

A CENTURY OF CHANGE IN GEORGE SQUARE, 1876–1976

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GEORGE SQUARE earned its place in Edinburgh's architectural history by pre-empting, by several years, the great town planning project that created the New Town on the ridge to the north of the city after 1767. As such, it presented the first major opportunity for civilised city living outside the seething closes of the Old Town. In 1948 a whole volume of the *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club* was devoted to a study of the building of this fashionable eighteenth century square and its notable residents.¹ A very different architectural and social experience awaits contemporary visitors to George Square, as only one and a half sides of the original Georgian square have survived more or less intact. In striking contrast to the domestic scale of the old terraces, several far more substantial structures are now sited around the verdant seclusion of the central garden. A Victorian school rubs shoulders with a group of twentieth century academic buildings, which tell of the role the square played in the expansion of the University of Edinburgh in the 1960s.

There has been much controversy over the issue of the square's redevelopment. In Edinburgh folklore, this architectural intervention is often seen as synonymous with the clashes of modernism and tradition, of post-war planning and conservation, even of University and Town. While accepting these as useful categories, one wonders how much the lens of later perception distorts the image of actual events in order to fit these concepts, and the present article seeks to provide an objective account of the evolution of the square. George Square became the object of national media coverage in the 1950s as its future

became bound up with the post-war expansion of the University. However, the square had featured in University proposals long before that, and there had already been several demolitions and conversions by various parties as well as a number of failed projects and abandoned proposals. In practice, change has been a constant factor for a century or more. The oral tradition surrounding 'the Battle of George Square' is fascinating, both on account of its longevity and the passions aroused. This account may not change opinions about the morality or aesthetics of the University's project, but perhaps future debate will be better informed.

EARLY INTERVENTIONS

George Square was a speculative development on the grounds of Ross House by the builder James Brown, who laid out the plots and drew up the feuing regulations. There was no grand monumental scheme, but simply an arrangement of residences around a square such as was then popular in London; a variety of local builders and masons appear to have been involved in the individual houses. Work started at the north end of the square in 1766, and the south side was the last to be completed, around 1785.

The layout of the square, which was open at the corners, divided each side in two with a lane giving access to the stable mews at the rear (fig. 1). The houses were numbered sequentially, counter-clockwise, starting at the north-east corner. On the north side (Nos 1–15) the access lane was closer to the east end rather than centrally placed, to preserve the view south from Ross House, but it was blocked

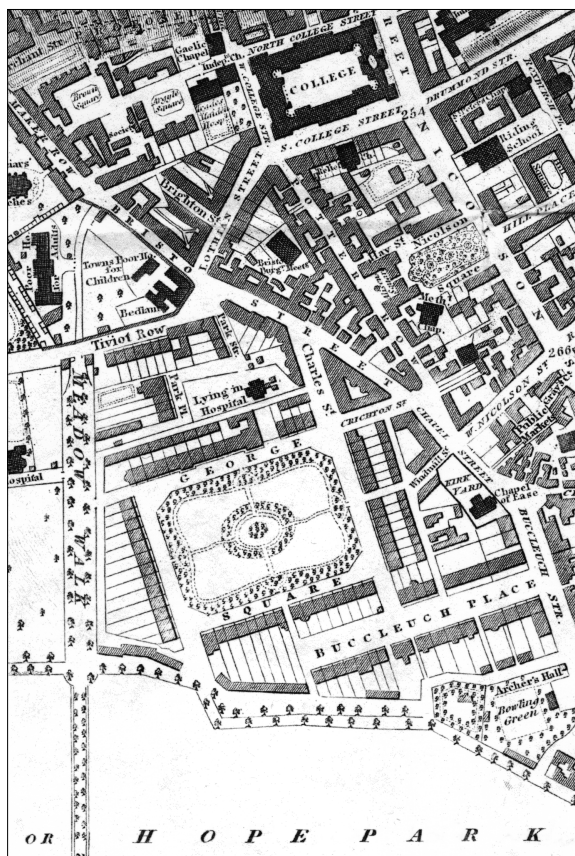


Fig. 1. Detail from James Knox's Plan of Edinburgh, 1824 edition. (Courtesy of Andrew Fraser.)

as George Watson's Ladies College began to build round the gap between Nos 4 and 5 in the 1870s.² On the west side (Nos 16–29) the single storey house at No. 23a filled up the central lane in 1779. The south row consisted of Nos 30–38 and 39–46 in two blocks, and the east side Nos 47–54 and the surviving block at 55–60.

As might be expected, building materials varied and regulations altered during the development of the square.³ The basic format of the earlier houses was a two storey elevation above a sunk basement area, with the doorway to one side of a three bay arrangement (see fig. 2). Later houses were usually of three storeys, and a few extended to four or even five bays. A number of buildings on the south and east

sides were a hybrid of town house and tenement forms, with a main door house at street level, and upper floor flats accessed by a common stair.⁴ The entrance porticos varied too. The doors of the earlier houses were mainly flanked by Tuscan columns – engaged, half-column or free-standing – but some houses had Ionic columns or pilasters, while a few were astylar.⁵ Occasionally small windows or ocula were inserted beside the door, supplementing the fanlight astragals lighting the entrance hall. Although, in the course of the development, rubble walls with traditional snecking gave way to more regular coursing and droved ashlar, there remained a measure of homogeneity in the unassuming classicism of the porticos and the regulated style of the windows and doors.⁶

The first intrusion into the square was on behalf of the Merchant Company of Edinburgh, for George Watson's Ladies College. In all, five original houses were lost in the creation of the French Renaissance block that still survives (though in University use) on the north side (fig. 3). The present form was achieved in stages, with an L-shaped block first replacing No. 5 and the stable block behind in 1876.



