slated-pitched roof and adopted block proportions more akin to apartment buildings in the Netherlands than the towering monumentality of the native variety.36

36The four-storey tenement block at Morrison Street, Edinburgh, of 1940 demonstrates this slight change of approach. It is interesting to recall that MacRae’s designs for housing schemes at Craigmillar and Crewe Toll (both Edinburgh) were praised by Dudok. (R.Bailey Scottish Architects Papers p.49)
Reiach and Hurd looked to the Continent with hope, but were afraid of an influx of barely considered designs and construction methods.

In Scottish Art Deco there were several distinct but converging streams. One, often referred to as Moderne, displayed an overt interest in the machine forms of cars, ships and aeroplanes. Fins, streamline strips, flagpoles, and tubular handrails are employed entirely as architectural decoration. Streamlining applied to buildings has always perplexed some architects, yet clients could find them uncomfortably plain without it. Designers had been trained to embellish with architectural elements such as friezes, pediments or pilasters, but if the building type, or the client, demanded something modern looking, the architectural vocabulary had to be supplemented. Although Moderne is quite distinct from Functionalism, it does appear that architects were beginning to think less in terms of traditional composition of mass, and to treat cinemas, for example, as entertainment factories rather than as palazzos. These were basically industrial brick buildings with a veneer of white render and typically flagpoles and bands of neon lighting. This type had its most common Scottish application in commercial buildings such as cinemas, shops, ice-rinks, roadhouses and filling stations. More prestigious commercial schemes might display more attention to symmetrical massing and stone dressings.

Another strand, though not always entirely separate, is often referred to as White Architecture. This type is closer to Functionalism in that it reflects some of the concerns of the period such as fresh air, sunlight, sport and health. It makes a play of the associations between whiteness and cleanliness and between glass or steel surfaces and hygiene. Here cleanliness is next to godliness, as clean lines in architecture are associated with morality. It is the architecture of the sanatorium and the health resort and it shares these and certain superficial aspects with the continental modernists. This had more substance than the contrived Modernism of white rendered cinemas inserted into smoke-blackened streetscapes.
White Architecture, self-consciously modern, chiefly acknowledges the fact that after the Villa Savoye everything else looked old-fashioned. The best known example of the type in Scotland is the inappropriately named Ingle Neuk, at Arbroath.\textsuperscript{37} (Fig. 2.27b) Replete with balcony, steel hand rails, corner windows and a ship's ladder to the roof terrace, this specimen optimistically stares out to the North Sea as if awaiting the golden rays of a Mediterranean sun to enliven its white rendered walls. In the 1930s, the public, and most of the profession, could probably not have distinguished between this type of Art Deco and the so-called International Modern of say Mendelsohn at Haifa, or Lubetkin at Highgate. The Scottish houses take the corner windows and metal fittings of the commercial Art Deco and marry them to a vision of modern architecture akin to Hoffmann and Loos at their most puritanical, with the square and the cube the essential generators of form.

On the other hand, the geometricising impulse was conjoined with the classicising one of the period. Thus an architect might pare down and modify classical motifs - attenuated columns being a particularly popular technique. Or, the massing and proportions of classical and pre-classical architecture might be used in conjunction with more novel forms of decoration. Both approaches were often employed for the same building, as at St. Andrew's House and the National Library of Scotland. The Lorimer & Matthew buildings at the University's science campus incline towards the classicising, but are ultimately eclectic by virtue of their Arts & Crafts motifs.

The geometricising impulse is often associated with the esoteric spatial sculpture of Vantongerloo, as practiced by Dudok in the Netherlands. But, for architects from more conventional backgrounds than the Dutch progressives, the primal energy of ancient architecture retained its allure. This search for vitality had been a pre-occupation of architects since the 1890s, bringing to mind the German and Austrian

\textsuperscript{37}Ingle Neuk (1935-37) near Arbroath by Gordon & Scrymgeour.
Secessionists' awe at the temples at Segesta, or even the excitement over the Aztec massing of Sant'Elia's power station drawings. That said, even the more respectable institutional Classicist architecture might owe more than has been acknowledged to the spectacle of the Hollywood interpretation of the Ancient World. Cinema was in its heyday, with almost everyone attending these palaces of both escapism and world news. Powerful visual images as the epics of "Biblical proportion" cannot easily be discounted as an influence on architecture.

Gunnar Asplund was probably the most influential and innovative master of the classicising Geometric in the period, producing works of great solemnity, and British architects were extremely interested in his work. The Stockholm Public Library (1918-27), for example, makes a monumental statement on the cityscape with a cylinder rising from a cuboid base. [Fig. 2.28a] On closer scrutiny, we find touches of Classical detail such as v-jointed ashlar rustication, frieze and cornice. His Woodland Crematorium complex (1935-40) is the canonical work of stripped down Classicism. [Fig. 2.28a - 2.28c] The Monument Hall employs the essential elements of trabeated structure and exemplified an approach that seemed to culminate with the Fascists' Palace of Italian Civilisation at Rome. The Chapel of Hope has a roof structure supported by attenuated columns of some conjectural Classical order. [2.28c] The plan relates how sight lines and the ceremonial function determined the seating and altar arrangement, with these expressed in the actual shape of the building. Apart from the west wall, all the others gently curve towards rounded-off corners.

Spence and Kininmonth, particularly the latter, were intrigued by Asplund's crematorium complex. However, the Edinburgh duo had no large civic institutional projects to actively explore Asplund territory, and one can only speculate as to how they would have responded to a commission such as that for Glasgow University.

Reading Rooms (1938). (Fig. 2.29) T.Harold Hughes and D.S.R.Waugh, the architects for that particular project, created a saucer domed rotunda articulated with giant order pilasters alternating with vertical glazed strips. The circular reading room and the classical veneer seem to acknowledge Asplund, but the Glasgow building is less audacious in its role within the urban fabric than the Stockholm library, though it was intended that it should have enclosure. One might have expected Glasgow University, with a tradition to maintain, might have opted for a "traditional" building. However, it is difficult to locate the building within any specific tradition despite its Classical motifs. For while even George Gilbert Scott had made references to the first Glasgow University buildings when the Gilmore Hill campus was begun, the 1938 building is a creation of fashion: a collision of Geometric and classicising impulses.

Nevertheless, the Glasgow University was provided with a building of a more familiar monumentality than that of many schools erected in the period. For while the rotunda library may have had a formal antecedent in Gibbs's Radcliffe Camera at Oxford (1737), the less auspicious educational institutions of the 1930s had broken away from the "Free Renaissance" eclecticism of 1900-20. With an ethos based on health and fresh air as an essential accompaniment to effective education, the closed urban quadrangular, and monoblock building types were being abandoned in favour of an formula based on a linked complex of buildings on green-field sites which could be easily extended when required. Although some overtly prestigious institutions commissioned Neo-classical edifices, for local authorities it was economy, as much as taste, that determined a sort of industrial aesthetic. Any embellishments tended towards towers and horizontal banding.

Kininmonth and Spence's main educational project of the late thirties was the experimental Scottish School of Art and Industry at Kilsyth, in Stirlingshire.
Building commenced in 1939, but it was postponed by war. This was an open campus layout on a green-field site. And, while it was certainly eclectic, several facets of the architects' styles are to be found along with a melange of industrial and Art Deco ideas. (Fig. 2.30) Glazed corridors traverse open green spaces spanning the parallel linear blocks, with the main activities centred on a C-plan block. A tower placed asymmetrically provides a focal point and a clue to the authorship, since Spence made particular use of "the vertical feature". The actual layout is reminiscent of the American campus pattern of such institutions as the Cranbrook Academy, by Eliel Saarinen, although the budget for Kilsyth was clearly a fraction of that at Cranbrook. The gymnasium is an entirely glazed structure with an elliptical roof making the steel frame construction immediately apparent. As a counterpoint to the rationale of glass and steel, the building is clasped between a boiler house and wall clad in random rubble. While this may be a reference to the vernacular, as was intended at Dunbar, it may simply be an artistic technique to add textural interest or a sense of weight to a particularly lightweight building.

**A Flexible Architecture**

Some examples from the period demonstrate how the plethora of idioms engendered a flexibility of approach from the architects, albeit from a limited repertoire.

The University of Edinburgh's only large city-centre project of the 1930s illustrates the sort of flexibility of architects in response to client's demands. J.R. MacKay routinely borrowed Renaissance and Classical motifs for his commercial projects. An Edinburgh cinema of his has Italian palazzo features, while a department store blends Neo-classical with Geometric Art Deco. Perhaps surprisingly, given the University’s association with the practices of both Lorimer

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39 Most of the buildings at Kilsyth were erected between 1948 and 1953.
and Matthew and Rowand Anderson and Paul, MacKay was given the commission for a new extension to the Anderson's Medical School. Actually, there was some disillusionment with architects, and MacKay was brought in to carry the project to completion after the University's own Clerk of Works had produced a design for a rather ungainly building, with the emphasis on a heavy entrance surmounted by a buttressed water tower. This project was the precursor of the University's ambitious post-war development in the city-centre. The sequence of events in the late 1930s demonstrates some frustration with the architectural profession. The Faculty of Medicine had been complaining for several years about the inappropriateness of the Anderson building. The money spent on architecture, by which they meant both masonry and carved detail, would have been better spent on land, they argued. Doubtless the medics would have preferred to start afresh at the King's Buildings campus, but the presence of the teaching hospital kept them harnessed to the city centre site. The faculty wanted flexible space for laboratories, animal houses, modern lecture halls, and most of all natural light. The chair of the committee responsible for the project was an engineer who prided himself on his pragmatism, and the professors demanded economy, efficiency and functionality. Admittedly there is a difference between the appearance of efficiency and efficiency itself, and since this project was also abandoned due to war, it is difficult to assess it fairly. From the drawings, however, it appears that MacKay understood his clients perfectly, and provided nothing in the way of architectural detail, apart from a series of emphasised base courses. {Fig. 2.31}

There was no attempt whatsoever at blending-in with Anderson's florid Venetian pastiche for this extension into north George Square. Neither was there any

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40MacKay seems to have been given this commission partially on the basis of his friendship with Professor Oliver, chair of the building committee. The fact that he was architectural advisor to the Merchant Company, whose George Square property was required for future university expansion may have had some bearing on the matter. Demolition of the Merchant Company's School would also have removed any need for further buildings to conform to its French Renaissance style, which had its day as a Scottish fashion between 1900 and 1920.
resemblance to a previous project, abandoned in 1915, for the same site where the intention was to echo the François I style of a school already established on the same street. Essentially, the elevation is all windows. Seventeen bays of fenestration articulate the George Square façade, and these windows are tripled on the ground and third floors. A cylindrical stair tower, lit by a window that vertically spans four floors, turns the corner of the street and the fenestration pattern is continued along the west elevation. Here the outline of the plot dictated a stepped progression of massing.

Given a white render, this medical building could have become the institutional counterpart to Kininmonth and Spence's white houses, and the city's only large project in the Moderne idiom, for it has the cubic massing, the cylinder motif, and a ship's rail along the parapet where there is an exercise terrace serving the animal houses in the attic storey.

The architect Reginald Fairlie was similarly flexible. Fairlie is best known for his Classical/Deco hybrid, the Scottish National Library in Edinburgh. An abandoned Fairlie scheme for a large University hall of residence adjacent to the King's Buildings campus, which he designed in 1931, is of an entirely different order. (Fig. 2.32) This design is a fairly accurate reproduction of a country house of around 1690, though somewhat over large for a house of that period. The tripartite

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41 The Edinburgh and East of Scotland School of Agriculture commissioned a new building from the architect T.P. Marwick for this site on the west of north George Square in 1913. Since consent was given, the drawings remain in the planning archive. - Edinburgh City Archive - Dean of Guild Court Records. The University persuaded the college not to continue with this plan after the war. Instead it agreed to move to King's Buildings, where a new building, to be shared with the University departments of Agriculture and Forestry, was to be erected. University Clerk of Works, James Cordiner, with the assistance of Professor Oliver, actually drafted a plan for a quadrangular building. As it happens, this design was dropped after the next war intervened. The College was ultimately realised with Ralph Cowan and Alan Reiach winning the commission in 1948. The Cordiner and Oliver plan was printed, together with plans and perspective of the Medical Extension, in "University of Edinburgh Medical Buildings Extension Scheme. Statement on behalf of the University Court for the Information of the Development Commission" 1939. A copy is held at: EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 140. 

42 Archive of Dick Peddie & MacKay (Leith). Note that the material from this period has now been transferred to the RCAHMS-NMRS, Edinburgh, and is currently being catalogued.
centrepiece is flanked by wings of nine bays terminated by a pair of projecting pavilions. This was probably felt to be a fitting genre for the semi rural surroundings, and perhaps in social terms the country house model would appeal to students from county backgrounds concerned at the prospect of lodgings in the city centre.\footnote{Interestingly, the artist who produced the perspective drawing for this design was Basil Spence. -NMRS Collection. EDD/544/1.}

Lorimer & Matthew demonstrated flexibility in the competition entry for the Port Hamilton scheme, in Edinburgh. This mixed development scheme of cinema, offices and shops, addresses popular expectation. A large block with geometric corner towers and motifs derived from classicism are all the more surprising given the attribution to Robert Matthew.\footnote{Illustration in C.McKean \textit{The Scottish Thirties} 1987.} The design failed to win the competition, but it was not dissimilar in style to the design that was built.\footnote{Lothian House, Lothian Road, Edinburgh, by Stewarte Kaye (1933).}

The major Scottish architectural project of the period was the government building in Edinburgh, St. Andrew's House, by T.S.Tait (1937-40). This example of derivative monumental Classicism and cubic geometric massing relies heavily on its mass of load bearing stonework to impart the gravitas required for such a symbol of nationhood. \textit{(Fig. 2.33a)} The opulence of the interiors easily equals that of such ubiquitous examples of Art Deco as the Chrysler Building and Radio City. \textit{(Fig. 2.33b)} In a sense though, St. Andrew's House marks the culmination of a specific movement. Through the educational efforts of Rowand Anderson, craft training had been brought to its apogee, which Lorimer was able to take advantage of, even if not always successfully. One almost feels that Lorimer called on the craftsmen more out of duty than anything else. Clients were often cajoled to take a serving of applied art along with their building. Increasingly asinine sculptural reliefs at the King's Buildings throughout the Lorimer period demonstrate the impending redundancy of the applied decoration although this has more to do with the inane symbolism than the work itself.
The workmanship at certain prestige buildings is unarguably superb. At St. Andrew's House, neither wood veneering, stone carving, nor bronze casting had ever before reached this degree of perfection in Scotland. It is as if there was a final effort to assert the superiority of the craftsman. But, at the Bauhaus, this campaign was already abandoned, with the Morrisian craft ethos superseded by direct engagement with the challenge of industrial design. Cynicism at the social conditions in 1920s had opened many eyes to the irrepresible onslaught of industrialism and mass production.

The Scottish craftsmen, lacking in individual artistic direction at the beginning of the 1930s, found that craft skills could not insulate them from poverty in times of economic depression. Ox skulls and triglyphs are likely to be some of the first economies when recession strikes. Ironically, the craftsmen found themselves handcrafting forms that symbolised machines or emulated machine-manufactured forms.
In this chapter there is an examination of the role that the Edinburgh School played in creating the University's architecture.

**William Kininmonth**

From 1947, in advance of the main thrust of its expansion drive and the city-centre redevelopment plans, the University of Edinburgh began to address some pressing architectural needs. The initial projects were the Medical School Extension, postponed by the outbreak of war, refurbishment of the Dental Hospital in Chambers Street, the Examination Halls building, and the first purpose built halls of residence at Salisbury Green (later named Pollock Halls of Residence). The University's independent Student's Union also began to plan an extension to its premises at Teviot Row.

With the exception of the Medical Extension, for which a competition was held, the choice of architect was William Kininmonth, by then principal architect of Rowand Anderson, Kininmonth & Paul. His favour with the University's architect in this period is often attributed to his personal friendship with the University Secretary, Charles Stewart. That they were close friends is without doubt, but Kininmonth had already become well connected in Edinburgh circles. He was in various societies, participated in the RSA and RIAS, and sat on educational boards. Kininmonth had also become acquainted with Sir Edward Appleton and Lady Appleton after he insisted on personally supervising repair work and the installation of heating equipment at the Principal's residence, Abden House, when one would have expected delegation of such work to a subordinate.

In the case of the Dental Hospital the award of the commission was a straightforward matter, and by the time that Charles Stewart arrived in Edinburgh, in

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46 Interviews with Richard Ewing, Rowand Anderson Partnership (June 1998), and with Ian Gordon, formerly of Rowand Anderson and Kininmonth (August 2000).
1948, the design was ready to be lodged with the planning authorities. The project was, in fact, a revived scheme of 1937 by the same practice that had been abandoned with the outbreak of war.\textsuperscript{47} Plans had been drawn up to extend the 1927 building to the rear. This involved the demolition of the old tenement building that had served as the original Dental Hospital and which predated the laying-out of Chambers Street. While there was to be little alteration to the façade onto Chambers Street, the extension addressed the demand for well-lit spaces by creating what is essentially an entirely glazed box out of the rear upper storeys. \textit{(Fig. 2.35)}

By 1947 the project had officially become the Dental Hospital and School, a partnership between the University and the Royal Infirmary, with the former receiving Department of Education grants for the teaching component and the latter receiving funding under the new National Health Service. Even so, the financial situation was such that the whole scheme was reduced in scale from the pre-war plan. Thus, the brief was basically for renovation of the existing buildings and reorientation of the Chambers Street façade, including a new entrance arrangement and some signage. However, the entrance front design was further modified in the light of the design for the Examination Halls at the north east end of the street.

For the Examination Halls project, a refurbishment of the property formerly occupied by the Operetta House (also known as the Gaiety Theatre) was originally envisaged. But, when the University managed to acquire complete possession of the site it was decided to demolish the old theatre and start anew.\textsuperscript{48} The Principal, Sir Edward Appleton, used his influence to obtain the funding from the U.G.C. and the project was promoted on the basis of its multi-function brief. As such, the new building was considered a particular asset to the city in its role as festival host, for it was to serve as a flexible venue with an arts cinema/theatre and exhibition halls, as

\textsuperscript{47}Edinburgh Dental Hospital Appeal pamphlet 1937. -EUL Spec Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 8

\textsuperscript{48} The demolition of part of this city block resulted in some problems with the subsidence of adjacent properties requiring additional shoring and underpinning.
well as providing a home for the recently bequeathed Torrie Art Collection. In fact, there was some criticism of Sir Edward Hale and the discretionary nature of the U.G.C. over the funding committed to the project, which was considered rather lavish for the sole function of examinations. 49

In a typically efficient fashion, Kininmonth, who had taught Professional Practice at the ECA before the war, devised a plan that satisfied both the University and UGC, but the aesthetic matter of the facade and general appearance of the building was a separate concern. 50 The architect considered that it was crucial to take into account the streetscape, both for artistic reasons and to secure consent from the Corporation's Planning Committee, which depended upon approval of the Dean of Guild Court. 51

Opposite the examination halls site was the University's main building, the Old College, by Robert Adam and William Playfair. When the Old College had been built, the south elevation faced onto a small alley way and was therefore severely plain, but after city architect, David Cousin, laid out the new Chambers Street, this elevation became more important and Rowand Anderson embellished it somewhat to befit its new status.

Even the purchase price was a matter of some haggling. The owner wanted £20,000, the UGC was prepared to pay the District Valuer's figure of £6,000, but the University went on to pay £12,000. Memo. of November 1949.
-EUL Spec. Colls. DRT 95/002 Group 30 "UGC " Box 8.
50 The University Court approved initial sketch plans for the examination building in March 1949. However, the Secretary reported that the accommodation above the premises was now available and he was given authority to negotiate purchase in order to give the University ownership of the whole site. In May of that year, Kininmonth drew up sketch plans for a larger scheme, in the event that these negotiations might prove successful. The rest of the property was purchased in November and the architect was instructed to proceed with planning. In May 1950, Appleton received UGC approval for the scheme.
-University Court Minutes Vol. XX 21 March 1949, pp. 489.
51 The Dean of Guild Court fulfilled a role in building control, until the local government reorganisation in 1975. According to tradition, Edinburgh's Court exercised a type of aesthetic control that had ensured that development of the New Town adhered to certain standards of uniformity for over a century. Kininmonth became a member of the Dean of Guild Court and was able to assist the University during the Public Inquiry in 1954.
Kininmonth's artistic task, which placed him under the scrutiny of the Edinburgh establishment, was how to both acknowledge Old College opposite and yet respect Cousin's elevations for the north side of the street. His decision here later brought him a sort of esoteric acclaim, but it attracted the criticism of younger architects who did not appreciate his agenda. There was even some consternation within the Rowand Anderson office, where the younger assistants reacted by sketching an alternative modernist façade.52

Kininmonth must have decided that he could take advantage of his traditional training in order to produce a façade that was consistent with what already existed in the street and to do justice to Cousin's ambitions. He observed that all the buildings in the street were in the "Renaissance Manner" and that the architectural atmosphere was "overpoweringly classic". He decided that the new façade should indicate that the building was part of the old University opposite. Nevertheless, he was inserting a building into an existing city block and was required to maintain the cornice lines. Furthermore, as the University intended to obtain the rest of the block, the floor levels were to be such that the building could be either extended or simply linked to its neighbours.53 [Fig. 2.36a]

Kininmonth's design was the last authentic Classical façade in Edinburgh. As completion approached, the new monarch ascended the throne and it thus became the University's first building of the new Elizabethan era. When it was confirmed that the Adam family of architects had previously occupied the site, it was agreed to name the building Adam House in their honour.

53 William Kininmonth reports of 31/5/50 and 23/6/50. It is interesting to note that, in his report of 9/5/49, he merely observed that the Chambers Street façade should be simple and direct with a scale and depth to correspond with Old College.
5 Rowand Anderson archives, Richard Ewing Collection. File EN/23 (Adam House)
As with Spence at Coventry, Kininmonth was accused of not being modern enough. Kininmonth answered the criticisms by outlining his personal approach to architecture.

"The key to the treasure house of our art is neither to be found in the works of the past nor the present, but in an open minded and generous spirit...Architecture begins where building ends"

Answering criticism about a lack of originality in the use of the Classical language he wrote simply:

"All architecture is derivative"

But Kininmonth believed that there was a fitting solution to each architectural problem and he demonstrated this by contrasting Adam House with his Le Corbusier inspired Renfrew Air Terminal. {Fig. 2.56}

"One is an airport built on an open field on waterlogged and shifting sand, while the other is a university building filling a gap site in a stone street of classical architecture built on rock"\(^{54}\)

Thus, although the construction involves a concrete frame, the front of the building is entirely in natural stone, which was carefully chosen for its greyness.\(^{55}\)

Kininmonth was obviously not at one with the theories of the Functionalists who asserted that the appearance of a building was the outcome of a rational approach to

\(^{54}\) Letter from Kininmonth published in The Builder 4/2/55

\(^{55}\) Kininmonth demonstrated considerable knowledge about the properties of various types of stone and the building trade, in a letter to Charles Stewart (8/4/53). The only readily available Scottish stone was red and therefore unsuitable, as was Blaxter, which was fawn. Leoch stone could be obtained in Angus, but the architect claimed that no Edinburgh mason would dress it. Hewarthburn stone, from Northumberland, was chosen for its greyness in order to match the Craigleith used for Old College. -Richard Ewing Collection. File EN/23 (Adam House)
the problems of planning and construction. The façade design was a response to history and was governed by a symbolic programme and by specific considerations of the site. From a strictly neo-Classical point of view, however, Kininmonth's design could be considered entirely rational. He used the language of Classicism to answer the problems of the site, albeit with some mannerist manipulation of elements.

The entrance uses Doric pilasters to create a sort of two-dimensional portico, framing the central door and the arched niches that flank it. The tetrastyle motif echoes that of the window arrangement on the first floor of the Old College. The overall streetscape was quite a concern and, while he was designing the exam halls façade, Kininmonth amended his Dental Hospital entrance to create a balance between these two buildings at the east and west entrances to the street.\textsuperscript{56} \textit{(Fig. 2.37a)}

On the piano nobile of Adam House that motif is more forceful, with engaged columns as the central pair, and with the three bay central section recessed as the flanking pilasters blend into projecting wings. This is clearly a response to the projecting sections of the elevations opposite. \textit{(Fig. 2.37d)} And there is further mannerism in the way that the entablature is broken in the centre and bridged by an incised arch head to create a Serliana motif as a reference to the original building on the site. \textit{(Fig. 2.37c)} It can also be seen as a response to a similar motif on the Old College, although there it is achieved by flanking an arched window with two smaller square-headed ones. The breached entablature also allowed the architect to insert a triangular pediment over the central window. The whole ensemble is surmounted by a pediment spanning the three central bays; another echo of its counterpart across the street, but here we see that the architect has stilted it upwards.

\textsuperscript{56}Warrant to amend the design of the entrance porch by replacing the proposed 6 concrete piers with 4 stone piers (25/6/52).
-Edinburgh City Archives . Dean of Guild Court Archive
to permit an additional floor lighted by an oculus, thus avoiding the need for untidy looking dormers.

Another practical consideration, artistically handled, was the need to provide a shared service entrance with the adjacent building to the west, then occupied by a police college. The façade is thus asymmetrical with a sober arched door on the extreme left bay. The exam halls themselves are pushed back from the noise of the street with the front windows lighting only the stairs and circulation space, and each hall lighted by a large window to the rear of the building. This presented no difficulty with the arrangement of the fenestration, since the rear elevation eschewed Classicism and was given a largely glazed central section.57

The need for a symbolic programme appears to have been very important, however, both to the client and to the architect who worked out three different schemes of applied ornament before agreement was reached. (Fig. 2.36b) In the executed scheme, according to Kininmonth, the entrance front itself represents a triumphal arch, through which the examinees must pass, as with the entrance of Old College. The niches by the door contain a pair of urns intended to represent the arts and sciences. Then there are the symbols of City, University and State superimposed on the tympanum, together with a "Festival Star". A legend, in Greek, proclaims that:

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57In "Classical Modernism and Adam House" Architectural Heritage V (pp.98-100), B.T.Pentreath claimed that the architect first designed a Modernist façade, later dropping it in favour of the Classical approach, but this author appears to have come to the wrong conclusion. However, the written description, quoted by Pentreath, of the so-called Modernist design (pp.98) conforms exactly to the building as it was actually executed. And, in May 1949, before any elevations had been drawn, Kininmonth wrote to Charles Stewart recommending that the Chamber Street façade should be "simple and direct with scale and breadth to correspond with the old buildings opposite". Letter from Kininmonth to Stewart 9/5/49.

- Richard Ewing Collection. File EN/23 (Adam House)
The difficulty with the Planning Department, that Pentreath refers to, was actually over the need to exceed the 60ft height of the previous building. The elevation in the City Archive does not conform exactly to what was built, but the only difference is in the pediment above the first floor window. This drawing (EN/23) is stamped with an interim warrant of 30 March 1951, and therefore Kininmonth's letter to the planning officer, of 15th May 1951, that Pentreath quotes, must refer to this drawing not to any Modernist version.

According to Ian Gordon, however, some of the younger assistants in the office sketched an alternative design after seeing Kininmonth's Classical elevation. (Interview with Ian Gordon). Alex McIver, who did some of the detailed drawings for Adam House, is unaware of any non-classical design. Interview with Alex McIver (Sept. 2000).
"He who is educated sees twice"; an invitation to delve into the meaning encoded in the work, perhaps.  

The correspondence concerning the sculptural scheme reveals a delight in the orchestration of architectural symbolism, relishing the possibility of an ambiguous reading, which recalls Lutyen's approach to Classicism.

Kininmonth's eager manipulation of symbol and myth is repeated at the other end of the street, where he designed an ironwork device to stand outside the Dental Hospital. (Fig. 2.37b) The professor at the University's faculty of Medicine objected to the design, but only after it was installed. And the architect’s response to criticism contrived to demonstrate complete confidence in mastery of symbols and their application. The credulity of the professor must have been somewhat strained by the explanation Kininmonth gave for his design. The pair of snakes and staff, naturally, refers to the attributes of Aesculapius, god of medicine, however, their contortions allegedly form an inverted lyre as a further reference to Apollo, who is associated with both music and healing. The bay leaves were introduced to represent the token of victory that Aesculapius received for athletics.

While Ascelapius's attributes have a traditional connection with the emblems of medical institutions, there is no valid reason why Earth, Sea, and Air should govern the decorative scheme of the examination building - even one doubling as an arts venue. The architect's second proposed scheme, which placed putti with torcheres.

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58 A lintel with the same legend was salvaged from the University's seventeenth century buildings and is now preserved in Old College.
59 In a letter to Charles Stewart (15/4/53), Kininmonth felt that the first proposed scheme was "too abstruse" and wanted to give it more impact, suggesting that shells, leaves and birds should represent, water, earth and air, in ascending order. He felt that the niches should contain “lamps -of-learning” with a pair of putti; one rooting for the candidate and one turning his back, presumably embarrassed by failure. But the design of April 1953 was possibly becoming too frivolous, with a pair of winged putti supporting the coat of arms. Only the shells from this scheme appeared in the executed version. -Richard Ewing Collection. File EN/23
The model of the façade with this sculptural scheme, of April 1953, is preserved in Edinburgh University Library Special Collections.
60 Copy of a letter from Kininmonth to Charles Stewart, 22/7/53.
61 This is reminiscent of Spence's symbolic programme for the ICI pavilion at the Empire Exhibition (1938) which used tree, bird, and fish motifs to represent the fundamental 'elements' of air, earth and water. See Book Two Chapter Four "Exhibitions and Nostalgia".
in the niches, was obviously too fey to be acceptable. \textit{Fig. 2.36b} And, while the urns have certain funereal applications in the Classical tradition, just why a pair of these should be considered to represent Art and Science, as the architect said, is unexplained.\textsuperscript{62}

The frivolity behind all this "iconography" recalls something of the British spirit of the 1940s, as captured in cinema films such as Lucky Jim. The idea that appealed to the British was that authority could be gently mocked, or even hoodwinked. This notion seems to have been embraced by the public as an antithesis to stern Totalitarianism. Nothing of this attitude is rendered absolutely apparent in the building, of course, and the architect did not admit it publicly. Nevertheless, the critics of Adam House had rather missed the point.

Upon entering the building, those who might have been tricked by the neo-Classical exterior find themselves within an entirely Festival Style environment. The light-wells that pierce the first and third floors have balustrades formed from linked ovals of bronze, and festival stars are etched into the surfaces of the floors. Kininmonth designed the furniture for the staircase area, alluding both to traditional forms and modern motifs. In fact, the combination of upholstered plush seating, balustrades, and chandeliers, evokes something of the so-called Hollywood Regency atmosphere of Spence's Gribloch.\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Fig. 2.36c}

Glazed screens isolate the exam halls from the circulation space to the front of the building. And, although the interiors of the examination rooms themselves are fairly utilitarian, the Greek theme of the entrance inscription is picked up in the decorated shields that serve to conceal the wall-mounted ventilators. Birds, beasts and plants

\textsuperscript{62}Antecedents of urns in niches in the Adam repertoire include the David Hume Monument (Edinburgh) and the Coffee House at the Adelphi (London).

\textsuperscript{63}The details of the balustrade were drawn up by Alex McIver, who was not aware of Gribloch, but the idea of linked oval hoops was Kininmonth's own. Interestingly, the metal workers Charles Henshaw Ltd, of Edinburgh, fabricated both balustrades. Interview with Alex McIver (Sept. 2000)
are depicted in the manner of Hellenic ceramic decorations. Again, the architect claims a symbolic significance for these representations in which, for example, the eagle signifies alertness and the dolphin speed. One is reminded of Phyllis Bone's sculptural reliefs at the Zoology building where animals represent geographic zones. The decorative shields that adorn the walls of the theatre employ an eclectic symbolism that is scarcely penetrable and apparently arbitrary. Subjects include Vitruvian Man/Universal Man - perhaps a reference to the esoteric aspect of architecture - a Cornucopia, and even Confucius!

**Salisbury Green**

The development of the Salisbury Green site gave Kininmonth his largest and longest running commission. His appointment in 1949 demonstrates the faith Sir Edward Appleton and Secretary Charles Stewart had in the architect. However, the donor of the site, Sir Donald Pollock, obstructed and resisted the plan. He did not want any new building at Salisbury Green, but might have accepted some small extensions to the existing buildings. The University, on the other hand, intended to demolish two of buildings on the site in order to create up-to-date student quarters for 600 students, and it was some time before a workable compromise was achieved. The University Court was satisfied with Kininmonth’s initial layout scheme for development of a prestigious site with a dramatic natural backdrop but had to

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64 Kininmonth’s designs were executed by C d'O Pilkington Jackson, whom Lorimer & Matthew had engaged for decorative work at Zoology and Geology.
65 The serpent represents wisdom, the horse: service to mankind; the olive branch and amphora: physical achievement; the cock: health; the lion: courage; ivy: friendship; the bull: strength; and the octopus: tenacity. Undated memorandum of Rowand Anderson, Kininmonth & Paul.
66 The shields in the theatre illustrate: Universal Man, Janus, Pegasus, a Cornucopia, Confucius and another of rather muddled symbolism featuring a dove that is reminiscent of Medieval representations of the Holy Spirit coupled with a pair of Dolphins. The Universal Man - or is it Vitruvian Man? - is set against a triangle on which are etched the numerical progressions 1, 3, 9, 27 and 1, 2, 4, 8. The Greeks described these as the Lambda, with the former sequence masculine and the latter feminine. Presumably Kininmonth was making an allusion to the Masonic tradition as Plato used these sequences to describe how the architect of the universe, the Demiurge, generated the World Soul, in The Timaeus.
undergo many tribulations before work commenced. The background of conflict to the project will be discussed in Book Three and the further developments of the site in Book Four. Here I will consider Kininmonth's creation of the largest example of architecture in the Festival Style, although only half of it was realised according to the original plan.

A variety of enlarged schemes were produced over the subsequent years, but the essence of the layout was contained in that first plan of 1949. From the initial discussions, it is clear that Kininmonth had retained his pre-war flexibility in terms of style or "architectural expression", as he preferred to call it. He asserted that there were three possible approaches:

1. "A traditional Edinburgh approach". By this he meant historicism, and the two examples cited were Renaissance Classicism and Vernacular Gothic (sic).

2. Contemporary Fashionable, with a warning that there was a risk that the buildings might appear dated before completion.

3. A fusion of Classical principles and contemporary planning.

The architect directed the University's decisions by means of an astute political analogy. The first approach he likened to "unrepentant conservatism", the second to "advanced communism". Clearly an academic institution which prided itself on liberality could have no truck with either of these. The idea of "intelligent democracy" as an analogue of the third approach was tailored to appeal! Extremes were to be avoided, the architect felt, and a balance between domestic and public architecture should be sought.

To house 600 students, the recommended best solution was for four separate residences, arranged in pairs with each pair sharing a common refectory. An open-air swimming pool and theatre might even be erected at some stage if a benefactor were to come forward.

As for construction, Kininmonth preferred reinforced concrete. His thoughts on walling and finishes give a good account both of the state of the construction
industry, and his ideas on decorum. Natural stone was always to be preferred he stated, but it was doubted if there were enough stone masons in Scotland to do the work - strangely there is no mention of the cost in time and materials in relation to this. One alternative, he suggested, was to use a mix of natural rubble with artificial stone on a brick backing. Another alternative worth considering was brick with artificial stone dressing. One imagines here something akin to the English provincial classicism of the 1660s. But Kininmonth considered this to be a departure from tradition, and warned that there was only one variety of Scottish brick that was worth considering. Also, demand for bricks still far outstripped supply in those days. Nevertheless, he felt that brick walls with harling would be both traditional and pleasant in appearance. The roofing preference of light gauge copper was enjoying something of a vogue at the time.

The first outline plan is a formal arrangement that reveals a predilection for axial layouts. This was probably something he acquired in the Lutyens office, where the same "High Game" guided the axial layout at New Delhi. The complex is aligned symmetrically on a north-south axis with a bisecting avenue forming an east-west cross axis. (Fig. 2.38a) The southernmost building is the refectory, from which accommodation wings project northwards to form inner and outer courtyards. At the northern end is another refectory with a pair of accommodation wings forming a semi-enclosed courtyard, but this time four individual linear blocks on a north-south axis subdivide the space between the main building mass and the central avenue. This axial avenue is actually aligned on the tower of the Romanesque church beside the loch at Duddingston. At the easternmost end of the site is a viewing platform. Difficulties with Pollock were already a hindrance and Kininmonth expressed his perplexity by inscribing on the plan "Statue of Sir Don Pollock", whose image is presumably glowering down the avenue. Pollock always professed extreme
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modesty, but was in fact quite vain. Whether this was a misguided attempt to placate the millionaire or another example of the architect's humour is not entirely clear.67

Kininmonth subsequently produced a long-term development plan to provide accommodation for between 910 and 1180 places for students and staff. This involved adding to the earlier plan a residence for women students housing 125-150 on the north west corner of the site. For the women's residence, a refectory with two residential wings is repeated from the first phase, but there is a diagonal axis splaying the residential units out at 45 degrees on either side of a north-west axis. This concern with axial planning is also manifest in Kininmonth's consultancy for the King's Buildings Site and in an unsolicited scheme for George Square, which will be discussed in Book Four.