Fig. 2. Nos 1 and 2 George Square, c. 1966. Note the wooden architraves on the windows of No. 1, and the Charles Street tenement to the rear. (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, RCAHMS, No. ED/2338.)



Fig. 3. North George Square, c. 1959. On the right are Nos 1 and 2, followed by George Watson's Ladies College, on the site of Nos 3–7. Beyond is the portico of the Forestry building, on the site of Nos 8–10. At the far end can be seen the structural steelwork for the first phase of the Medical Extension. (*Edinburgh University, EU, Fenton Collection.*)

The original school presented a four bay facade to the street, and there was an open courtyard between it and the house at No. 4. That work was carried out by the noted Scottish Baronial architects MacGibbon and Ross, who were called upon again in 1890 to extend the school to the east. For this second phase the house at No. 4, and the stables behind Nos 3 and 4, were demolished in order to add a further L-shaped block, doubling the accommodation. The old courtyard was excavated and a new central entrance created through a single storey screen of decorative stonework. With this addition, a tripartite frontage suggestive of the U-plan of the French *hôtel* form was achieved, though asymmetrical with four bays in the west wing and three in the east. However, the mansard roofs, dormer windows and French-style

channelled stonework aided the illusion of architectural unity. The new central section, with its elaborate iron gate and balustrade, was given a partially glazed roof and provided an indoor exercise area surrounded by galleries or corridors.⁷ In 1910 the architect George Washington Browne was faced with a difficult task in maintaining coherence when Nos 3, 6 and 7 were acquired for further extensions for senior classrooms and art and science facilities. His solution was to create a subsidiary centrepiece on the site of No. 6, with Venetian windows and a Baroque pediment, and replicate the four bay arrangement of No. 5 on the site of No. 7.⁸ The easternmost extension was given a different façade, with arcaded rusticated basement at street level and Tuscan columns articulating a blind attic storey.

The University's interest in the square stretches back to 1897 when No. 12 on the north side, and No. 31 on the south side, were converted into residences for women students, named Muir and Masson Halls respectively.⁹ This followed a trend begun in 1895, when the Church of Scotland opened a residence for divinity students at No. 14. Initially, these changes of use made little visual impact on the streetscape, but construction work soon took place on the back gardens and stable areas. Thus, a four storey extension was added behind Muir Hall in 1904. Masson Hall was also enlarged, by the annexation of No. 32 in 1911.¹⁰ The internal stairs of Nos 31 and 32 and the wall between them were removed and replaced by a new single staircase. The entrance steps to No. 32 were removed and the door was changed into a window. The conversion of the entrance hall into a bedroom necessitated the removal of the stone columns, which were then installed at the foot of the new internal staircase. The roofline became cluttered with the addition of a pair of new dormer windows and a skylight, none of which matched the existing ones (see fig. 4).¹¹



Fig. 4. The west half of the south side of George Square, showing how much the façades of Nos 30–38 had been altered by 1959. On the right, the doorway of No. 32 was removed when it was incorporated into Masson Hall. The doorway to Cowan House (No. 35) shares a porch with No. 34, now blocked. On the left, the portico of No. 36 was removed when the door was converted to a window. All the buildings have also been extended upwards in one way or another. (*EU, Fenton Collection.*)

The first indication of the changing character of the residential area north of George Square had occurred when the Reid School of Music, designed by David Cousin for the University Professor of Music in 1858, began the obliteration of Park Place. The institutional squeeze on the old residential quarter intensified with the construction of the new Medical School (1880–86) and its partner the McEwan Hall (1886–97), both designed by Robert Rowand Anderson. A further encroachment was made with the Teviot Row Students Union (Sydney Mitchell and Wilson, 1887–88, extended 1902–05), on the site of the original Ross House. All these University buildings lie just a few yards north of George Square, on the other side of the rear service lane, Charles Street Lane (see fig. 5). For those

unfamiliar with the rapid advances of medical sciences in the early twentieth century, it may seem surprising how quickly Rowand Anderson's Medical School became cramped. As a result, various constructions, mostly of a semi-permanent nature, soon filled the University's side of Charles Street Lane.¹² A document of 1919 bitterly complained that 'what an architect most aims for is to reduce window space, whereas a laboratory should be all window and skylight', and 'if our predecessors had spent a quarter on land [of what] they spent on architecture we would not be faced with this predicament'.¹³

The most substantial of these annexes was erected in 1919 as an extension to the Department of Surgery at the south-east corner of the Medical School. The building, designed by Walter Clark, University Clerk

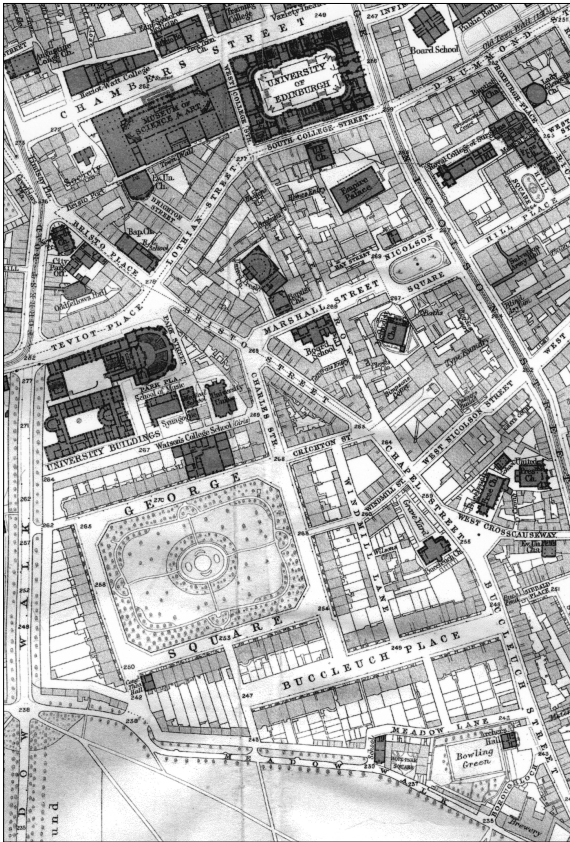


Fig. 5. Detail from Bartholomew's Large Scale Plan of Edinburgh, 1891. (Courtesy of Andrew Fraser.)

of Works, to provide anatomy facilities for women students, was converted (with the addition of an extra storey) into the Wilkie Surgical Laboratory in 1925–26. Since it was to share the tiny remaining fragment of Park Place with Cousin's neo-classical Music School and Anderson's decorous Italianate buildings, Clark gave it an ashlar front, with a cornice and a flat pediment over the doorway to complete the monumental intimacy of the new Park Place piazza.

Walter Clark appears to have been a fairly accomplished architect and draughtsman, for he had earlier designed a handsome building for the Departments of Forestry and Agriculture with which the University made its first academic incursion into George Square in 1912. For this Nos 8, 9 and 10 were

demolished, together with their stables. The new building took the form of a Renaissance palazzo, with two storeys above a basement (fig. 6). Either in direct reference to the Watson's school, or as a concession to current fashion in institutional buildings, there was a continuation of the French Renaissance theme in the channelled ashlar of the façade. Mansard roof and dormer were eschewed, however, in the original design, in favour of a parapet which obscured the roof line. The surviving drawings reveal a fairly confident handling of a sixteenth century style in which the pediment of the Corinthian portico partakes in an alternating sequence with those of the ground floor windows. All this artistry in stone belied the concrete floor and steel beam construction hidden behind the façade.¹⁴



Fig. 6. Forestry and Agriculture building, 1912, designed by Walter Clark, University Clerk of Works, erected on the site of Nos 8–10 George Square. Photograph c. 1975. (RCAHMS, No. ED/15094.)

The University and the Merchant Company were not the only institutions with plans for buildings in the square in the period before World War One. The Edinburgh and East of Scotland College of Agriculture had occupied No. 13 since the beginning of the century, and the location of this independent, though related, college obviously influenced the siting of the University's Agriculture building nearby. In 1904 the architect T. P. Marwick was engaged to enlarge the college premises by adding an extra floor to the original house and a three-storey extension to the rear. In the execution of this work stables were demolished, and the back garden was reduced to a small light well.¹⁵ The College's later acquisition of

Nos 14 and 15 resulted in a rather grander expansion plan, for which planning permission was received in 1913. Though the project was cancelled at the outbreak of war, the drawings survive to reveal the scale of the College's ambition (fig. 7).¹⁶ In this scheme, again by Marwick, the two houses at the west end of the block were scheduled for demolition. Taking a cue, perhaps, from the Watson's school and the University's Agriculture building, the new design again harked back to the French Renaissance and would have been another step towards the creation of a terrace of palazzos, leaving the surviving original houses at Nos 1 and 2 somewhat diminutive by contrast. The design was not taken up after the war