Contemporary Classical Halls of Residence

In execution, the first pair of halls of residence at Salisbury Green followed Kininmonth's recommendations of 1949. Here was his fusion of Contemporary and Classical considered most appropriate to "intelligent democracy". Each hall actually consists of an L-shaped block extending from the refectory building, with a C-plan block attached to the north end. These residential blocks are protruding wings symmetrically arranged about the north-south axis to form outer and inner courtyards. The Classicism frequently referred to is primarily a matter of layout, but other features collude in creating this impression. [Fig. 2.38c] Loggias of elliptical arches alternating with pilotis define the entrances to the residential buildings facing onto the courtyard. [Fig. 2.38e] The Refectory itself has a loggia comprised of a series of semicircular concrete vaults projecting outwards from the dining area and forming its roof. These are supported on incredibly slender columns that lend it an air

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67Kininmonth's son-in-law feels the architect was probably "laughing up his sleeve". Interview with Richard Ewing (June 1998).
of almost Brunelleschian lightness. (Fig. 2.38d) In typically Festival Style, the light and slender contrast with the massivity of the stone clad internal wall. The concrete vault construction of the Refectory, however, was abandoned and the projecting concrete sections have no structural role other than to roof the loggia. The internal continuity of these pseudo vaults is facilitated by plasterwork simulating the original concept. (Fig. 2.38g)

Of course, the function of the refectory, as originally conceived, could be considered as traditional in the sense that it is dictated by the traditional collegiate social structure as applied at Oxford and Cambridge. In fact, during the Public Inquiry of 1954, the project was referred to as the "exclusive cloisters of Kininmonth". Emphasising the monastic social structure, the refectory was oriented on the high table, for wardens and academic staff, while the students dined six to a table along the hall.

The main impression created by the three-storey configuration is one of horizontality, but vertical interest is provided by the two pairs of stair towers guarding the entrance to outer and inner courts. The towers rise only slightly above the ridges of the rapidly patinating copper roofs, but a lantern for night lighting surmounts each of these as punctuation on the skyline and they help to impart an institutional atmosphere.68 This slightly ecclesiastical element actually assists the overall Scandinavian effect of the complex, for the lantern towers and white walls are redolent of the post-war Swedish new-wave of church building. In terms of Festival Style vocabulary, we might note that a similar lantern surmounts the tower of the Congregational Church at Lansbury. (Fig. 2.39)

The third and fourth phases of the development were intended to more than double accommodation on the site and was a variation of the layout of the first two

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68 Interesting photographic material showing the buildings in construction can be found in the University Photographic Collection -EUL Spec. Colls. U.A. Photograph Albums nos. 9 & 10.
phases. For these subsequent phases a second refectory block was required and the architect, rather than repeating the original block, suggested an interesting contrast, which can be seen in the site model (1953). As can be seen from the model, this second refectory, instead of employing a series of transverse vaults, was to be roofed with a large shell dome carried on spandrel arches, achieved by spraying concrete on to a mesh structure. (Fig. 2.40) This technique had recently been showcased at the Brynmawr Rubber Factory (completed in 1951), where nine concrete shell domes and a series of shell vaults were combined in a building that captivated architects in the UK. (Fig. 2.41) The shell dome seems also to have informed Spence's first visualisation of the University development, with the suggestion that it could be employed for both the Library and the proposed Convocation Hall.

A successful application of the shell dome for an institutional building was at the Natural Philosophy (1963) building at Aberdeen, where it formed the roof of the lecture theatre.69 (Fig. 2.42)

The designs of Holland House and Fraser House featured techniques that Kininmonth and Spence had been using since the 1930s, where "traditional" surfaces of harling or random rubble are contrasted with large areas of glazing and exposed concrete. The interior of the Refectory derives much of its atmosphere from the combination of massivity and lightness where the wall of sandstone contrasts with a glazed arcade ambiguously supporting the curved concrete vaulting. Features explicitly defined in Festival literature are here too. There is the flying staircase with spindly metal balusters, and the light fittings are pendant clusters and wrought iron torchères in a foliate form. Naturally, the original furniture consisted of the typical splay-legged tables and chairs of the period. (Figs. 2.38f - 2.38i)

Despite the formal layout of the buildings, the copper roofs, and the arcades, the residential buildings were not dissimilar in proportion to the three-storey terraces of

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69 Brynmawr was designed by the Architects' Co-operative Partnership with Ove Arup. The Natural Philosophy Building at Aberdeen was designed by J.Douglas Mathews & Partners.
Lansbury, or, indeed, to the student housing at Aarhus, as illustrated in Building Scotland. (Fig. 2.43) The building height at Salisbury Green was chosen to avoid overshadowing and to preserve views across the site at Salisbury Green, and this linear block form allowed the architect to achieve his desired fusion of domesticity and formality.

The University Union Extension

Kininmonth began work on a brief for the extension of the (men's) University Union in 1948, but it was some time before a design was produced. The Union occupied a Victorian building in a mock Scottish Renaissance style and had already been twice extended in a similar mode. The fives court at the rear of the building was chosen as a space for new restaurant and cafeteria accommodation. At this early stage, Kininmonth recommended that stone was the only suitable material.\(^7\) Finance for the Union was a problem, however. For, as an independent organisation, it had to raise its own funds from subscriptions and donations. One might have imagined that the University Court could have considered diverting some funds from the Pollock donation, but this was clearly tied up in protracted negotiations relating to the future of the so-called "island site". The independence of the organisation was in some ways an obstruction to the University's own expansion plans, and the UGC only tentatively suggested a loan to the Students' Union, as it was not prepared to make a capital grant for buildings not actually owned by the University. However, once the property had been made over to the University in connection with a re-organisation of union membership and responsibilities, funding was swiftly secured and Kininmonth set to work.\(^7\)

\(^7\)Letter from Kininmonth to J.C.Lessels CA (17/6/48). EUL. Spec. Colls. DRT 95/007 pt.1 "K.B.Common Room/Union 1924-56"

\(^7\)The reorganisation involved the introduction of composite matriculation by which every student would be a member of the unions, the athletics clubs and the Students Representative Council. The University intended that this would mean an end to social exclusion of poorer students. With the
The completed building was the most overt concrete structure built in the city thus far. Its location on a service lane meant that the Planning Committee of the local authority was less concerned with design and finishes than might have otherwise been the case. The potentially lumpen effect of the board-marked white concrete is alleviated by bold articulation of parapet and fenestration. This was achieved by a dramatic cornice level punctuated by concrete discs, which are actually the protruding ends of the conical headed columns rising through the interior. These are balanced by four circular domed roof-lights spaced between the column heads - a feature employed on the top storey of Adam House. Two horizontal bands of glazing wrap around the corners, and thus the gallery and roof levels appear to float above the basement. The structure is stilted above ground level on stubby cruciform legs to achieve the required floor level of the original building, which contribute to the floating effect. It seems that this was not achieved without difficulty for there were delays in completion, and additional expense incurred by over-excavation of the site, suggesting some caution, perhaps uncertainty, which resulted in the laying of unnecessarily deep foundations. {Fig. 2.44a}

The form and construction of the extension have more affinity with Mediterranean concrete structures than with any British Festival Style buildings or pre-war antecedents. The conical headed columns, for instance, suggest Nervi as a source of inspiration.

Kininmonth was known for allowing younger architects in his office to "have their head" in terms of design, and this may be such a case as assistant Jack McRoberts was heavily involved in the project. Nevertheless, Kininmonth had been personally involved since the project was first proposed and he always took a particular interest in University commissions. Thus, the extension may demonstrate

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property transferred to University ownership, UGC support was guaranteed. See: Ian Catto (Ed) No Spirits and Precious Few Women-Edinburgh University Union. Edinburgh 1989.

72See Concrete Quarterly no.61 1964.

73Interview with Alex McIver (Sept. 2000)
either his pre-war flexibility, or perhaps a response to criticism of the conservativism of Adam House.

The interior of the Students' Union, which is double height with a mezzanine gallery, has a close affinity with other Edinburgh buildings of the period in the play of contrasts of wood and stone surfaces with fixtures and fittings of lightness and femininity. Parana pine linings recall Matthew's Turnhouse and Hardie Glover's University Staff Club. The exposure of an existing rubble wall as a decorative feature had already been used at the latter, while the effect was created anew for the Refectory at the Pollock Halls.

**Basil Spence**

The importance of the appointment of Basil Spence as planning consultant and his role in bringing about the commencement of the George Square development has already been discussed. What is remarkable is that the approval of the University Court and outline consent from the City's planning committee was achieved without a detailed plan, a model, or a single building design - other than that for the Medical Extension, designed by Walter Ramsey, which Spence undertook to amend. Of course, the University / Cultural zone was already defined in the City's development plan, and the Holden scheme had prepared the way for redevelopment. But Spence was confronted with the seemingly intractable condition imposed by the local authority that an attempt to retain the old George Square façades must be made. Many architects would have tried to work within that limitation whereas Spence decided that he must convince the planning committee that he knew better.

The architect had been chosen for his character and confidence, but almost as important was his skill in architectural analysis and pictorial representation. The massing proposed by Holden and the City's conditions were cast aside and, with little

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74 A perspective prepared by Harvey, based upon the Holden layout, appeared in Proposals for the Future Development of The University of Edinburgh (1949), and a version, by Alphonso Martinez, was published in Abercrombie's city development plan.
more than a site for the library provisionally chosen, he went to work with his watercolours, sketching first the previously neglected view towards George Square across the Meadows, an open green space to the south. A photograph of this view, which included the rocky Salisbury Crags as a backdrop, was demonstrated to be somewhat lacking in vertical punctuation and architectural interest, and Spence's perspective shows an "improved skyline" with suggested new buildings. (Figs. 2.45a & 2.45b) This proposed new view is picturesque in the sense that a characteristic skyline as an important representation of the city. This was important for a city presenting itself as an international centre for the arts and a destination for tourists. Since "picturesque" can simply mean an interesting subject to paint, it is interesting that Spence used a painting to demonstrate the picturesque potential that could only be realised by the architectural intervention of a new University development. The City's planning committee was thus lead, as if by a skillful advocate, to a position from which there was no withdrawal. Who would not wish to see a more interesting and picturesque skyline, especially when the means of achieving it would mean better educational and cultural facilities?

Particularly evocative was Spence's representation of the internal form of the proposed campus. (Fig. 2.45c) This reveals the architect's concerns, while its success with the City must be taken as evidence of the currency that such settings then had. Paradoxical descriptions such as informally formal best describe the atmosphere of civility and enlightenment. This evocation was part of the strategy that had made his proposals so difficult to attack. He avoided overt architectural representation of a new George Square in itself at this stage, since the issue of demolition was such a sensitive one, concentrating instead on the atmosphere of the setting and striking views out of the campus. This made the loss of existing buildings there the only possible grounds for objection to the University's scheme. In the new Buccleuch Place, water, sculpture and trees are used to give character to just one of several semi-enclosed spaces that Spence aimed for. Many would have seen this as
consistent with Reiach and Hurd's prescriptions for "an oasis of learning". The spatial enclosure is formed by a long low building apparently with an entirely glazed front and completed by a glazed linking bridge, raised up on pilotis to permit circulation beneath. The slab blocks to the east look typical of office blocks of the period with a 3:1 vertical division between glazing and wall. Again, and typically for the period, the sheerness of the façade is broken up by small square projections. That particular treatment is probably a sufficient feature to designate a building as Festival Style. Such punctuation, for instance, can be found on the landward elevation of the Royal Festival Hall. Spence's office produced a model of the central development area the following year with the layout and general massing of buildings, but the atmosphere he was seeking is probably more adequately evoked in the perspective sketches.

The image of Spence as a painterly architect emerges in accounts by his contemporaries. For instance, when he was asked to design the Scottish Widow's building in Edinburgh's St.Andrew's Square, he is reputed to have set up a small easel opposite the corner site, at which he painted a perspective. He then walked back to the office and gave the picture to his Edinburgh partner, John Hardie Glover, saying “Build that old chap!”.

The University Chapel

A further project of 1956, for a University Chapel, produced a design by Spence that could be said to be Festival Style. A block representation appeared in the 1956 model and initial plans and elevations were prepared, but this was another project thwarted by Sir Donald Pollock. An appeal committee was set up in July 1956 and, on the recommendation of Appleton, Spence was appointed architect designate for

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75 Many of Spence's contemporaries, such as Ian Gordon and Jimmy Beveridge, regard this myth to be based on fact. However, this should not be taken to mean that Spence only took an initial interest in his buildings. On the contrary, once he had begun upon a design, he liked to oversee every aspect of it down to the smallest detail, and his sense of taste and propriety determined the outcome.

-Interview with Archie Dewar (Feb. 2001).
the project. This was partly in recognition of his efforts on behalf of the University, but also in acknowledged of his growing reputation as an ecclesiastical architect with a spate of church commissions in the wake of the Coventry design. Spence concurred with the chaplain's recommendation for a location near the University Union, and he chose a prominent position for a landmark, with the tower as the focal point of roads leading into the area situated at the junction of Marshall Street and Bristo Street. {Fig. 1.26} Interestingly, this was only a few metres to the north of Mears' suggested chapel site. {Fig. 1.09} Holden on the other hand, had proposed obliterating all traces of these old streets and siting a chapel to the north of the Medical School. {Fig. 1.15}

Unfortunately, the site chosen by Spence was under the control of the Pollock Trust Development Committee, and occupied by the Pollock Memorial Hall and the J.M.Barrie Theatre. There is a discussion on this issue in Book Three, while the design itself will be considered here.

The perspectives and plans of the Chapel are intriguing and, taken with the University perspectives of 1955, they clarify the character of the University precinct conceived by the architect.\textsuperscript{76} The focal point is the tower, which is linked to the main building and serves as a subsidiary entrance on the south side, while the main entrance is from the west through a porte-cochere. {Figs. 2.46a - 2.46c}

The plan is simple, but effective, in providing for religious and ceremonial functions, and it efficiently in provides seating for 1100. Of these, two hundred are in a gallery on the north side. The provision for worship can be read as multi-denominational with side chapel and altar addressing both Anglican and Roman Catholic liturgies, while the gallery might be thought of as following in the Scottish Presbyterian tradition. On the south side, the side chapels project outwards at one third of the height of the main walls and are roofed with a series of elliptical transverse vaults. Choir stalls are located within a single stubby transept on the north,

\textsuperscript{76}The original watercolour perspective now hangs in the University's Chaplaincy Centre, a few metres from the proposed chapel site.
and this, together with the termination of the side chapels, forms the division of the nave from the apsidal east end, where seating, presumably for dignitaries, is located.

The Chapel is clearly conceived as a cosmopolitan building and, as at Coventry, Spence suggested smooth walls of ashlar. Interestingly, the cornice line is at an angle that gradually declines towards the east end. Typically for Spence's ecclesiastical oeuvre, asymmetry guides the displacement of elements about the central east-west axis, to include an offset west entrance. Traditional ecclesiastical fenestration was avoided in favour of vertical stone louvres - or are they mullions? These, interspersed with glazing, articulate the external arcade of the side chapel. The louvres rise to full height on the south elevation, at the east and west ends, revealing the architect's preoccupation with dramatic interior lighting. It seems that the Spence's early proficiency with perspective renderings had created an acute awareness of the importance of contrasting differing intensities of light and shadow. Indeed, black and white photographs of many of his buildings have a remarkable resemblance to perspective drawings.

The influences upon the chapel design are predominantly Scandinavian and can be traced to Asplund and Saarinen. The rounded off corners in the plan seem to be part of a studied avoidance of the pure rectangle. This is a constant feature of Spence's churches, with Asplund's Woodland Crematorium (1935-40) a likely precedent. (Fig. 2.47) Possibly, this is a result of the architect's search for interesting natural lighting effects while adhering to the rigid orthodoxy of orientating churches towards the east.77

However, the influence of Eliel Saarinen is the predominant one. The Tabernacle Church of Christ (1940) at Columbus Indiana, and the Christ Church Lutheran Church of Christ (1940) at Columbus Indiana, and the Christ Church Lutheran

77 At Coventry, Spence used a zig-zag wall so that windows of the nave face southwest and north-west, rather than north and south. The nave also tapers to create a perspective effect of greater length. The zig-zag arrangement becomes a starburst in 1962 at Mortonhall Crematorium (Spence and Hardie Glover), while St.Ninian's; at Whithorn (designed in 1951 but unexecuted) has both zig-zag walling and an 'organic' groundplan.
(1949) at Minneapolis, are clearly antecedents. \{Figs. 2.48 & 2.49a\} The church at Columbus has several features in common with the University Chapel design. For instance, the form is an essentially cuboid main block with a detached bell tower and the west facade is emblazoned with a simple crucifix that is repeated internally at the east end, and also here is a lower side chapel with columnar supports. \{Fig. 2.49b\} Saarinen's church at Minneapolis is similar in form and also includes the crucifix spire that Spence employed.

This is not to say that Spence completely plagiarized these existing buildings. There is some originality evident in the composition of the campanile. On a square plan with rounded corners, the south elevation of the tower is dramatically riven in two to permit a vertical strip of fenestration within the cleft. Similarly, the crucifix motif on the west elevation appears to penetrate the stonework of the façade in a manner unique for the time, although it has been employed more recently.\textsuperscript{78} At the same time, it appears almost as an allusion to the arrow slits of medieval towers, and this allusion is accentuated somewhat by the incline of the chapel's battered walls.\textsuperscript{79}

Spence made no secret of his admiration for Saarinen's work. He made a point of visiting the Cranbrook Academy, at Michigan, where Saarinen also taught, while on a fund-raising tour of Canada on behalf of the Coventry Cathedral appeal fund, in 1953. The philanthropic millionaire George Booth had founded this institution upon Arts and Crafts principles. Spence described it as a "Shangri-La of a university" in his book on Coventry. \{Figs. 2.50a & 2.50b\} He was particularly enamoured by the lavish aesthetic effect created by gardens, porticos, pools and fountains, and very impressed by the generous quantity of sculptures by Carl Milles.\textsuperscript{80} This experience seems to have influenced his University work. Spence did not seek to emulate the

\textsuperscript{78}Interestingly, the corner tower element of the Royal Scottish Museum extension, by Benson and Forsyth (1988) uses the crucifix/arrow-slit motif as a main feature.

\textsuperscript{79}Honeyman, Mackintosh, and others had adopted this rather martial feature for ecclesiastical use in the 1890s.

\textsuperscript{80}B.Spence \textit{Phoenix at Coventry} pp.94-95
actual architectural styles at Cranbrook, which range from American Arts and Crafts to Scandinavian Art Deco. Nevertheless, in his perspective for Edinburgh, as so often with other campuses and prestigious buildings, water features, sculptures, and gardens are incorporated in the designs. Spence inherited from Saarinen the conviction that a campus should offer more than merely a utilitarian response to accommodation demands, but rather a sensual engagement with the arts and nature.

The Staff Club

Until its destruction in 1999, the interior of the University Staff Club (1959) - designed by Spence's partner, Hardie Glover- provided a perfect evocation of its era. (Figs. 2.51a - 2.51f) The ingredients of the Festival Style were all there: a staircase with spindly metal balustrade, partially glazed screens, glass entrance doors, pine wall linings, splay-legged chairs. The typical juxtaposition of solidity with lightness was achieved here by contrasting wood and glass screen walls with the exposed random stonework of the original supporting walls.

The purpose of the Staff Club was ostensibly to provide a social meeting place for academics of all faculties, in parallel to the students' unions, and a sympathetic environment for visiting colleagues. Such facilities were held to aid the creation of a corporate identity, a principle supported by the UGC.81 With parity of pay across the UK, social facilities were considered an important aspect of the academic working environment that would help attract a high calibre of staff. Social provision at Edinburgh included: bars, dining rooms, squash courts and bedrooms for visiting professors.

81 The building estimate, in 1958 was £100,000, with the UGC providing £65,000. Minutes of the Major Buildings Committee 23/9/58 EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 Box 56.
The agenda of the club reflects the zeitgeist and the milieu that produced it. This milieu included Professor Talbot Rice and his wife, Tamara, who were pivotal characters in Edinburgh's academic and artistic scene. The Talbot Rices were great friends of Basil Spence, and of Charles and Marie Stewart. They in turn were close friends of William Kininmonth and his artist wife Caroline, who had studied alongside Robin Philipson. The post-war optimism of this circle was fired by the launch of Edinburgh's International Festival. In this scheme of things, the Staff Club played an important role by providing a far higher standard of food and drink than could be found locally. The surroundings were also uniquely convivial and spacious, with carefully chosen Scandinavian furnishings obtained from a London importer. Works of art, such as the specially commissioned wall panel by Leonard Rosoman, were essential to the ambience.

The Staff House (as it was originally referred to) was actually inserted into an existing building in Chambers Street within a block that was also later to contain the replacement Women's Union (1964), when it relocated from East George Square. Only minor external modifications to the ground floor fenestration of a former shop were necessary, and refurbishment was a far cheaper expedient than demolition of the property in order to create a vacant site. Apart from this, there was the issue of the City's sensitivity about maintaining the load-bearing stone fabric of Chambers Street - as Kininmonth found when the specification of natural stone for the façade was a factor in the planning consent for the examination halls.

Interestingly, one of the stated aims of Sir Donald Pollock's donation was the provision of such a club within one of the older properties at 16-17 Bristo Street. The University must have been aware that any project relying upon agreement with

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82In 1952, a committee was formed to prepare plans. This consisted of Professors Fisher, Brash, Arnold, Hirst, Talbot Rice, Piggot, Mr W.K. Smith, Dr. Sinclair, Mr Abercrombie and Charles Stewart. Robert Matthew joined the committee when he arrived in the summer of 1953. This Committee recommended Basil Spence as consultant (1954). University of Edinburgh Gazette no.7 June 1954.
83Interview with Archie Dewar (Feb. 2001).
Pollock might take a considerable length of time. The Staff Club might therefore be thought of as a kind of demonstration to Sir Donald that the University could provide extracurricular facilities without recourse to his donations, or to his opinion on the matter. The Staff Club concept is discussed further in Book Three.

Modifying the Medical Buildings

As we saw in Book One, Spence presented his proposed new campus to the Planning Committee of Edinburgh Corporation under the auspices of obtaining consent for the Medical Extension design, with which Walter Ramsay had won the competition in 1951. One difficulty of the Ramsay design was its quasi-Georgian look that attempted to fit in with the existing streetscape. But with Spence's new campus layout, this style had become redundant. Ramsay's elevations were stark and severe, and Spence gave assurances that these could be "humanised".

Consent was not so easily achieved, however, for the Planning Committee attempted to make further modifications of its own. The architect firmly opposed this "imposition of an alien style". It was important to resist interference in order to avoid creating a precedent that might compromise the elevations of all the forthcoming buildings by turning their design into a sort of free-for-all. Ultimately, consent was achieved for Spence's solution, which was to treat the first phase as almost a separate building from the subsequent phases that were to provide the main elevation to North George Square. This first phase was, in effect, an extension to the elevation of George Square, though one house was demolished to allow construction. The larger expanse of its elevations looked onto Middle Meadow Walk, to the west.84

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84 On 13 July 1955 the Planning Committee resolved to recommend that consent be given, subject to Spence's adjustments and detailed consideration thereof. On 27 July 1955, when plans and application for demolition of No.15 George Square were submitted, demolition was not opposed, but the façade of the Pathology building was not approved because there was "not sufficient softening". On 22 February 1956, the University appealed against the Planning Committee's additional modifications as being "tantamount to imposing an alien style". Spence, Matthew and Ramsay advised against these further modifications. In the light of this "expert advice" Councillor Farrer, the Lord Dean of Guild, moved that the committee should approve the University's scheme and the motion was carried. -Edinburgh City Archive, Minutes of Edinburgh Corporation Planning Committee.
subsequent advice by Spence, the planned main block of the Medical Building was divided in two to reduce the oppressive bulk and to provide access from George Square to the School of Music beyond.\textsuperscript{85}

Then, as now, the local authority believed in the principle of 'harmonising' new buildings with existing ones. In the case of the first phase, the nearest buildings were the houses on the west side of the square, which Spence had decided to retain, and the Royal Infirmary on the opposite side of Meadow Walk. West George Square presented a random rubble gable to the site of the new building, while the hospital had walls of rock-faced ashlar. The reader will recall that the hospital had been lambasted as a grim edifice in \textit{Building Scotland}. Spence often liked to take advantage of the striking contrast between old and new. Here, his solution to the demand for harmonisation was to make the Medical Extension mediate between the hospital and the houses by introducing a variety of surface textures, clothing the most prominent part of the walls in an imitation rock-faced stone of rather diminutive proportions, known as art-stone. Other walls, where the new block was linked to the original Victorian Medical School, received a smoother treatment, with a veneer of dressed ashlar. \{2.54\} These varying textures of stone were intended to impart "vertical emphasis" to the part facing Meadow Walk.\textsuperscript{86} Polished green slate was used for detailing around the windows on the ground floor and on the square columns of the ground floor windows. \{Fig. 2.54a\}

The first phase of the Medical Extension might be considered an example of Scottish Festival Style in its combination of modern metal-framed windows and

\footnotesize{On 20 February 1955, the University Court was informed of the Planning Committee's rejection of the adjusted facade. The Court resolved to appeal to the Secretary of State, but Appleton offered to personally intervene with the Lord Provost, and this intervention probably carried the day.}

\footnotesize{University Court Signed Minutes Vol. XXII}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{87}Compare the arrangement of the Medical Buildings in the original model of 1956 and the amended version of 1959. \{Figs. 1.26 and 1.28\}}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{88}Minutes of the University Development Committee, 13 December 1954.}

\footnotesize{EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 98/005 Box 1.}
cosmetic use of stone. Certainly, it fits comfortably within Spence's repertoire of educational buildings of the period from around 1938 to 1958. Its surface treatment resembles that of the Natural Philosophy building at Glasgow University (1947), where a rusticated basement storey is combined with upper storeys clad in smooth Portland stone. Kilsyth Academy (1938-48) and Duncanrig School, East Kilbride, relied upon a similar contrast for articulation. {Figs. 2.52 & 2.53} However, the Medical Extension appears to be the end of that series, with its treatment possibly an expedient to achieve planning consent by dint of familiarity with an established type. In contrast to the rock-faced effect, his perspectives for the campus hint at a new direction with larger areas of glazing and generally smoother surface articulated by the shadows cast by projecting elements. Indeed, the elevations for the subsequent phases of the Medical Extension - of which only two were built - have entirely different surface textures. {Fig. 2.54f} Ramsay modified these on Spence's instruction. The modifications transformed the monotony of the pared-down Classicism of the competition design. Firstly, the vertical rectangles of the windows were tipped on their sides and the facing slabs made to project to simulate pilasters and cills. Then, the wall of the ground floor was recessed to create a loggia, or colonnade. {Fig. 2.54d} The "balconies", that Spence devised to form the link at first floor level between phase one and the adjacent block, provide a motif that is repeated at the east end of the building. {Figs. 2.54c & 2.54e} These little glazed boxes seem inspired by machine metaphor - evoking the notion of mass-produced modular buildings - and they inject a completely different character to the façade while yet recalling the Suspended Offices by the Architects Co-Partnership at the South Bank Exhibition. {Fig. 2.54g}
Robert Matthew and RMJM

Robert Matthew's return to Scotland in 1953 marked, not only his entry into architectural education, but also his (rather late) entry into private practice under his own auspices. He was obviously aware of the University's expansion plans and probably expected to be asked for help and advice. But, whether or not he expected to be given commissions is not clear. Considering his status, it would have been surprising if had not. Before he returned to Edinburgh, he already had the commission for Turnhouse Airport Terminal. Beginning with this rather modestly sized terminal, he soon launched what was to become a large international concern with head-offices in both Edinburgh and London. Of all the post-war work produced under his name, this is the one building that he can truly be said to have completely designed. It therefore reflects his design talents and concerns most fully, and it was certainly of great interest to other Scottish architects.

The Turnhouse terminal would not have been out of place as a pavilion on the South Bank in 1951. A Festival Style flying staircase descends to the runway from a balcony, and a lounge with an entirely glazed wall was intended to allow a view of the still novel spectacle of aircraft at close quarters. \( \text{Fig. 2.55a - 2.55c} \)

Despite its affinity with South Bank exhibition structures, Matthew appears to have been exploring his interest in creating a new Scottish architecture, albeit with a Scandinavian flavour. This was not something he pursued in isolation though, for Matthew was closely associated with the vernacular enthusiast Alan Reiach, and, as Professor of Architecture, he directed Patrick Nuttgen's postgraduate study into vernacular architecture. This pursuit of Scottish character was continued through Matthew's commissions for generating stations at Lochay (1954) and Cashlie (1956), responding perhaps to the call for:
"A new and vital beauty in the highland landscape"\textsuperscript{87}

The timber boarding at Turnhouse, which was something of a Matthew obsession, is used both internally and externally, while a precise reference to the vernacular is made with sections of rubble walling. Granite setts interspersed with paving slabs evoke the urban tradition of the city for which it was to serve as a new modernist gateway.\textsuperscript{88} \textit{Fig. 2.55a} For those air travellers who would draw no association with Scottish architecture, the solidity and firmness of the paved surface might serve as reassurance of the safety of terra firma.

But Turnhouse is no romantic fantasy, for the rationalist agenda is readily comprehensible in the way that the internal spaces interlock and are expressed in the external composition. It was this spatial explication, together with the attention to detail, that won it the Edinburgh Architectural Association Centenary Medal. The assessor, John Summerson, was particularly impressed by the way in which the concourse was penetrated by the customs block; thus facilitating the balcony and side terraces. In plan, the geometric control is of an almost neo-Classical quality with rectangles arranged around a square.

This is a key building of the Scottish 1950s, and it was important as the first landfall for many visitors to the International Festival. Replacing an ad-hoc cluster of sheds at the RAF base, it represents how Matthew felt the Capital should present itself to the world. It should therefore be thought of as a critical element of the new festival city.

Turnhouse was undoubtedly influential, and its interiors and furnishings had a strong affinity with others, such as the University Staff Club, which were designed

\textsuperscript{87} Both generating stations are in Perthshire, with Lochay being constructed from 1957-59 and Cashlie from 1958-60.

\textsuperscript{88} John Richards, former partner with RMJM, describes Matthew's obsession with random rubble and boarding, in a lecture : "Sir Robert Matthew and his Work" (1984 unpublished). This point was further emphasised in an interview with the author in September 2000.
soon after. And, spiced with the new glamour of international air travel, it was regarded as a harbinger of things to come.

The Turnhouse Airport building stands in striking contrast to the contemporary Renfrew Air Terminal, by William Kininmonth (1951-53). (Fig. 2.56) For, while Matthew's building is an attempt at merging functional agenda with evocations of national character, Kininmonth attempted to evoke the spirit of modernity with an example of sculptural formalism that was essentially anti-rational. It used (recent) historical references to proclaim international affinities in the same way as his white houses of the 1930s had done. Kininmonth was a great admirer of the buildings of Le Corbusier and had visited the Swiss Pavilion at the Cité Universitaire in 1932.89 The Scottish architect, who borrows the great hyperbolic arch of the Swiss maestro, blatantly plagiarized the vintage Modernism of Le Corbusier's competition entry for the Moscow Palace of the Soviets (1931). Although it looks impressive, the arch serves little structural purpose. Corbusier probably tailored his entry to suit perceived Constructivist tendencies of the Soviet judging panel. However, allowing for Kininmonth's symbolist predilections, one suspects that he probably felt that it represented a bow, from which the arrow-like aircraft are fired into the sky.

The control tower, designed by his assistant Michael Laird, conforms to the established form for its type in simultaneously recalling Luftwaffe bases and mid-western American airports. To be fair to Kininmonth and Laird, their response was arguably appropriate to the requirements. A dramatic gesture could inspire confidence in air travel, and a control tower ought to be easily recogniseable as such. Moreover, while the Renfrew design may appear dated now, we should recall that at

89Kininmonth seems to have admired almost any design of Le Corbusier that he saw, although there is no indication that he had any sympathy with the polemic behind the Swiss architect's urbanist vision.

-Interview with Alex McIver (October 2000).
this time the sweeping wings of Eero Saarinen's TWA Terminal in New York - later to be attacked for anti-rationalism - were not yet on the drawing board.

The Arts Faculty buildings

Shortly after Appleton's arrival in Edinburgh, the idea of holding competitions for the design of all the University's buildings appears to have been dropped, although the Medical Extension competition was already in hand. Thereafter, the Principal began personally recommending architects to the UDC and the University Court. For instance, he recommended Kininmonth for Salisbury Green and other projects, and Spence was promoted as architect for the University Library and the Chapel. However, as Professor of Architecture, Matthew was generally deferred to, and it was he who advised the Principal.

Following the recommendation of Appleton, a sub-committee was assembled to select architects for the main priority buildings, including the Engineering extension (at King's Buildings) and the Veterinary Field Station. Matthew was appointed as architect for the Arts Faculty buildings in June 1956. Since the sub-committee included Spence, Appleton and Matthew, accusations of nepotism in the award of commissions were directed at the University.

The immediate pre-development plan for the Faculty of Arts project was devised by Matthew, following Spence's general arrangement, and incorporated in the

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90 The appointment of Robert Gardner-Medwin for the Engineering extension was an interesting one. He was not part of the Edinburgh School, but was well acquainted with Matthew, with whom he formed a left-wing alliance within the RIBA. He was also considered something of a specialist in educational buildings within the DHS. He was also employed, in various capacities, as advisor to the UGC. The lecture theatre was described as an example of "Form follows function" in Concrete Quarterly no.47 Oct. 1960.

91 The sub-committee, consisting of Appleton, Spence, Matthew, and Professors Arnold, Macmurray and Robertson, met to chose the architects on 30 May 1956. Minutes of the University Development Committee 12/6/56.

EUL Spec. Colls. DRT 98/005 Box 1.
amended development plan of 1959. Fig. 1.29) By the time of this plan, of course, the entire north side of George Square was allocated for Medicine, the west side preserved intact for smaller departments, and the library site reserved on the south west corner. With Appleton insisting that the teaching of first-year science should also take place in the central area, future site uses were becoming clearly defined. Thus, the initial phases of the Arts buildings were concentrated around the south-east corner of the square, with possible further phases in Buccleuch Place, immediately to the south.

Matthew took the opportunity to include the first of several slab blocks, to the east of the square, as had been recommended by Spence and accepted in principle by the Corporation. Matthew, however, moved this tower back from the original building line of the square, presumably to prevent it dominating the central garden. An associated low block of lecture theatres was located a little further to the east. A pair of linear four-storey teaching buildings, at right angles to each other, flank the tower, and complete this corner of the square.

In addition, a large lecture theatre, for the use of all faculties, was assigned to the third phase and located by Matthew on the south side of the square, between the Library and the south teaching block, in the manner indicated in Spence’s model. As George Square was at a higher level than the street to the south, the idea of a podium linking the arts buildings at basement level, and accommodating sub-podium car parking, was adopted. With some modification, this scheme was executed as the first three phases of the Arts Faculty programme. Although only officially

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92 Thus, phase one: Arts tower (block A) and lecture block (block B). Phase two: one teaching block on the east of the square (block C). Phase three: one teaching block on the south side (block D) and large lecture theatre (block E). Note that, in 1960, this was amended to provide 3 lecture theatres in block B, and a south wing was added to block C. A further block (F) on Buccleuch Place, to commence in 1965, also provisionally approved.
93 The 1959 block plan and the Arts Faculty model were published in the pamphlet, University Development and George Square (March 1960). Here, the arts tower was allocated to Languages, Classics and Philosophy, with Block C (William Robertson Building) for History, Geography and Political Economy, and Block D (Adam Ferguson) for Psychology, Social Sciences and Phonetics.
instructed to produce the sketch plans for the tower in January 1960, Matthew had such confidence in the project that he had already prepared these well in advance.\footnote{Due to the fact that the UGC had not yet approved schedule 1, it was not possible to officially appoint Matthew as architect. Minutes of the UDC 7/3/58. EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 98/005 Box 1.}

The Arts Faculty model that Matthew produced in December 1958 was rather more than a simple block plan, being quite finely detailed and stylistically explicit.\footnote{The Arts Faculty model was unveiled and approved on 8/12/58. Minutes of the UDC. EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 98/005 Box 1.} (Fig. 2.58) And, although the plan for the faculty buildings was expanded over the next fifteen years, the five buildings in Matthew’s model were, in fact, the only ones to be built. Of these, the fourteen-storey building is truest to the model. The lower buildings, intended to precisely match the tower in detail, underwent design changes. In the model, projections and recessions around the fenestration articulate the façades, and this is accentuated by the black and white detailing.

John Richards, who was made job architect for the David Hume Tower, regarded the Arts Tower as "Festival" architecture, and felt that it lacked integrity by not expressing its construction and by its deceptive use of materials. The DHT was felt to lack the sort of gravitas that Matthew’s New Zealand House possessed. (Fig. 2.59) As it happened, although Matthew had been personally awarded that commission by the prime minister and cabinet while in New Zealand in 1954, the design work for that project was handled by the London office. And, under the pen of Maurice Lee, Matthew’s original design was considerably altered.\footnote{Matthew’s picturesque skyline would not have been very popular with the younger architects at the time. - Interview with John Richards September 2000.}

Like many who were coming into Matthew’s quickly burgeoning practice, Richards was one of the new generation looking for a harder edged more "rational" architecture than that produced thus far in post-war Britain. All of these young men...
respected Matthew for his immense social commitment, but they had difficulty in coming to terms with his use of materials. The white spandrels of the Arts Faculty model especially were reminiscent of Powell and Moya's Churchill Gardens blocks at Pimlico (1946). Powell and Moya were regarded as fairly eclectic at the time, and their work passé, in comparison to the dispassionate glass boxes of Egon Eiermann's German Pavilion at the Brussels Exposition (1958), or Richard Neutra's rather cool steel-framed structures. And, at that time, the Smithsons' Hunstanton School was considered the crest of a wave that was carrying the New Brutalist aesthetic to prominence. {Fig. 2.60} However, Matthew had been able to put his company at the forefront of new developments by linking up with the English master of building systems, Stirrat Johnson-Marshall, who was ostensibly in charge of the London branch of the firm. This gave the company a certain immunity from the derision of the post-war architects.

In execution, the detailing on the David Hume Tower was smoothed out a little, but Matthew's men had to conform to the design that had already received planning permission. {Figs. 2.61a - 2.61i} The tower was to be constructed from an in-situ concrete frame with brick gable walls, and Matthew had decreed high quality cladding. The gables were clad in sandstone and the façade sheathed in slabs of polished black slate. For the City's planning officers, concerned about the effect of weathering, this, rather costly, treatment would have been more popular than concrete panels. It was described in the architectural press at the time of completion as "Elegant, urban and austere".

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97 The slate slabs were to function as waterproofing for the junction of concrete frame and timber joists. The fitting was problematic and caused delays in completion when the contractor had to face fix every slab with brass clamps and bolts. Interview with John Richards September 2000.

98*Concrete Quarterly*, no.61 April-June 1964 pp.14
The recessions of the facade at the second, third, sixth, and seventh floors of the David Hume Tower were intended to reduce glare into the windows of the departmental libraries. And, although the location of these was soon changed, the recessions remained as an aesthetic device to relieve the monotony of the grid of fenestration. Matthew's block for Queen's College, at Dundee, reversed this principle by projecting a corner section of the facade of two elevations at the fifth floor to denote the senate room. (Fig. 2.62).

The rubble-clad wall, at the sub-podium level of the David Hume Tower, was the only feature of the execution personally supervised by Matthew. And, although his concern for that particular detail is interesting, the Arts tower marks a transition in the practice, as Matthew relinquished control of architectural design. This coincided with a waning of enthusiasm for all the trappings of Festival Style. (Fig. 2.61e) By the time of commencement in 1960, Matthew had more to concern him than architectural detail, and the characteristics of his design approach were superseded. The Auchenlea rubble cladding and cedar boarding of the Queen's College tower had perturbed many of his young associates and, consequently, Matthew's desire to find modern uses for stone was put aside.

The interiors of the David Hume Tower feature some details associated with the Festival Style, such as red hardwood linings, but most fittings are standard products lacking the sort of affectations of those at Adam House or the Staff Club. (Fig. 2.61f) The original grey, white and black colour scheme suggests a revealing move away from the atmosphere of frivolity towards one of austerity. The triple lecture theatre block erected simultaneously with the tower, stands at a respectful distance. Although there is considerable continuity of interior decoration with the tower, to which it is linked at sub-podium level, it is entirely deferential. Its only glazing is a horizontal strip on the ground floor entrance level, and its walls are sheathed in the

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99 Interview with Dermot Quinn (November 1998).
100 Interview with John Richards (September 2000).
York stone cladding of the main building, while its bulk is only apparent from certain viewpoints. (Figs. 2.61g - 2.61i)

When the buildings constituting phases II and III, i.e. the tutorial buildings later named after Adam Ferguson and William Robertson, were eventually erected, they adhered to the massing of the 1958 scheme, despite amendments. But the relationship to the tower through materials and details, that the original model had suggested, was not followed. The slate cladding and modelling of the fenestration were found uneconomical and rejected. However, by the time that details were being worked out, the planning consultant had decided that York stone slabs should be used to bring unity to the buildings in George Square, and this precluded any experimentation with treatments for the skin of the buildings.101

Chapter Four. Elizabethan Style Dethroned.

In this chapter there is consideration of the special affinity between the Edinburgh School and the Festival Style, and why certain sources were mined to express the aspirations of the post-war period. How the style came to be interpreted as essentially pre-war will also be discussed.

Exhibitions and Nostalgia

As a term, Festival Style is uniquely applied to British architecture of the 1950s and early 1960s but, as I have already claimed, styles are necessarily international. Nonetheless, as far as I am aware, no non-British examples have ever been cited, despite the fact that all of the architects had absorbed foreign influences. Of course, we might regard Festival Style as the occurrence of a sort of eclecticism in a specific

101 Arts Faculty development phases as proposed in 1958. Phase I: Arts tower and lecture block containing two theatres. The lecture block was expanded to contain three theatres in 1959. Phase II: a tutorial block of four storeys on the east side of George Square. Phase III: a four storey tutorial block (South George Square) and 600 seat lecture theatre (South George Square)
place and time, rather than a refined style per se. This would take account of references to native and foreign traditions, to historical styles, and to pre-war International Modern architecture. We have observed the Edinburgh School's debt to Scandinavian architecture, something of their search for Scottish character, the abiding interest in academic Classicism, and something of their pre-war flirtations with Art Deco and Moderne.

Obviously the designation "Festival Style" originates from the 1951 Festival of Britain, with the South Bank Exhibition as the central focus. Much of the impact of the "New Look" might have been the novelty of frivolity, after a decade and a half of the utmost seriousness for the nation, and any effeminacy is understandable after the enforced masculine circumstances of the military services. Nevertheless, as has been observed, the idiom did define modern design for the generation that had fought in the war.

Exhibitions provide an ideal opportunity to try out new forms and spatial concepts as the exhibitors strive to make an instant impression. The temporary nature of the constructions means that worries about the fickleness of fashion can be set aside. However, there is a unifying factor that lends coherence to the idea of a style that is so obvious that it could be missed. Festival Style is true to its name in there is a detectable mood of celebration, such as that contrived for exhibitions. This celebratory mood is possibly tinged by poignancy connected to feelings of impermanence and mutability, brought about by the notion of impending change. Ruari McLean’s account may tell us more about a part of his own life and that of his generation than it does about design.
"Personally, on that first morning when I first saw the Festival looking across the river from Charing Cross Station, it was so utterly beautiful and exciting that I wept...."\(^{102}\)

After the euphoria of 1951 had abated most designers acknowledged that the visual vocabulary of the Festival of Britain was already familiar from pre-war exhibitions. In architectural history, the large international exhibitions are generally used to chart a steady development of new architectural ideas towards what is now regarded as Modernism - this irresistible progression being temporarily thwarted by the totalitarian regimes, that advertised themselves in the rhetorical neo-neo-Classical displays at Paris in 1937.

For many of the recently demobilised architects, the most compelling vision of the past was of the Stockholm Exhibition of 1930. The striking similarities between it and the 1951 exhibitions, in terms of design and layout, can thus be accounted for. But, most importantly, the Stockholm Exhibition, with Gunnar Asplund as principal architect, was the first that could be said to have created a total environment inasmuch as every design drew on a similar lexicon. That vocabulary was Constructivism; an architecture shorn of traditional rhetoric and preconceptions, based instead upon the creative possibilities of contemporary technology, and largely inspired by Cubist painting. \(\{\text{Figs. 2.63a - 2.63d}\}\) As I have already observed, Spence borrowed Constructivist ideas, and the Stockholm Exhibition literature may have been his source, rather than De Stijl magazine, through which it was more commonly disseminated. Other South Bank pavilions drawing heavily upon Constructivist forms were the suspended offices, designed by the Architect's Co-operative Partnership, and the '51 Bar, by Leonard Manasseh. \(\{\text{Figs. 2.54g & 2.64a}\}\)

The "Homes and Gardens" entrance, by Denis Clark-Hall, demonstrates the connection to De Stijl with its Mondrianesque colour pattern. *{Fig. 2.64b}*

The translation of Constructivist forms to architecture proper was not so simply achieved. In interior design, where a certain lightness of character was an aim, it was achieved by much use of glazed partitions and slender metal work. There may have been no implicit revolution in the built form in the fashions of 1951. Nevertheless, at that very time, there was considerable political will to set the architects the task of solving technical problems to achieve social aims. This association between the ephemeral and the social meant that Festival Style represented ideas about the future and that there was a gesture inherent in it.

In the 1950s, Spence, Kininmonth and Matthew were echoing the architecture of their idols of the 1930s, while making a strong appeal to a native tradition. Therein lies the eclecticism that inspired puritan attacks. But did the Edinburgh School reveal the influence of the Stockholm experience prior to the war?

In pre-war Scotland De Stijl and Constructivism were scarcely known, even in the exhibition setting. Spence's Edinburgh Architectural Association stand, at the Edinburgh building exhibition in 1935, was therefore probably the most surprising exhibit of the decade, having something of the cubic form of the Stockholm pavilions. Here, the geometric purism was taken much further than in his white villas, for it was essentially a hollow cuboid, with very thin sides. It had a porch of the utmost simplicity that alluded to the classical temple tradition by the insertion of a pair of very slender columns with a variation of Ionic capitals. But, this was not a direction that he pursued over the next four years. *{Fig. 2.65}*

The final, and most memorable exhibition in Scotland in the inter-war period, was the 1938 Empire Exhibition, in Glasgow. Thomas Tait, Scotland's premier architect of the time, and practitioner in the Beaux Art tradition, was the architectural director.

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103 McKean describes this as a precursor of Post-Modernism in *The Scottish Thirties* (pp.34).
The governing theme was Scotland's contemporary role in the British Empire. The events of the next few years meant that this theme could never be revisited. Curiously, Sweden contributed a pavilion, and, as was normal for the period, such institutions as the Royal Air Force, the Automobile Association, and the main Scottish churches joined the industrial exhibitors.

Considering the imperial title of this event, and Tate's personal predilections it is perhaps surprising that there were no overt displays of monumentalism - at least in the conventional sense. Poignantly, given the political climate, it included a Pavilion of Peace by Alister Macdonald, the architect son of Ramsey Macdonald.

The UK Pavilion, by Herbert Rowse, achieved the monumentality of cinema empires rather than of political ones. *(Fig. 2.66a)* In fact, the tenor of the exhibition was overwhelmingly eclectic Art Deco and, since exhibitions were indicators of contemporary style, this suggests that Scotland was simply lagging behind the times in terms of taste. There may have been a conscious avoidance of rhetorical monumentalism, as some sort of retreat from the overt displays at Paris. Certainly, variants on Classicism were absent, with the prevalent style gravitating towards public entertainment, by using an identifiable architectural language of leisure and recreation: cinemas, roadhouses, and swimming pools. It is as if distractions from the international crisis were being sought. It was a trying time to strike a celebratory chord.

Prominently, there was the Beresford Hotel, having the appearance of a gigantic jukebox, it was the only permanent structure of the exhibition, and it was not actually on site. *(Fig. 2.66b)* This was a very American looking building that employed such machine metaphor motifs as streamlining. The Roman Catholic pavilion, by Jack Coia, was at the opposite extreme of Art Deco. *(Fig. 2.66c)* This was a derivative of White Architecture; rounded at the apse, and with a tower and flagpole.

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104 Designed by William Beresford Inglis, the Beresford survived and is now a student hall of residence.
it suggested a health pavilion of religion. The Palace of Industry, also by Coia, demonstrated a rather belated attempt at catching up with the industrial architecture of mainland Europe in the 1920s where it might have passed as a factory by Peter Behrens. *(Fig. 2.66d)*

The Concert Hall, by J. Taylor Thomson, is interesting, for while it was, no doubt, inspired by the one at Helsingfors, it might also be said to have both emulated the Finsbury Health Centre and anticipated the Royal Festival Hall. *(Fig. 2.66e)* Admittedly, it was not as elegant as its relatives, but the essential components were similar. The main hall was in a large rectangular block, while the foyer was almost detached. Based on a crescent plan, the foyer was raised up on pilotis, with an entirely glazed façade. This example reveals the thread of continuity between Scottish Art Deco, Matthew's post-war designs, and the deification of Scandinavian architecture that was evident in Reiach and Hurd’s *Building Scotland*.

Of considerable interest are the Basil Spence contributions. The Country House, for the Scottish Council, was one of his more eclectic works, where he attempted to blend Arts and Crafts forms with the Weissenhof aesthetic. *(Fig. 2.66f)* The result seems to acknowledge Mackintosh, though with less fussiness of detail. His Scottish Pavilion was essentially an Art Deco roadhouse, replete with tower and flagpoles, and was the architect’s least original work. *(Fig. 2.66g)* More compositionally outstanding was Spence’s ICI pavilion, although the symbolism of the sculptural decorations, executed by Thom Whalen, was rather facile. *(Fig. 2.66h)* This consisted of the so-called elements of Earth, Air and Water, represented by motifs of a tree with a worm, a bird with a cloud, and a fish with waves, in a repeating pattern.105

As no products were to be exhibited within the focal tower, the architect was able to create an abstract sculpture, which was a combination of the primary forms of the

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105 Note the similarity with the decorative scheme for Adam House.
cylinder and cuboid he had used in his white houses. In this design they took on an almost Cubist character that might have some relationship with Constructivist projects, but the combination of sculpture and tubular bars classify it as Art Deco. The main elements of the tower had scalloped faces, and the solidity of the cylinder was dissipated into horizontal elliptical bars linking the three vertical elements. There was clearly a strong desire to create novel forms and, perhaps this indicates that the architect was wringing the last creative possibilities from the Art Deco idiom.

The post-war Scottish exhibitions were the true forerunners of the 1951 festival, however, and they demonstrated a shift in approach, towards lighter forms and suspended constructions. It was here that Spence's new practice helped to create the exhibition style of the 1950s.106

Making a fresh start after the war, Spence resigned from the Rowand Anderson office, ended the semi-formal Kininmonth & Spence partnership, and started up in practice for himself in 1946. As a specialist in exhibition design, he was made overall designer of the 1949 British Industries Exhibition, in Glasgow. Here, he defined the essence of Festival Style, with slender supporting members, flying staircases and white railings. The British Airways Stand, one of several designed by Spence's office, pre-empts the 1951 Sea and Ships Pavilion in its synthesis of the vocabulary of Constructivism.107 (Figs. 2.67a & 2.67b) This design also has great affinity with Robert Matthew’s Turnhouse Airport.

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106 Coinciding with the first Edinburgh International Festival, in 1947, the city also hosted the "Enterprise Scotland" exhibition, organised by the Council of Industrial Design. James Gardner, who had been responsible for the morale boosting "Britain Can Make it" exhibition, designed the decoration at the Royal Scottish Museum. The emphasis was on boosting contemporary Scottish industry and business, and there was a strong appeal to tradition. A twenty-five feet tall sculpture of St. Andrew dominated the space. Enjoying one of his first post war commissions was the architect, Basil Spence, who was responsible for the exhibition layout.

A Constructivist tribune supports the lettering for the J&P Coates Pavilion, recalling Asplund’s advertising pylon at Stockholm, while the ICI Pavilion advances the purism of the 1935 EAA Pavilion in the direction of Mies' Barcelona Pavilion, with its pristine assemblage of vertical and horizontal planes. \( \text{Figs. 2.67c & 2.67d} \)

Colour was a major element at the British Industries Exhibition, and Spence co-ordinated swathes of material in striking shades. Spence had a longstanding interest in colour harmonies, and had taught colour theory at the Edinburgh College of Art, before the war. The use of contrasting bold colours, at the British Industries Exhibition, marked a complete departure from the uniform whites and pastels of the Empire Exhibition, and pre-empted the exuberance of the South Bank colour scheme.

**Transformations**

History favours the convenience of landmark events, from which succeeding events can be said to have sprung, however, a landmark can also signify some sort of final statement or culmination. Thus, rather than regarding the Festival Style as the start of a new era of Elizabethan architecture, as the public had been encouraged to do, the Rationalists saw it rather as a sort of reprise pre-war architecture. There is much of the generational revolt about the repudiation of Festival Style. As the first generation of post-war architects began to enter practice, they naturally found association with the values of the pre-war world distasteful. Of course, any nostalgia for 1930 Stockholm that might have captivated the designers was not simply for the past, but for the shattered dreams of the past. Many architects were trying to resume careers after serving in the armed forces, and this must have involved a certain degree of retrospection, or, as it were, a return to the point where it seemed world events had taken a turn for the worse.

The detractors of the idiom considered themselves progressive Modernists and attacked its designers principally on the basis of similarity to pre-war architecture, but also for traditionalism, for references to non-canonical Modernist works, and historicism. In this way, any British Architecture of the 1950s and early 1960s not
considered progressive was branded "Festival Style". Nor were there defenders of the style, since the practitioners were not aware that they were operating within one. Criticism, of the sort endured by Kininmonth and Spence, was not experienced as an attack on a movement, or school of thought, but on their work.

As is the way with design, the distinctive architectural treatments lost their contemporary feel as other ideas gained favour. Copper roofs and Parana pine paneling simply acquired a dated feel. The so-called "New Look" for exhibitions, introduced by Spence, with its spindly balustrades & flying staircases, simply ceased to have contemporary resonance. The timber boarding and rubble claddings, as used by Matthew to create modern architecture of national character at Turnhouse, also lost its appeal.

As the 1960s began, the architects to the University were diverging in approach. And, although there is no evidence that Appleton and the University authorities were anything other than delighted with the architecture designed by Spence, Matthew or Kininmonth, all three saw their individual roles as designers to the University dwindle, for a variety of reasons. At the same time, architectural practice in general was undergoing radical change in order to meet changing demands.

**Chapter Five. Reflections on the Festival Style at Edinburgh**

After designing the David Hume Tower, Matthew delegated design and execution of the rest of the Arts Faculty buildings to his employees. Of course, he remained very important as the University's architectural advisor, and as the Professor of Architecture. His sphere of influence, however, spread far beyond Edinburgh. He was a key player in such audacious projects as the University of Ulster, and advised government on development in Commonwealth Countries, such as Pakistan, where he was the planning consultant for the new capital of Islamabad. The concept of Commonwealth development, that Matthew embraced so wholeheartedly, was an integral part of Britain's ethical policy during the early years of Elizabeth's reign.
The rapidly expanding RMJM practice of the 1960s was expressly intended to be relevant and to engage with the bureaucracy of state funding of schools, hospitals, and universities, placing the emphasis on team work and specialisation. For a time, at Edinburgh, further phases of the Arts Faculty were an exiting prospect. As part of the Comprehensive Development Area mapped out by Percy Johnson-Marshall, the University campus promised to become part of totally planned and controlled urban environment. Matthew's acolytes constantly canvassed for a new building for his School of the Built Environment that would be a comprehensive sociological institute of the science of human settlements: Ekistics.

To the young architects in RMJM, Spence and Kininmonth were "decadent Edwardians". Their backgrounds embraced both Beaux-Arts, and Arts and Crafts principles, which were no longer considered relevant. Indeed, even the Modernist tradition was under attack from the radicals who declared themselves the New Brutalists. At RMJM, the ideal of light and dry construction, of steel frames and the transparent finishing of Eames held sway. A left-wing democratic vision of citizens in white overalls assembling architect-designed system buildings burned brightly. Younger architects in RMJM balked at Matthew's rubble clad basement storey of the David Hume Tower, which breached the functionalist rationale that demanded prefabricated panels for such applications. Concern for the vernacular, which Matthew tried to express in new forms, was sidelined and ultimately found its expression in the emerging conservation movement. The tensions and factional friction within the Edinburgh School will be discussed in Book Four.

Signs of the shift in approach and execution, in the early 1960s, can be seen in the Appleton Tower designed by Alan Reiach. This was the first of two projected phases of the Fundamental-Science buildings initiated by Appleton, who died before its completion. The tower that was to have been named after Enlightenment geologist Hutton, instead memorialised the late Principal.
Reiach's previous University work was at the King's Buildings site, where a building for the joint use of the Department of Agriculture and the local agricultural college was designed in collaboration with Ralph Cowan in 1949/50, though it was not commenced until 1956. Reiach does not seem to have produced anything that might be described as typically Festival Style, yet the agriculture building had some of the characteristics of the "communist" architecture of its period. The building was originally conceived as a traditional load-bearing brick structure but, when the project was revived, a concrete frame was employed. Nonetheless, the original form and load-bearing appearance were, curiously, retained. Reiach's other University project of the period was the Veterinary Field Station, in the rural setting of the Bush Estate, just outside Edinburgh. Accurately described in the press as "workmanlike", the pair of two-storey teaching buildings show complete engagement with the industrial aesthetic, yet, in volume and massing, they echo the LCC buildings at Lansbury. Standing on pilotis, with car parking at ground floor level, these linear blocks have brick gables and front elevations of repeating pre-cast wall units.

After these low-rise linear buildings, the Appleton Tower was a departure for Reiach, who had just started a new partnership with Eric Hall. Essentially, it is a slab block that derives its site and height from Spence's development plan model of 1955. In fact, it was the second of several University towers, proposed by Spence, and the final high-rise building, before City and University adopted a low-buildings policy for the city-centre. The Science Tower stands at right angles to the Arts Tower, and the terrace on the north elevation was intended as the first stage of a podium, devised by Percy Johnson-Marshall. This podium was intended to traverse Crichton Street, linking up with projected academic and amenity buildings. There is a lecture wing to

108 After the war, the Ministry of Agriculture's architect, Ingham, produced a design. This was considered unsuitable and was withdrawn in 1949. At this point Appleton tried to recommend Kininmonth for the job but the contract went to Reiach and Cowan who produced a design in 1950. Construction took place between 1956-60.
the south, and the original scheme included a science tutorial block of four storeys, which was intended to complete the east side of George Square {Fig. 2.69a}

Between the first design concept of Reiach's model and execution (1963-66), the external articulation was smoothed out and the Tectonesque appearance was replaced by a Miesian one. {Fig. 2.69b} The double-height top-lit concourse linking the main tower to the lecture theatre block demonstrates a move away from the intimacy of spaces of Festival Style towards a less personal large open space articulated by concrete columns and rafters. {Fig. 2.69c} Here, the concrete of the piers is unashamedly bereft of pine or stone cladding. The concourse is clearly a circulation space, rather than a place for dalliance, and this speaks of the demands of university expansion. The beton brut of the secondary staircase is of a different sensibility to that of the timber and glazing of the main stair of the David Hume Tower.

Reiach's interest in the vernacular found no expression here, and neither was there any harmonisation with the surface finishes of existing buildings. All of the old buildings around it were scheduled for demolition and, as it had no frontage onto George Square, the York stone cladding of the Arts Faculty and Medical buildings was eschewed for a variety of pre-cast concrete panels. Reiach still managed to achieve some striking contrasts with these by employing coarse slabs, with exposed aggregates, for the podium deck and basement storey walls. Slabs exposing large river pebbles are used both externally and internally. The latter could be seen as an expression of national identity, by virtue of a reference to the natural scenery of Scotland, rather than to any traditional buildings. On the elevations, industrially produced mosaic panels produced a diffused blue tint and a gleam to mediate between the rough lower storeys and the sheer grid of fenestration on the north elevation. Planning of the main block is Miesian too, with a flexible open-plan arrangement, intended to accommodate large teaching laboratories.
Spence's consultancy to the University was terminated in 1960, and the University awarded no new commissions to the company after Appleton's death in May 1965. Spence's senior partner in the Edinburgh office, Hardie Glover, handled the standing commission for the University Library. And, in another long running project for the Mathematical-Physics building (later the James Clerk-Maxwell Building), originally planned for the city-centre, but for which a site was ultimately found at King's Buildings, Spence played no part in the design. Considering his importance to the development, it is a curious fact that the University possesses no buildings that could be said to have been designed by Spence himself. Doubtless, had the University Chapel project been revived, the architect would have taken a more personal interest. For much of the important work of both the Edinburgh and Scottish offices, Spence would often produce some initial sketches, and thereafter authorise the important stages in the design. He always insisted to clients, however, that there was "not a hairsbreadth of difference" between his way of working and that of Hardie Glover and Peter Ferguson.

The interest in natural materials continued in Spence's later work. Used in a less traditional manner than in the rubble cladding of Scottish Festival Style, or the Cotswold stone of parallel English work, these take on an almost Japanese ambience. By this I mean that he seemed to provide aids to mental reflection by using pebbles or rocks around his buildings as mediators between the natural and the built environments. The water features for Edinburgh's campus suggested in his initial perspectives were not taken up, but his interest in water's reflective qualities was maintained in projects where he took a particular interest, such as the award-winning Scottish Widows II, in Edinburgh. (Fig. 2.71) For one of his most notable buildings, 

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109 Aside from the Library, the other University commissions in the city-centre were conversion schemes, untypical of the practice. These were the alterations to the 17th century Old Surgeon's Hall for Natural Philosophy, the University Staff Club, and the conversion of the former George Watson's College for Ladies (1976-8) for the Department of Psychology.

110 Interview with Archie Dewar (February 2001).
The British Chancery at Rome, the symbolism of Britain as an island nation provided justification for the sensual stimulation of a building surrounded by water. \textit{(Fig. 2.70)} In his personal designs, Spence moved away from the blend of Constructivist forms and allusions to Scotland that typified Festival Style, towards the development of more abstract ideas. The Formalism that dominated his technique throughout his career—especially what has been described as rhythmical consistency—will be discussed in the last chapter of Book Four.

As I have demonstrated, the character of Festival Style was derived from the idea of exhibition design as the stimulus for practical architecture— to be sure Spence had produced so many designs for exhibitions by 1951 that he was considering emigrating to America where he could build something more permanent.\footnote{Basil Spence \textit{A Phoenix at Coventry} (pp.15)} Spence and Hardie Glover were both involved in exhibition design when they met and, not surprisingly, the Edinburgh office made something of a speciality of exhibition work. By the mid-1960s, when Spence was exploring newer idioms, the Edinburgh office continued to compose in the Festival Style. An interesting example is the Royal Highland Show-ground, Edinburgh, for which Spence, Glover and Ferguson held the contract from 1960-72. Here, the Constructivism of Stockholm in 1930 was recreated with the Judges Box (1965). The freedom of experimentation, that exhibitions encouraged, resulted in the rather industrial looking Herds Restaurant (1964), the Bandstand, and the Members’ Pavilion (1964), which evoke the pennant festooned gaiety of the South Bank in 1951. \textit{(Figs. 2.72a - 2.72d)}

Considering Spence and Matthew’s connection with the South Bank, and the pre-war work of Kininmonth and Spence, the character of the 1950s designs for the University now seem almost inevitable. And, the use of this idiom at Edinburgh had more meaning than elsewhere because the festival impulse had become part of civic
policy. The extension for the Royal Scottish Museum (1960), lying within the University/Cultural precinct was a further example of this civic impulse. Comprising a lecture theatre/cinema and cafeteria, it was a cultural asset to the city. The design, by Stewart Sim, demonstrates roots in Art Deco. And yet, while its contrast of mural expanse and a glass curtain has something of Coventry Cathedral about it, the faceted stonework and eccentrically shaped windows are extremely redolent of the architecture of Czech Cubism. {Fig. 2.73} Such eclecticism attracted puritan ridicule. But, was it not its liberalism of forms that invited attack?

In Edinburgh, "Festival" was not just a one-off event, but part of the plan for the rest of the century. This celebratory mode was engendered by the belief in cultural and social regeneration and equality, rather than triumphalism. How appropriate an architecture for Appleton's re-integrated University, in the heart of the regenerated city, a veritable exhibition of educational and social ideals.

The circle of architects that the Principal gathered around him - the Edinburgh School - responded to his aspirations for the University in a manner typical of the "New Elizabethans": with both optimism for the future and respect for tradition, and with the ideal of social justice as the post-war motivation. Such ideas reflect a period in history that now seems poised between post-war naivety and post-modern cynicism. In that respect, Appleton himself is represented quite accurately in the architecture, since he belonged to an almost extinct breed of scientist, who saw no conflict between the demands of technocracy and Christianity.

"I think that there are scientists sufficiently humble to realise that, as they disclose the wonders of nature's secrets, they are dealing with things which have been wonderful all the time - since Creation"

(Sir Edward Appleton)¹¹²

¹¹²An address to the Anglo-Swedish Society, quoted in (pp.171) R Clark Sir Edward Appleton Oxford 1971
Like the claims made for the New Brutalism that succeeded it, Festival Style was an ethic as well as an aesthetic. Consider Spence Glover & Ferguson’s Scottish Agricultural Industries Fertilizer Works, at Leith (1956-8). This was a serious piece of industrial concrete construction. Nevertheless, the interiors that housed administration and staff facilities alike were a perfect example of the Festival Style. *(Figs. 2.74a - 2.74c)* And, while it may not now be considered revolutionary, there appears to be something inherently democratic about a style that worked equally well for a workers' canteen as for a university union or staff club. A comparison of the S.A.I interiors with those of the Edinburgh University’s Women’s Union (1964), also by Spence Glover & Ferguson, demonstrates the style in such applications. *(Fig. 2.75)*

Appleton was certainly aware of both the social and artistic importance of the University's architecture.

"It is our intention to provide the best buildings, functionally and aesthetically, that our age can provide... We do not accept the argument that only the past can build well... We see no reason why at least some of the buildings in George Square should not be a monument to whatever is great and good in this age... And it is our hope that it will be said one day that Edinburgh was great in the eighteenth century, but also that it was not without men of vision and perseverance, and possibly even some taste, in the twentieth.

(Sir Edward Appleton 1956)\(^{113}\)

The first of the student halls of residence at Salisbury Green is representative of a new era in education, yet one strongly coloured by the past, and by the tradition of the ancient universities. The University Staff Club, now destroyed, was a

\(^{113}\)"The Principal’s Address to the University", 14 Dec. 1956.
-EUL Spec. Colls. EU DRT 95/002 Box 151
contemporary environment that spoke of the ideals of reintegration and the Geddesian principle of cross-fertilisation; a place where academics from all faculties and from different universities could meet. Adam House was homage to the city's greatest architect yet also a venue for the new International Festival, and it tells of the shared aspirations of City and University. Spence's campus perspectives similarly evoke the ethos of the time. And then, there is the University Chapel project, which remained permanently shelved yet, in its aspiration; a testimony to Appleton's faith.
Chapter One. The Geddes Inheritance

It is difficult to pinpoint the origin of the theory that universities function as incubators of society's future, although it had great currency in the postwar period.¹ Certainly, in the nineteenth century, the notion was gathering wide acceptance, as university reform measures began to be implemented throughout Europe. In Scotland, Sir Patrick Geddes had enthusiastically promoted the university cause, claiming that the universities had actually *made* Germany and that Scotland was falling behind the rest of Europe.² Geddes specifically called attention to the importance of the university environment as part of the overall educational experience and asserted that the social life, student societies and communal living constituted the environment in which society was incubated. Again, British universities, with the exception of Oxford and Cambridge, were identified as deficient in the creation of a suitable environment.

Geddes' social experiments with halls of residence and multi-disciplinary summer schools in Edinburgh were intended as an example of what universities should aspire to. His idea of bringing together of scholars of many different specialties was applauded by educational progressives. And, although the University establishment was slow to take up Geddes' ideas, the Town Council sponsored his Summer School, while other organisations set up student residences, in emulation of his example.

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¹ Cardinal Newman's *The Idea of a University*, 1852, was perennially influential and, indeed, it was reprinted in a popular format in 1959.
² *Scottish University Needs and Aims*. Patrick Geddes' closing address at University College Dundee, 1890.
Edinburgh's civic university ultimately had to embrace these ideas and it finally began to take control of the existing student hostels, in the 1920s.

Significantly, Geddes also linked his student residence schemes to the principle of regeneration of the decaying core of the historic Old Town of Edinburgh. In the "Neotechnic" future era that Geddes anticipated, universities would replace the Medieval Cathedral as the spiritual heart of the city. Here was a challenge to both civic and academic authorities that was to be frequently invoked in the twentieth century. The spiritual role of the University was clearly accepted by Sir Edward Appleton, who said:

"A University can discover and show society what its needs are. Its task is to discover - or perhaps uncover - the spiritual and intellectual needs of Society."

In the 1920s, Geddes and his architect son-in-law, Frank Mears, were engaged on a specific architectural project, founded upon theories of the catalytic role that a university could play in creating a new society. The wider influence of this aborted project is not easy to ascertain. However, considering Geddes' effect upon the planning and university movements, and Mears' influence in the city of Edinburgh, especially through the latter's work as a teacher in the School of Architecture, it is reasonable to assert considerable local influence, at least. The project in question was sponsored by the British Zionist movement, with the aim of setting up a Hebrew University at Jerusalem, then part of the British protectorate of Palestine. The political tribulations and ultimate failure of the scheme need not concern us here.

Neither should the architectural designs of Mears, which appear to have been an

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3"The University and the Community" speech at the Conference of University Rectors and Vice Chancellors, Cambridge 1955.
EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 151.
attempt to engage with an extinct Holy Land tradition, detract from the fact that the underlying theories acquired substantial currency. (Fig. 3.01) The essential proposition was that a new university could regenerate the region, in this case with consequences favourable to a proposed Zionist state.\(^4\) This assertion; that a 'community of scholars' - as Geddes described a university - functions as the intellectual dynamo bringing about social change, found no detractors and came to be regarded as a truism. Chaim Weizmann, who was to become Israel's first president, was a firm believer in the Hebrew University scheme and looked forward to seeing the complex of buildings rising upon Geddes' chosen site at Mount Scopus.

Such ideas may have won admirers in Britain, but in underdeveloped countries they garnered a following of almost religious intensity, since university education was seen as the way out of poverty and towards western affluence. In India in particular he was regarded as a sort of pedagogical prophet.\(^5\)

Geddes is rightly regarded as a Social Darwinist, for he instigated a biological analogy that could be applied both to town-planning and to the social function of university education. A hugely influential idea in his study of "Civics" was the metaphor of the city as an organism whose health had to be carefully maintained and regulated, with occasional operations, or "conservative surgery", as Geddes called it. Other writers have exhaustively dealt with his undoubted influence on town and country planning theory, in the first half of the twentieth century. His theories of town-planning, and, indeed, university planning have a particular significance in Edinburgh. In the most general sense, the recognition of the historical and social importance of the fabric of the Old Town led to many biologically inspired theories of regeneration. Geddes set an example by putting into practice some of these

\(^4\)In this respect, Geddes was perhaps unwittingly serving the interests of the British government, which could only benefit from unburdening itself of responsibilities in the region. Significantly, Geddes was awarded a Civil List pension in 1925, the same year as the inauguration of the university.

\(^5\) One of the most tangible outcomes of his campaigning was the plan that Geddes prepared during the First World War: The Proposed University for Central India at Indore (1918). -EUL Spec Colls.
theories, around the turn of the century, when he began redeveloping slum properties.

By the 1930s, the importance of maintaining a high proportion of the city-centre for residential purposes, and the desirability of restoring buildings of historic interest had become an integral part of town council policy, and it has always remained so. Also, Geddes’ assertion that the University functioned as a sort of nutrient, maintaining the vitality of the city-centre, became fairly widely accepted. Frank Mears’ city plan of 1931 was founded upon that proposition. Furthermore, the process of symbiosis, principally describing the co-existence of animal and plant cells for mutual benefit, became a working metaphor for co-operation between the University and City, or "Town and Gown", as Geddes described them. Here, it is not clear whether the University is analogous to animal or vegetable. The wider sociological inference - where Geddes typically leaps from the particular to the general - was that such a relationship should pertain between academia and society in general.

The many donations to university facilities by wealthy industrialists, in the inter-war period, seem to bear out the wider perception of mutual benefits. In fact, prior to the Second World War, Treasury grants for capital expenditure were rare, with universities dependent upon benefactions in order to finance new buildings. For example, a bequest by James Sanderson, of Galashiels, greatly benefited the engineering laboratories at Edinburgh, while Thomas Cowan made a substantial donation for halls of residence, in recognition of the part played by the student body in providing volunteer services at the docks, during the General Strike.6

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6The Sanderson Bequest provided £50,000 for Engineering at King's Buildings, while Cowan's donation led to the opening of a hall of residence in George Square. In addition, Alexander Grant provided £50,000 for the Grant Institute of Geology at King's Buildings. A donation of £20,000 by Mr. Pullar, of Bridge of Earn (1926) assisted the building of the Zoology building.

Exceptionally, Sir Thomas Holland made a special visit to London in 1937. Consequently, he succeeded in acquiring a Treasury grant of £15,000 towards the cost of the King's Buildings Common Room, on behalf of the University Union. (Letter from Holland to Ross-Smith (SRC) 27/1/37)

-EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Pt. I List D "Science Faculty"(various boxes)

-EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 Pt I "KB Common Room/Union".
In organising the internal layout of universities themselves, Geddes saw a parallel between genetic procreation and intellectual stimulation. In an era of accelerating specialisation, the polymath professor was anxious that academics should be like him and take a broad outlook by exchanging ideas and theories between different fields of studies. This "cross pollination" between disciplines, as he described it, was vital, in the same way that a good genetic mix is essential for a healthy organism. The planning of the prospective Hebrew University demonstrates how cross-pollination might be achieved. Although there was an element of symbolism in the forms chosen, the basic idea was that scholars of different disciplines could be physically brought together. In the Jerusalem plan (Fig. 3.02), building blocks representing different departments and faculties are arranged in such a way as to encourage individuals to permeate through the campus. There is something a little naive about this idea, that mere proximity will bring specialists in different fields together to their mutual benefit, and yet it cannot be totally refuted. In Scotland, where the tradition of generalist, as opposed to specialist, education was enjoying resurgence in the 1930s, this cannot but have struck resonant chords. Premature specialisation was still identified as a "peculiarly English problem" by the influential Albert Sloman, first principal of the University of Essex, in his Reith Lecture series A University in the Making in 1963.7

Chapter Two. Appleton's Ethos.

"For a University is a place of intellectual roads and bridges: it provides the student with opportunities for contact with other minds and other disciplines. Let me say here that I am thinking here particularly of the contact of student and student - contact which is

rendered easy and natural by club facilities, student societies and, above all, by life in a college or other halls of residence. For to my mind students educate one another as much as they are educated by their teachers."8

(Sir Edward Appleton)

Sir Edward’s view of the university experience as a sort of total immersion in an academic environment, with the university itself as essentially a hothouse for the breeding of intellectuals, is entirely consistent with that of Geddes. This was by no means an obscure or minority opinion. Appleton’s role as secretary of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), between 1939 and 1949, has already been mentioned in respect of his contribution to the Barlow Committee Report (1946). This recommended that the number of science graduates be doubled in order to provide the sort of workforce that the country needed.9 By virtue of Appleton’s DSIR post, and his consequent ex-officio membership of the University Grants Commission (UGC), he was influential in creating the formula for central government funding priorities for university building projects. Despite the enormous post-war demand upon national resources for even the most basic requirements, the UGC was extremely receptive to requests for funding for recreational and residential facilities. The thinking behind this was based upon the idea that the collegiate environment was the main factor in the high status and achievement, and the extremely low “wastage” of students at Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

9The Barlow Committee Report, Scientific Manpower, recommended that the number of science and technology graduates would have to be increased from 55,000 to 90,000, by 1955, if the country was to remain industrially competitive. Treasury commitment to the UGC, between 1957 and 1952, was only half of what was required to meet the Barlow recommendations of £40m for buildings and £10m for land. This still represented a 90% increase over pre-war capital grants. In the event, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Hugh Dalton, was only able to allocate £13m. -W.A.C.Stewart Higher Education in Post-war Britain , 1989.
This purely pragmatic incentive was tempered by a deeper sense of the value of education for its own sake and in the general interest of humanity. In the anxious social and political climate following the Second World War, the universities' role of incubator seems to have been regarded as a sort of imperative for the survival of civilisation itself. Even before the war, there was apprehension. Indeed, Sir Alfred Ewing, who served as Edinburgh's Principal from 1916-29, and who led the University's great inter-war expansion of science, had expressed similar concern over the ethical unpreparedness of man for the responsibilities that scientific discovery presented. He spoke of the "Sweeping pageant of discovery and invention" and asked: "Whither does this tremendous procession tend? What, after all, is its goal?"