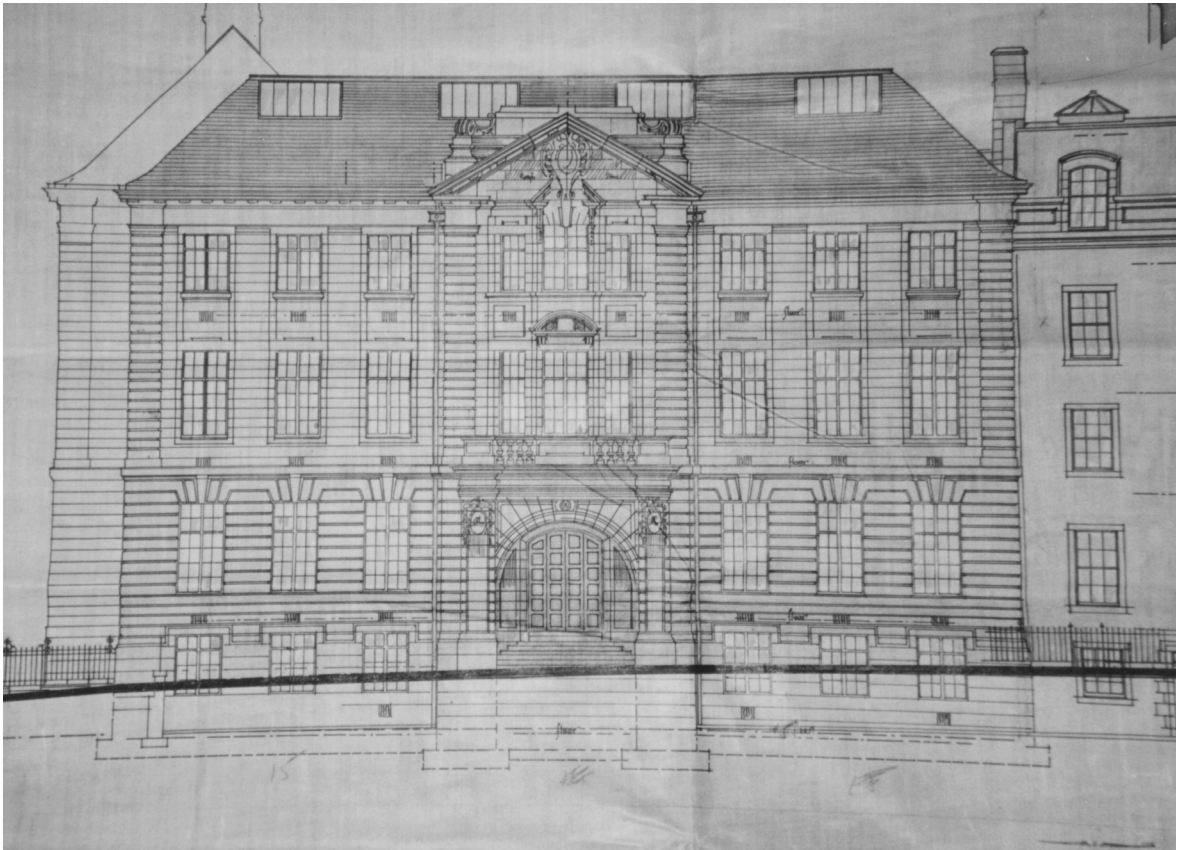


Fig. 7. George Square elevation of unexecuted project for the Edinburgh and East of Scotland College of Agriculture by T. P. Marwick, 1913. This scheme would have occupied the sites of Nos 14 and 15 George Square, together with some further land to the west. (*Edinburgh City Archives, Dean of Guild Court Archives, DGCA*)

but instead, in 1919, there were internal alterations to the three houses, and the stables were demolished and replaced by temporary single storey laboratories of timber and galvanised steel. The abandonment of the Marwick project is an early indication of schemes which were then being germinated for Medical School expansion and for removal of the Agricultural College from the city centre.

THE INTER-WAR PERIOD

George Square became the proposed target of large-scale redevelopment for the expansion of science facilities which was being planned during World War One. Just as the location of the Royal Infirmary in Lauriston Place had determined that of the Medical School across Meadow Walk, the sciences of Chemistry and Zoology (Natural History) were satellites in the medical orbit which sought a convenient neighbouring location. When the University Principal, Sir Alfred Ewing, called together the heads of these departments to discuss accommodation in 1918, there was apparent agreement that serious consideration should be given to redevelopment in George Square. However, other considerations took precedence over proximity to the Medical School, for, soon after, Sir Alfred negotiated the purchase of West Mains Farm to the south of the city as the site for new Science Faculty buildings, to be known as the King's Buildings. On this green-field site buildings of a cheaper type could be erected than that demanded for public buildings in the city centre. In addition, there were no demolition or conversion costs, and buildings could be constructed in such a way as to permit future extensions.

The new building for Chemistry (previously housed in the Medical School) was commenced at King's Buildings in 1919, but Sir Alfred had a rebellion on his hands when it was proposed that

Zoology (still housed in Old College) should follow in 1924. The scientists recalled the war-time meeting and proposed an alternative site in George Square. In order to achieve the rebels' scheme, the University would have had to purchase and demolish Nos 34–39 George Square, in the centre of the south row (a rather constrained site since Nos 30–32 were already in use as Masson Hall). However, despite substantial opposition to leaving the city centre, the Principal was adamant.¹⁷ The same pragmatic considerations that had determined the siting of the Chemistry building remained compelling, and in 1926 a site at King's Buildings was chosen for Zoology. Despite the conflicts, the Zoology building was named after Professor Ashworth, who had led the protest.¹⁸

While the relocation of Zoology was being planned another scheme was being formulated, which could have been a factor in the reluctance of the University Court to entertain Ashworth's proposals. The project was the result of a donation by the wealthy Dr Thomas Cowan, General Manager at Leith Docks, whose gift was to record his gratitude for the strike-breaking activities of student volunteers at the docks during the General Strike of 1926.¹⁹ This resulted in the provision of Cowan House, a much needed hall of residence for men, for which work was in hand by the middle of 1927. A. F. Balfour Paul was architect for the work, which involved substantial reconstruction of the five houses at Nos 33–37 in the west block of the south side. Most of the offices and stable buildings on Meadow Lane were demolished to provide new kitchens and service rooms. The rear block was linked to the main building by a two storey 'garden wing' of harled brick with stone dressings which contained bedrooms and bathrooms.²⁰ Much internal reorganisation was required, including slap-throughs in gable walls, subdivision of rooms, new concrete staircases and emergency escapes. The façade to George Square was also modified.

Although the many and varied dormer windows that already existed appear to have been left untouched, the doors at Nos 33 and 36 became windows. The porches of Nos 34 and 35, which had already been enclosed in a single doorcase, were further altered; No. 35 became the main entrance, with No. 34 a blind doorway blocked by masonry (see fig. 4 above).