Ewing's presidential address to the British Association in 1932 was cited by Sir Walter Moberly in his book The Crisis in the University (1949), in which the Christian ethical foundation for the post-war universities was explored.

The ethical and pragmatic factors combined might validly be thought of as the spiritual architecture of a university. With the University as client, here represented primarily by Appleton, the professional architects were directed towards the attainment of certain goals. It must be said, however, that the professional architect does much of the translation of the client's goals into an achievable architectural form. In this section of the thesis, I intend to explore the efforts to create an environment at Edinburgh that would address the spiritual and intellectual needs of society.

Chapter Three. Pollock's University.

Sir Donald Pollock (1868-1962) was neither architect nor planner, but he had designs for the University, and his ambitions had a considerable effect on what came to be built. Pollock also appears to have inherited certain aspects of the Geddesian

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10 Pollock graduated in Science, at Glasgow, and Medicine, at Edinburgh. During his early medical career he designed equipment for X-ray treatment. Later, he devised a method for liquid oxygen.
vision. Notions such as self-governing communities of scholars, and the idea of the University as the intellectual hub of the city appear to have been integral to Pollock's plans. Also, Geddes' principle of conservative surgery of the urban fabric, which favoured rehabilitation over demolition and retention of old street and building lines as the palimpsest of the city's evolution, appears to have been thoroughly absorbed.

From the mid 1930s until his death in 1962, Sir Donald played a peculiar role in the affairs of the University and he attempted to steer it along an alternative route to that chosen by the University Court. His avowed intentions were fundamentally similar to official policy, however, his perception of how the interests of the University would be best served resulted in a phantom vision that was at best parallel to Appleton's; while, at worst, it was plainly obstructive. For, while Appleton had to concern himself with every aspect of improving and expanding the University, Pollock was able to pursue narrowly what he felt was important, in the manner and scale that he believed appropriate, without regard to academic requirements or the demands of governments. Pollock's aims appear to have been rather partisan. Apart from an interest in the Sea Scouts movement and vacation schemes for missionaries, he seems to have had little interest beyond the confines of the University in his adopted city. Of course, he may have rather taken it for granted that his projects for Edinburgh students would have far-reaching consequences as these young people made their way in the world. That said, his donation of property and money was to prove extremely advantageous to the University in the long run.

Another similarity Pollock bore to Geddes was in the utter conviction that he was always right. This self-assurance was bolstered by great wealth. However, as he

production. The greater part of his fortune was made in salvaging the German Fleet scuttled at Scapa Flow, with the breaking done at Charlestown in Fife. In 1935, he founded Metal Industries LTD, which later became the British Oxygen Company. Unmarried, he devoted considerable energy to youth movements, such as the Sea Scouts (Forth), and he sat on the board of the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland.
attempted to direct the proceedings of the post-war development of the University, he met with only partial success.

As assessor to University Rector Lord Allenby in 1935, Sir Donald is credited with quelling student unrest. He clearly regarded the University's lack of corporate identity as a matter serious enough for him to devote a large part of his personal fortune to remedying it. He prescribed that there should be an increase in halls of residence, facilities for athletics and physical training, greater provision for clubs and societies, and a headquarters for the Students’ Representative Council.\(^{11}\)

Considering the political and economic climate at the time, the aim of corporate identity might be thought of as ensuring high morale and guarding against a malaise in the university incubator. Revolution, Communism and the collapse of Christianity were the afflictions that it appeared might easily occur in the nation's universities, if reform and improvement was not forthcoming.

In 1936, Pollock set up a trust for religious and charitable purposes, which he endowed with £250,000. The University was to benefit from a third of the resources of the trust.

Taking matters immediately into his own hands, he used the funds to acquire the United Edinburgh Brewery premises, in the Pleasance, and converted it into a gymnasium. This he gifted to the University in 1938. His subsequent popularity with the students won him two terms as rector, in 1939-42 and 1942-45. During the war he set up a company, St. Leonard's Heritable Trust, to conceal his activities as he began acquiring property in the so called "island site" between Marshall Street, Lothian Street and Bristo Street, with the aim of turning the site into a centre of

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\(^{11}\)Pollock was assessor to rector, Lord Allenby, in 1935, when there was student unrest and "pandemonium in the McEwan Hall". Pollock apparently placated the malcontents. He was persuaded to stand for the post of rector, losing to Sir Herbert Grierson (1936), but continued to serve as assessor. According to Sir David Wilkie, Pollock "saved us from disaster and produced a different feeling and atmosphere amongst the student body" (12/11/36).
Statement by Donald Pollock, November 1944.
-EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 135 "Pollock Trust".
extra-curricular student activity. The land and buildings at the Salisbury Green estate were acquired and money was also set aside for land on the outskirts of town, at Peffermill, to be acquired for playing fields.

As we saw in Book One, the "island site" itself formed a prospective link between the Medical School and Old College and it was within shouting distance of the University Union, as well as being extremely close to the existing student hostels of George Square. In the centre of the site was a redundant Methodist church that Sir Donald gifted to the University, just before the war, as a place for non-denominational religious meetings and debate. {Fig. 3.03} This was named the Pollock Memorial Hall, ostensibly in memory of Sir Donald's parents: a Free Church minister and his wife, from Galashiels. He also persuaded the University Court to use the J.M.Barrie bequest to acquire another redundant church there, for conversion into a theatre, for student productions. The latter property was placed under the control of the Pollock Trust, which expressly restricted the site to non-academic student (and staff) amenities. The Pollock Trust Development Committee (PTDC), ostensibly a sub-committee of the University Court, was set up in recognition of Pollock's donations, with the raison d'être of making recommendations on student welfare.

Sir Donald had originally intended to undertake all the necessary work and expense in creating student facilities, on the "island site" and at Salisbury Green himself, and to present the finished result to the University. But, for reasons of tax advantage, he made the property over to the University in 1943. This was a decision that he must have later bitterly regretted, as it allowed his control to eventually be

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12Interestingly, Pollock was ahead of his time in seeking to create a source of income for the University from commercial sources. The bulk of the "island site" was residential with shops at street level and he wished to retain most of the shops as a source of rental income while the flats would provide an income until such time as they were needed for conversion into student amenities. Other properties at Salisbury Green were to provide an income, including a market garden which he proposed might ultimately be run by students to provide their own food.

13Sir Donald Pollock, letter of 22/4/43, regarding his trust.

-EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 147 "Public Inquiry Report"
usurped. He was aware of the proposal of Professor Oliver to redevelop George Square, and it is likely he felt that his student amenity project would form an effective barrier to development of academic buildings, between George Square and Old College. Pollock was acquainted with Frank Mears, preferring his 1931 proposals to any of the University's. In fact, Pollock's idea of a University precinct was more conservative of the existing urban fabric than Mears', as the latter suggested obliterating most of the streets between George Square and Old College. {Figs. 1.09 & 1.04} However, Mears' proposal for development to the east of Old College, with the preservation of George Square as a residential enclave, including retention of the student hostels there, suited Pollock's aims. Indeed, Pollock sat on the City's advisory group, the Clyde Committee (1943), that recommended co-operation between the City and University, and a pooling of sites to allow development of a re-integrated university within a coherent scheme. In this report, George Square was specifically mentioned as "an architectural gem" worthy of special protection.\(^{14}\) Despite this statement, and the Pollock gift of the "Island Site", the University adopted Professor Oliver's master plan, which entailed complete destruction of the square.

In his defence of the square against redevelopment, in 1947, Pollock felt obliged to publicly oppose the University, but there were split loyalties and he did not wholeheartedly align himself with the factions hostile to the University scheme.\(^{15}\) There was no backing from Mears either, since the architect felt it unprofessional to comment on the designs of another architect; in this case Charles Holden. Pollock lacked the political power to stop the George Square project and, unlike those factions, he knew it. When Appleton became Principal, Pollock appears to have conceded defeat, on this point at least.

\(^{14}\) The Clyde Report i.e. Report of the Advisory Committee on City Development 1943. J.L.Clyde K.C. (chairman), Sir Thomas B Whitson LLD & Sir J.Donald Pollock (Bart)

\(^{15}\) Pollock's public objections to the George Square redevelopment were recorded in The Evening Dispatch 29/5/47 and in The Scotsman 19/7/47.
Nevertheless, the restrictions on usage of the "island site", by the terms of the trust, affected University development in the city-centre, and these terms virtually guaranteed that this specific sector should become a centre for student amenities. Pollock was outraged when the first of the official university schemes, the Holden Plan (1947), appeared to require demolition of all the old buildings there. It was necessary for the acting principal, Sir Sydney Smith, to assure the University's benefactor that this aspect of Holden's scheme was not a practical necessity, but that it was more a device to ensure appropriate zoning of the whole site. Earlier, Smith had come under attack from Pollock for allowing the Pollock Memorial Hall to be used for lectures, as this was a breach of the terms of the trust.\textsuperscript{16} The PTDC was supposed to be an advisory committee to the University Court, but the Court found itself in the position of having to ask Pollock's consent for any activity on the "Island Site".\textsuperscript{17} It was only with great difficulty that permission was received for a temporary laboratory on land under PTDC control. It is probably no coincidence that the late Principal, Sir John Fraser, collapsed and died immediately after a fraught meeting with the obstinate benefactor, in 1947.

In 1946, the Pollock Memorial Hall was already considered to be something of a burden, in terms of maintenance, especially since it was never used for the purposes for which it was intended. Professor Oliver appears to have been eager to demonstrate that it was structurally unsound, although Sir Donald vigorously contested the evidence.\textsuperscript{18} Pollock felt that the majority of the properties on the island site were worthy of retention This was partly in the interests of conserving what he felt was old Scots architecture, but also because he believed that it was cheaper to

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\textsuperscript{16} Correspondence between Pollock and Sidney Smith, January 1948
-EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 135 "Pollock Trust"
\textsuperscript{17} Pollock's statement to the University Court claimed that his permission had to be obtained for any development. 16/3/46. In January 1947, the Trust reluctantly gave consent for the Barrie Theatre to be used for exams.
University Court Signed Minutes Vol. XIX
\textsuperscript{18} 16 March 1946: Pollock declared that the building was not unsafe. October 1946: "tell-tales" attached to the building by Oliver appeared to prove otherwise.
University Court Signed Minutes Vol. XIX
convert than to demolish and build anew. This was all in the spirit of Geddes' theory of performing conservative surgery on the fabric of the Old Town, with buildings renovated and converted to new uses. Of course, even if Pollock was correct, in respect of the architectural value of the buildings and the economics of conversion, this does not mean that conversion offered the most desirable facilities. The Pollock Hall, replete with gallery, might have been well-designed in terms of a Methodist meeting house, but it could never have been satisfactory for any function other than preaching to a large congregation, unless the interior was entirely gutted and new floors and apartments inserted within the external walls. To do this properly would have entailed a major expense, whereas Pollock preferred to make thrifty conversions using salvaged materials.

The Lothian Street tenements were certainly substantially built examples of the type, as the surviving buildings on the north side demonstrate. If it had been intended that these should function according to their original design, as domestic dwellings, they could have been rehabilitated, given the will and the finance. But the type of facilities required: refectories, cafeterias, health clinics, dance halls etc. were not so simply accommodated within a tenement block.

Under the austere conditions of the economic depression and the war that followed, the "make do and mend" principle was accepted by most. However, the University had audacious ambitions to take its place amongst the leading universities of a new era and its facilities had to be first-class. In short, if such an ad-hoc arrangement of converted buildings was not to be considered good enough for Oxford and Cambridge students, then it was not good enough for Edinburgh students.

Over and above the economics and the desirability of conversion and reconstruction, the fact remained that the area had developed on an piecemeal basis, as determined by medieval land ownership and later feus, and it was criss-crossed by
Chapter Four. The Christian Incubator.

The moral imperatives underlying the post-war university expansion had triple advocacy. A small but influential aspect was essentially Marxist, while a larger, and more respected, cadre of reformers styled themselves Humanist. But, by far the largest reforming body in the academic world was Christian. Indeed, the UGC in the period should be thought of as an essentially Christian organisation. Appleton also considered himself Christian, while Sir Donald Pollock's gifts to the University were avowedly inspired by Christian motives. Under those circumstances, one would expect that some of the new architecture at Edinburgh to be designed for explicitly religious purposes.

As it happened, the University was forced to shelve its Chapel project when Pollock assailed Basil Spence's development plan of 1955 for the assumption that demolition on the "island site" was possible. The chapel design itself, as an example of Festival Style, was discussed in Part Two, however, some further observations on the controversy surrounding it, and on how the site might have been developed in terms of the university environment, are worth making here. The University's first chaplain, Rev. David Read, officially proposed a Chapel to the UDC in March 1954, just before Spence's appointment. The Chapel was initially considered important enough have a claim to a site in George Square. Both the Mears and Holden schemes had included a Chapel, as a matter of course. Holden proposed a site to the north of the Medical School, but Spence chose precisely the site favoured by Mears, on the north side of west Marshall Street. As was observed in Book One, Mears desired to

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19 Influential Christians involved in the national expansion project included Sir Walter Moberley, chairman of the UGC (1934-49) and author of *The Crisis in the University* (1949), W.R. Niblett, Dean of the Institute of Education at the University of London and author of *The Expanding University* (1962). Niblet's report was of a conference of predominantly Christian university personnel.
create a new street layout in this area, while Spence wanted to take advantage of the existing road system to make the Chapel a prominent element of several routes into the University precinct.

As planning consultant, Spence reversed several of Holden's propositions, and his 1956 model shows the street layout between George Square and Old College retained. Here, a vertical feature represented the campanile of the Chapel, with buildings that we must assume were intended to contain student amenity buildings standing closely behind. [Fig. 1.26] Spence was extremely enthusiastic about the Chapel, which would clearly have been the dominating feature of this sector.²⁰ Given the existing street layout, and the dominance of the proposed Chapel, very little in the way of other amenities could have been comfortably fitted on the "island site". Of course, it may already have been assumed that the land immediately to the south, i.e. the two triangular blocks between Marshall Street and Crichton Street, could be allocated to such purposes, since the whole area had been zoned for educational purposes in the city development plan of 1949. It was probably the lack of certainty over this matter that led Spence to leave this ground vacant in his model, although it was expected that the properties would be acquired and demolished by the City on behalf of the University.

The concept of a fairly large religious building as a key element of the student environment is revealing. At this time, Edinburgh was the only Scottish University without a Chapel, and Chaplain Read's successor, taking up the cause, began actively canvassing to redress the deficiency.²¹ He rejected as unsuitable the New North Church, in Forrest Road, and the Tron Kirk, in the High Street. In his report to the

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²⁰Spence was apparently "extremely keen" to build the Chapel.
-Interview with Marie Stewart, Feb. 2001.

²¹Note that Adam's original College design had a chapel in the linking building which was to subdivide the quadrangle. This was omitted when Playfair rationalised the plan. Traditionally, the University had used Greyfriar's Kirk for its religious purposes.
University Court, the Chaplain proposed a site opposite the Student Union, and
voiced the opinion that an appeal fund for this purpose was viable in the prevailing
climate.

"There is increasing sympathy towards any movement of a religious
nature in this generation".\textsuperscript{22}

Such optimism and enthusiasm for a new religious building is characteristic of the
period that produced Coventry Cathedral, and which still saw a place for worship
within university life. In retrospect, the post-war period might be seen as one of the
closing chapters of the Christian era, or, at least, the last of many waves of church-
building in Britain. In some senses, a building symbolising the spiritual aspect of life
was entirely appropriate within the University precinct since it was intended this
should be the "heart of the city", taking over the role played by the cathedral in the
life of the Middle Ages.

As Spence saw it:

"It is traditional to mark the importance of Christian faith in the life of
Scottish Universities by means of a chapel in an important position - as for
example at St. Andrew's, Aberdeen, and Glasgow. The site chosen occupies a
key position between George Square and Old College and is integrated
within the student centre. The tower will provide a focal point for roads into
the area"\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{22}Chaplain's report to Court - Minutes of the University Court vol.XXII June 1956.
The Chapel Appeal Committee was constituted in July 1956. The suggested membership was: The
Principal (as convenor), the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, the University Rector, the Chaplain, The
Secretary, Professor Talbot-Rice, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Episcopal Bishop of
Edinburgh, and Sir Donald Pollock.
- University Court minutes vol. XXII July 1956.
\textsuperscript{23}Basil Spence "Reasons for siting of the proposed chapel", 28/2/57.
Spence was particularly familiar with the chapel at St. Andrew's, since he had been employed by the architect, Reginald Fairlie, to prepare perspectives for it, although it certainly did not serve as a model for the Edinburgh Chapel. Without wishing to cast any doubt on Spence's sincerity as a Christian, it is likely the architectural task was the key challenge for him. The new cathedral at Coventry, together with a spate of publicly funded replacements for war-damaged churches, might have suggested to the architect that a religious revival was at hand. However, the second Chaplain, Rev. James C Blackie, is the more likely of the two to have been inspired by such enthusiasm and optimism, being newly appointed and, no doubt, filled with fervour. His shabby office in the Pollock Memorial Hall may have provided some incitement too. Appleton obviously approved of the Christian spiritual content within the University, as he supported the creation of the post of chaplain soon after he arrived in Edinburgh.

Had the Chapel project proceeded, then it is likely that Spence would have been given the commission for other buildings on the site, as they would clearly have to complement it. One can only speculate as to what the architect might have achieved here at what he regarded as the entrance to the new campus. In the case of the University of Sussex, Spence later created the memorable Falmer House as an entrance feature and community centre, using his trademark concrete segmental vaults. The latter is a quadrangular arrangement housing refectories and serves as a conduit through which one passes upon entering the campus. Given Spence's abilities, it is conceivable that a memorable ensemble of Chapel and Refectory might have been achieved on the "island site". But, such a combination might have produced a rather oppressively ecclesiastical tone, and it is unlikely that there would have been sufficient space for such things as society rooms, shops and theatre.

Pollock saw no need whatsoever for a new chapel. He considered the Pollock Memorial Hall to be the chapel, as he had intended it for non-denominational worship and other religious uses. He envisaged this as the centre-piece of a student
amenity area, together with the Barrie Theatre, and the old tenement, Seceder's Land, which was to be converted into a postgraduate club. {Fig. 3.04}

Perhaps the religious enthusiasm of all the parties was misplaced, since the Pollock Hall had not seen any sort of religious use since 1939. At the same time, the Barrie Theatre had become redundant in 1955, with the opening of Adam House, which provided a more convenient and comfortable setting for student drama in its purpose-built basement theatre. The suitability of these buildings for University use had frequently been questioned, as had their structural condition. In 1946, Pollock had vigorously rejected allegations that his Memorial Hall was in any way defective although Professor Oliver's glass "tell-tales" seemed to indicate otherwise.24

The University sought the opinion of the City Engineer on the structural aspects, while Appleton took up the matter of the Chapel with Pollock personally. But Sir Donald was intractable. It may seem that Appleton was naïve of in expecting Pollock to support the scheme, and to sit on the Chapel Appeal Committee, but one of the aims of his charitable trust was to support religious activity at the University. Pollock, however, was completely hostile to the project, declaring (ironically) that this would disrupt his plans.

Apart from the loss of his buildings, which he completely opposed, Pollock was hostile to the idea of a chapel wherever it might be sited. This may have been due to his own non-conformist background, as the son of a minister in the United Presbyterian Church. For, while the Pollock Hall was specifically intended for non-denominational use, the new Chapel, under the care of the University Chaplain, would necessarily have been under the control of the established Church of Scotland.

Pollock had previously warned that if there was any breach of the terms of his Trust, then it would become void, with all assets passing to the Vacation Residences

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24On 14 March 1946 Pollock declared that the building was not defective. 24 October 1946 Oliver apparently presented evidence to the contrary.
- University Court Signed Minutes vol XIX March 1946.
It must be said that glass "tell-tales" are easily sabotaged to give the impression of subsidence!
for Missionaries charity. That outcome would have proved extremely debilitating for the University, since it would have lost possession of the "island site", as well as the Pleasance Gymnasium and the Salisbury Green site.

Spence responded by offering to move the Chapel slightly, so as to avoid the Pollock Hall, and to reconstruct Seceder's Land elsewhere in the Buccleuch Street area, as a sort of gate-lodge for the precinct, but it was to no avail. Rather than proceed with an unsuitable site, the appeal committee decided to postpone the project - presumably until such time as Pollock should cease to be an obstacle.

The revised University development plan, of 1959, diplomatically avoided any formal proposals for the "island site". Considering Sir Donald's advanced years, it was probably felt that time was on the University's side. However, the final chapter in the saga occurred when Percy Johnson-Marshall produced his revised development scheme shortly after Pollock's death, in 1962. The University Chapel was rejected out of hand by the planner without a murmur of disapproval from within the University. The spiritual climate had clearly changed since 1956. In the interim, the Reverend Blackie had been forced to accept the New North Church, in Forrest Road, as a Chaplaincy.

As W.R.Niblet observed in 1961:

".... The symbolic centre of a new university is far more likely to be the administrative headquarters or the students' union than, say, a chapel."

And so it seemed, for the site of Spence's proposed Chapel is today occupied by the Students' Centre, although there is a small Chaplaincy Centre within.

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- EUL Spec. Colls. DRT 95/002 Box 135.
26 Principal's notes on a meeting with Pollock
Chapter Five. The Community of Scholars:

Salisbury Green/Pollock Halls of Residence

Sir Donald Pollock also inherited the Geddes innovation of self-governing student residences. It was for this purpose that he acquired two Victorian mansions, Salisbury Green and St. Leonard's House, with a third, Abden House, to be used as the Principal's residence. (Figs. 3.05-3.06) These houses were located in what Pollock justifiably referred to as "a magnificent setting" on the boundary of a royal park, surrounding the Palace of Holyrood House, with a rugged volcanic mass providing a picturesque backdrop. Although close to the city-centre, it had a rural character and formed part of a green swathe that still included farmland. This parcel of land, 22 acres in all, clearly excited the University authorities with its development potential. Knowing well his duty, Appleton did not shirk the inevitable struggle that lay ahead in realising the potential of the site. He may even have discussed the matter with Kininmonth soon after he first saw the Salisbury Green site; for within weeks of the new principal's arrival, the architect was sketching plans for a scheme to house 600 students. The University Court accepted this scheme, and Kininmonth was given the commission the following year (1950). Appleton clearly wanted to have all the plans ready in order to obtain a government grant as soon as the national moratorium on major building projects ended in 1955. For as long as he was able, Pollock opposed the scale, form and ethos of the proposed Salisbury Green project. But, no one could have been in a better position than Appleton to understand the demands for expansion about to be placed upon the University, and he tirelessly pursued his goal.

Whatever the individuals concerned felt about the general principle of self government for student halls, it was not part of government policy, UGC grants would not have supported any such scheme, and therefore it would have necessarily been small in scale and subsidised by private funds. Few, apart from Sir Donald, were much taken with the idea of students being lodged in old converted buildings,
except under extreme necessity. University Secretary, Charles Stewart, was perfectly well aware of the standards that were required. He remarked:

"The naturally frugal nature of Sir Donald and his almost uncontrollable desire to acquire and restore old and badly neglected houses and other edifices, brought him into conflict with other authorities in the University and the Town, with the result that not all of his proposals were susceptible of implementation."  

Kininmonth was prepared to faithfully follow the instructions of the University Court and, like other architects of his generation, having little regard for Victorian architecture, he looked forward to the ultimate demolition of both St. Leonard's House and Salisbury Green. Kininmonth's original designs for the halls at Salisbury Green were discussed in Book Two. However, the events leading up to the commencement of the development reveal a three-way conflict of ideas.

Chapter Six. The Battle for Salisbury Green

Pollock felt that the development proposal amounted to a "grandiose" and gross over-development of the site and that it was not in keeping with the terms of his trust. The PTDC, however, was prepared to extend the existing halls to house a maximum of 100 men and 100 women. The presence, in Kininmonth's plan, of a large number of male students close to the women's residence at St. Leonard's Hall was also regarded as "undesirable". That particular objection might be thought of as a curiosity of the era that demanded separation of the sexes. However, since there

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29 Letter from Col. Hardie (PTDC) to Charles Stewart 23/12/49. The Pollock Trust also suggested residences for 50-100 women in an extended St. Leonard's Hall and a similar number of places for men at Salisbury Green. 
-EUL Spec. Colls. DRT 95/007 Box 28 ("Halls of Residence-Salisbury Green 1943-54").
were already male students at the old house of Salisbury Green, which is only two or three minutes walk from the women's residence at St. Leonard's Hall, Pollock's grasp of the dynamics of sexuality was scarcely credible. In order for this to be considered a valid objection, moral corruption of students would have to be directly related to the actual proportion of males to females and it would also have to be accepted that a two-minute walk would be sufficient to deter inpropriety. Of course, Pollock was desperate to find ways of blocking the project and even privately commissioned Sir Frank Mears to draft an alternative scheme in 1950. The University warned Mears that the contract was a private matter between himself and Pollock. Mears submitted his scheme to the PWDC but made it clear that, rather than being his ideal scheme, it was simply what Sir Donald wanted.

Between 1949 and 1954, Pollock managed to avoid finalising any agreement. Of course, a delay in providing new residences might conceivably have undermined progress of the George Square development. And, it seems likely that is precisely what Pollock wanted. It was only after the whole future of university halls at Salisbury Green appeared under threat that he began to accept the inevitable.

In Abercrombie's 1949 city development plan, the site was part of a larger area zoned for residential development at 150 persons per acre. Residential zoning was no obstacle to the University's plans, but its scheme was for only 40-50 persons per acre. The idea, or perhaps rumour, emerged that, since the site would be underpopulated when fully developed by the University, the City Council might decide that some of the land at Salisbury Green site should be developed for public housing. If it was judged necessary, the local authority had the power to obtain a compulsory

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30 Letter from C.H.Stewart to Sir Frank Mears (28/6/50) warning that the University Court had already approved Kininmonth's outline plan. EUL Spec. Colls. DRT 95/007 Box 28 "Halls of Residence-Salisbury Green 1943-54".
In the Spring of 2000, Mr. Crawford, of Sir Frank Mears Associates, recalled seeing a file on the Salisbury Green site, but it has not yet been possible to locate it.
31 Minutes of the PTDC 15 Nov. 1950. Pollock was absent from the meeting when Mears' Salisbury Green plan was submitted. The drawing is not located with the minutes of the meeting, however. EUL Spec. Colls. DRT 95/007 Box 28 "Halls of Residence"
purchase order from the Secretary of State. Pollock regarded the prospect of council housing on, or even near, his site as: "Too horrible to contemplate" Under pressure of this threat, he gradually began to back down from his position of outright opposition to development.32

Charles Stewart and Kininmonth, together with a solicitor representing Pollock, appeared at the Public Inquiry of 1954 to put forward the University's case and appeal for the statutory zoning to be reduced to 50 persons per acre.33 Pollock argued that it was dangerous to interfere with the intentions of trust funds, as this might undermine the concept of benefaction, by creating a precedent. Naturally, Pollock's advocate made no representation of his disagreement with the University over the development of the site.

Kininmonth presented his opinion on the best usage of the site, in terms of building height, accommodation, and recreation space. Charles Stewart was able to present himself as something of an expert on university halls, having served as a warden when he was Assistant Registrar at the University of Liverpool (1946-8). In his Reith Lecture of 1963, Albert Sloman described Stewart as:

"The most dynamic and enlightened of wardens".34

Stewart easily countered accusations of elitism and exclusivity by expressing the ethos behind the project in terms of the emerging consensus on meritocracy.

"Since the introduction of grants by local authorities, large numbers of students come from homes which cannot provide the atmosphere of books

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32 Letter from Pollock to Appleton 16/5/53. EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 153 ("Pollock Trust").
33 After an initial approach by the University, the City had reduced the suggested density from 150 to 75 persons per acre. But this would theoretically have allowed the Corporation to obtain 5 acres of the land to house 700 persons at 140 per acre.
34 Albert E Sloman A University in the Making. (The BBC Reith Lectures) 1963. Sloman was the first Principal of the new University of Essex.
and culture and it is desirable for people from relatively humble homes to have the opportunity to live completely within academic society.”

As if to impress the city authorities with his power and influence, Appleton wrote to the Lord Provost pointing out that the University Chancellor, Prince Philip, was: "Very keen to see the halls of residence built".

The University won its case, which is hardly surprising, considering that the Secretary of State had the final say in the matter, but there is no evidence that the Corporation ever genuinely intended to deprive the University of any land. Instead, it seems, that there was something of a panic reaction at the zoning densities in the city development plan, which were interpreted by the University as a prerequisite to compulsory purchase. The Corporation’s argument, at the Public Inquiry, was simply that 50 per acre was too low a density for the economic use of the land, of which the Salisbury Green estate was just a part. In later years, the University was forced to concede that this was indeed the case, when it was required to develop the site further to accommodate more students.

It might be going too far to suggest that the zoning appeal at the Public Inquiry was a ruse by Appleton and his supporters in the City to frighten Pollock into submission. Nevertheless, it was rather convenient, for, by the end of the affair, Pollock accepted that if the University did not develop the site, then someone else might. He could not accept Kininmonth's development plan as it was, however. Appleton felt that Pollock could not agree with anything that was not his own idea. He made it clear to those in the City sympathetic to the University that Sir Donald had delayed progress of the halls scheme for five years by what he described as

36 Letter from Appleton to the Lord Provost, January 1954. EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 pt 1 Box 148 VE.
"unconstitutional behaviour" in regard to his Pollock Trust Development Committee. The Committee rarely met and Pollock took all the decisions without referring to the University Court, of which the PTDC was merely a sub-committee. After the Public Inquiry, Appleton would brook no further deference to Pollock.

In May 1954, the University Court took the decision to proceed with development as soon as possible. With Appleton in the chair, the PTDC was no further obstacle, and Pollock himself stopped attending the meetings. At the meeting in June 1954, Mears' alternative plan for Salisbury Green was swept off the table, and committee member Councillor Mathieson, who had been appraised of the situation by Appleton, helpfully declared that the city would not tolerate lack of development on the site forever. At this stage, Colonel Hardie, a member of the trust and Pollock's confidante, had apparently softened to Kininmonth's scheme and to the urgency of the University's needs. Kininmonth, for his part, demonstrated that he was open to constructive ideas from the PTDC. Pollock loathed the strict rigour of the quadrangle plan, and Hardie, suggested relieving the strict symmetry of the layout. The architect found this interesting and responded by bending the north-south axis in a subtle effect and this was incorporated into the plan. But, at the same time, Kininmonth also recommended that it would be desirable to demolish Salisbury Green Hall in order to clear the site.

These were not the only obstacles that had to be overcome, since funding for the project also had to be obtained. In order to get treasury funding, the UGC had to approve a phased building programme. The proposed first phase was for one of a

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38 Notes for the Principal for the meeting of the PTDC, 4 June 1954. Letter from Appleton to Councillor Mathieson (the Corporation's Assessor to the University Court), 30 October 1952 - EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 13
39 A letter from Kininmonth to Stewart (21/6/54) tells of an informal meeting with Pollock and Colonel Hardie where the architect presented a model and 12 alternative outline plans. He also considered that demolition of Salisbury would have to be handled delicately, but that Hardie himself was unlikely to be an obstacle.
40 Letter from Kininmonth to Hardie 19/6/54 - EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 Box 28 ("Halls of Residence-Salisbury Green 1943-54").
pair of halls for 150 students, with a refectory for 300. The next hall would form the second phase to complete development on the south side of the central avenue. By 1954, however, the UGC had misgivings about the scheme as it stood. The cost per student was too high and it sought a reduction. Grant-aided buildings had to be built in usable stages, but this scheme did not lend itself to staging. The proposed residential units were also considered rather too large from a social point of view, as Pollock had asserted.

But Appleton possessed a rare gift, for despite his great eminence and dignity, he was still able to beg. He pleaded with the UGC chairman, Sir Keith Murray, for help over the funding. Half the £42,000 figure for the refectory could be considered as part of the second phase, he argued, since both halls shared a refectory. If absolutely necessary, the room size could be reduced, to cut the cost per head. Edinburgh was clearly never going to be an entirely residential university, but with 2000 additional students expected by 1970, this was the time to begin making serious provision. Kininmonth was asked to examine possible cost-cutting expedients. However, it appears that the University Court was determined to maintain a high standard of architecture and accommodation. It decided against certain cost-cutting measures such as: reducing ceiling heights or the roof pitch, dispensing with the copper roof cladding, abandoning the balconies, or reducing the height of either the courtyard arches or the height of the refectory.41

Some within the University Development Committee were perplexed that the ultimate loss of 260 places caused by the redevelopment of George Square would account for most of the accommodation in the first hall at Salisbury Green and this undermined the University's case.42

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41In May 1956, it was resolved not to reduce the height of the buildings, nor to abandon the copper roofs or alter the roof pitch. Neither was it accepted that the refectory roof or the courtyard arches should be lowered. The balconies in the corridor blocks were to be kept too, although it was agreed to omit these from the stair towers to allow extra bedrooms. University Court Minutes. vol. XXII May 1956
It was not as if Murray needed to be won over to the principle of the project. The higher performance and lower "wastage" of students at Oxford had already convinced him of the educational benefits of student residences. The "nine to five mentality" was the enemy of university education, as far as he was concerned. He firmly believed the theory that the study day could be effectively lengthened if a "hot house environment" of refectories and other facilities for extra curricular activities was provided. Like his predecessor, Sir Walter Moberly, he later quoted from J.S.Mill's lecture on the object of university education as the creation of capable and cultivated human beings.

".... Men are men before they are lawyers or physicians or manufacturers; and if you make them capable and sensible men, they will make themselves capable and sensible lawyers or physicians".43

Murray, like Moberly, believed that the future of society was the responsibility of the universities. In fact, the UGC under Murray claimed that the three most important of society's activities were higher education, advancement of learning and research.44 In response to Appleton's plea, Murray gave unofficial and confidential permission to proceed with the first phase of the scheme to commence in 1956.45 The first phase, Holland House and the Refectory, opened in 1960, with the second hall completed three years later. After amendment, the second phase, Fraser House, accommodated 215 students, with 7 residential staff and a warden. The increased capacity over Holland House, which itself necessitated an extension to the existing kitchen, was achieved by using a smaller building module, incorporating a semi-

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43 J.S.Mill "Inaugural Address to the Students of St. Andrew's University". Quoted in Sir Walter Moberly The Crisis in the University. London 1949. Moberly was at that time chairman of the UGC.
45 Appleton's intimation to this effect is in the Minutes of Meeting of the PTDC 4/6/54. EUL Spec. Colls. DRT 95/002 Box 135 (Pollock Trust).
basement and smaller bedrooms. Some economies on the form and detailing of the loggias were also made.

Chapter Seven. The New Students' Centre: Mass-Produced Higher Education.

In 1960, despite Pollock's opposition, the University demonstrated its resolve to ultimately clear the "island site" and create new facilities for students. On Matthew's recommendation, Morris and Steedman were appointed as architects for the job. This was a somewhat surprising choice, for although the young practice had received some acclaim for its innovative designs, these had so far been exclusively in the field of domestic architecture, such as the highly regarded Avisfield, at Cramond. However, Matthew told Jim Morris at the time that he recommended them because he and Steedman were young enough to see the project through to its conclusion. On this occasion, even Matthew may have underestimated the time scale.

Percy Johnson-Marshall dictated the building layout and volumes, since it had to conform to the proposals for his Comprehensive Development Area. For this to be achieved, the old street layout between Lothian Street and Crichton street had to be obliterated. The Students' Centre buildings were to be erected in phases in such a way as to form the enclosure on the north and east sides of Johnson-Marshall's proposed new Bristo Square in front of the ceremonial building, the McEwan Hall. It was also intended to have these buildings link up with the podium of the Appleton Tower to the south. In typical CDA fashion, the main pedestrian circulation was to be at first floor level, except where it steps down to the level of the new pedestrian square.

Since grants for amenities depended upon the number of student places provided, and since this depended upon provision of residences and academic buildings, it was

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46Interview with Jim Morris (August 1998). The fact that both architects had trained under Matthew may well have influenced his choice.
not until 1967 that a proposed scheme was published. The University's publication, "Student Amenity Centre" (1967), prepared by Johnson-Marshall, illustrates a model of a surprisingly formal urban layout, that has far more in common with the Holden scheme than with Spence's. {Fig. 3.08} The first phase, on the north side of Marshall Street, is the smallest of three blocks, with uniform façades, providing complete enclosure of the new plaza. It is a very inward looking development that turns its back, and its service entrances, towards a major thoroughfare, Potterrow, and the Royal Scottish Museum.

The first phase was designated as a combination of health centre and refectory. The proposed second phase, with further student amenities, was to share the site between Marshall Street and Crichton Street with a building for first-year Mathematics/Physics. By this time, agreement had been reached with the Corporation, which had undertaken to acquire the two blocks to the south of the "island site" and to clear these in order to assist the University.47 The architects were less than happy with what they felt was a tenemental form imposed upon them, but the die was cast. Prior to commencement, in 1969, they produced their own sketches evoking more effectively the contemporary ideal of a post-Robbins Report student environment, anticipating the huge influx of students from all sections of society. Fashionable looking students are depicted in consciously informal poses strewn across the concrete megastructure. {Figs. 3.09}

The Refectory was described in the architectural press as: "A welcome tool for mass production higher education"48 With seating for 500 and a serving rate of 1,000 meals an hour, this is a far remove from the setting for student life on the site that was envisaged by Pollock. But then society itself had been transformed since the

47This agreement was reached in October 1964 and was carried out under slum clearance provision in the Housing Acts.
Minute of meeting between Charles Stewart and Mr. Glendinning, the Town Clerk, 16 January 1973.
- EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 Pt 1 (Misc. Development Committees) Box 57 File 6
time of his rectorship. The religious faith and moral imperatives that had underpinned the visions of both Appleton and Pollock, despite their differences, had all but evaporated. At any rate, it was absent from the student beneficiaries of the post-war movement. This change is, perhaps, exemplified by the general student unrest of the late 1960s, from which Edinburgh was not immune. In his rectorial address, in 1969, Kenneth Allsop observed that there was a malaise of estrangement and alienation within "the cradle of comfort of the welfare state". The sense of vacuum that the privileged young undergraduates experienced was not something that had afflicted their Christian predecessors. These students, who were demanding, amongst other things, a greater role in the running of universities, rejected the inherent paternalism of their would-be benefactors. The perceived disadvantage of the mass education system was the feeling amongst students that the university was simply a machine for producing graduates. In this mechanism, the individual student was processed, in order to fulfil the needs of the state. Furthermore, the state was seemingly implicated in enterprises of dubious morality, such as the regime in South Africa and the war in Vietnam.

Charles Stewart actually saw the beginning of the malaise in Edinburgh, with the rectorial role of Pollock who, by being easily manipulated by student leaders, had marked out the beginning of a "path for dissidence", which accustomed the student body to having its own way. Stewart’s perspective seems unusual in ignoring the national and international circumstances that resulted in a revolt against authority by the generation in its early twenties in 1968-9. In this wider picture, the student unrest at Edinburgh was in emulation of glamorous media images of protest and riot in Paris in 1968. Nevertheless, there is something in what Stewart says, since a new mood of intolerance towards the old status quo was germinating during the war when

49 New Edinburgh Review (February 1969) (Edinburgh University Student Publications Board)
Pollock was rector. And, Pollock himself might be thought of as a model of dissidence in his opposition to the University authorities.

Ironically, Modernist architecture, which had been presented as a tool of social justice and revolution, came under attack from the aspiring revolutionaries. The Students’ Centre, for example, was mercilessly lampooned using such terms as "pretentious", and "unnecessary and expensive". Morris and Steedman were caricatured as "Worse and Worse" in a cartoon in the student newspaper, while the first phase was still under construction. Similarly, the David Hume Tower was depicted as a cascade of faceless graduates. Democratic and Humanist ideals, enacted under pragmatic restraints, were easy targets for disaffection, it seems.

As Matthew had anticipated, the Students’ Centre had a long gestation period, during which the design adapted to several changes in local and national government policy. Architectural uniformity between the phases was initially anticipated, but by the commencement of the first phase, a new factor had come into play. For the site of the intended second phase, to the south of Marshall Street, was now required to also include facilities to compensate for those expected to be lost when the Pollock Gymnasium would be demolished as part of a city road improvement scheme. In the City Engineer’s office, indecision reigned over the road system, and the second phase of building took place on the site designated for phase three. Furthermore, the adjacent site, between Marshall Street and Crichton Street, by this time a temporary car park, with the southern part of Bristo Street obliterated - was also designated for the New Dental Hospital and School. Thus, the second student building, which was completed in 1975, took a different form from the linear blocks first proposed. In a practical sense, it more effectively turns-the-corner of Potterrow and Lothian Street than had been suggested in the massing of the blocks in the Johnson-
Marshall model. By commencement of the second phase, agreement had been reached between Johnson-Marshall and the city authorities on the realignment of Lothian Street and Potterrow, in order to facilitate the closure of the northern part of Bristo Street and the western part of Marshall Street. {Fig. 1.36}

The second Students’ Centre building straddles the corner, its black Plexiglas saucer dome intentionally mediating between those of the McEwan Hall and Old College.\textsuperscript{52} {Fig. 31a} Accommodation included office space for the Students’ Association, a Chaplaincy, shops and a bank. The safety of Plexiglas domes was thrown into doubt after a disastrous fire on the Isle of Man in 1975, however. The space under the dome had to be reorganised for a smaller capacity, and thus its intended use as a high-density social space was never fully realised.

By 1976, a shortage of development land was evident, with the site between Crichton Street and Marshall Street expected to accommodate student amenities, a gymnasium, the Dental Hospital and School, and buildings for First-Year Science. {Fig. 3.11c}

As it transpired, no further student amenity buildings were erected on the site of Bristo Street, and the plaza, later named Bristo Square, became less of a student habitat than it might otherwise have been. The Dental School, for which Morris & Steedman also gained the commission, was ultimately cancelled due to lack of finance. A project for a further student building on the south side of Marshall Street was the subject of a public appeal for funds by the student association, EUSA. But, somehow the Students Association - subject to the temporary nature of undergraduate sabbaticals - never grasped the long-term financial aspects of its ambitious scheme for a multi-function concert hall, and this project was also abandoned. The funds available were allocated to renovation of the old University

\textsuperscript{52}Interview with Jim Morris (August 1998)
Union building, and it was to be more than a decade before any further interventions were made in the area.

Thus, a scheme originally conceived by Pollock in the 1930s reached a point of stasis. Both he and Appleton were in their graves before any demolition or construction had even been carried out. Yet both men, in their own way, had contributed to the creation of the extant Student Centre.

Pollock's vision for the University was sincere, but it belonged to an earlier era. No doubt, he envisaged students enjoying the spacious grounds of Salisbury Green and, perhaps, occasionally taking tea with the Principal in Abden House. These imaginary undergraduates might then stroll through the semi-rural surroundings of Holyrood Park to the Gymnasium at the Pleasance, or to a debate or student society meeting at Bristo Street. Had Pollock presented his gift in the 1920s, his proposals for unions and society facilities in converted buildings on the "island site" might have been acceptable to the University authorities, and this would doubtless have enhanced student life at the time. As it was, by the 1950s, the principles of student amenities and halls of residence had been well digested, but the small elite student body had vastly expanded in size and social spectrum.

Interestingly though, the concept of self governing residences would have appealed to that generation of students in the late 1960s who were rejecting the inherent paternalism of the mass education system and demanding a say in the running of their universities.

Some of Pollock's ideas were quite prescient, however. For example, he proposed that the University might benefit from commercial enterprise. His original intention for the "island site" was that business premises there would provide an income to pay for the student and staff amenities. Indeed, the second phase of the Students' Centre incorporated a bank and a travel agency. Pollock's precise intentions for the site were somewhat diverted though; with student societies later finding their main centre at the Pleasance, while the Potterrow building provided entertainment and health
facilities, in addition to a refectory. The non-denominational religious use for which the Pollock Memorial Hall was intended ultimately found a place in the second phase, with the inclusion of a Chaplaincy Centre. The representation of student interests was addressed by the EUSA offices in the same building. Lest we think that Pollock attempted to direct student facilities entirely according to his own predilections, it is worth noting that University Secretary, Charles Stewart, considered that Pollock's intentions to be largely coloured by the desires of the student body. Even those interests were altered by the social circumstances prevailing during the Appleton era.

Chapter Eight. Scholars in the Heart of the City: The Lawnmarket Scheme

As a result of an unusual sequence of events, the University was able to embark upon a development scheme in the most ancient part of the city. This excited its planners, Robert Matthew and Percy Johnson-Marshall, by virtue of its direct geographical and historical engagement with the Geddesian tradition. The Lawnmarket area, on the High Street, between the Castle and the Mound, had been the centre of Geddes' activities in the Old Town. At his home in Ramsay Garden he organised the inspirational multi-disciplinary summer schools that attracted academics from around the globe. Close by, within three flats at no. 2 Mound Place, Geddes set up the first independent halls of residence in 1887. This was in order to bring about his aim of a co-operative community of scholars, which he felt would revitalize the area. By 1896, 120 residents were living in self-governing halls in a variety of buildings in the Old Town, under the guardianship of the Town and Gown Association.  

In 1891 Geddes acquired properties in Riddles Court. Then, in 1893-94, Ramsay Garden and Ramsay Lodge. In 1896 the remainder of no.2 Mound Place was incorporated into the hall. The Town & Gown Association took over the running of these in 1896. In response to this initiative, the Edinburgh Ladies Educational Association opened Masson Hall, in 1897, at 31 George Square. At 12 George Square the Independent Muir Hall, for female medical students, was opened. The Church of Scotland opened a student residence at 14 George Square in 1895. (Memorandum on Halls of Residence.)
The most prominent building in that part of the town was New College (1849), which was designed by William Playfair for the secessionist Free Church of Scotland. \(\text{Fig. 3.12a}\) When the Scottish churches were reunited in 1929, a separate college was no longer required, ownership of the building passed on to the Church of Scotland, and New College became the headquarters of the University’s Faculty of Divinity. Some of the former Town and Gown Association properties then passed to the church to be used for divinity student residences.\(^{54}\) In this dense urban fabric, there were two other important specimens of Scottish architecture: Mylne's Court (1690) and James Court (1703). \(\text{Figs. 3.12b & 3.12c}\) These imposing residential blocks with central courtyards had served as prototypes for the City's classical tenements of the eighteenth century. However, for those who venerated Geddes as the father of urban planning, it was the Outlook Tower that had appeal of talismanic significance. This eccentric Baronial style monument, with its camera obscura, had been the location of Geddes's Museum of Town-Planning and Centre for Civic Studies. \(\text{Fig. 3.12d}\) To town-planners, the Outlook Tower was a metaphor for the overview that effective planning requires. The camera obscura - a sort of periscope for projecting living images of the city onto a table surface - functioned as the re-educator of the eyes.

By 1960, most of the residential properties in the Lawnmarket area were in a poor state of repair. Much of Mylne's Court, James Court and the adjacent buildings were below tolerable standards and regarded as slums by the city authorities. New College itself was in desperate need of repair and renovation, to the tune of £100,000, but since it was still owned by the Church of Scotland, rather than the University, it did not qualify for UGC grants.

\(^{54}\) In 1934, the Church of Scotland renovated the eighteenth century building at Mound Place naming it Lister House.
The Church of Scotland agreed to transfer ownership of New College to the University, in order that Treasury funding could be acquired. During assessment of New College and the neighbouring property, it became clear that there was potential for redevelopment of great practical and symbolic value. In 1954, the Geddes centenary, Sir Edward Appleton had acknowledged Sir Patrick's pioneering work, while indicating his intention of increasing the University's stock of student accommodation. Without specifically mentioning the Lawnmarket, he said that Geddes had revealed a need which: "Has certainly been one of the factors affecting our subsequent policy".  

The north side of Mylne's Court was structurally unsound and work was already being carried out, by the Church of Scotland, to stabilise the block. The east side was about to be demolished, but the opinion arose within the University Development Committee that it could be saved and used as a university residence. With the transfer of New College to the University in 1961, the energetic newly-appointed planning consultant, Percy Johnson-Marshall, was ordered to look into the possibility of a Comprehensive Development Area for the Mound/Lawnmarket Area.

It seems likely that Robert Matthew was the instigator of this scheme, with no apparent opposition to the suggestion. The principle was one of conservative surgery, with the renovation of historic buildings for student residences, and additional facilities for the Faculty of Divinity. This would necessarily require cooperation with the Corporation on the acquisition of property. Both Johnson-Marshall and Matthew were anxious to ensure that the Outlook Tower itself should fall into their hands. Matthew revealed to a correspondent that this was to ensure that

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56 At the beginning of 1961 demolition work had begun on the north side of Mylne's Court due to structural instability, but Matthew felt that the lower storeys could be saved for the purposes of university residences.
57 Minutes of the University Development committee 13/1/61.
58 In May 1961 damage to the north side was calculated to be less than previously feared.
59 Minutes of the UDC 18/5/61.
60 EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 Box 56 Bundle 2.
His (i.e. Geddes') original purpose be brought to life, and so that the Department of Architecture could have a unique symbolic centre associated with Geddes.57

Three ranges of the substantial structure of Mylne's Court still survived— the fourth, having been burned down in the 1850s. This offered the most immediate opportunity for conversion. Matthew and Johnson-Marshall suggested that it might provide 72 bedsits and 7 flats, for around £168,000, with some funding likely to be provided by the Historic Buildings Council. (Fig. 3.12e) In the light of the George Square controversy, there was great enthusiasm for the project, since it would demonstrate that conservation of the architectural heritage of the city was a matter of concern for the University.58 It was further proposed that this residence might become a replacement for Masson Hall, which was due to be demolished to allow commencement of the Arts Faculty programme in George Square.59

The University demonstrated some magnanimity by appointing Ian Lindsay as architect. To be sure, Lindsay was the most advanced of the conservation based architects in the country, but he had sought to undermine the University's George Square project by attempting to give the buildings there a higher historic buildings listing than they already possessed.60 It is to Appleton's credit that he brought architects into the fold, so to speak, who had been critical of the University's plans. Of course, this might be interpreted as an acute sense of realpolitik, rather than a desire for reconciliation. With the University as his client, Lindsay would find it

57 A letter from Matthew to Oskar Stonorov (Penn. USA) 28/10/63 intimated that he was engaged in negotiating the purchase of the tower.
Proposals for the Faculty of Divinity and a Patrick Geddes Centre for Urban Design at the Outlook Tower were reiterated in 1970, and a donor was still being sought. (Minutes of the UDC 26/3/70)
- EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 pt.1 Box 56 Bundle 4
58 Minutes of the Major Buildings committee 6/6/63.
- EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 pt.1 Box 56 Bundle 2
59 Memorandum by Ian G Lindsay 1962
- EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 Box 29 Halls of Residence.
60 Alan Reiach had given the buildings an initial C listing, but Lindsay later began the process to have them upgraded. "Listing in Scotland: Origins, Survey and Resurvey" by David M Walker, Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society Vol. 38, 1994. See Book One for the implications of this for the tripartite working party of 1959.
rather awkward to criticise its other projects. Usefully, the architect was an influential member of the Historic Buildings Council.

In 1964, in the wake of the Robbins report, the UGC expressed favour towards the scheme, and the city authorities promised £25,000 towards the project. Meanwhile, structural engineers were appointed, and further funding was sought elsewhere. Architect John Reid, of the Ian Lindsay practice, and consultant Percy Johnson-Marshall were instructed to undertake a study of the whole Lawnmarket area, to ascertain the potential for a major development contiguous to the work on New College.

Despite financial commitments by the Historic Buildings Council, the UGC, Edinburgh Corporation, and the University itself, funds were still inadequate at the time of Appleton's sudden death in 1965. The late Principal's faith in the project was vindicated when benefactor Philip Henman undertook to provide a major cash donation for the rehabilitation and conversion of the north side of Mylne's court, the following year. The Mylne's Court development was completed in 1970, after Edward Salveson provided further funding. A total of 180 student places was provided.

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61 Record of Ian Lindsay's appointment.
62 Henman offered £100,000 for the restoration and development of Mylne's Court, for postgraduate students. Reid estimated that the cost would be in the region of £130,000-£170,000, with the possibility of £20,000 from the Historic Buildings Council. Johnson-Marshall recommended that the University should begin buying up as much property as it could in the area. (Minutes of the UDC 6/2/67).
62 The Corporation offered a building in James Court, free of charge, since it intended to close for falling below tolerable standards for habitation. (Minutes of the UDC 6/11/67).
63 In 1968 the Corporation declared the Mound/Lawnmarket a Special Conservation Area. (Minutes of the UDC 30/10/68).
By this time, the University had begun the process of acquiring all available properties in the area. One such building was nos. 1-3 Mound Place, also known as the New College residence, the former University Halls of Patrick Geddes.\(^63\)

While the University's scheme for the Lawnmarket was not exactly comprehensive development, since there were properties that it could never acquire, it was certainly substantial. \(\text{Fig. 3.12f}\) The Mylne's Court part of the project was universally judged to be a great success. Something of the Geddesian spirit had been evoked: students were living in the heart of the Old Town in accommodation that met modern standards, and a prominent and important piece of architecture had re-emerged in immaculate form, at least externally. \(\text{Fig. 3.12g}\) Self-governing halls were not the aim, however, the self-contained flatlets having no aspiration to the Geddes ideal. And, it must be said, only a few of the interior spaces give any indication of the rather grand and generous spaces that Robert Mylne originally provided for the town's bourgeoisie. Aspirations and ideals had clearly changed since 1962 when W.R. Niblett had observed that:

"Dormitories and flats, though cheaper to build, are poor substitutes for halls and colleges, however welcome as replacements for poor lodgings"\(^64\)

In 1970, the Mylne's Court part of the scheme was complete. For his efforts, the principal architect, John Reid, was pronounced Edinburgh's Citizen of the Year, receiving a Saltire Society Award for conservation the following year, while the University renewed its appeal for cash. Reid had completed a schedule of accommodation to meet the changing needs of the Faculty of Divinity. This involved

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\(^63\)This Church of Scotland property did not pass automatically to the University, along with New College, but was transferred on 28th May 1966. (Letter from R. Maxwell Young to Charles Stewart, 11 May 1966).

The architect's interim report (16 May 1967) recommended demolition and redevelopment.

- EUL Spec. Colls. DRT 95/007 Pt 1 Box 30 Halls of Residence ("Mylne's Court/New College Residence")

\(^64\)W.R. Niblett *The Expanding University* (Conference Papers) London 1962.
reorganising existing spaces within New College, with extensions to the west for lecture halls, a chapel and student hostels.

The other halls of residence schemes in the Lawnmarket area met with less success than Mylne's Court. James Court had less coherence as an architectural entity than its neighbour, and complete university ownership was unlikely. Nevertheless, nos. 3 and 7 James Court, together with other buildings in the Lawnmarket, such as the historic Sempil's Close (a seventeenth century house), and the Outlook Tower, at the south-western corner of the zone, were acquired and proposals for renovation drafted.65

The New College scheme soon ran into difficulties of the sort experienced at George Square, with the breakdown of the spirit of co-operation between the University and citizens over the proposed demolition of Lister House, together with the old stable buildings along Ramsay Lane. (Fig. 3.13) On the site of Lister House, Reid proposed a pair of one-hundred seat lecture theatres, with a pair of large seminar rooms at both ground and first floor levels, and a chapel on the third floor of the block. A long seven-storey hostel building on a staggered plan was proposed for the entire length of Ramsay Lane. (Fig. 3.14a - 3.14d) But, although the feasibility study of 1965 gained the general approval of the Royal Fine Art Commission, Ramsay Garden residents, jealous of their amenity and view, were against having students in the area and they opposed all further change at the consultations that were held. Reid found this rather perplexing.66

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65 The Outlook Tower was to be leased by the University for Divinity and the Department of Urban Design. A scheme for restoration of the derelict Sempil's Close, to create five flats, was presented and approved, together with a scheme to create 71 undergraduate places at 3 & 7 James Court. (Minutes of the Mound/Lawnmarket Development Sub Committee. 11/12/69).
66 Residents included what Reid referred to as "the University Contingent". He wrote to the factorial secretary, Roy Maxwell Young, expressing his frustration and pleading for the Principal to put a stop to their activities. (Letter of 16/5/69).

- EUL Spec. Colls. DRT 95/007 Pt 1 Box 30 (Halls of Residence).
- EUL Spec. Colls. DRT 95/007 Pt 1 Box 30 (Halls of Residence).
Department of Fine Art lecturer Alistair Rowan, one of the "contingent ", also criticised the scheme in an article "Cuckoo in the Nest" Country Life 25/1/69.
Obtaining the finance for the New College hostels proved difficult. Reid drafted a revised scheme with a smaller hostel but, by 1971, it was decided that the funds that were available should be used for the alteration of New College to improve academic facilities. In view of the high cost of renovation and the lack of a major benefactor, a time limit was set on the retention of unimproved properties. And, ultimately, renovation schemes were shelved and most of the other properties in the Lawnmarket were disposed of. However, the condition of Lister House (also known as the New College Residence) precluded its sale. Besides, the site was crucial for any expansion of the Faculty of Divinity. Reid had been concerned about the building since 1967, and an alarming report by structural engineers in 1972 made demolition an attractive proposition. For safety reasons, the residence was closed in 1973. Despite the onerous cost of reconstruction, disproportionate to the value of the accommodation provided, funding was eventually secured. Appropriately, some of the money came from the Pollock Trust. One might speculate here on how Pollock might have ensured a much more satisfactory long-term outcome for the Lawnmarket Project, if he had been less inflexible over his "island site" project and the George Square issue, and diverted his energy and money to the Lawnmarket project. How fitting such a commitment would have been, considering the shared aims of the protagonists, with their common debt to the Geddes inheritance.

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67 Minutes of the Works & Buildings Committee 9/11/71
EUL Spec. Colls. UA 95/007 Box 30

68 Minutes of the Mound/Lawnmarket Sub Committee 12/6/73.
EUL Spec. Colls. UA 95/007 Box 30.

69 A report by the Buildings Officer, Noel Anderson, recommended that no further properties should be purchased and that internal work at New College should take priority over any further projects. - Minutes of the UDC 9/6/75.
EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 pt. 1 Box 57 Bundle 5.

70 The structural engineer's report recommended that, in the long term, complete rebuilding would be the most economical procedure. They installed a pair of emergency iron props in the first floor lounge. Report of T. Harley Haddow, July 1972.
EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Box 30.

71 The UGC contributed towards the cost of furniture and consultant's fees, Edinburgh District Council gave a conservation grant, and additional funds came from the Pollock Trust and the Carnegie fund. Thus the total cost of £266,000 was met. - Minutes of the UDC 21/3/77.
EUL Spec Colls. UA DRT 95/007 pt.1 Box 57 Bundle 7.
The culmination of the University's Lawnmarket project was, appropriately, the re-opening, in 1978, of the reconstructed Lister House, renamed Patrick Geddes Hall. This was fully seventeen years after the instigation of the scheme. Despite hitherto unparalleled techniques and resources, such rehabilitation work remained difficult and expensive. Geddes himself had a bounty of ideas, but he never suggested that attainment was easy.

"Each piece of work has been under taken as circumstances and means allowed; yet all as part of a comprehensive scheme of long-standing and which at an increasing rate of progress may still be long of accomplishment. Briefly stated it is that of the preservation and renascence of historic Edinburgh, from the standpoints of both town and gown; that is at once as City and as University, and each at their best"  

(Sir Patrick Geddes, 1915)

Chapter Nine. Collegiate Ideals and Design Outcomes.

It is clear that both the University's leadership and its architects were engaged in a perpetual reconciliation of principles. In creating the desired environment, there were issues such as corporate identity, academic cross-fertilisation and social welfare to be addressed. Edinburgh's own tradition of urban design and the civic aim of "University Reintegration" were also key components in this rapprochement.

"The conception underlying the plan of the new residences is that each student is provided with his own study bedroom to which he may retire at will and these rooms are grouped in small units opening off the staircases.

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72Quoted in the University publication Mound/Lawnmarket Area 1970
Each hall will have its common rooms, library, games rooms and offices while the refectories will be shared by all the students from the two halls.

Thus a student will get to know his immediate neighbours quickly and will be gradually introduced to all the members of his community in the common rooms and to a wider circle in the refectories. The spirit of the project is therefore concerned on the one hand with the full development of the free individual and on the other is social and communal and an attempt has been made to express this duality of purpose in the architecture."

This announcement, made upon the completion of Holland House, at Salisbury Green, displays no obvious conflict of intention with that of Sir Donald Pollock, in that it aimed for the development of the individual and the creation of a community. However, as we have seen, even the achievement of the first phase of development was an undertaking rife with conflict. As far as Pollock was concerned, even the first hall and refectory amounted to an over-development of the site.

Pollock's intentions for the Salisbury Green estate - later named the Pollock Halls of Residence - were, sadly, as anachronistic as those for his student amenity centre. Self-governing residences for a select few in the secluded mansions of Salisbury Green might have been considered acceptable in the 1930s, but the demands of the post-war era, in terms of mass education and tolerable standards, were of an entirely different order. As it was, Salisbury Green House operated as a male student residence, from 1946-49, without a warden, although there was a housekeeper. But it was far from being self-governing, as Pollock made all the decisions and busied himself with any aspect of the residences that he saw fit. The female residence, at St. Leonard's Hall, operated under the watchful eye of a warden. However, both halls provided only ninety student beds in total, and this was when the student population

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73 "Holland is First of Six" The Scotsman 21/9/60. (Article announcing the completion of Holland House).
was 5200. Immediately before the war, Edinburgh had 14% of its students in halls, compared to 42% at Nottingham and 79% at Oxford. Development on the scale required to meet Appleton's agenda threatened buildings that Pollock was determined should be retained and the running of the halls was to be managed by the bureaucracy of the institution.

As a matter of government policy, based upon national requirements, newer solutions for accommodating a vastly expanded student body were required from the 1950s onwards. This also meant that the universities lost much of the autonomy they had achieved in the nineteenth century.

In terms of creating a complete university environment to rival the Oxford-Cambridge model, Edinburgh never aspired to combining academic, residential and amenity buildings within an enclosed campus complex. When Appleton arrived, George Square did contain student hostels, some academic departments and professors occupied some houses there, as had been acknowledged by Frank Mears in 1931. But the sites around the square were earmarked for academic buildings, from the time of the "master plan" of William Oliver onwards. The land there had to be assembled in parcels and it was simply too valuable to devote to other purposes, if the ideal of the integrated city-centre campus was to be achieved. The Geddes and Mears proposition, that all the colleges of further education actually constituted the University, was never addressed.

The scale of development that Appleton had to achieve precluded the self-contained campus with both residential and academic buildings. Yet, for a civic university this was not necessarily a disadvantage. The Lawnmarket residences were firmly inserted into the fabric of the ancient town, only a short walking distance from the square. And, with Old College and the other Chambers Street buildings lying between, a more open campus that allowed citizens to permeate through the University area was achieved.
In the reintegrated University that was eventually achieved, however, there is something of a disjunction that filters out the University's personnel from the other citizens. For Pollock's "island site" was ultimately cleared of its own buildings and the historic street layout obliterated. Thus, if one takes a north-south route through the university area, the Student Centre acts as a psychological barrier. \( \textit{Fig. 3.20} \) This is despite the instatement of Bristo Square as a new civic space. Spence's layout for the Bristo street area was, perhaps, superior to those of Mears, Holden and Johnson-Marshall in maintaining ancient civic and academic routes. The complete enclosure of this space by student buildings anticipated by Johnson-Marshall was never achieved. If it had been, doubtless, a genuine student piazza, if not a public square, would have been created. Neither can one say that Bristo Square is a space used much by students, though it has certain popularity with some sub culture groups. Thus it remains something of a compromise.

Of course, all of this city-centre University activity could have been otherwise, if the City and the Scottish Office had not approved the educational/cultural zone, as recommended by Abercrombie, or if the University had submitted to pressure to preserve George Square. As we have seen, in Appleton's re-assessment of the planning situation in 1949, there was a contingency for complete removal to the suburban site at King's Buildings. The Department of Engineering even drafted a possible campus layout at KB that was to include Arts Faculty buildings, a Graduate Hall, a University Hospital, Library and administration facilities.\(^7\) \( \textit{Fig. 1.20} \) Had complete removal taken place, the University would have ultimately been required to expand onto at least part of the adjacent golf course, but residences, amenities and academic buildings could easily have been sited there too. Conceivably then Edinburgh might have become like one of the New Universities, such as at Kent,

\(^7\) Works Department memorandum of 1949.
-EUL Spec. Colls. UA. DRT 95/002 pt 1. Box 145 VE.
where the student experiences a total environment divorced from any direct civic influences

King's Buildings had refectory and other facilities since the 1930s, but the idea that emerged from time to time that there should be residences there was never constructively pursued. During the war, when it was decided that all future development would be in the city-centre, there was a suggestion that existing buildings there might be converted into student halls. But Appleton's recommendation for dual development recognised that the site was too valuable as a location for science and engineering buildings to be devoted to hostels. Besides, a collegiate enclave there with hostels and academic buildings would have been contrary to the principles both of re-integration and of the generalist approach to education that found expression in the biological metaphor of cross-fertilisation between disciplines. The existing disjunction between the scholars of the arts and sciences was something that Appleton sought to remedy with the teaching of first-year science at George Square. A balanced social mix that avoided segregation by department or faculty was an often-repeated aim of the mid-twentieth century. And, a specific university social life leading to a corporate identity was a concern long before Pollock took it up. This ideal became an architectural matter. In Edinburgh this necessarily became an issue of urban design too.

"It seems essential.... for architects working with academics to remember that whether we plan this social centre or that coffee lounge, or a hall of residence, or whether we arrange for mixed feeding or segregated feeding, this will promote one pattern of student life as against another. We have constantly to be asking ourselves whether the building will promote links,
whether they will support the academic as well as the intellectual life or encourage private and distant lives.\textsuperscript{75}

(Boris Ford 1964)

The arrangement of Kininmonth's original student houses at the Pollock Halls of residence was calculated to promote links of a more diverse sort than the collegiate residences of some universities, in the sense that students from different faculties and departments occupied rooms off the same corridor. Bringing them together to dine at the hall's refectory would further aid the socialisation process and, presumably, the so-called "cross-fertilisation" of intellects. The location of the site, on the route from George Square to King's buildings, makes it suitable for students studying at either location. On the other hand, the self-contained student flats of Mylne's Court, with their individual kitchenettes, might be thought more likely to encourage distant and private lives. The lesson that has been learned through time and experience is that students are not all of one species. Full board and lodgings might suit many, especially first year students, while others seek different degrees of independence and privacy.

Historically, the majority of Edinburgh students had rented accommodation privately; for many this remained a preference. It is true that, with the expansion of the 1960s and the deterioration of properties around the University, rented property of a tolerable standard was in short supply, resulting in the over-development of the Salisbury Green site. But, even while this was happening, it was economically viable for the University to acquire a variety of properties in numerous locations for conversion to student houses. This reflected a trend towards a preference for self-catering accommodation. Notions of communality changed dramatically in little over a generation, and the idea of sharing such things as bathing facilities, or large dining

\textsuperscript{75}Quoted in Michael Brawne (ed.) University Planning and Design London 1967.
halls, became unthinkable. The experience of war and national service, together with its ethos of sacrifice and comradeship retreated into history. And the predominantly Christian public school character that had dominated the university community was diluted with a larger and newer elite with different aims and expectations.

Central refectories and unions adjacent to academic were recognised as providing the main opportunity for social interaction. And, although there was never any obligation to use these official facilities, the character of the public houses and cafeterias in Edinburgh, in the 1950s and early 1960s, would have deterred all but the most adventurous students and staff. By the 1970s, however, such establishments had adapted so that the burden on University facilities was eased somewhat, despite the increasing university roll. When the Staff Club opened in 1960 it was one of the few places in the city where one could buy such exotica as salad, or indeed a full dinner in the evening, other than at a handful of exclusive clubs and restaurants. It was the most amenable place for staff to entertain visiting academics, or merely to dine and drink. By the time that the first clutch of new academic buildings in George Square were in operation, the Staff Club, the Men's Student Union, and the Women's Union (removed from George Square to no.16 Chambers Street in 1964) were the centres of the University's social life.

By contrast, tutors and students of the later 1970s were far more likely to find their own niche in Edinburgh's rejuvenated cafe society than to socialise in an institutional environment. This renewal of civic facilities was due in no small part to the presence of an expanded university community in the city-centre.


The conviction that future society is created within the incubator of the university environment has never been abandoned by advocates of university education, but, as we have seen, even during the Appleton era, the manner in which that environment was to be engineered was changing. The social currents that had been set in motion
by the great wave of fervour that was the reconstruction project effected a cycle of change; so that as the university changed society, society itself brought pressure to bear upon the university for further change.

The gradual development of the halls of residence at Salisbury Green during the 1960s is indicative of these changes. The factors leading to revision of the original development plan included the changing nature of the student population, and amendments to the planned scale of the UK university expansion programme. The matter of cost-efficiency, a perennial issue, became ever more critical as Edinburgh expanded its residential accommodation. And, with the revisionism of government policy in the late 1960s bringing what became known as "stringency" in university circles, the real value of Treasury funding declined, adding to the pressure to reduce building costs per head of the student population. With the campaign for the new universities well advanced and reliant entirely on the Treasury, Edinburgh's UGC allocation for 1966/67 dropped to £850,000 from £2.2m the previous year, and the University re-launched its public appeal for cash. As with the Lawnmarket residences, the University had to employ ingenuity in locating funding for the continuing project at Salisbury Green.

Kininmonth's first layout was draughted in 1949 but, with only two phases built by 1963, it would have been curious if there had not been amendments to the design. Indeed, before completion of the second phase, the original scheme was considered archaic, both in its Festival Style details and in its quasi-cloistered arrangement. As student changed The cloistered hall, with its connected refectory and communal lifestyle, envisaged when Kininmonth was first commissioned, had become a thing of the past.

In 1962, as work was about to commence on the second phase, Fraser House, Kininmonth wrote to Charles Stewart suggesting that consideration be given to the

76 An Expanding University (1965 Appeal brochure.)
third and fourth phases of his masterplan for the site. Although there was no further prospect of UGC funding before 1965, the whole matter was thoroughly reconsidered and, consequently, completion according to the original design was abandoned. The rethink considered student demand and UGC recommendations. Student accommodation demand was far less straightforward than had been appreciated in 1948. Current recommendations were for a variety of accommodation, such as large flats for married students, with small flatlets for singles and self-catering facilities.

In response to Kininmonth's enquiry, and the research that followed, it was resolved that, rather than thinking about phases 3 and 4, the whole future development of the site should be reconsidered. After discussion between the architects and representatives, the following conclusions were reached. The further development of the site should be on the principle of several detached residential buildings, served by a central refectory with one or more dining rooms. In addition, the structural stability of the original Victorian buildings and their possible renovation was to be taken into account. Kininmonth and his assistant, Alex McIver, began working up a scheme, with cost a major consideration, and the University's officers investigated the minimum legal standards for accommodation. The subsequent development plan draft of July 1963 proposed eight 5-storey and four 4-storey blocks, with a large catering/services building, a smaller services building and staff housing. The architects felt that 1,342 further student places and 45 staff places could be provided. But, at £1.9m, this was still considered too expensive and the architects were instructed to find out what could be achieved by a further paring down of living space, storage and a reduction of showers. Communal space was now to consist of two small general-purpose rooms on each floor, without any natural

77 RAK&P Pollock Halls Development Plan Draft 4 July 1963
-EUL Spec. Colls. UA Box 31 "Halls of Residence, Pollock Halls 1958-72"
lighting. This was quite a contrast to the carefully furnished common rooms of Holland House.

By the end of 1963, the Robbins Report demonstrated that the planned rate of expansion of UK universities was too slow, as only 61% of those qualified to go to university (in 1961) were actually finding places. To the burden of the postwar "Baby Boom" was added the effects of the reform of secondary school education, which meant that there were more highly qualified school-leavers than had been anticipated. At the then current rate of expansion there would be an increasing shortfall of places for prospective students.78

At Edinburgh, the University launched a "crash programme" to address the deficiency of student accommodation was. In response, Kininmonth's practice came up with an extremely economical proposal to build two 5-storey halls, to house 258 persons each, with another 795 students in five 6-storey halls. A ninth block would replace the old house of Salisbury Green later. Ironically, funds from the Pollock trust were to be assigned for the demolition of Salisbury Green Hall and for the extension and renovation of St. Leonard's Hall. In November 1963, Kininmonth was convinced that seven accommodation blocks and a catering building for 900 could be provided by the summer of 1966, if an immediate start was made to the project. There was no more talk about "enlightened democracy" or the traditional primacy of stone for building. Instead, patent prefabricated building systems were examined. Using the Swedish "Skarne" system, for which Crudens, the building company, had taken out a licence, and by paring down room sizes to an absolute minimum, a schedule of accommodation, produced in June 1964, proposed to house a total of 1006 in six blocks, with more to come later.79 A refectory building would be required to complete the project, and the idea was advanced that a building doubling

78-The projections of the Robbins Committee foresaw that at the then current rate of expansion there would be a shortfall of 25,000 university places by 1967.
79-RAK&P Schedule of Accommodation proposal 2 June 1964
-EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 Box 31 "Halls of Residence, Pollock Halls 1958-72"
as a conference centre would be desirable, since it would be self financing, to an extent, from letting it out over vacations. Other economies were sought, but the idea of bringing in a housing association was rejected, since that would have compromised the University's complete control of the site.

Ultimately, a scheme for six accommodation blocks to house 1200 students, with a refectory to come later, was approved. The majority of the work on the site was delegated to his assistant Alex McIver, but after sketching a variety of alternative layouts; Kininmonth was able to carefully arrange the orientation of the blocks in such a way that the bi-axiality of his original layout of 1949 was maintained. *(Fig. 3.15b)* The new refectory was designated a site precisely where the proposed shell-domed second refectory of the original scheme was to have stood, directly to the north of the first refectory. The new accommodation blocks were arranged symmetrically about this axis, while the west-east axis of the original scheme was not compromised. But, neither was it emphasised, for the viewing platform that looked out to Duddingston Loch in the original scheme was forgotten and, in the laying-out of the grounds, planting obscured the view along this axial avenue.

The "Skarne" system had been tried and tested in Sweden in the late 1950s and had proved to be an extremely rapid and economical method of constructing blocks of flats, reducing building time by 50% over more traditional methods. It also required half the normal workforce. Essentially, the system involved first erecting a concrete tower, which acted as a stabilising unit and contained all the services, such as plumbing, venting and lifts and stairs. Pre-cast wall units and in-situ floors were then constructed around this core. A variety of non-load-bearing external wall panels and prefabricated window units could then be installed.