The east side of the square remained residential until 1919 when Nos 52 and 53 were combined to form the new University Union for women students. The outbuildings were demolished and a dining hall and dance hall were erected on the back-greens.²¹ Further alterations for the Women's Union were carried out by Lorimer and Matthew in 1927, when the outbuildings behind No. 51 were demolished in order to extend the dining hall and kitchen. The

ground and first floors of No. 54 were also incorporated into the Union buildings: since the flats on the second, third and attic floors had a separate entrance stair at the rear, the front entrance was done away with, and a single entrance replaced those of Nos 52 and 53. New dormers were also installed at Nos 53 and 54.²²

Needless to say, the physical form of other buildings had been continuously subjected to numerous alterations by private house owners. The most common were the many attic conversions resulting in dormer windows, such as the mansard roof and dormer window which the Roman Catholic Church sought to install at No. 26 in 1912 for the hostel for female students that had opened the previous year.²³ The house at No. 20 acquired an additional storey at some stage. And, as one might

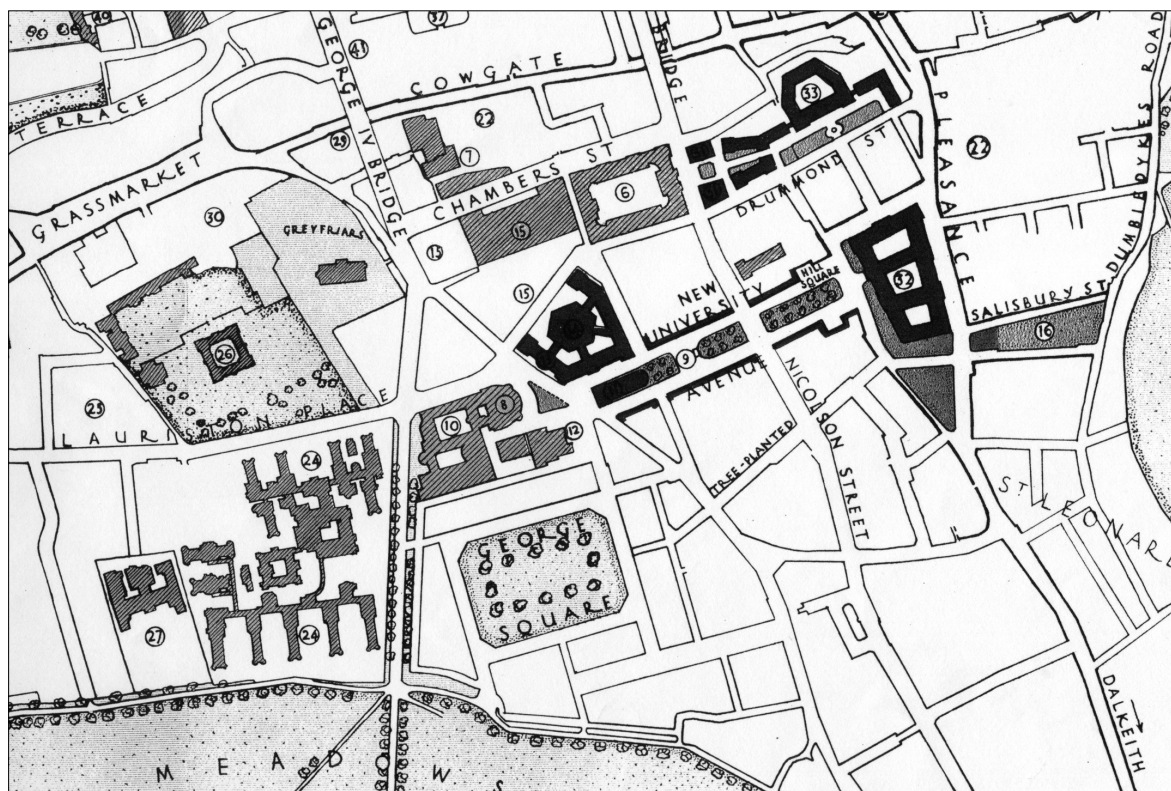


Fig. 8. Detail from the 'Mears Plan', Frank C. Mears, 1931. (EU, Fenton Collection.)

expect, in the 1920s and 1930s many of the stables in the mews lanes were converted into motor garages.

Apart from the abandoned Science proposals of 1918, University developments within the square had progressed in a fairly piecemeal manner in the first thirty years of the century. Nevertheless, the University's involvement in the square had gradually increased, as if by osmosis, until in 1931 the architect and planner Frank Mears was able to say that George Square was rapidly becoming a university campus. The 'Mears Report' on the development of the wider area around the University featured grand plans for urban regeneration, involving an almost Baroque orientation of institutional buildings along a pair of east-west axes to form avenues of academic and related buildings – his 'College Mile' (fig. 8).²⁴ A wide avenue with central gardens was proposed, to link the University Union and McEwan Hall with the site of a proposed new Heriot Watt College at the Pleasance. George Square was included in the University zone, but apparently without alteration – rather, it was to be preserved as an enclave on a tree-planted student route between the Pleasance and the open green space at the Meadows. Serving as a pivot for his various academic routes, a large library building was proposed for a site to the east of the McEwan Hall, which was later to become known as the 'Island Site'. Mears insisted that the most suitable location for the majority of future University buildings was on the densely built-up area east of the Adam/Playfair Old College. This eastern extension would have involved the removal of several old buildings at High School Yards which the University had converted for Science and Engineering in 1905.²⁵

Inherent in Mears' proposals was the conviction, shared by many in the city, that the gradual transfer of academic departments to King's Buildings should be halted, and, with a few special exceptions, reversed. In Mears' view, 'the University' was a civic

concept embracing all the educational institutions. His 'College Mile' was an attempt to relate the sites of all their buildings, from the College of Art at Lauriston to Moray House Teachers Training College in Holyrood Road, as if in a topographic dialogue. This might reasonably be seen as a reflection of the ethos of Mears' father-in-law, Patrick Geddes, who saw the University as a vital cultural entity that functioned as the heart of the city. Certainly, there was widespread concern about the fragmentation and absence of corporate life in the University itself. With three main academic locations and numerous smaller departments occupying other converted premises scattered across the town, reintegration was becoming a rallying call.

Within a few years of the Mears Report, the University was involved in a series of complex arrangements that would allow the Faculty of Medicine to undertake a major new building programme. During 1937 and 1938 plans were formulated for extension of the Medical School into north George Square. All the existing buildings would eventually be removed. This was a long term plan, since the houses at Nos 1 and 2, and the Watson's school (3–7), would ultimately have to be acquired. Alternative accommodation would also have to be found for Forestry and Agriculture (Nos 8–10), the Indian Students Union (No. 11) and Muir Hall (No. 12). However, the first phase was being actively planned, to expand into the north-west corner of the square on a strip of vacant land owned by the University, together with the site of the buildings then occupied by the College of Agriculture (Nos 13–15).²⁶

Arrangements for extension of the Medical School buildings were put in the hands of a special committee chaired by William Oliver, Professor of Commerce.²⁷ By 1939 negotiations were well under way for acquisition of the buildings required for Phase 1, including the College of Agriculture house

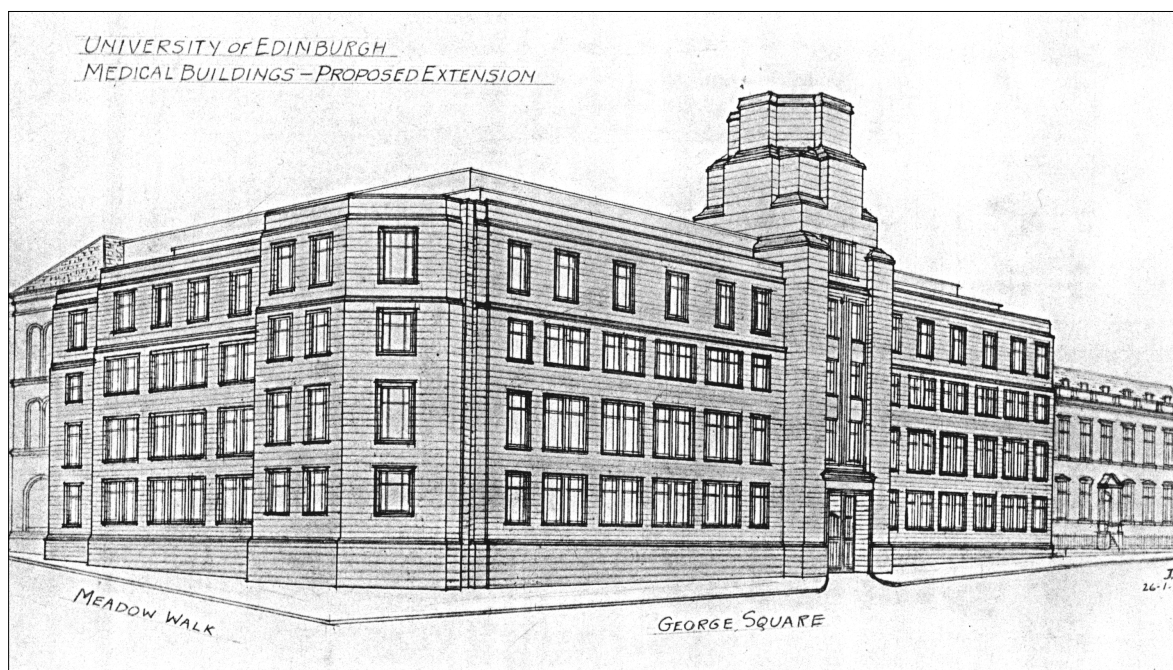


Fig. 9. Proposed Medical Buildings in north George Square, by James Cordiner, University Clerk of Works, 1938. The Forestry building is included on the right. (*Edinburgh University Library, EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 143.*)

at No. 15, again scheduled for demolition. Agreement was reached with the College to support its funding application for a new building at King's Buildings, in return for giving up its George Square premises. A non-urban setting was considered more appropriate for Agriculture, and it was closer to the farms and outstations around which the work revolved. The transfer also provided the opportunity to bring the College together with the University's Departments of Agriculture and Forestry in new purpose-built accommodation.

The University Works Committee charged James Cordiner, University Clerk of Works, with producing preliminary plans for the new medical buildings. Cordiner's design could most kindly be described as an inelegant example of 1930s industrial architecture, but it provided the basis for grant applications, and the starting point for what was to become a major project, notwithstanding a few setbacks (fig. 9).²⁸

The first phase of the Medical Buildings Extension Scheme moved forward, and the committee had to choose a professional architect. The commission went to John Ross McKay, of Dick Peddie and McKay, whom Oliver seems to have known well.²⁹ The choice of architect was perhaps partly strategic, in terms of his connections – McKay was a member of the Dean of Guild Court and also architectural advisor to the Merchant Company. McKay's experience included a number of large commercial projects such as the Binns department store at the west end of Princes Street and the Caley Cinema in Lothian Road. His design for the medical extension consisted of three elements. The west and east blocks were to extend from the Rowand Anderson building, right across Charles Street Lane, to link with a south block fronting George Square. The west wing was allocated to Physiology, Pathology and an animal house, the east wing to



Fig. 10. The Medical Extension project, by John Ross McKay, 1939–40. (Courtesy of Mr Henderson, Dick Peddie and McKay, drawing now in RCAHMS.)