In order to ensure the best possible natural lighting, each of the "Skarne" blocks utilised a sort of z-plan as a result of linking a pair of square plan units to the vertical

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80 A Visit to Sweden and Denmark* Concrete Quarterly* no. 43 Oct.-Dec. 1959.
circulation core, with single-storey foyers providing an entrance to the core of the buildings. A reddish brown hue was chosen for the finish of the external wall panels in order to harmonise the miniature towers to the imposing cliffs that form the backdrop to the site. \(\text{Fig. 3.16}\)

Work commenced in 1965 and progressed apace, although the demands of the design went beyond the capabilities of Cruden's version of the system. This necessitated considerable adjustment and modification by the architects and builders.\(^8\) The bed/study rooms were extremely economical of space, as indeed were the apartments of the first "Skarne" blocks in Sweden, described by journalists as "cramped". Nevertheless, construction was rapid. The first block was complete in October 1966. By March the next year three more were complete and the other two well advanced. At this stage, a brief was prepared for a catering block to seat 800 although, after negotiations with the UGC, this was moderated to a capacity of 600.

Revealingly, the first of the plans to show the final arrangement of the "Skarne" blocks also has a further four blocks arranged about this north-south axis, but located to the south of Holland and Fraser Houses. \(\text{Figs. 3.17 & 3.15a}\) This would have required the demolition of Salisbury Green House, Abden House and the acquisition and demolition of March Hall, a private house just south of the University's land. This is indicative of the atmosphere in the immediate wake of the Robbins inasmuch as the Principal's residence was to be sacrificed in order to accommodate more students. Indeed, the Victorian buildings on the site only survived this period because of the cost of demolishing them.

\(^8\)Interview with Alex McIver (October 2000).
The Close of the Era.

Arguably, Edinburgh’s last great event of the post-war era occurred in 1970, when the city hosted the Royal Commonwealth Games - formerly the Empire Games. The preparations generated a mood of expectancy in which the spirits of age and place, of post-war Edinburgh, were evoked for the final time. In the light of economic recession and political change in the 1970s, the era can now be seen to have been coming to a close. For a short time though, the optimistic tenor of reconstruction still applied to the new concept of Commonwealth, carrying hopes of a new role for the Britain as a respected maternal and moral influence; as if the principles of the Welfare State could be applied to the remnants of empire.

This was the culmination of an era that began with the launching of the International Festival in 1947. The Festival had turned the international spotlight on the city, informing the Abercrombie plan and the University precinct. The Games allowed the city, once more, to welcome the world, while draining the last drops of the post-war ethos in its goodwill salute.

As with the arts festival, the University had a part to play and, indeed, the games ensured completion of the fourth phase of building at the Pollock Halls of Residence. The usefulness of University facilities to the "Festival City" had been acknowledged for some time and, on this occasion, the City approached the University to use the Pollock Halls as "the Games Village" to accommodate athletes.

The location of the halls was fortuitous, as the city authorities were able to centre activity on the Royal Park. With a new main stadium just east of the park, at Meadowbank, and a new swimming pool constructed immediately adjacent to the halls of residence, on the west side of the park, all the necessary journeys between sites for participants could be made through the park.

The site acquired by the City for the pool had been a part of the Nelson family properties, but one that Pollock had been unable to buy during his lifetime, since it
was in use by Nelson's printing works as a playing field for its employees. This development did mean that a potential opportunity for expansion of the Pollock Halls site evaporated, but it was, nevertheless, of considerable advantage for students to have a first-class amenity literally on their doorstep. In fact, a university swimming pool at the site had been considered desirable before the first phase of development had begun. Now it had been delivered at absolutely no cost to the University.  

Robert Matthew, a great advocate of the Commonwealth, was the founding president of the Commonwealth Association of Architects, in 1965. Interestingly, the Games provided RMJM's John Richards with the opportunity to create his landmark building, the Royal Commonwealth Pool.  

By the time of the Games, however, it was observed that the site would still lack the refectory building necessary to serve the occupants of the "Skarne" blocks. As a special dispensation, on account of the Games, the UGC, exceptionally, advanced funds intended for subsequent years, in order that the refectory should be ready in time. Here one can only guess at the extent to which proponents of the Games, or friends of the University, brought their influence to bear. The "Skarne" system was not employed, as it was not particularly appropriate for the refectory/conference centre, which was rather low with a large building footprint. Although, for the sake of uniformity, similar cladding panels to the accommodation blocks were employed.

In view of several new buildings erected in the 1980s and 1990s, and later demolition, one can foresee constant change and rebuilding, and the Pollock Halls

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82 The idea of holding the Empire Games in Edinburgh originated in the early 1960s. Indeed, Percy Johnson-Marshall had discussed a possible site for a swimming-pool at Boroughloch with the Corporation. This was within an area that he had proposed for university accommodation blocks, a short distance to the south of George Square, but an Olympic standard pool was considered a great asset to the University.

83 The Scottish Widows insurance company acquired Nelson's Parkside Works site, on the opposite corner to the Royal Commonwealth Pool. Their headquarters building, designed by Sir Basil Spence, Glover & Ferguson, was erected there. The gateway to the Royal Park is thus marked by a pair of very striking buildings that might be described as prime examples of late Edinburgh School architecture.
may never be considered actually complete. Interestingly, Charles Stewart, writing in 1973, however, considered that completion of the halls of residence project would be achieved when Cowan House, the accommodation building subsequent to the second refectory, was opened. By the time of the Commonwealth Games, however, it was arguably complete in terms of the maximum amenity of its residents, since subsequent buildings have tended to erode sport and leisure facilities, such as gardens and tennis courts. Appleton's ambition of 1949, to provide 600 new student places, was posthumously achieved and surpassed, with University Secretary Charles Stewart providing continuity, when Principal Swann took over in 1966. The Divinity professor, John McIntyre was honoured for his work on the halls development committee in naming the refectory: the John McIntyre Centre. After relinquishing the consultancy of the King's Buildings site layout to Percy Johnson-Marshall, the Salisbury Green development became Kininmonth's sole outstanding university contract, with the Holland-Fraser complex his largest complete architectural entity.

84 In a letter of March 1973, to the UGC, Stewart stated that this building, known as Phase VI, would be the last of the buildings that it would be possible to erect on the site. The UGC was only able to provide £52,800 towards the total cost of £524,000 for this hall to accommodate 350 students, at the extreme north of the site. However, in 1971, it was discovered that the Cowan Endowment Fund of 1926 was by then valued at £180,000 and this money, together with the University's building reserves, which it had raised by public appeal, allowed the project to proceed. EUL Spec. Colls. DRT 95/007 Box 29 (Halls of Residence). The original Cowan House in George Square had been destroyed by this time, and, therefore, Cowan House II was erected at Salisbury Green. Stringency of cost had severe repercussions on materials and interior space. The architects had to revise the design to increase accommodation from 200 to 350. This resulted in a substandard unsatisfactory building that the University received permission to demolish in 2000.
In this final book of the thesis, I would like to discuss relationships and tensions of several kinds that were operating within the University's development project. The relationships between the Edinburgh School architects had implications for the University as client. The experiences of the architects, in the context of the atmosphere in the profession, were determinants of events too. The social and political climate tensions of the era gave the University project its particular dynamic. These are examined under the headings: Art and Science, Tradition and Modernity, Pragmatism and Idealism. This is not to suggest that these are absolute antipathies, however, and other relationships are acknowledged.

Chapter One. Antipathies: Art & Science

In his book on the post-war rebuilding of England, Lional Esher describes students of architecture divided between two camps: the "Art Boys" and the "System Boys". This polarity between Art and System was surely an incarnation of the Art/Science dichotomy. The foundation of that polarity lies in the historic academic designation of architecture as a Fine Art, rather than as a Science, like Engineering. The dilemma faced by architects was this: If architecture is an Art, then it cannot claim to offer any scientific solutions. But if architecture is to be considered a Science, then the authority of the history and tradition of architecture are both challenged. Notice how Science also appears to threaten tradition in this demarcation.

The escalation of new building technologies, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, eroded the independence of the architect, as his knowledge of traditional building skills and building trade practice became steadily less important. In architecture, as in every other field of expertise, an increasing tendency towards specialisation perpetuated itself through increasing knowledge bases. As specialist
Structural engineers, urban designers, planners and various types of analysts became increasingly important, the dichotomy was exacerbated.

By the 1950s, the drive towards standardisation and the industrialised production of components for building systems provided a further challenge, with the prospect of building contractors being able to dispense with the services of the architect almost entirely.

This made professional privileges all the more difficult to justify. The architect either had to become leader of a team of specialists or a provider of architectural services to such a team. In order to retain his status, he was forced to re-emphasise artistic control of major projects. It is not surprising, therefore, that the RIBA's main concern by the 1950s was the status of the architect, who was in danger of becoming merely a draughtsman. Left-wing activists, by no means traditionalists, were also particularly concerned with the status of architects employed in public service.

Utzon's scarcely buildable Sidney Opera house may have given hope to the artist-architect in its artistic challenge to the engineers and the innovation that resulted. Yet, paradoxically, that project also highlighted the dichotomy, by demonstrating how the engineer had to rescue the architect from the consequences of his own designs.

As town and country planning and urban design became professions distinct from architectural design, they developed their own consequent specialisms. And it was the regional planner and town planner, rather than the jobbing architect, who was expected to assume control over the specialists, to analyse the data and to make recommendations to elected politicians. Planning was regarded a Science, possibly a Social Science, rather than an Art.

An obsession with the unplanned nature of the past was integral to the psyche of the 1930s, with its concomitant support of national political leaders, or dictators,

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1The first chair of Town Planning in Britain was created at Liverpool in 1909, at the insistence of Charles Reilly, Head of the School of Architecture there.
promising a meticulously planned future. Architects in Scotland appear to have been enthusiastic advocates of strategic planning. Witness, for example, the planning exhibition organised by the Edinburgh Architectural Association in 1937. Robert Matthew's position in the Department of Health Scotland (DHS) was strategic rather than artistic. His collaboration with Abercrombie in the preparation of the Clyde Valley Plan (1946), which also saw Alan Reiach working in Robert Grieve's team, drew upon such commitment to strategic planning.²

The conflict and destruction of 1939-45 only increased planning fervour. The business of Planning gained wide public attention, with great faith invested in the ability of the experts to scientifically transform society. It was held that ingenuity and expertise, previously expended upon the war, could be applied to social improvement. Activists in such groups as the APRR had canvassed for reconstruction before there had been any destruction!³ They trained professionals in military service to be planners after demobilization. Then there was the government's own propaganda, as discussed in Book Two. Furthermore, other servicemen had the experience of education through the Army Board of Current Affairs (ABCA). The Bureau produced publications explaining the bright future for the nation after the war. These simple texts were capable of being easily manipulated into some sort of socialist manifesto by left-wing officers. Allegedly, the ABCA tutors were significant in stimulating the socialistic mood of the post-war period.⁴ Even fairly conservative architects in uniform, such as Spence and Kininmonth, in the Royal Engineers and the Royal Artillery respectively, were eager to participate in planned reconstruction.⁵

³ The School of Planning and Research for National Development (SPRND) was founded in 1935. In 1940 it became the School of Planning and Research for Regional Development (SPRRD), which taught be correspondence course and completion course in London. The Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction (APRR) was set up at the same time to strengthen the campaign.
⁴Johnson-Marshall's widow accepted that her husband was one of many officers trying to convert the rank and file to Communism.
⁵Interview with April Johnson-Marshall (Dec. 1998)
⁶Interview with Richard Ewing (Sept 1998).
After the war, the precepts of the planners acquired force through legislation in the Town and Country Planning Act (1947). While city development plans called for regeneration and redevelopment, regional development plans were further reaching. In their frustration with unplanned and overcrowded cities, the planners’ ultimate solution was the New Town. In a strange way, the planners inherited the role of the Renaissance artist who had tried to portray the Ideal City. The idealists of the twentieth century, however, were expected to actually create these ideal communities, rather than simply supply graphic representations.

The National Health Service and the nationalised industries also had obligations requiring strategic long-term planning. This was the context in which Sir Patrick Abercrombie prepared his civic survey and development plan for Edinburgh (1947-9), incorporating Holden’s plan for the University area, which was to prove so crucial to subsequent developments.

Confrontation with the Art/Science antipathy was seminal to the Modern movement. The Modernists were obliged to claim architecture as a Science, albeit one that was subservient to Strategic Planning. The essential aim of Modernism was engagement with the condition of Modernity: the consequences of rapidly developing industry and technology. As the Modernists saw it, legislators had consistently failed to anticipate the effects of science and industry and the laissez faire attitude of governments had created urban chaos and inefficiency, with the result that very few people were able to derive benefit from technology. The architectural profession symbolised this lack of engagement with Modernity in its backward-looking historicism and laissez faire eclecticism. Geddes had looked forward to the end of what he called the Paleotechnic era and its replacement with the new enlightened Neotechnic one. The raison-d’être of the Modernists was to actually bring that new era into being.

The Congres Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM) disseminated the dogma of Modernism, its "Athens Charter" of 1933 providing the blueprint for the
Functionalist agenda: Work, Residence, Circulation and Recreation. The politicised activists of Modernism operated under this banner, attacking as reactionaries any that did not fully embrace its principles. In the 1950s, a new wave of CIAM Functionalists, including the English Brutalists, rejected the principles of the 1930s as simplistic, while also renewing critical attacks on pre-war architects remaining outwith the radical tendency. Spence and Kininmonth, as Arts based architects, were typical targets of the new Functionalists and their Social Science.

Nevertheless, many were convinced that the ethical aims of the Modern Movement was bequeathed by the Arts and Crafts, and Garden City movements, inasmuch as they were directed towards social service and social justice. Even the radical pre-war plan for London by MARS, the British offshoot of CIAM, owes a debt to the Garden City concept in its utilisation of the Neighbourhood Unit and the idea of creating green swathes through the urban fabric. There is also an interesting similarity between the CIAM’s Work, Residence, Circulation, Recreation principles and Geddes earlier model: Work, Place, Folk. The latter seems more humane, or, perhaps, less technocratic, in the sense that people themselves, rather than simply their functional roles, are taken into account. Sir Robert Matthew saw himself more as an inheritor of the Geddesian and Scottish Democratic traditions, than as a Modernist technocrat.

Antipathies riddle architectural theory to the extent that it is almost impossible to discuss it, without making use of them. Such concepts have their uses, and Esher's task was to relate the demise of the Modern Movement as an ethical/architectural force. The Arts/System antipathy reveals the lack of a unified vision within the profession that had been clear since the 1930s, with traditional practice challenged by those interested in a technological revolution. After the war, the technological revolution appeared to be at hand, and Esher recounts how the ambitious reconstruction targets and the architects' willingness to comply with political
agendas left the profession vulnerable to criticism and allowed it to become a scapegoat for society's failures.

It would be convenient if the Edinburgh School architects could be placed in either the "Art" or "System" camps of Esher's story. Unfortunately, it is not that simple. That particular antipathy, evident in the English schools of architecture of the late 1940s, has far less relevance when discussing Reiach, Kininmonth, Matthew and Spence, who had emerged from the different cultural milieu of inter-war Edinburgh. Often there are great similarities in their work - it is not too difficult to identify the residue of pre-war eclecticism in their designs - and personal and professional antipathies appear to have been as strong as ideological ones. That said, we might see Spence's University at Sussex as epitomising the Art approach, while RMJM's University of York occupied the opposite position, by employing the CLASP building system, which had been developed for building cheap and efficient schools by local authority architects. [Figs. 4.02 & 4.03] One such architect was Stirrat Johnson-Marshall who was, by the time of York, Matthew's partner in the London office of RMJM. He and Andrew Derbyshire were responsible for York. Curiously, Stirrat had fabricated dummy vehicles to supply to Basil Spence, when the latter was in Normandy creating decoy armoured columns to confuse the enemy. Presumably, this was the Art and Science of war combined.

Chapter Two. Matthew and Spence

Two Paths

Spence and Matthew, for example, did not actually occupy diametrically opposed positions on architectural design. Rather than a precise schism between Art and Science in the Edinburgh School, the architects occupied a variety of positions at different times, depending on circumstances. Symbolism, Functionalism, Social Reformism, and Art had to be balanced within the atmosphere of cultural renewal in which they were enacted. They were not immune from the issues affecting
architecture, but there was no hard-line as such. Theoretical debates, such as those on The Picturesque or Monumentality, are likely to have attracted the attention of Matthew and Spence, but we must allow them the particularities and differences coloured by their own predilections. As men, they have been described as being as different as "chalk and cheese", with Matthew "a committee man" who was able to make things happen, while Spence was acknowledged as a "brilliant draughtsman", who had acquired authority and bearing by virtue of his army commission. Spence also had a reputation as someone who could "sell anything".

It is, perhaps, significant that Matthew, along with Reiach, went into public service early in their careers, only later moving completely into private practice. Meanwhile, Spence and Kininmonth both began their careers in private practice augmented by some teaching, before relinquishing practical teaching to concentrate on architectural practice. Matthew's colleague from the LCC, Percy Johnson-Marshall, spent his whole career in public service, before his appointment as lecturer in Edinburgh in 1959. Only then did he begin private consultancy work too. The migration from public to private sector, while it is partly attributable to frustration with the machinery of government, should not be seen as a complete abandonment of principles, but rather as the creation of a "third force" of socially committed private practitioners. It is true, however, that they all wanted more money than local government provided.

It is unlikely that Spence and Matthew could have foreseen with much accuracy the paths that they were to follow when they began their careers. Despite a uniformity in their training under an essentially Beaux-Arts regime, differences in approach can be detected early on. For, while neither architect devoted himself to writing books of theory, deep-seated characteristics may have determined their mature tendencies.

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6 Interview with Jimmy Beveridge (August 2001).
7 Matthew and Reiach did briefly teach at Edinburgh College of Art, while Reiach also spent a year with a London practice before being employed by the Department of Health for Scotland.
To an extent, of course, they were rivals and it may have been the case that Appleton understood what each man stood for and knew that, by having both in the University's camp, a broad range of expertise and advice could be obtained. As we saw in Book One, the University relied heavily upon acquiring architectural authority, in order to achieve its city-centre development.\(^8\) Having Spence as planning consultant, with Matthew as advisor to the University on architectural matters and sitting on its buildings committees, was a unique coup in the acquisition of such authority. Notwithstanding the contribution of Percy Johnson-Marshall from 1961, Spence and Matthew really shaped Appleton's George Square campus, finalising the layout with their collaborative Central Development Area plan of 1959, as building was about to commence on the David Hume Tower. \{Fig. 1.27\}

I believe that some indication of the inherent predilections of Spence and Matthew may be discernable in their student work. It is likely that these predilections had repercussions upon their later designs and the direction that their respective practices took. Here, in some senses, an inclination towards opposite ends of the Art/Science polarity might even be detected.

In the ECA School of Architecture Calendar for the session 1927-28 two illustrations of student work appeared. One is a meticulous elevation, worthy of an architectural dictionary, portraying a temple-front across which is emblazoned the legend "Greek Doric Order". \{Fig. 4.04\} The other is an accomplished watercolour perspective, depicting the interior of a Roman bath. \{Fig. 4.05\} If a student drawing can serve as an architect's handwriting, as if for the purpose of psychological analysis, the illustrations in the prospectus are revealing. One might regard these examples simply as two personal views of antiquity, yet at the same time sense the beginning of later enthusiasms.

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\(^8\) The engagement of prominent architects could be seen as a way of precluding their criticism. It must be said, however, that the majority of architects in the city believed that it was unprofessional to openly criticise other architects. This code of conduct meant that few architects would comment on a development plan, such as the University's. In this respect Hurd was unique, but as we saw in Book One, he was also very careful to commend Matthew's Arts Faculty plan while objecting to the demolition it entailed.
The bath interior is reminiscent of an Alma-Tadema painting, with naked figures gliding through transparent water in the foreground, although the evocation of great arches of groined vaults and vast interior space tends more towards the monumentalism of Piranesi than the intimate scale. The young perspectivist was Basil Spence, already displaying a distinctive style of execution, having discovered how to give the impression of architectural detail with a flourish of the pen or brush. As a student he prepared perspectives for many architects. The bath scene is evocative and sensual, yet it is not architecture per se. For, a perspective, although a representation of architecture, is not the architecture itself, but a separate work of art, which can be both persuasive and misleading. This is an early manifestation of Spence's enthusiasm for compelling pictorial representation. We have seen just how persuasive he could be with a few perspectives, when he convinced Edinburgh Corporation of the contribution that the university architecture could make to the city.

The student who produced the Doric specimen was Robert Matthew. The temple elevation is severe and, one is certain, accurate in proportion, suggesting that it has been thoroughly researched in a textbook manner and executed with precision. In the rigorous execution of the task we can detect his attributes: an analytical approach to the exercise, strict rationality in application and commitment to the goal. In the didacticism of the motto, perhaps, the germ of his interest in education. Admittedly such elevations were a standard architecture school exercise, notwithstanding the diminishing validity of historicism in architectural practice. The neo-Classical architecture of the 1930s was enabled by this sort of exercise, though Matthew was not amongst its practitioners. If this elevation was anything more than proof of ability in two dimensional representation then, given Matthew's analytical prowess,

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9 In 1927, Spence was engaged by Frank Mears to create perspectives for the main building of his ultimate design for the aborted Hebrew University at Jerusalem on which he had worked on for ten years. This was a monumental rotunda with which Mears attempted to create a new architectural style for Palestine. This style was historicist and eclectic and appears as if it was inspired by artist David Roberts' nineteenth century impressions of the Holy Land. The great hall is a temple-like edifice with foliated capitals. Spence effortlessly conveyed the massive bulk and heavy dome. But although he enlivens the scene with sky-scape and cypress trees, the work seems strangely non-committal. Although handled efficiently there is little engagement with Mears' design; perhaps this is simply because it is not the artist's own vision. It is even possible that the decay of the Jerusalem project, by this time mired in squabbles and disputes, precluded any chance of vitality or enthusiasm. Mears Collection, -NMRS, Edinburgh.
it might be considered a summing up of a constructional system that represented a
culture. Something of the character of the Doric, its severity and lack of ostentation,
is entirely appropriate to what we know of the man. Of all the orders it is the most
fundamental and, in its austerity, it has the most affinity to the Scots character. It also
seems relevant to Matthew’s political outlook, since the architecture of ancient
Greece, was commonly associated with democracy. Many years and a world war,
later the architect was to proclaim:

"For the first time since the 5th century BC architecture is truly democratic - in
the strict sense by the people and for the people". 10

Plainly, for Matthew, architecture had a message and a purpose.

In contrast to Matthew’s grandiose statement about the social and democratic role
of architecture, Basil Spence described the social and economic aspects of
architecture as merely transient stimuli, which drop away and ultimately become
historical! In his maturity, a favourite anecdote recalled a conversation with Ludwig
Mies van der Rohe, who advised him never to look at new architecture, only at old.
Spence took this to mean that architecture should be judged by standards of
greatness, not by any contemporary gloss. 11 That he put such ideas into practice
seems to be borne out by his claim that inspiration for the forms of the University of
Sussex came from two sources: Robert Adam’s University quadrangle at Edinburgh,
and the exposed vaulted structure of the Colosseum. Thus, from the monumental
quadrangle he devised the idea of an intimate enclosure with "resonances of
something ancient and impressive".12 The arches of the Colosseum were used to
relate the mass of the building to the scale of the individual. Indeed, the segmental
arch motif was a favourite device of the architect who used it, for example, at
Glasgow Airport (1962-6) and at the Canongate flats (1966). {Figs. 4.06 & 4.07)

10 ORIAS (RIAS Quarterly) Aug. 1952
11 The RIBA President’s address to students. Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects.
March 1959
12 Basil Spence “Building a New University” in Daiches The Idea of a New University 1966
Spence makes no mention, however, of the concrete segmental arches of Le Corbusier's house at Jaoul (1951-5), which many see as a source. {Fig. 4.08} We may also recall here the use of false vaulting by Kininmonth for the student refectory and the arch motif for the loggias of the residential buildings at the Pollock Halls of Residence. {Figs. 2.38c - 2.38e} Another notable Scottish use of the repeating elliptical arch was made at St.Peter's Seminary at Cardross (1959-66) by Gillespie Kidd & Coia. Here the principal designers, Andy Macmillan and Izi Metzstein, like Spence at Sussex, used it to create comprehensible monumentality and an evocation of cloisters. {Fig. 4.09}

At Sussex, Spence used the arch purely for its formal compositional qualities. The social element of the source, i.e. slaughter as entertainment, being only transient, has dropped away. This formal approach is a sensual one too, for the "intimacy" can be thought of as evocation of a primary spatial experience. Adam's Old College evokes a sort of claustrophobia with an enclosure of monumentality that would have been even more intense had his original double quadrangle been realised. It is curious that the arch motif from the Colosseum, was used to create intimacy, considering that the experience of those unable to hide from the wild beasts released to torment them, would have been agoraphobic, rather than claustrophobic. Spence would, no doubt, have considered this a further example of time purging architecture of its original social element. In a more prosaic sense-and this probably accounts for the success of the motif in Spence's hands - arches divide up spaces in such a way that individuals can comprehend the structural rhythm, as if it were the metre of a poem.

This formal use of architectural elements is contrary to the dogma of Functionalism, which demands that form should be a direct outcome of a functional programme. The extent of Formalist and Functionalist approaches within the Edinburgh School needs further consideration.
Architectural Analysis and Programmatic Planning.

According to John Summerson, speaking in 1957, the essence of Modernist architecture is to be found in its devotion to the building programme. In this he is acknowledging the theories that Hannes Meyer put into practice at the Bauhaus. Here, the design of the building's appearance comes fairly late in the process leading up to development. By then, the programme is well advanced through the systematic collection and analysis of data and the examination of possible solutions. In this way the functions are articulated through the design. Any other approach is Formalism and that is antithetical to the orthodoxy of functionalism.

One wonders whether Summerson advanced such ideas when he taught design at the ECA, when Matthew and Spence were students. Spence practiced Formalism. And, as far as he was concerned, the genius of an architect resided in the skills of architectural analysis and conception. These are the skills that enable an architect to listen for a few minutes to a client's ideas, visualise solutions, and then produce an initial sketch. Because he has knowledge of the tradition of architecture, learned through a study of history, the architect constantly draws on this in order to produce sketches that will engage the viewer, or client, or planning authority, all of whom will also have some inkling of the tradition of architectural forms. More work has to be done to arrive at a final design, but an architect proficient in these skills would be expected to have an initial kernel of an idea, or a concept. This, together with a relevant symbolic vocabulary, would carry him through the design process. The Beaux-Arts training attempted to instill the skill of architectural analysis by training students to produce esquisses: very quick perspective visualisations of architectural solutions to a specific problem. These would then be expanded into final schemes, without radically departing from the original conceptions.

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13 John Summerson "A Case for a Theory of Modern Architecture" Address to RIBA. Published in Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects June 1957
Such was the case with the Coventry Cathedral design. Spence relates that, upon visiting the site for the first time, an unusually clear picture formed in his mind's eye. Despite numerous alterations, the essence of this vision was carried through to the final realisation. In his book, he claims that a hallucination he had under anaesthetic provided a key element of the Cathedral design.

One can see that this is an essentially artistic response to architectural problems, but it nevertheless requires considerable experience to create an esquisse with anything approaching the appropriate form and scale for any sizeable project. Floor space, building height and layout can always be adjusted, but one would have to be fairly close in estimating building mass and plot ratio to be able to produce a reasonable sketch plan capable of being carried forward to the next stage in the design process.

The initial University of Edinburgh plan of 1954 is a good example of Spence's ability in architectural analysis. The extent of the University development area, with George Square as the centre of activity, provided Spence with a starting point. It was required that he should deliver a plan for the next fifty years of development, yet without accurate information on requirements in terms of total floor-space or facilities, even for the short term.

Obviously, Spence had seen university campuses elsewhere and had developed a measured eye that could judge the generalities of building volumes and spatial relationships, without being overwhelmed by complexities of calculations or premature detail. Although Art-based, the procedure was practical. After an initial assessment, the art of composition was quickly brought into play. As more specific detailed information of immediate, medium and long-term requirements became available, allocations to faculties and departments could be adjusted. Sketch plans for individual buildings could then commence. Following the calculation of accommodation, cost estimates could be made, leading in turn to a budget being set. Detailed design work could then proceed.
Architectural training at the Edinburgh College of Art School of Architecture in the inter-war years followed an essentially Beaux-Arts regime, although it must be said that the influence of Sir Robert Lorimer had given the institution some of the concerns of the Arts & Crafts movement. This aspect was clearly oriented towards sensitivity to materials, rather than the Fabian socialist ethics of William Morris and his group. Nevertheless, lecturer E.A.A. Rowse laid the groundwork for post-war reconstruction by preaching social theory and Taylorism from 1929 onwards. Post-diploma courses in town-planning, from 1933, encouraged a Geddesian survey-led approach. Matthew used to cite his influences as Rowse, Mears and Geddes, rather than Lorimer, in whose practice he gained his first professional experience. This does not alter the fact that Mears himself had been the recipient of Beaux-Arts training, before being exposed to the planning guru, Geddes.

Like Mears before them, Spence, Matthew, Kininmonth and Reiach were trained to produce esquisses which, with the acquisition of building practice and experience, amounted to a fairly formidable skill. Nevertheless, it encouraged a type of Formalism, where artistic sensibilities directed building design. The criticism of the Functionalists was that this process encouraged formal imitation of the architecture of historical periods. To be sure, the architect had to acquire artistic skills and knowledge of the architectural tradition in order to understand how to proceed with the first step. In other words, one would have to know what architecture looked like and how to represent it prior to the undertaking. The difficulty perceived by the Functionalist is that a design produced in this way is actually an assemblage of ideas about architecture. There is some truth in this observation, since no-one can re-invent architecture, just as no idea is entirely novel, and even the most nightmarish chimera

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14 Rowse moved to London in 1933 to become Assistant Director of Education at the Architectural Association. In 1935 he was appointed Principal and reorganised teaching according to Geddesian principles. -Andrew Saint Towards a Social Architecture Yale 1987. Rowse was also a founder of the School of Planning for National Reconstruction, later the School of Planning and Regional Reconstruction. He was Principal of the school, before and after the war, and the instigator of the Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction.
is made up of known parts of different beasts. At the same time, it would be difficult to imagine that an architect might be kept innocent of pre-existing architecture and its influence, whether positively or negatively. Here the Formalist/Functionalist antipathy parallels the Art/Science one, with Formalism representing Art and Functionalism aspiring to Science.

However, critiques from either Formalist or Functionalist viewpoints require that the practice of architecture and the theory be separated. Since there is no obvious difference in appearance between a building designed by a Formalist and one by a Functionalist, information about the architect and his methods is required to assess it. To the casual onlooker, a building might appear to have been designed by a Modernist of the functional persuasion. But he might be deceived since Beaux-Arts trained architects could draw upon the vocabulary of Modernist architecture as easily as they could upon historical styles. Perhaps this explains the variety of architecture that was discussed in Book Two. The Moderne in particular might be seen as a Formalist expression of Functionalist design. It might also explain the apparent reluctance of the Edinburgh School architects to indulge in any great amount of theorising. It is unlikely that they wanted their buildings to be judged by the underlying theory instead of by the architecture itself.

Chapter Three. Kininmonth, Matthew and the Architecture Chair.

The Succession.

In the first book we saw a succession of architects engaged under Appleton, as the development project progressed. After the first professional development plan by Charles Holden in 1947, architects with more specific Edinburgh connections were brought in. The Rowand Anderson & Paul practice, under William Kininmonth, received the first postwar commissions and may have reasonably expected an even 

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15 It seems to me that this was actually the strength of the Beaux-Arts training but the new wave of architects emerging from the schools in the 1950s and 1960s attacked their predecessors for lacking ideology.
greater share of the work. The firm’s historic connection with the University led directly to the commission for refurbishment of the Dental Hospital and School (1947), which was the revival of a project delayed for ten years by the war. \(\text{Fig. 2.37a}\) In 1950 the practice also built an extension to Balfour Paul’s Chemistry Building (1919). \(\text{Fig. 2.25}\) This ran concurrently with the designs for Adam House and the Pollock Halls of Residence. Later, the site consultancy for the science campus at King’s Buildings was added to Kininmonth’s roster of University commissions. The arrival of Robert Matthew seriously affected the fortunes of Kininmonth and, indeed, those of all the Edinburgh architects. Matthew was given important roles in the University committees concerned with building and few had the authority to challenge his recommendations.

With work scheduled to commence on the first stage of the Medical School extension in 1955, a new planning consultant was required to take up from where Charles Holden had left off in 1947. By this stage the University needed an architect to choose specific sites and to obtain the necessary consents to get the development project off the ground. One might have expected Kininmonth’s existing commissions with the University and his close friendship with the University Secretary to have resulted in more University jobs than actually transpired. However, as we have seen, Basil Spence, by then resident in London, was appointed on Matthew’s recommendation. Spence’s high public profile and persuasive talents were obviously important qualifications, but he had good friends, such as Professor David Talbot Rice, within the University.

Spence certainly proved to be capable of the task, but in anticipation of the comprehensive redevelopment of the area around the University, he was asked to resign as consultant in 1961. Matthew’s old LCC comrade, Percy Johnson-Marshall, by then Professor of Urban Design in Edinburgh, was brought in. This resident expert on statutory comprehensive development also usurped Kininmonth as consultant for the King’s Buildings site. And, as we have seen, although Spence
received a clutch of early commissions, the First-Year Science and the Dick Vet commissions went to Matthew's friend, Alan Reiach, rather than either Kininmonth or Spence. Even-handedness in commissioning locally based architects was a professed policy of the University, but Matthew's opinion was the overriding one. His former students, Morris & Steedman, were appointed for the Student Centre project and for the abortive Dental Hospital & School at Potterrow.

While it appears that Matthew did not recommend Kininmonth for any jobs, Charles Stewart and Appleton favoured the architect for the Pfizer Institute and the Postgraduate School of Medicine at Hill Square in the city-centre. The Principal and University Secretary were closely involved in this project financed by the medical company, Pfizer Ltd., to create a postgraduate medical centre. To achieve this, a Postgraduate School for the Royal College of Surgeons was to be linked to the ostensibly separate Pfizer building. These were opened in 1965 and 1967 respectively.¹⁶ {Figs. 4.01a & 4.01b}

It was mentioned in Book Two that there was some hostility from RMJM towards Kininmonth and that this went beyond the bounds of mere competitiveness. From the evidence of events and the testimonies of witnesses it seems that the Edinburgh School, despite its superficially polite and close-knit nature, experienced some factionalism soon after Matthew's return to Edinburgh in 1953. The critical attack on Kininmonth by a cadre connected with Matthew will be discussed in a forthcoming chapter on Modernity and Tradition. The declining role played by Kininmonth at the University and the parallel rise of RMJM - unsurprisingly awarded the commission

¹⁶ Pfizer's senior medical officer, an Edinburgh graduate, initiated the scheme in 1958. Finding a suitable site or a building to convert proved difficult until the Royal College of Surgeons offered a site at Hill Square/Roxburgh Street, adjacent to its Postgraduate School. The idea of the institute was that it should have a club atmosphere, accommodation for visitors and that symposia would be held there. Since the RCS postgraduate school needed to be rebuilt it was considered advantageous to postgraduate medical study to consider both schemes together and to make them contiguous. The Pfizer Institute for Postgraduate Study in Medicine was opened in July 1965. The Royal College of Surgeons Postgraduate school, which opened in April 1967, was named The Lister Memorial Building as the Lister Trust together with the Davidson Bequest financed it. - Minutes of committee meetings and correspondence.
- EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 pt.2 "Pfizer Foundation"
for the potentially enormous University Arts Faculty programme - had been anticipated by Kininmonth before Matthew arrived back in Edinburgh, as we shall shortly see.

**The Secession.**

The state-funded mass provision of the post-war reconstruction naturally required a corresponding expansion and modernisation of architectural training. Progressive forces within the architectural establishment represented by the RIBA had an agenda to upgrade architectural education from the pre-war combination of apprenticeship and college diploma to a full academic degree course, with the opportunity of postgraduate study. At Edinburgh, immediately after the war, architectural design was taught exclusively at the School of Architecture within the Edinburgh College of Art, but a change began with the endowment of a university chair in architecture, ratified in 1948. Agreement was reached between the ECA and the University that the Professor should occupy the vacant headship of the School of Architecture and that students should have the opportunity to take academic courses at the University, in accordance with RIBA ordinances.

In January 1948, R. Gordon Brown was appointed the first Forbes Professor of Architecture. However, Brown's tenure was unsuccessful in many ways, with an extremely high failure rate amongst students for the new MA degree, followed by his resignation in 1950.  

A selection committee was assembled to consider a replacement professor and the future of the MA courses. This committee included Appleton, Talbot Rice, Robert Lyon (ECA Principal), and Kininmonth. The latter had not taught at the College of Art since before the war, but represented both the Edinburgh Architectural Association (EAA) on the College Board of Management and at the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA).

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17 A scheme by Gordon Brown to provide car parking beneath Old College also proved unsatisfactory.
-EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT/95/002 Pt.1 Box 2 "Architecture Chair" file 1/7
There was no shortage of applicants for the chair but, after the debacle with Brown, the committee was cautious and dissatisfied by the calibre of candidates. The idea of personally inviting a suitable man was therefore considered. A list was drawn up which included Spence, John Needham, Sir Hugh Casson, Ralph Cowan (the acting head) and Matthew. Casson and Matthew emerged as favourites for the post but, ultimately, it was resolved that Matthew should be approached first. If he was not interested he was to be asked to recommend someone else. Matthew was still with the London County Council (LCC) and some interesting negotiations and consultations took place. Before the selection committee even decided who should be approached first, Matthew received a letter from his brother, in the Department of Obstetrics at Edinburgh, informing him that a "high official" wanted him to apply for the chair. Although he had not actually applied for it, Matthew apparently was interested in the post, for his brother was able to tell this official that Robert would not "compete for it". Douglas also claimed that, should he be interested, backing in influential circles had already been secured. In May of 1952, Appleton wrote to Matthew asking him to take the chair, while assuring him that he was not in competition with anyone else. Matthew agreed to come to Edinburgh to meet him, however he gave the impression of being unsure about whether he should take the job. He was still employed by the LCC and had to attend a major public inquiry later that year. He apparently also had difficult family circumstances, and then again the salary was rather less than he required. Matthew wrote, in a friendly tone, to Kininmonth telling of his predicament and trying to find out if more money could be found, since he would be unable to undertake private practice in conjunction with the chair. Kininmonth commiserated, yet encouraged Matthew.