Anatomy, and the south block to teaching and research laboratories. The outline of McKay’s plan followed Marwick’s earlier stepped arrangement down Middle Meadow Walk and turned the corner into George Square with a tower containing the water tank and utilities. The elevation was extremely plain, essentially consisting of four conventional storeys with a blind attic for the animal house above (fig. 10).³⁰ McKay’s design was approved by the University in March 1940, but by then the country was at war and all projects were quickly cancelled. However, McKay was asked to build an air raid shelter on the site and it was agreed that this should be built in such a way as to form the basement of the intended medical extension.

POST-WAR PLANNING

All building projects were cancelled at the outbreak of war, but forward planning was soon resumed under the heading of post-war development. By now it was taken for granted that all the buildings on the north side of George Square would eventually be demolished for the Medical Extension. However, Professor Oliver had come up with a proposal – known as the ‘Master Plan’ as early as 1939 – that the University should acquire all the buildings round George Square, demolish them, and build four

large institutional blocks in their place (fig. 11). This new quadrangle would answer the calls for reintegration and provide for future expansion, particularly for Science departments. Although the Master Plan was a fairly rudimentary sketch plan, its essence was to form the core of University development plans in the future.

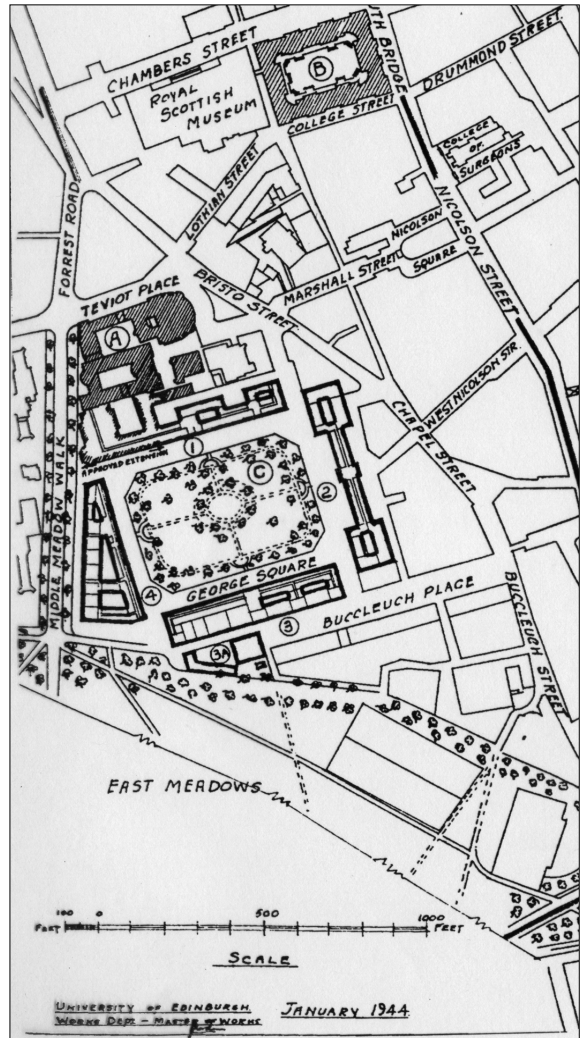


Fig. 11. The ‘Master Plan’, by Professor William Oliver (drawing by James Cordiner, 1944). The north side of George Square was allocated for medicine and biology; the east side for administrative and library block; the south for mathematics, physics, engineering, geology and geography; and the west for chemistry. (EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 140 VE.)

War-time thinking on the future form of Edinburgh is crystallised in a report commissioned by the City and published in 1943 (the Clyde Report). This may have lacked the detail and audacity of Mears' proposals, but reintegration of the University in the city centre was still regarded as a central aim. Construction of the Medical School extension was accepted, but there was clear opposition to Oliver's Master Plan:³¹

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 includes streets which call for redevelopment, it also embraces excellent architectural gems such as George Square ... which are well worth preservation ... We recommend that the Corporation take the matter up with the University forthwith and work out a development scheme for this area which will enhance the position of the University, and establish it as a living and active factor in the life of the City.

In response to this, the University produced a memorandum in July 1943. This proposed that there should be no building east of Old College without consultation with the University. A new road to relieve traffic on the North and South Bridges was suggested, and a non-specific interest in George Square was declared. It was further intimated that the King's Buildings site might have to be abandoned for reasons of inconvenience.³²

The Clyde Report takes into account the imminent donation of a whole city block adjacent to the McEwan Hall for student and staff amenities. One of the three authors of the report was Sir Donald Pollock, who was Rector of the University and whose generosity was to underpin the move back to the city centre. Before the outbreak of war he had donated the Pollock Gymnasium at the Pleasance, created at his own expense from an old

brewery building. Another central student amenity was the Pollock Memorial Hall for student society and non-denominational religious use. This former church stood, surrounded by buildings, in the block bounded by Lothian Street, Potterrow, Marshall Street and Bristo Street – the so-called 'Island Site' (see fig. 5 above). Pollock spent the war years buying up properties surrounding the Pollock Memorial Hall, intending to create student union and club facilities, and then to present them to the University. Instead, however, for tax considerations, he transferred all the property as it stood to the University in 1943, and a subcommittee of the Court was set up to administer the Pollock Trust.