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18 Minutes of the Selection Committee May & June 1952.
EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Pt. I Box 2 "Architecture Chair" File 1/11
19 Letter from Douglas Matthew to Robert Matthew 10/10/51.
"I do hope you will find a way out (i.e. of the difficulties) because we need people like you in Edinburgh - although I'm most apprehensive of you as a ravennning (sic) wolf snatching the mutton from the rest of us...This is a most indiscreet letter and had better be burned."^{20}

It seems that everyone involved was talking about Matthew, and possibly in contact with him as well, for in a subsequent letter Kininmonth wrote: "The whole world knows you have been offered the chair."^{21}

Shortly before Matthew came to Edinburgh to be interviewed, Professor Talbot Rice briefed him in London about the curriculum problems at the School of Architecture. The selection committee was impressed by Matthew's "personality, enthusiasm and personal distinction", and it was arranged that he should take the chair as soon as he was free of his London commitments.^{22}

Despite what he had said to Kininmonth about being unable to do any work in private practice if he became Professor, Matthew already had the Turnhouse Airport contract and was clearly planning to quickly set up an office in Edinburgh. The company's first assistant, Tom Spaven, approached Matthew for a job in March 1953 after being urged to do so by Matthew's architect friend, Alan Reia~h.^{23}

Matthew's tenure at the ECA was a short one though, for he seems to have had difficulty in coping with the way the college was run, especially regarding the

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^{20} The letter from Kininmonth to Matthew, 17/6/52, was not burned.
^{21} Letter from Kininmonth to Matthew, undated (Friday).
^{22} Letter of Matthew to Appleton (28/5/52) asking if the 26th June, when he would be in Edinburgh for the RIBA convention, was suitable.
Letter from Talbot Rice to Matthew (11/6/52) arranging a meeting in London.
Letter from Charles Stewart to Matthew (4/8/52)
Letter from ECA to Matthew (9/9/52) officially informing him of the appointment.
Report on Matthew's interview and recommendation for the chair. Minutes of the Selection Committee (16/7/52).
- EUL Spec. Colls. DRT 95/002 Pt 1 Box 2 (Architecture Chair)
^{23} Copy of a letter from Tom Spaven to Matthew (17/3/53).
appointment of staff. To his dismay, he found that he had no say in the matter at all. He was given no intimation of interviewees for vacant posts and no opportunity of seeing them, since he was not on the board of management. He could not take responsibility for staff hired in this way and tendered his resignation in September 1954. Matthew did not, however, offer to resign from the chair, thus creating a potential difficulty for the ECA, which was unable to appoint a new head of school so long as the post was a dual one. If the roles were to be split, the headship would become far less attractive without the lucrative bonus of a university chair. Matthew, obviously, wanted the positions split as a step towards setting up his own Department of Architecture at the University. Subsequent events show that the University found it more important to keep Matthew as professor, than to continue the relationship with ECA, as it was soon proposed that the dual arrangement should be terminated. This entailed that the University had to re-examine its architectural education completely.

With the pre-existing arrangement, Matthew had been unable to improve the pass rate for the MA, since the two years at University were not spent studying architecture or planning - only two students took their finals between 1954 and 1957. With the positions split, a new BA Architecture degree was launched in 1958. Students still had to spend the first three years of their five-year course at the college, but there was now a Department of Architecture teaching courses at honours degree level, and moves were in hand to organise a postgraduate school. Matthew must have convinced Appleton that the University could play an important role in architectural education. He pointed out that there were six

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24 Letter of Matthew to J Paterson, of Liverpool University, on the new arrangement (9/12/55).
-EUL. Special Colls Sir Robert Matthew Papers "Personal & Misc." MS 2533
Letter from Appleton to the Nuffield Foundation regarding funding for a postgraduate research unit. Appleton also mentions the termination of the arrangement by which the Professor of Architecture was Head of the School of Architecture (20/6/57)
university chairs in architecture, with corresponding departments of architecture in England, yet there were none in Scotland. The joint course with the ECA was untenable as was the government of the college. Town councillors occupied 50% of the college's board of management, which meant that the teaching body was not represented.25

Although the ECA /University arrangement continued for a time, discussions with the RIBA ensued, and the University set up a special committee to consider the future of architectural education at Edinburgh. Matthew brought in Sir Leslie Martin as advisor, to support his proposals for an entirely separate university department.26 Martin had worked with Matthew at the LCC and succeeded him as chief architect (1953-6), before taking the chair in architecture at Cambridge. Both men were apparently on a similar trajectory, taking them out of public service and into education and private practice.

Negotiations continued with the ECA, but Matthew had laid down conditions, which the college could never meet.27 And Appleton accepted Matthew’s aim to educate: "A smallish number of people with special talent and promise", as he said in a letter to the UGC. It was also intended that this department should conduct postgraduate training and research, and stimulate interest in architecture as a "cultural and educative subject".28 The UGC chairman, Sir Keith Murray, was alarmed at the proposals, which he feared would put demands on both capital and

25 Letter of Matthew to Appleton, 2/12/54.
26 Letter from Matthew to E..Haynes, secretary of the RIBA Board of Education, inviting him to dine with Charles Stewart, Patrick Nuttgens, the chairman of the RIBA Board of Education, and himself at the Albyn Rooms, Edinburgh. (14/11/58).
27 Matthew could accept undergraduate training at ECA if and only if:
   a) The professor of architecture was a member of the board of management;
   b) teachers in architecture were organised into a board of studies; and
   c) that the professor and his staff should play a reasonable part in undergraduate teaching.
   (Minutes of a meeting between representatives of ECA and the University, 9/2/61).
28 Letter from Appleton to Murray (24/6/61).
recurrent grants. Matthew wanted a further professor and seven other members of staff, as well as a new building for the department. The ECA already had plans in hand for an architecture building to be funded by the Scottish Education Department, and its Head of Architecture, Ralph Cowan, stated that it would be a pity if the two institutions indulged in an unnecessary building competition. The organisation of the College's Board of Studies precluded Matthew's demands, but his proposals were uniform with the RIBA's recommendations which, incidentally, he had contributed to formulating. Appleton canvassed Sir Keith Murray of the UGC, arguing for the liberal education of an architectural elite and asserting that, with Matthew at the helm, there was an opportunity to develop one of the country's leading schools of architecture. The RIBA soon inspected and approved the courses, Murray was persuaded, and the ECA/University arrangement was terminated in December 1961. Diplomas and degrees were still available for ECA students, but honours and postgraduate students were to be taught entirely at the University.  

At this stage, Matthew can be seen to be approaching the peak of his career. He had succeeded in establishing a Department of Architecture, later to become part of the larger School of the Built Environment, for which he intended to erect a fine new building. His company was also flourishing, with its first building for the University, the David Hume Tower, under construction. The presidency of the RIBA soon was his too (1962-4).

The secession of Matthew from the ECA could be seen to represent a rejection of the categorisation of Architecture as a sub-group of Fine Art, as it was treated at the ECA, moving it towards a more "scientific approach". Sir Leslie Martin, as a neutral

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29 In a letter to Appleton of 26/6/61 Murray expressed his alarm. Appleton presented his views on the matter to Murray in letters of 24/6/61 and 28/7/61. The joint committee recommended the termination of the University/ECA arrangement on 19 Dec. 1961. (Minutes of the Joint Committee of ECA & University.) - EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Pt. 1 "Architecture" file D2.
advisor, supported Matthew in this, advocating the benefits of teaching Architecture as a Social Science, rather than a Fine Art.\(^30\)

Interestingly, back in 1951, after the failure of the first MA degree, Kininmonth had expressed an opposite view. He opposed the proposition that a new BSc, as opposed to an MA, in architecture should be taught: ".... On the fundamental principle that architecture is an Art".\(^31\)

Matthew's antipathy to the government of the ECA is understandable, and some of the antagonism within the Edinburgh School is explained by it. At various points Kininmonth was on the staffing committee, along with the painter Anne Redpath (1953). Kininmonth was also on the Board of Management and a member of its adjudication committee (1956). It is likely that there were other figures within the college administration that Matthew was unhappy to have responsible for decisions affecting him, and the future of architectural training. The University's Fine Art Professor, Giles Robertson, and the conservationist architect Ian Lindsay, both prominent in the protest campaign to prevent redevelopment of George Square, are two such examples.

**Formalism Vs Functionalism.**

Matthew steered his newly established practice in a technocratic direction when he formed a partnership that put Stirrat Johnson-Marshall in charge of the London office.\(^32\) Stirrat's experience with local authority projects, especially schools, was an

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\(^{30}\) In a letter to Leslie Martin (30/5/61) Matthew thanked him for agreeing to sit on the ad-hoc committee and outlined his aim of achieving a school of 75-100 students with the aim of developing "a full department of architecture in the broadest sense". The committee, with Appleton as convenor, agreed that a limited number of "honours calibre" students should be instructed wholly at the University. Martin saw no reason why this should be damaging to the ECA diploma if there were to be two schools of architecture in the city: Report of the Special Committee on the Future of Architecture (16/6/61) -EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/002 Pt. 1 "Architecture" file D2

\(^{31}\) Letter from Kininmonth to Charles Stewart 3/12/51.

\(^{32}\) Curiously, Basil Spence is said to have been offered a partnership by Matthew, which he declined. (See p. 184 Andrew Saint Towards a Social Architecture Yale 1987.) This seems inconsistent with the relationship between the two, and, if it is true, then ill-judged by Matthew, since Spence already had established practices in Edinburgh and London while Matthew's firm was still small and Edinburgh based in 1956.
invaluable asset. He was also familiar with government departments, through being the chief architect to the Ministry of Education (1948-56). In combination with Matthew's reputation, this accounts in no small measure for the large number of public projects, such as hospitals, schools and universities with which RMJM became involved. The progressive new firm practised a multi-disciplinary approach, bringing together specialists, such as quantity surveyors, engineers, and acoustic experts - it even had its own fully staffed library. This made for a large organisation, but with all the expertise under one roof, so to speak, the teamwork principle was more easily facilitated and lent itself to programmatic planning. The survey-led design process followed the regional planning model and proved remarkably well suited to publicly funded projects. Following specialist surveys of user needs, expansion rates and proportional costing, government agencies in control of project finance were provided with information in their own language: statistics. Having satisfied the bureaucrats that target figures would be met, the technical means of facilitating these would be presented. Matters more specific to architecture, such as circulation, daylighting and technical services, would take their place within the programme and, in an apparently unbroken chain of logic, these factors determined fully functional plans and, ultimately, the structural system and elevations.

RMJM produced two development plan reports in 1964: for the faculties of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Edinburgh. The first report deals with estimating the projected space needs for the two faculties throughout the years 1964-70. Beginning with a graph indicating the rate of expansion of the various departments, the proposed student figures were calculated. These were based on Edinburgh's proportion of the national requirement and included an adjustment factor to take into account the opening of new universities by 1968. Architecture was scarcely mentioned, as these statistics were primary. The intention was to inform the

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33RMJM Edinburgh University Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences Development Plan First Report (January 1964) and Development Plan Second Report - Planning Proposals (October 1964).
phased programme of demolition and building with the aim of achieving a total gross area of floor-space required by 1969-70, calculated as 506,000 square feet (excluding car parking).

Although RMJM ostensibly operated according to the Functionalist theory that the 'programme' takes into account all the relevant factors, leading and directing the building design, Formalism itself had neither been overcome or eliminated. For, notwithstanding the specialist surveys and calculations for the Arts Faculty group, the overall design had been created well in advance of the surveys. Matthew sketched a rough esquisse in 1958, working it up in time for inclusion in the 1959 development plan. (Fig. 4.10) In fact, sketch plans for the Arts Tower were ready before he was even officially awarded the commission, and a fairly precise area within the University precinct had already been designated for the faculty buildings.\(^34\) The “Development Plan First Report (January 1964)” had to take into account the David Hume Tower, which was by then already in use, together with the siting of other faculty buildings, including a 600-seat lecture theatre that Matthew inherited from Spence's 1955 plan.

Strictly speaking, programmatic planning should have taken the figures of the floor space requirements, the recommended building plot ratio - 2:1 in this instance - and the area of ground available, in order to determine building height and mass. But, as we have seen, the aesthetic imperative of Spence to have a "vertical feature" on the south-east of George Square had largely determined the "programme". Matthew slightly changed the siting of this tower and arranged the other four anticipated faculty buildings around it.\(^35\) The University received outline-planning consent in March 1959 and a more detailed submission was approved for a plan uniform with Matthew's Arts Faculty model a year later. And, although the brief of

\(^{34}\) It must be said, however, that user groups had increasing involvement as the building progressed.

\(^{35}\) The anticipated buildings, blocks A, B, C, D and E, were the David Hume Tower, its block of lecture theatres, the two tutorial blocks and the large lecture theatre respectively. All of these had been featured in the 1959 model.
1960 had been superseded due to the availability of more precise data, it was thought prudent to proceed with planning upon the basis of that brief in order to avoid reopening the question of planning permission for George Square.

After the quantity surveying exercise of the First Report, the Second Report (October 1964) got down to the serious matter of building programme using the language of Functionalism. A diagram demonstrated how the detailed examination of "functional requirements" suggested certain functional elements that would lead to a design outcome. For instance, it was a requirement that there should be spaces to suit activities at faculty level. The functional elements responding to this were "lecture rooms for small numbers of students". A "planning consequence" of these small lecture rooms was stated as: "ready access from main circulation and from departments". The "characteristics of building types" relating to this sequence were main lecture theatres, with raked floors, and smaller lecture theatres on the horizontal circulation, with departmental rooms above. To an architect, these deductions are so blindingly obvious as to scarcely merit mention.

The "components" which RMJM produced as a result of these considerations are "the linear teaching block", "the podium" and "special buildings". The flexibility of the linear teaching block is expressed by its extendibility into L-plan, C-plan and finally a quadrangle. The podium deck unified the various buildings and allowed underground links and underground parking. The 600-seat lecture theatre and the pre-existing David Hume Tower were described as "special buildings". {Fig. 4.10a}

The circulation of staff and students was carefully assessed but, of course, the physical grouping and building forms inevitably coincided with those of the 1959 layout. The only differences were that block C was already enlarged to the L-plan stage of its growth pattern, and there was acknowledgement of Johnson-Marshall's 1962 proposals, that the podium should link up with the upper level pedestrian

36The meticulous statistics of the First Report had to be amended because Fine Art and Archaeology had been excluded from the projections.
circulation of the commercial zone of the Comprehensive Development Area. In this scheme, therefore, traffic circulation and servicing were to be carried out below the podium at street level. *(4.10b)*

It is also interesting that the height of the linear teaching blocks was actually determined by the height of the chimney-stacks of the old houses in George Square: surely a Formalist device.³⁷ *(Figs. 4.10c & 4.10d)* This was the result of earlier strategies by Spence and Matthew to convince the local authority that the physical character of George Square would be maintained.

In the Second Report, the programmatic approach was emphasised to an extent approaching absurdity, given the facts that I have just revealed about the actual sequence of events. The attention devoted to circulation appears somewhat hollow, since much of the layout was a foregone conclusion. There was a certain pretentiousness in using a diagram - clearly influenced by Le Corbusier's "Modulator" drawings - to demonstrate the advantages of sub-podium circulation should there be rain. *(Fig. 4.10e)*

This is not to say that there was no refinement of the podium idea, such as the precise location of sub-podium elements and the position of the garden courtyards where the podium would be pierced to allow light into the basement rooms surrounding the gardens. The development plan also enlarged on Matthew's original scheme, which it was anticipated would be completed in September 1966. Projected further phases included a large quadrangular building, Block G, on the site of the buildings on the south side of Buccleuch Place, which was expected to be largely complete by 1967. The optimistic projection for September 1968 anticipated the following: a linear teaching building (Block F and F1) on the north side of Buccleuch Place; a special building on the south side of the street (Block H) and a further linear block, F2, at the extreme south of the site. *(Fig. 4.10f)*

³⁷ Compare diagrams 10.2 and 10.3 in the Development Plan Second Report to see the influence of the old building forms upon the new. *(Figs. 4.10c & 4.10d)*
In the final stage, block D was to be augmented by block D1, to the south, while blocks F, F1, and F2 would be linked into a single C-plan by block F3, which would also provide a frontage onto Buccleuch Street. {Fig. 4.10g} With the land to the north of Windmill Street allocated for First-Year Science, and the Library site enlarged to allow room for a future extension, this was to be the full extent of the Arts Faculty development. It should be stated that the phases of development were specifically linked to the estimated expansion rate of the various departments. And, the necessity of housing departments that had to be moved to allow demolition also affected the phasing of the programme. Efficient management of this logistical problem was a major contribution to the University's development plan.

The Arts Faculty programme was eminently practical, in the sense that it involved precise estimates of student and staff numbers absolutely essential for a Treasury-funded project. However, as we have seen, many of the steps in this logical process were outcomes of Matthew's own architectural analysis, and derived from the earlier one by Spence. Some apparent innovations, such as demountable storage walls, were included in the development plan and appear to have preceded a detailed building design. Installation of these and several other important practical problems had to be solved on-site.38 Although the development plan expanded upon Matthew's original design, it is ironic that no phases beyond those of his 1959 model were actually executed.

The design for the Fundamental Science buildings by Alan Reiach, intended to occupy the area immediately to the north of the Arts Faculty, appears to have followed a similar evolution to the RMJM buildings. The main building, the Appleton Tower, which was the only one executed, takes its overall form from one of the south-oriented slab blocks to the east of George Square, as suggested by

38None of the demountable walls have ever been demounted, and there was some uncertainty as to whether they could ever be remounted again if they had been. For all the research involved, it proved impossible to ascertain the type and location of drains until some on-site experiments were carried out. This aspect of the tutorial blocks has remained problematic.

-Interviews with Dermott Quinn (formerly RMJM) and Mick Duncan (RMJM)
Spence's 1955 scheme. [Fig. 4.11] This was moved slightly to the north, on to the site of Windmill Street, as a result of Matthew re-siting his tower further to the east than Spence had originally suggested. The associated teaching block follows the general form of the Arts Faculty linear buildings, themselves echoing the original Georgian houses: thus completing enclosure of the square.\(^{39}\)

Whatever the artistic imperatives of the founder, Spence's firm was also able to give the impression of strict Functionalism. According to Hardie Glover, the design of the Main University Library was determined almost entirely by imposed conditions and practical considerations. The planning authority imposed a site restriction and constrained the site to the south, by insisting upon a roadway for services and emergency vehicles, which necessitated revision of the evolving design. [Figs. 4.12a - 4.12c] This, together with the size and shape of the one-acre site, determined the massing, while the podium system of the RMJM buildings determined the level of entry and precluded any basement extensions. The design team included the University Librarian, E.R.S. Fifoot, and representatives of the main contractors. The necessary floor-loading determined the structural grid, and the librarian's brief required the "American system" of displacement around a circulation core. Then, with a ceiling height of 8 feet, with space for the services and ducting, the building is largely determined. Hardie Glover modestly described the design as the inevitable outcome of these conditions. Yet, for all that, he was acknowledged as something of an expert on library design, and the interior designers in his team were responsible for furniture designs and finishing.\(^{40}\) So successful was the resulting building that the whole team, including the librarian, was engaged to produce a library design for University College Dublin along the same lines, with Ove Arup & Partners again as structural consultants. The Irish library, completed in 1972, also

\(^{39}\) Note that Spence had originally suggested that a rather unnecessary Convocation Hall might occupy this site.

\(^{40}\) John Hardie Glover "Edinburgh University Library" F.A.A Yearbook no.13 1969
J.H.G Edinburgh University Library University of Edinburgh Publication 1968
Interview with Archie Dewar (formerly S.G&F) March 2001
makes use of the water feature as a foreground setting so beloved of the practice.\textsuperscript{41}

\textit{(Fig. 4.12d)}

It should not be forgotten, however, that the site for the Library at Edinburgh had been quickly chosen in Spence's architectural analysis of 1954, and that the footprint corresponded almost entirely to that of the western block, including the back gardens, of the original buildings of south George Square. Spence's initial estimate of space requirements proved fairly accurate, although a site for a possible extension was allocated at Buccleuch Place. A cluster of hexagons represents this extension in RMJM's plan. \textit{(Fig. 4.10g)} The extension was intended to compensate for the space lost as a result of the local authority's restrictions, but no design for it was ever commissioned.

\textbf{Chapter Four. Pragmatism and Idealism.}

As the New Elizabethans celebrated with a Festival Style Coronation, beneath the surface of the optimistic society, the technocrats were busily making their instrumental calculations and the progressive architects were striving to meet targets. For example:

"In 1949 secondary schools had an average area per place of 111 sq ft and a cost per place of over £320 which at current prices would be equivalent to over £450. Now the corresponding figures are 75 sq. ft and £240 a place and the quality of building is being maintained"\textsuperscript{42}

It is not too difficult to demonstrate that quality was not assured in the productivity drive that produced the post-war architecture. Yet there were many

\textsuperscript{41} Spence's perspectives for the Edinburgh campus (1955) suggested fountains and sculpture, probably inspired by Saarinen's Cranbrook Academy. These ideas were never pursued. Spence employed the device of a water feature as a setting for several of his notable buildings including the University of Sussex, Scottish Widows II, in Edinburgh, and the British Embassy in Rome. Interestingly, Stirrat Johnson-Marshall's campus for the University of York has a lake, but this was chiefly to provide adequate drainage of a marshy site.

\textsuperscript{42} Stirrat Johnson-Marshall, from a lecture at the British Architects conference 11 June 1953 \textit{RIBA Journal} June 1953.
then, as now, convinced that a surge of technological discovery inevitably ensured improved materials and construction methods leading to increased production, together with cost reductions, due to economies of scale. For these reasons, whether under socialism or capitalism, the construction industry is forever under pressure to reduce the real cost of production, while attempting to increase its own profits or surpluses. Government funded schemes have always been under even more pressure than private enterprise to employ techniques of Taylorism and cost-cutting. It is said that this is because governments spend income raised from taxes, while businesses can avoid taxation by spending money on buildings.

In 1961, when a Ministry of Works official wrote to ask what factors were hampering building and civil engineering work in Scotland, Matthew was able to promptly provide a list. Lack of proper standardisation was one factor, another was "design co-ordination" i.e. the lack of mass production of necessary elements. The fact that a "stop-go" system of government funding was in operation was also cited as a major factor. By this Matthew meant that governments used the funding of public building projects as a sort of tap for increasing or reducing consumption. Somewhat shrewdly, considering that he had recently set up a Housing Research Unit at the University of Edinburgh, Matthew pointed out that a lack of government funding for research was also hampering progress.43

As we have seen, post-war Britain witnessed the fruition of many of the progressive ideas that architects, planners and reformers had canvassed in the 1920s and 1930s. Matthew had been important before the war, as Chief Architect to the Department of Health for Scotland, applying his ingenuity to the execution of government policy. Now that he was no longer a civil servant, he had more freedom to comment upon the processes of government. Yet, although Utopian ideas had some political value, the means to the ends were still entirely reliant upon finite

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43Letter from Mr. Wastie (Ministry of Works) to Matthew 25/10/61 - EUL Spec. Colls. MS 2533 Sir Robert Matthew Papers (personal letters file)
resources. All the reformist planners, from Geddes onwards, had claimed a pragmatic foundation for their theories, as had the university reformers. This was the claim that the cost of state projects would be borne by the resulting increase in productivity.

In capitalist, or mixed, economies, governments borrow money in order to invest in the future, but they always strive to control the economy and, as Matthew pointed out, borrowing and public expenditure are seen as the key to this control. In the period in question, many on the Left envied the state control of the Soviet Union, where longer-term plans were possible than under the relatively short-term life of elected governments.

Nevertheless, we can see that a social experiment was in train, with politicians and civil servants willing to listen to the acknowledged experts in order to achieve tangible results. Some architects, at least, did become the protagonists of historical change that they had long aspired to be.

**Pragmatism at Edinburgh.**

In Book Three we saw various cost-cutting measures at the Pollock Halls of Residence leading to the abandonment of Kininmonth's original scheme and the use of a patent building system, together with a reduction of living space and facilities for individual students. The phase following the refectory/conference centre was subject to further pragmatic exigencies. At the time of commencement, in 1971, Phase VI of the development was considered to be the final building on the site. Kininmonth's revised layout of 1954 had allocated a site for a women's hall of residence at the extreme north of the site. (Fig. 2.38b) The land available for the sixth phase had been reduced, due to the layout of the "Skarne" blocks, but the intention remained to build a further hall in this location. The architects produced an initial plan on the basis that it would contain 200 rooms. But, this was a difficult time for the University. It required many more residential places and yet the UGC was not able to provide adequate finance for these, despite the fact that the University already
owned the land. To answer the growing accommodation needs, the architects were instructed to produce a new plan to increase capacity of the hall to 350.

Many means of finance were unsuccessfully investigated, before the University's officers discovered that the Cowan House fund was rather well endowed. The original Cowan House residence had been created out of buildings on the south side of George Square, with the gifts and bequests of Dr Cowan. This hall had been demolished to clear the site for the new Library, but stocks and cash were still held in trust for residential scholarships. The trustees agreed to transfer the money to the Pollock Halls building fund, so long as the new building would be called Cowan House. With these funds, as well money set aside from the University Appeal, and a grant from the UGC for furnishings and equipment, the new Cowan House was ultimately realised in two phases and opened in 1973. (Fig. 3.15a) However, even the humble ideals for this hall had been substantially reduced. Provision for married students with families was dropped, baths were eliminated from the scheme and the finishing materials were of the cheapest quality. The space allocated to each student and the circulation space had been pared down to an absolute minimum: in fact to "Parker Morris" council house standards. The design was further compromised when replanning within the original envelope meant that very narrow linear corridors had to be incorporated. The resulting poverty of accommodation, in both size and quality, made Cowan the least desirable hall on the site, with an excessive rate of wear and tear. Inevitably, the building became untenable in terms of maintenance and letting and, less than thirty years after opening, the University chose to demolish it, in order to redevelop the site.44

In the 1950s, university building projects tended to proceed on the basis of estimates by a reliable architectural practice, but by the 1960s Taylorist inspired

44 Minutes of the Project Sub-Committee for Pollock Halls of Residence Development VI; Correspondence between Charles Stewart and UGC Misc. Correspondence and reports of Noel Anderson (buildings officer), M. Westcott (assistant to the secretary), R.Maxwell Young (factorial secretary) and A.J.McIver (architect).

- EUL Spec Colls. UA DRT 95/007 pt.1 Boxes 29 & 30 "Halls of Residence"
The new Cowan House was demolished in 2001.
scrutiny was constantly demanding more value for money. Spence's ambitiously
designed buildings for the first of the new universities, at Sussex, ran well over
budget, provoking stricter control of building costs. The UGC engaged its own
specialists, in order to look for economies and set maximum costs. This proved
detrimental to the quality of university buildings in general.

In order to meet the higher education expansion figures, universities were under
government pressure to take more students. In order to receive the funding to teach
these students, building plans had to be prepared. But, as the UGC funds were spread
ever more thinly, the value of capital grants per student fell. The University of
Edinburgh was never able to cease its public appeal for funds. The appeal was re-
launched in 1965, with the news that the UGC allocation of £2,200,000 for 1965/6
had dropped drastically to £850,000 for 1966/7.\textsuperscript{45} A dramatic sign of the times was
the building for Forestry and Natural Resources, later named the Darwin Building, at
King's Buildings, designed by Gardner-Medwin, Kingham & Knight. The steel
skeleton stood abandoned and gently rusting for a year, until the UGC “unfroze” the
funding in 1966.

The Medical School Extension was another major project compromised by
stringency. Earlier, we saw the beginning of the project in the 1930s, and it became
the subject of a competition in 1950. When site preparation eventually began in
1955, it was anticipated that there would be four phases of building to create an
entirely new north side to George Square, in about a decade. After various setbacks
due to structural difficulties and miscalculations, Walter Ramsay’s first phase, for

\textsuperscript{45} The cost of three major projects, Chemical Engineering, Petrology and the Central Science
Laboratory, amounted to £850,000. No funding from the UGC was immediately available for the
New Refectory at the Pollock Halls estimated at £200,000. The residential development of Mylne’s
Court required a further £90,000. UGC funding for the Students Centre was deficient by £350,000 for
the first phase. For urgent restoration to historic buildings £48,000 was required. Other projects
proposed, but with an uncertain future, were: Medical Extension, Arts and Social Sciences Extension,
Library Extension, further phases of the Student Centre, Chemistry Extension, Electrical Engineering
Extension, Physics and Mathematics, King's Buildings Library, King's Buildings Refectory.
\textit{- An Expanding University} (University of Edinburgh Appeal Brochure, 1965)
Pathology, was eventually ready for use in 1963. However, the intended second phase, for Biochemistry, was postponed and superceded by the projected third phase, for Pharmacology (1968-72), when funding for that became available first.

It required the additional financial assistance of the Wellcome Trust and the incorporation of a new medical library, funded by the Erskine bequest, to make the next phase viable. Although Ramsay remained as architect for Biochemistry, Hardie Glover was commissioned to design the medical library, within the intended penultimate phase of the Medical Extension. Work on this finally commenced in 1976. (Figs 2.54c and 2.54d)

It is almost as if fate conspired to prevent completion of the medical buildings. Acquisition of the vital George Watson's Ladies College site was a protracted matter that actually took forty years. (Fig. 4.13) In the late 1930s, the owners agreed in principle to sell the building to the University. However, when the Merchant Company announced in 1972 that it was ready to sell, the cost had risen and the UGC had become extremely reluctant to purchase city-centre sites. Furthermore, as there was no immediate plan for a development until after the Biochemistry phase was complete and the UGC could not sanction purchase until 1981.

This was the only part of George Square not yet owned by the University and tragedy seemed to be looming when the Merchant Company began to press the University to buy. Fears arose that the building might be put on the market and sold to another buyer. Rather than allow this to happen, the University decided that the

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46 Ramsay's original design was for a steel frame building. As steel was still rationed he was instructed to change it to a concrete frame. This was not a simple matter. The architect had no experience of concrete construction and local structural engineers had little had very little. However, concrete was then rationed, steel came off the ration list and Ramsay was instructed to prepare another steel frame design. (Minutes of the MBC 29 Jan. 1960)

Difficulties in erecting the frame brought work to a standstill on more than one occasion. Delays and additional consultant's fees entailed that the University's contribution rose to £100,000.

Spence was then asked to examine the rest of Ramsay's design. This resulted in the amended scheme, which split the Medical Extension in two with an access between the two blocks to the School of Music. (Minutes of the UDC 7 March 1958).

Due to a miscalculation in boiler capacity, the first phase was underestimated by £5600. (Minutes of the MBC 29 Jan. 1960).
building should be bought and used by another faculty, until such time as it could be redeveloped for medical uses. The UGC could only accept this if the University took 1000 extra students. To make matters worse, the UGC was not prepared to pay the full asking price, and a complicated deal had to be struck that gave the Merchant Company one of the University's playing fields.

An extremely pragmatic solution to the problem of its immediate use ultimately saved the old school building from total oblivion. New accommodation, for the Department of Psychology was high on the priority list. A site had been found at Adam Street/Roxburgh Street, next to the University's buildings at High School Yards, and Spence Glover & Ferguson produced sketch plans. However, finance depended upon compensation expected from the Corporation for the compulsory purchase of the Department's temporary accommodation at the Pleasance, which stood in the way of a proposed new road. By 1975, the entire road scheme, and thus the compensation, appeared unlikely, or an extremely long-term prospect. It was decided, therefore, to convert the old school for Psychology, and Spence's practice inherited the job of conversion in 1974. The survival of the old school, flanked by the successfully completed phases of the Medical Extension, is a highly visible

Spence's company had already done work for a Psychology building at Adam Street/Roxburgh Street, adjacent to High School Yards. Andrew Merrylees presented the sketch plan for the Adam St. building to the New Psychology Building Project Sub Committee in June 1971. The UGC was prepared to provide £240,000 for this project in 1972 and it was expected that compensation from the Council would make up the balance of the cost. Minutes of the UDC 29/10/71.
-In April 1973 the UGC approved an offer of £400,000 for the George Watson's Ladies College. However the Merchant Company wanted £1,500,000, but offered terms involving the Craiglockhart Playing Field. (Minutes of the UDC 23/4/73)
In November 1973 the deal with the Merchant Company was concluded and it was decided then that the alternative to Roxburgh St. for Psychology was conversion of the old school. To further complicate matters, the Corporation was considering rezoning Adam Street for housing, should the road scheme be abandoned. (Minutes of the UDC 19/11/73)
- EUL Spec. Colls. UA DRT 95/007 Box 57.
reminder of the impingement of pragmatism upon the idealism with which the University's expansion project had commenced.48 {Figs. 2.54c- 2.54e}

The Architecture Department Building.

Even the ambition of so powerful and influential a character as Robert Matthew seems to have foundered on the reef of instrumentality. In 1954, with Spence's support, he had laid claim to a site in the George Square area for his new Department of Architecture building. Here one is reminded of one of Matthew's idols, Walter Gropius, who re-organised the Weimar School to create the Bauhaus, designed its revolutionary new home at Dessau, while also setting up in private practice.

As detailed earlier, Matthew succeeded in setting up both his practice and his new Department. This, he rapidly expanded, to address the needs of architectural education and important social issues, such as housing and strategic planning. A postgraduate diploma in Civic Design was offered and this was augmented, when a Housing Research Unit (HRU), later the Architecture Research Unit (ARU), was set up in 1962.49 Meanwhile, the specialised field of Urban Design and Regional Planning was being groomed to branch off into a separate department under Professor Johnson-Marshall, in 1965. Despite the success of these departments, all of which operated from several old houses in George Square earmarked for demolition, it proved difficult to keep the proposed new Architecture building as a priority on the University building programme. The apparent lack of urgency for the building caused the Department constant concern for over a decade.50

48 While it was actually under threat of demolition, there were no calls to preserve McGibbon & Ross's eclectic French style building. Re-assessment of the architects and substantial Victorian buildings has resulted in its subsequent statutory listing.
49 The Diploma in Civic Design was offered from 1960/61. Matthew, Percy Johnson-Marshall and former DHS architect F.R. Stevenson gave lectures. Patrick Nuttgens taught history, and Arthur Ling was Visiting Professor.
The Builder 5/8/60.
The Carnegie Trust, the DSIR and the Nuffield Foundation initially sponsored the HRU.
The Builder 26/2/62.
50 Early in 1965, the Architecture building was fourth on the University's priority list, though it did not remain there. (Minutes of the UDC 4/5/65)
-EUL Spec. Colls. UA. DRT 95/007 Box 56
Letter from Matthew to Charles Stewart protesting that the Architecture building was not on the University's programme for 1970/1 (22/2/67).
When the UDC recommended Matthew as architect for the new Architecture building in 1960, the estimated cost was £400,000, with commencement expected in 1966. Matthew's successful efforts, after resigning from the ECA, appear to have justified this. Indeed, RMJM's 1964 Development Plan allocated a large site on the north east of Buccleuch Place, "Block G", for a "special building". {Fig. 4.10g} Matthew and the head of Geography, Professor Wreford Watson, had reached an agreement about the shared interests of Geography and Architecture/Urban Design/Regional Planning. Accordingly, the Development Plan recommended shared accommodation of 122,000 sq. ft. for 400 students. In 1965 the Department of Architecture's sub-committee for the project, somewhat optimistically, instructed preparation of a preliminary sketch plan to a budget not exceeding one million pounds. {Fig. 4.14} The scheme had already been somewhat scaled-down to keep it within this price range!\textsuperscript{51} Mick Duncan, at RMJM, responsible for this task. He had a special interest in the project that began with his undergraduate dissertation project of 1961, for a building to house the Department. It is interesting that, in connection with his undergraduate work, he was aware of the precise site of the proposed building well in advance of the Development Plan of 1964.\textsuperscript{52}

Plans were draughted and briefs compiled for such a building, but there was no point in proceeding further until the project was actually on a UGC budget. The feasibility study of 1965 suggests a fairly substantial building of 225,000 sq. ft., conforming in footprint to that of block G in the development plan. This was intended to occupy the site of nos. 8-12 Buccleuch Place and extend back to the boundary with the Meadows to the south. At this stage the idea was that the massing could be stepped to allow for top lit studios, and thus the L-plan at the core of the


\textsuperscript{52}Interview with Mick Duncan (RMJM) (February 1999).
building would rise to four storeys, while the bulk of it would consist of two storeys and a basement at sub-podium level. The eight lecture theatres, ranging in capacity from 60 to 350, seats were to be shared with Geography, along with a library, slide library, exhibition hall, and common rooms for staff and students, together with all the facilities for teaching and research.\(^{53}\)

Matthew must have soon ascertained that this was not realistic, for later that year the target budget was £350,000! Nevertheless, funding allocations and building schedule priority were more favourable with Geography accommodated too. The resources of the Department of Geography were essential for teaching regional planning and strategic development. The relationship with Geography signified a further break with the tradition of Arts based Architectural education.

Of course, Matthew was not expanding the Department simply to justify his desire for a grand new Architecture building. He intended to put the University at the forefront of the study of architecture and its related fields of study. In its recommendations to the Robbins Committee, in 1961, The Welsh School of Architecture had advised that civil engineering, architecture and planning should be brought together, to create faculties of the environment. This was representative of progressive thought in the profession: the comprehensive approach to planning and architecture, such as Matthew discussed with Doxiadis at their Delos gatherings.\(^{54}\) Such changes take time, however, and it was not until 1967 that the departments of Civil Engineering, Geography, Architecture and the Department of Urban Design and Regional Planning were brought together to form the School of the Built Environment. It is interesting to recall that Kininmonth's recommendations for an

\(^{53}\) "Schedule of Areas for new Architecture and Geography Building" 1964.
Minutes of Meetings of Architecture /Geography Building Committee.
Eleanor Morris Collection. Department of Architecture File.
"Block G Feasibility Study" drawings.
-Mick Duncan Collection.
\(^{54}\) The Builder 12/1/62
Architecture Faculty, presumably to be run jointly by the University and ECA, had been brushed aside before Matthew's return to Edinburgh.

Time was against Matthew, in terms of both the University's priorities for Architecture and the accelerating stringency of the Treasury. After Appleton's death, the University's enthusiasm for a purpose-built Department of Architecture building waned and other alternatives were explored.

When the estimate for Matthew's School of the Built Environment building was revised again to £1,500,000, in 1967, there must have been some anxiety within the University. The possibility of instead acquiring and converting the vacated Heriot Watt premises in Chambers Street was discussed. Neither Architecture nor any other University department was interested in this building, however.55 In 1969, premises previously occupied by a working-men's club in Infirmary Street were briefly considered. This was the year in which the University began investigating ways of retaining the tenements on Buccleuch Place, thus denying the proposed Architecture building its site. The following year, when a redundant biscuit factory at the Causewayside was suggested, it was rejected by the Department.56 Conversion of the nineteenth century Surgical Hospital at High School Yards was next mooted. This was to be vacated when the second phase of the James Clerk Maxwell building was completed.57

After a feasibility study for converting the hospital proved that it was too expensive, at £110,000 over the UGC maximum allowance, the University's

55 The UDC considered the project very large and expensive and the Heriot Watt building was discussed as an alternative. (Minutes of the UDC 6/11/67)
56 EUL Spec. Colls UA DRT 95/002 Pt. 1 "Architecture", D8 Heriot Watt College was awarded a University Charter in 1966 and the Regional Council gifted a site for its campus on the outskirts of the city. Alan Reiach was commissioned to produce the development plan. The old Heriot Watt building in Chambers Street has an impressive façade but its site is compromised by its neighbours. As a result it was considered badly planned with very poor daylighting to the rear.
57 This site was several hundred metres to the south of the Arts Faculty site.
58 Since the last of the Department of Physics did not move to King's Buildings until 1976 this was not a viable option.
acquisition of the Argyle brewery behind Chambers Street provided the final solution. There was more than a little desperation by now, since demolition of the Department's premises in George Square was imminent. Agreement was reached, therefore, to amalgamate the old brewery maltings and the adjacent Minto House in Chambers Street. RMJM was thus deprived of what an important design challenge. It is somewhat ironic that the architect appointed was John Reid, of the Ian Lindsay practice. Lindsay had been an opponent of Matthew during the George Square controversy, before his company carried out various works of conversion and rehabilitation of historic buildings for the University.

This particular job was more conversion than conservation. However, the brewery buildings included the important Tailor's Hall (1621) and Reid prepared a feasibility study for the whole site.58 {Figs. 4.15a - 4.15c} Minto House had been created by linking a former church with a medical college and had endured many years of alteration since the University acquired it after the First World War. Reid erected three brick towers with concrete fronts, to unify the buildings and provide vertical circulation. These new elements were discrete, with only a small portion visible from the main street. {Figs. 4.15c & 4.15d}

Matthew's primacy ended along with the era of Reconstruction when the Department of Architecture moved into Minto House c/w the Argyle Maltings, in 1974. He resigned from the Forbes Chair, with the gratitude of the Dean, since this helped the University's financial predicament, but remained as Director of the School of the Built Environment. He was ill by then, however, and died the following year.59

58The rest of the project stalled during the recession of the 1970s but a modified scheme for student residences on the site of Kincaid's Court was achieved in the late 1980s after Tailor's Hall was disposed of.
59Letter from Prof. S.B.Saul to Matthew 6/5/74.
- Glendinning Collection RHM Papers Uni. File.
Chapter Five. Modernity and Tradition.

Resolving the antipathy of Modernity and Tradition was a familiar task for the Edinburgh School. In the second book, we saw how the architects tried to maintain affinity with the tradition of Scottish architecture, while also attempting to engage with the spirit of Modernity. This had been complicated by differing views on what constituted architectural and, indeed, what the essence of Modernism was. In the 1930s, building form and type were the main avenues for expressing either polarity. Then, after the war, the appearance of stonework and timber came to represent tradition. With the obvious Scandinavian influence representing Modernity, the antipathy is apparently resolved and the Scottish Festival Style idiom created.

Basil Spence always maintained - perhaps unwisely for his popularity at the time - that he was a traditionalist. He prefaced his book, "A Phoenix at Coventry", with the following quote from Bela Bartok:

"Only a fool will build in defiance of the past. What is new and significant always must be grafted to old roots, the truly vital roots that are chosen with great care from the ones that merely survive. And what a slow and delicate process it is to distinguish radical vitality from the wastes of mere survival, but that is the only way to achieve progress instead of disaster"60

(Bartok)

Architectural historicism, however, was not a consideration by this stage in his career.

"I realised too... that architecture should grow out of the conditions of the time, should not be a copy of past styles, and must be a clear expression of belief in contemporary thought"61

60 Basil Spence A Phoenix at Coventry (preface.) London 1962
61 Basil Spence A Phoenix at Coventry (p20.) London 1962
For Spence, "being traditional" meant always building in one's own time, to be part of the tradition of architecture was to be - as he described it -: "... Fresh leaves on the top of the old tree". In claiming that being modern actually was the tradition, while any sort of historicism is a revolt against architectural tradition, he perplexes the theorists.

"Many sincere people, little realising that our tradition is such an adventurous one, are shocked when architects think in this traditional way; they cannot see that the true traditionalists are people who think simply in their own era. The copyists, then, are surely the revolutionaries."  

Describing the historicists as revolutionaries was carrying the point rather too far. What he really meant was that the use of contemporary construction and style had continuity with the spirit of adventure that had characterised medieval architecture. A statement that he made just before the war demonstrates that he felt he had reconciled the roles of tradition and innovation, and in a rather traditional way.

"Our tradition is really a sensitive reaction to existing conditions, and the production of a building that is fitted for its purpose, direct and simple in its conception, with an eye for proportion and the understanding use of materials."  

Concepts of sensitivity and proportion seem most relevant to the architect trained as an artist. Nevertheless, fitness for purpose, directness, and simplicity might equally be considered the attributes of vernacular architecture. Reiach and Hurd valorised the vernacular in Building Scotland - the use of the term "building", rather than "architecture", in the title was significant. Reiach's sketches of Mediterranean vernacular buildings, frequently published in the Edinburgh Architectural Association journal, show an abiding interest in these attributes.

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62 Basil Spence A Phoenix at Coventry (p22.) London 1962
63 Basil Spence from a speech he made at the 1937 Empire Exhibition in Glasgow. Quoted by C. McKean in The Scottish Thirties pp.36.
But, while Hurd ultimately came to specialise in restoration, even emulation, the effect of the vernacular upon Reiach is less straightforward. His student work was considered avant-garde by Scottish standards and contains elements of Art Deco and Bauhaus Modernism. The housing designs he produced for the Westwood Report (1944), while with the DHS, are consistent with the Building Scotland recipe of rural cottages and continental balconied blocks of flats. {Fig. 4.16a & 4.16b} The former having some affinity with the left-wing architects demands for "People's Detailing".

In Reiach's Edinburgh and East of Scotland College of Agriculture (1955-60), at King's Buildings, forms reminiscent of contemporary domestic architecture were adapted for institutional buildings. The shape and configuration recall Lansbury and Swedish housing schemes and the solution is not dissimilar to Kininmonth's design for Holland House. {2.67e}. The College has a pitched roof, fashionably clad in copper, with its most formal feature a glazed arcade.

Like Matthew, Reiach was delegating all the design work by the early 1960s and many considered that he did not live up to his early promise as a designer. The mature work of his practice displays the influence of canonical Modernist designers, such as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Frank Lloyd Wright, rather than the vernacular tradition. The tower for the Royal (Dick) Veterinary College (1967), for the University of Edinburgh, is redolent of Wright's Johnson Wax Laboratory Tower (1950), in proportion and formalism of outline, though the Edinburgh tower's corners are chamfered, rather than rounded. But there were many such variations of the Johnson theme. {Figs. 4.16c & 4.16d} Mies is evoked in the Appleton Tower; in its great open-plan floors, and the sheer glazed grid of fenestration, which is redolent of Lafayette Towers, Detroit (1955). {Figs. 4.16e & 2.69b}

In Matthew's architecture, the vernacular is alluded to in materials and surface texture. The irregular rubble cladding he enjoyed might also have some affinity

64 Hurd's rehabilitation work at the Canongate, for example involved dismantling and re-erecting some buildings while others were invented to fill in the gaps.
called organic movement within 1930s Modernism. Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier had both used natural stone as a sort of elemental material that relates buildings to the earth. The coarse stone finish became a fashionable international stylistic technique, of course. But Matthew continued to harbour a desire that modern techniques would be found of actually building in stone, rather than simply using it as a dressing.

"Stone has been in the past our great traditional building material, but now we find that one cannot use stone economically in building. Surely here is a study worth promoting - the application of scientific methods to the use of stone in building, and the apparent impossibility of doing so at present can be accepted as no more than a challenge"

(Robert Matthew 1953)\(^65\)

The use of stone in Scottish Festival Style buildings, which we saw in Book Two, appears to have been, in some instances at least, a reference to a particularly Scottish tradition. Matthew's use of rubble on the external walls of the podium of the David Hume Tower was specific to the location, with stone from demolished buildings evoking the history of place and craft. It is relevant that he emulated the more vernacular appearance of the side and rear walls of the destroyed buildings, rather than the smooth regularly coursed ashlar of their essentially classical façades.  \(\{\text{Fig. 2.61e}\}\)

Kininmonth's stone clad interior wall of the refectory at Salisbury Green is in striking contrast to the slender concrete columns of the portico, the delicate electric light fittings, and the smooth plaster vaults. Here the stones are massive and rock-faced, like some defensive structure. The sense of their considerable load creates a tangible presence. This contrast was the most extreme of Scottish Festival Style.  \(\{\text{Fig. 2.38g}\}\)

\(^{65}\) Robert Matthew's Inaugural Address to the University of Edinburgh, 1953. -Glendinning Collection RHM Papers Uni File.
At the Refectory, the stonework seems as much an "organic" expedient, as a reference to vernacular tradition. For this is not a random rubble effect, and the coarsely hewn stone relates in colour and texture to the natural brown crags behind the site. Kininmonth's use of ashlar for the façade of Adam House appears to allude to the tradition of monumental Classicism, yet it too responds to the material context of its urban site.

Hardie Glover's exposure of the existing irregular coursed load-bearing walls, in the Staff Club interior, arose out of an interest in the sensuality of the materials and the interesting contrasts of textures that could be achieved. In the creation of the New Look, this was usually more important than the historical integrity of the masonry, although some viewers would have seen it differently. Kininmonth repeated this approach at the University Union extension where the former external wall of the existing building became part of the interior design integrating the new concrete structure with the old stone Union. Festival Style proved quite suitable for the interior of older buildings, and offered a variety of readings on the intentions of the designer.

It does seem that Matthew was deliberately alluding to the vernacular tradition of the town when he clad the Queen's College Tower in Dundee (1955-61) in random rubble. And surely there was an attempt to simultaneously evoke a contemporary mood and a historic sense of place with RMJM's Midlothian County Building (1968), at a junction of Edinburgh's Royal Mile. This was clad with contrasting veneers of ashlar, hammer-dressed stone and prefabricated glazing panels. Matthew's Crombie Halls of Residence in Aberdeen made an even more emphatic reference to the vernacular with random rubble, stained timber weather-boards and pantiles. Engagement with the vernacular has been described as one of the four main qualities of Matthew's work, together with pragmatism, sense of space.

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66 Interview with Archie Dewar, interior designer to the University Staff Club.
and an idiosyncratic sense of scale. A college tower dressed in the attire of much smaller vernacular buildings might create some sort of confusion of scale for the viewer. However, if we can accept that Matthew was one of many who saw Modernism as the child of the vernacular, we might regard the Dundee tower as an attempt to come to terms with Monumentality in the modern context. A tall tower can satisfy some of the desire for a monumental statement with the rubble stone asserting continuity with the nation's ancient towers.

On the other hand, John Richards, who became a partner in RMJM, feels that there is a parallel between Matthew's technique and that of the post-Cubist painters. The painters introduced newsprint, cloth and other materials to their canvases in order to intensify the sense of reality. In the same way, Richards believes that Matthew treated the surfaces of his buildings like a collage, introducing timber and stone in order that they could be read by the public, as if part of an "everyday language" rather than an abstract one.

Matthew encouraged the first postgraduate student at his new department at Edinburgh, Patrick Nuttgens, to undertake a study of the Scottish vernacular that resulted in his thesis "Settlements and Architecture of the North East Lowlands of Scotland" (1959). Nuttgens' survey method, based on the Work-Place-Folk principles of Geddes, meant that this turned out as a sort of regional survey. While the study was comprehensive in its scope, Nuttgens offered little hope for a re-emergence or the creation of a new Scottish vernacular. But, Matthew's interest in vernacular architecture was pan-European. In 1959 he hoped to set up a "Project Vernacular", presumably as an expansion of Nuttgens' research. Apparently he felt some dissatisfaction with the fruits of Modernism, for in his application for funding from the Gulbenkian Foundation he wrote:

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"The Modern Movement in architecture is doing little to take the place of the finest of our older buildings. Replacement is either a poor show of tradition or a travesty of modern architecture (or sometimes a mixture of both)"\(^69\)

He maintained that the project was not an antiquarian pursuit, but a study to show:

"The high standards achieved in the recent past.... Standards that bear the mark of true culture against which the architect and builder of today must be forced to measure their accomplishments.... The villages and towns of the Mediterranean have a message for the young men of today."\(^70\)

Interestingly, Nuttgens had discovered that the message of the Scottish rural vernacular was its functional nature and the location-specific considerations of planning and the layout of communities; qualities that he found lacking in postwar housing in the same district. The latter schemes being an alien imposition that compared badly with traditional solutions.\(^71\)

**Two Traditions Clash.**

Nuttgens and Matthew had particular views of tradition based on a strongly based belief in the legitimacy of the vernacular, while Kininmonth understood the Neoclassicism of Adam part of a living Scottish architectural tradition. In response to Kininmonth's "traditional" approach at the University’s Adam House, Nuttgens began a critical offensive that threatened to compromise Matthew's professional diplomacy by dragging him into the affair. *(Fig. 2.36)*

\(^69\) Robert Matthew, "Project Vernacular" grant application to the Gulbenkian Foundation (Lisbon) 25/10/59.

\(^70\) Robert Matthew, "Project Vernacular" grant application to the Gulbenkian Foundation (Lisbon) 25/10/59.

\(^71\) "The post-war years have virtually seen the end (as far as new building is concerned) of the local character of North East buildings.... It is partly caused by a lack of attention to functional requirements confirms the assumption that local character is essentially the product of satisfying, practically and simply, local needs. It is the vernacular language of architecture; and it seems that a new vernacular will not emerge until more investigation is made, not of past styles, but of the actual local conditions and the demands they create" pp.470. Patrick Nuttgens *Settlements and Architecture of the North-East Lowlands of Scotland* 1959. PhD Thesis.
- Department of Architecture Library University of Edinburgh.
With the completion of Adam House, an article by an anonymous author launched a public debate in the University's "Student" magazine.

"What then are we to think of this sham Adam building - this ferro-concrete structure erected with all the technical skills of the mid 20th century whose face is made up with mock elegance lest it offend the police clothing store on one side or the food shop on the other"

As discussed in Book Two, the building was intended as a response to the Old College opposite, and built in such a way that it could be either linked to adjacent buildings or serve as the first phase of a replacement of the entire block. But the author of the article did not acknowledge this. He continued cuttingly:

"It may be that the members of the University Court simply like the Adam style. It is one thing to show a proper respect for this Adam masterpiece and quite another to attach imitations of its style to the face of modern buildings."

Then an imaginary professor is quoted as saying:

"The question of whether or not Adam House could possibly be made worse by vandalism is well outside the realm of the academic."

There was further criticism the following month with an article attributed to "PJN". This went much further.

"The massing is both cramped and ill proportioned. The relation of window to wall, the spacing of these windows, appears to follow no known rule or model of proportion. A handful of windows has been thrown at the building and they have stuck in strange places. The space left over from the central window is filled in with a sort of adolescent shield and some rather tatty rags carved about it. Adam House has no unity! It is a schizophrenic building, sudden in change of mind and change of century."

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72 The Student 27/1/55. Edinburgh
makeshift building, timid building, fit in, hope for the best, keep the council happy building, dead building."

Unsurprisingly, this incensed Kininmonth. To make matters worse, there were rumours that Matthew had instigated the article. Matthew was also displeased by further rumours that Kininmonth actually blamed him for it. Kininmonth denied accusing Matthew of anything but he asked the professor to keep his students in check. He also made clear his intentions to submit the case to the RIAS as a question of internal discipline. Having taken legal advice, he was informed that the article transgressed the bounds of fair comment.

"In my view the attitude of Nutyens (sic) and others shows a shocking lack of any sense of professional etiquette or conduct and if allowed to continue unchecked can only end in the disruption of the profession in Edinburgh."

It was fairly widely considered at the time that the façade of Adam House was rather tongue-in-cheek, but being too early for the irony of Postmodernism it attracted the hostility of the more evangelical of the Modernists. In a letter to "The Builder", the architect adopted a lofty tone in his own defence.

"The key to the treasure house of our art is neither to be found in the works of the past nor the present but in an open mind and a generous spirit."

Like Spence, he was apprehensive of what he described as "contemporary gloss", i.e. designs which would be briefly fashionable and quickly dated. Indeed, he had warned the University authorities about this in connection with the design for the first halls at Salisbury Green.

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73 The Student 10/2/55. Edinburgh
74 Letter from Kininmonth to Matthew 9/3/55
The language of Classicism was clearly important for Kininmonth too. His unsuccessful competition entry for the University’s Medical Extension was also intended to be in the manner of Adam, with a pediment motif to be repeated along the north side of George Square.\textsuperscript{76} His belief in Classicism may be at least partly attributable to a year of professional training spent in the office of Edwin Lutyens. Lutyens, of course, spoke of the “high game” of Classicism; implying that, while it was a grand thing, it was also to be enjoyed.\textsuperscript{77} Lutyens was able to operate with invention and wit within the Classical genre, and Kininmonth was perhaps attempting to emulate him.

Kininmonth’s predilection for grand landscape schemes is similarly Lutyensesque, although some might see this as a manifestation of the Scottish Baroque by citing sources such as Kinross and Hopetoun. Spence and Kininmonth had worked on the New Delhi layout while in Lutyens’ office in 1929-30, which may have inspired the axial layout for Salisbury Green that was discussed in Book Two. {Fig. 2.38a}

During his brief consultancy of the King’s Buildings site, Kininmonth attempted to retain the cross-axes of Robert Lorimer’s layout, with vistas along avenues terminating on the ancient Liberton Tower and the Royal Observatory.\textsuperscript{78} {Figs. 4.17 & 4.18}

An idea that Kininmonth came up with during 1951, when the George Square controversy was raging, was in a similar vein. The architect felt that it would be possible to monumentalise the square, saving some of the buildings and improving on the layout devised by Holden. Holden’s mistake, according to Kininmonth, was to put the emphasis of the George Square campus on an east-west axis, which required

\textsuperscript{76} It has not been possible to locate any surviving copy of the design but Alex McIver and Ian Gordon recall the elevation as being very similar to that of Adam House repeated several times over.

\textsuperscript{77} In a letter to Herbert Baker (1/12/04) Lutyens enthused about Classicism: “It is a game that never deceives, dodges never disguises. It means hard thought all through - if it is laboured it fails...So it is a big game, a high game...” Quoted in The Life of Sir Edwin Lutyens, C. Hussey, London, 1950.

\textsuperscript{78} Although the College of Agriculture physically blocks the vista the tower can still be seen through the glazed arcade. {Fig. 4.18/Unfortunately, later planting prevents appreciation of this view to the south and later building obscures the vista to the east.
a substantial building on the west side as a termination. \(\text{(Fig. 1.16)}\) But that site was unsuitable for a large building footprint. It was the smallest and most restricted of all, and it fell away to the south.

Kininmonth wrote apologetically to Charles with his idea, since the George Square issue was putting considerable strain on the University's administration at the time. \(\text{(Figs. 4.19a & 4.19b)}\) Nevertheless, the architect thought, that with the removal of Buccleuch Place, which at that time seemed inevitable to all parties, a new entrance could be made to the square from the Meadows to the south. A pair of more auspicious buildings could then replace the central buildings on the south side of the square, which he considered rather dull. These would flank a sort of ceremonial route into the square. The south-east and south-west corners might also be given more emphasis with additional buildings, he argued. Another advantage of this scheme was that it would allow expansion with a further enclosed quadrangle to the south east of the square.\(^{79}\) This rather Baroque layout has its axis of entrance aligned with the dome of the McEwan Hall to the north, while preserving the east and west sides of the square intact.

The rough sketches, or esquisses, were intended for the eyes of Appleton and Stewart only. However, no response is recorded and no further mention of the scheme has been found. It may have been dismissed out of hand. Or, Appleton and Stewart may have felt that it was too dangerous an idea even to discuss, since any proposal might have been seized upon by those opposed to the official University scheme, thus undermining the integrity of its preferred development plan.

Kininmonth's discretion in this matter was essential, as opponents of redevelopment were demanding alternatives to the destruction of George Square. He certainly never offered the slightest support to the University's opponents, nor would it have been in his interest to do so. Of course, if this scheme had appealed to the patrons it would

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\(^{79}\) Letter from Kininmonth to Charles Stewart, 24/1/51, including a sketch using coloured pencils on both sides of "utility grade" notepaper.

-EUL Spec Colls UA DRT 95/002 Box 144 VE.
have had consequences for the Medical Buildings Competition, designed with Holden’s layout as a starting point. Had Kininmonth won the competition, he might have worked on the idea further, arguing how further developments could be integrated with his Medical Building, which might have led to him becoming architect for the whole campus. Instead, it languished in the Secretary's filing cabinet. Interestingly though, although his proposed solution to the George Square issue might have pleased neither side in the controversy over redevelopment, his instant analysis of the University's spatial requirements produced a volume of buildings not too different from those proposed by RMJM’s survey-led scheme thirteen years later.

Kininmonth’s designs for the University, although heavily outnumbered by those with overtly Modernist inspiration, included the final examples of architecture in the Scottish Classical tradition: Adam House and the first two phases for the Pollock Halls of Residence. This fact appears to ratify the usual interpretation of the University developments as the ascendancy of Modernism over Traditionalism. But, as we saw in Book Two, there was a Tradition of Modernism, which in Scotland had several strands. However, in terms of the work under consideration, Modernism with an ideology aligned to the Vernacular Tradition overwhelmed the Classical.
Conclusion

The expansion of the University of Edinburgh, described in the foregoing chapters, with all of its aspirations and challenges, helps to elucidate much about the post-war condition. It has been my contention that the optimism characterising the period was the result of determination motivated by humanist principles of democracy and social justice. Sir Edward Appleton, with his experience and insight into the future of scientific research and technology combined with Christian morality and social commitment, was a paradigm of leadership. In the international drive to recreate the universities along humanist lines, Edinburgh was highly significant, in terms of its academic ambitions, the scale of the undertaking, and its architecture. In the opinion of Charles Stewart, University Secretary from 1948 to 1978 and tireless executor of the University's undertakings:

"It is scarcely possible, nor is there any good reason to conceal the opinion that this period, say from 1948 to 1965, was one of the most distinguished in the history of the University of Edinburgh. On the purely physical side the buildings of the University extended over a vast area, not incompatible with the size and eminence of the institution, both within the city centre, and on its outskirts, the numbers of its students reached unprecedented levels, and the reputation and distinction of its professors reached a standard not unworthy of the great days of the early nineteenth century"\(^1\)

Clearly, there was a tradition of excellence to maintain and a role to play in the technological future. But, in the light of the inhumanity of the preceding years, the spiritual role of the universities was strongly emphasised. In common with his UGC colleagues, Appleton stressed the need to produce well-rounded graduates schooled in both science and the humanities. All of this had a bearing on the way in which the University was developed. For instance, the siting of the First-Year Science buildings

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\(^1\)Charles H Stewart A Short History of the University of Edinburgh 1980 (unpublished manuscript) - Marie Stewart Collection.
adjacent to those for the Arts and Social Sciences and Medicine, rather than at a remote site with the rest of the Science buildings, was Appleton’s way of encouraging students to take courses from other faculties and thus avoid the segregation of science students. From the University’s point of view, re-integration, and consequently city-centre development, was intended as anti-isolationist and inherently socialising. Extra-mural activities and social facilities, such as student unions, bars, society rooms, and provision for sport were taken very seriously. Their perceived importance to corporate identity and formation of character accounts for a level of funding that today appears surprising for such apparently non-essential elements. Provision of halls of residence, as we have seen, was not entirely a pragmatic response to a shortage of accommodation in the city. With the nine-to-five mentality identified as an enemy of academia, notions of communal life and social cross fertilisation informed hall provision and design.

The thesis has also described the specific background to Appleton’s crucial decisions concerning the selection of architects and planning advisors, all of whom were commissioned for their perceived abilities to provide solutions to the objectives. As we have seen, the actual architectural outcomes involved success, compromise and failure in varying degrees, which was as much to do with politics and pragmatism as design. The challenges facing Appleton and his architects were moral, social, political and aesthetic.

The resulting architecture of the 1950s and early 1960s, while reflecting international preoccupations, evokes the peculiarly British phenomenon known as Festival Style, in which the architects to the University had a central role. This was not simply a fashionable “New Look” calculated to appeal to jaded tastes. The optimism of the era is expressed in its gaiety and celebratory tone. The designs also tell of the profession’s attempts to come to terms with both Modernism and tradition. The Scandinavian architecture of the 1930s provided British architects with their introduction to a variety of Modernism that could be comprehended in local terms and they revisited this when a humane and democratic architecture for the Welfare State was required in the 1950s. The Edinburgh School used this vocabulary to express national identity, cultural renewal and democratic values. Spence, Matthew, Kininmonth and Reiach, each in his own way, sought architecture appropriate to the task and each
attempted a sensual interpretation of national identity using native materials, while aiming for intimacy in the spatial engagement with the individual. The City’s ambitions for cultural renewal, with its International Festival, gave additional impetus to the design ethos.

The local politics of the situation meant that plans and designs were influenced by a dialogue between City and University. Torn between commitment to the University and the aim of reintegration, on the one hand, and fear of being branded architecturally philistine, on the other, Edinburgh Corporation’s indecision over the issue of redeveloping George Square was an obstacle to progress. Opposition to the major central development was partly about the contested merits of the square itself but it was also largely fuelled by claims about the legitimacy of alternative developments proposed in the Mears Plan (1931) and the Clyde Report (1943), to which the Corporation had no legal commitment. Sir Patrick Abercrombie’s survey and plan of 1949, however, did have statutory force and his recommendations supported the University’s own development plan, commissioned from Charles Holden in 1946. This was the planning context into which Appleton entered when he arrived in Edinburgh in 1949.

Edinburgh had a continual debate on city planning and development with a two-century history and University schemes were clearly going to occupy a substantial part of it during that expansion period. Astutely, Appleton enlisted Robert Matthew to his cause. As well as bringing his authority to the central development, this ultimately enabled the University to establish itself as a centre for the study of architecture. Such was his standing in the profession that Matthew’s advice was sought at the highest governmental levels, and his opinions were unlikely to be ignored. When there was a concerted bid by preservationists to prevent the commencement of the Arts Faculty Tower, in 1959, the Secretary of State’s architectural advisors had no difficulty in

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2 As discussed earlier (p18-19), Mears’ plan was grandiose and involved the tripartite zoning of the city on geohistorical grounds. (Fig. 1.09) But the University Precinct, or College Mile, depended upon many factors for success, none of which were achievable in the 1930s. To rehouse those displaced by the scheme would have required a massive increase in the Corporation’s worthy, but hard-pressed, public housing programme. And substantial finance would have been required to buy the commercial property required. For those reasons the University pragmatically resolved to
agreeing with Matthew’s recommendations and against Robert Hurd’s compromised alternative scheme.

Appleton, Matthew and the University Development Committee, made an informed decision in choosing Basil Spence as planning consultant to revise Holden’s scheme, in 1954. Although there was clearly aesthetic ambition behind this choice, it was also political. Again professional standing lent authority, but his specific attributes were also acquired. His popularity, charisma and persuasive skills enabled him to convince the Corporation’s Planning Committee of the exclusive merit of his scheme.

In response to further pressure to increase the student intake, the University had to increase its demand for space in the city. The University, alluding to the principles of co-operation, frequently rehearsed by Geddes, Mears and the Clyde Report, attempted to form a partnership with the City, and private enterprise, for the regeneration of the whole area known as the South Side, under the auspices of the University/Nicolson Street Comprehensive Development Area. The choice of planning consultant for this venture was the acknowledged expert in CDAs, Percy Johnson-Marshall, who had the experience and fastidiousness, as well as the necessary negotiating skills, required for the complex undertaking. At the time of Appleton’s death, in 1965, development in the central area was progressing, planning was well in hand for the Mound/Lawnmarket CDA, two phases of the Pollock Halls of Residence (at Salisbury Green) were complete, and facilities for Science were being steadily provided at King’s Buildings.

The theoretical considerations that conditioned the University’s architecture were made in the light of the key issues of the day, with urban design and regeneration central themes in the international context. The issue of the cultural core of cities was the subject of the CIAM’s conference, “The Heart of the City”, in 1951. Interestingly, regeneration plans for Edinburgh foreshadowed some of the conclusions of this particular gathering. Perhaps this is not so surprising, given the pedigree of town-planning theory in the twentieth century, with its debt to Sir Patrick Geddes who formulated and promulgated some of its original principles in Edinburgh. Many of the ________ reintegrate by simply redeveloping George Square, following the "Masterplan" of Professor Oliver, during the war. {Fig. 1.13}
delegates at Hoddeston, especially Jaqueline Tyrwhitt and William Holford, still openly acknowledged their debt to Geddes as well as to some of his more formidable followers such as Lewis Mumford.

Despite a lack of visible material progress in Edinburgh in the inter-war years, Geddes' ideas had become ingrained within the civic consciousness and very specific theories of urban improvement followed a parallel evolution with those of the international planning profession. In a manner of speaking, the torch had passed to Frank Mears and then to Robert Matthew. While Abercrombie might have been seen as bringing an aspect of the Geddesian survey back to Edinburgh, in some senses, there was a culmination when Percy Johnson-Marshall was appointed the University's planning consultant in 1960. Johnson-Marshall was a Geddes disciple, Mumford acolyte and Abercrombie pupil. His Mound/Lawnmarket scheme had a direct antecedent in Geddes' proposed improvements of the area. This included the conversion of James Court, by then a slum, into a college quadrangle to a design by architect Sidney Mitchell.³ That was only part of larger proposals, which were to be conservative as regards Town and constructive as regards Gown i.e. conservative surgery on the urban fabric with new university buildings as ornaments to the city.

In 1920s Edinburgh, Mears had been working on the formula for the city-core, based on Geddes' historical and social studies. Unlike the Piazza San Marco, Mears' College mile would not be a dead space, but imbued with dynamism, by virtue of the ceremonial, social and academic life of the educational institutions. [Fig. 1.09]

But the principle that there should be only a single city-core, as was finally concluded by the Hoddesdon delegates, was neither feasible nor desirable in Edinburgh, with its Old Town/New Town distinction. Since part of the agenda was to recreate the city as an international centre of the arts with an annual festival, Abercrombie proposed two cultural areas centred on theatres at the east and west ends of the New Town, with the University/Cultural Zone mediating between these from its Old Town site to the south.

Edinburgh’s scheme to create a precinct of academic buildings within the existing urban form had a parallel at Liverpool with a development plan produced by William Holford in 1949. As in Edinburgh, important factors included the location of the teaching hospital and the need for urban regeneration. There are other similarities, and it is likely that Holford and Holden discussed their similar tasks. In both schemes an existing central garden provides open green space and several obsolete old streets were to be eliminated. At Edinburgh, Holden had claimed that the relationship between building mass and enclosed open space was a crucial factor. Be that as it may, one could imagine Matthew being rather appalled at the prospect of George Square as envisaged by Holden and Ramsay, when he arrived in Edinburgh in 1953. (Figs. 1.15, 1.16 & 1.22) Ideas of democracy and culture would not have been well represented by the 1930s style of debased institutional classicism that was suggested. At least Kininmonth’s unsolicited Baroque scheme had some tongue-in-cheek humour. (Figs. 4.19a & 4.19b) But rhetorical monumentality had had its day. As Gregor Paulsson said: “Intimacy not monumentality should be the emotional goal.” Thus Matthew recommended that Basil Spence should be brought in.

At Hoddesdon, Walter Gropius had made the point about the relationships of scale and enclosure. Spence’s ideas of enclosure were closer to Gropius’ than Holden’s when he proposed a sequence of linked courts in his plan for Edinburgh, in 1955. The fountains and water features within these courts, envisaged in his first perspective sketches, might have appealed to Appleton’s ideals, though not his budget. They did appear, however, in subsequent universities, such as Sussex, York and Lancaster. Spence’s task was to breathe life and inject some artistry into the scheme. Rather than a cowering quadrangle of massive multi-purpose buildings, he made a picturesque play on the skyline and combined this with the current trend of segregation by function using markedly individual building types, such as tutorial buildings, library and lecture theatres. The overall form united vertical punctuation with linear blocks, providing

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4 Many would consider that Holden failed to achieve a balance in the building ratio of building mass to open space in his Bloomsbury campus for the University of London, in the 1930s.
enclosures of varying intimacy. (Figs 1.26 & 1.28) This three-dimensional form was an antecedent of dozens of campuses around the world - Essex, Lancaster, and his own Southampton have been mentioned - although Spence is never credited with this. It is a compositional device that he appeared to have derived from inter-war exhibition work, where there was always a vertical feature as a counterpoint to the generally low pavilions.

Of all the schemes for Edinburgh, Spence’s showed most consideration for townscape and picturesque composition. His interest in picturesque skylines and enthusiasm for pictorial representation have already been discussed. (Figs. 2.45a & 2.45b) Spence was also interested in old buildings and would not advocate needless destruction. Instead he liked to create a contrast between new and old architecture, which was one of his motives for retaining the Georgian houses on the west side of George Square. Variety and interest were also served by keeping the old street layout around Bristo Street, whereas Holden, and later Johnson-Marshall, had recommended obliteration. On a corner here he envisaged the tower of his chapel rising above lower neighbouring buildings, serving as a “gateway” to the precinct, rather than being lost amongst the group of higher towers that he proposed to the east of George Square. (Fig. 1.26)

His plan was easily overlaid with Matthew’s linear growth pattern layout for the Arts Faculty buildings. Thus rectangular buildings could be extended first to L-plan and then to C-plan before final enclosure of small courtyards that served as light-wells to basement accommodation. Here sub-podium links, rather than the more common covered walkways, facilitate circulation between buildings.

There was no consideration of townscape or “Sharawag” in Percy Johnson-Marshall’s recasting of the University’s scheme. But in the combination of a multiplicity of University, commercial and local authority housing functions, and the necessity of segregating vehicles from pedestrians, a megastructural solution was reached. This was a concept beloved of such avant-gardists as the New Brutalists and the Archigram sect and seemingly best adapted to New Town designs such as at the contemporary Cumbernauld town-centre (1959) by Geoffrey Copcutt. Many local authority architects seized upon
the idea for urban regeneration schemes in the early 1960s. Nevertheless, some other university designers sought solutions in megastructure and its perceived flexibility. Of course, on a virgin site, such as Britain’s New Universities were provided with, these things were more simply achieved than when there was existing urban fabric to consider. There one might impose a circulation grid onto the landscape into which buildings and their links might be slotted. At Loughborough University of Technology (1966), for example, Arup Associates devised a system where the diverse, though non-permanent, functional elements could be inserted into a grid to form one basic structural whole.

As we have seen, politics and financial restrictions delayed commencement of the University/Nicolson Street Comprehensive Development Area until it was an obsolete concept. Megastructure became regarded as inflexible and, indeed, mechanistic crudity. And, in the light of a growing interest in conservation, Johnson-Marshall had to rethink his plan for the area while struggling to find sites for University building projects that were themselves being undermined by lack of financial support from the government. [Figs. 3.11a-3.11e]

In assessing the architectural outcome of the Appleton years we can see that what was achieved was only a portion of that which had been planned. Nevertheless, this consisted of three out of a projected four phases of the Medical Extension, the Library, the first two phases for the Faculties of Art and Social Sciences, constituting five buildings, and the building for First-Year Science, together with two phases of the Students’ Centre to the north of the square. But, Appleton's policy of dual development ensured that the Faculties of Science and Engineering were able to continue to erect buildings at King’s Buildings, with funding as the only impediment. All the existing departments there were extended and new buildings for Agriculture and Forestry, Biology, Engineering, Genome Research, the Animal Breeding Research Organisation and Mathematical Physics augmented them.

The idealism of the immediate post-war period encouraged bold and ambitious planning, and the momentum that Appleton created was such that, despite difficulties, it continued for over a decade after his death in 1965. Notwithstanding the national context of University expansion, Appleton's achievement was exceptional. The aims of the City,
the University and the nation, were addressed and tempered by both the ethos and the practicalities of the period. Few could have struck a viable balance with so many objectives. As a patron of architecture, he mediated between tradition and innovation, with the University conserving a considerable number of historic buildings, while commissioning an impressive portfolio of new ones. For this he assembled a unique assembly of native talent. Appleton’s reasons for the choice of architects, albeit with Matthew’s advice, would have been political, social, moral and aesthetic. He would have demanded high moral standing, professional integrity and faith in the University’s undertakings. The aesthetic side, while not excluding these aspects, therefore required that the designs be modern in a technological sense, traditional in terms of their values, and yet optimistic in execution.
Appendices

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