Pollock's vision involved the preservation of existing buildings. True to the principles of salvage by which he had acquired much of his considerable wealth, the benefactor hoped that conversion of buildings and reuse of old materials would be carried out by the Pollock Trust. For instance, he felt that the 'interesting old Scots buildings' at 16–17 Bristo Street could become a staff club, and the site around his Memorial Hall be tidied up to form a garden.³³ He encouraged the University to purchase the Baptist church in Marshall Street for conversion to a theatre.³⁴ Sir Donald's gift to the University also included three Victorian mansion houses at Salisbury Green with extensive grounds for future provision of student residences.³⁵ As it turned out, this part of the donation actually made it easier to remove the student halls from George Square. Considering Pollock's advocacy for preservation of the square, there is a certain irony in this.

In November 1943 the University Post War Development Committee (PWDC) met for the first time.³⁶ Principal Sir Thomas Holland convened, and Professors Alexander Gray and William Oliver were members, along with the Deans of Faculties and T. J. Carlyle Gifford, a member of the University Court. At this stage, Councillor (later Lord Provost,

1945–48) John Falconer, represented the City. The PWDC was to play an advisory role in the future development of the University by making recommendations to the Court. Its initial agenda was to ascertain immediate requirements, and to work out methods of dealing with the expected post-war influx of students. The priorities were identified as expansion of various Science facilities, and resumption of the Medical School extension project which had been cancelled in 1940.

Post-war plans by City and University were, at this stage, extremely optimistic undertakings, considering the perilous state of the nation and the uncertain levels of future government funding. Nevertheless, in March 1944 the University took a further step when the PWDC recommended adoption of Oliver's Master Plan for the complete redevelopment of George Square, and the transfer of the Faculty of Science back from King's Buildings to the city centre. In order to boost enthusiasm for a proposal that would be unpopular in some quarters, an open architectural competition to choose a design was suggested. The jubilant mood within the PWDC at coming up with a single solution to post-war development and reintegration was dampened by the uncertainty of the Lord Provost, who thought that there might be a clash with the City's own post-war plans. Since Pollock, too, was unable to accept the proposal, pleading for delay whilst urging the City to produce an alternative plan, the University deferred decisions on the Master Plan.

The PWDC also had to deal with an almost universal assumption that, with the exception of the Medical School extension, future development would take a cue from the Mears Plan and be concentrated on the area east of Old College. But this was considered to be fraught with difficulties. The site fell away sharply beyond South Bridge and the numbers of industrial and domestic chimneys made the area

one of the most polluted in the city. By contrast, George Square was the quietest part of the district, and the adjacent Meadows gave it high amenity value in terms of fresh air and recreation facilities. Although the area east of South Bridge was regarded primarily as slum housing, the PWDC felt that this was the City's problem. It was scarcely mentioned at the time that there were also schools, churches and public baths which would have to be replaced prior to demolition. Nor could the University's properties in High School Yards be vacated before replacements were provided.

City and University perspectives were discussed under the auspices of the so-called 'Town and Gown' meetings which commenced in February 1945. The City was still not ready to make commitments, since it was in the process of commissioning Patrick Abercrombie, the noted town planner, to prepare a City Plan.³⁷ In the interim, and under pressure from Pollock, the Corporation instructed the City Engineer to suggest an alternative area for redevelopment, which would leave all but the north side of George Square intact.³⁸ The City's suggested development area included the north side of George Square and was bounded on the east by Potterrow, and on the west by Middle Meadow Walk and Forrest Road (fig. 12). It extended north to Chambers Street and included the site which had already been earmarked for an extension of the Royal Scottish Museum. A further area between Buccleuch Place and the Meadows, which conformed with the University's own plan for future expansion south of George Square after the Master Plan had been achieved, was also included.

Professor Oliver scrutinised the City's plan closely. As expected, it would be a more costly solution since it would require the acquisition of the Chambers Street/Bristo Place/Lothian Street block, and the Forrest Road/Bristo Place/Teviot Place

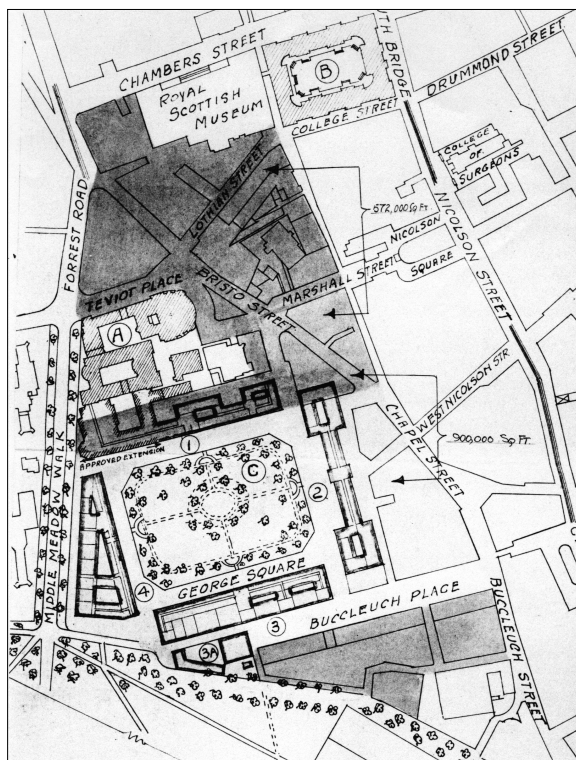


Fig. 12. Plan showing the areas for University development proposed by the City Engineer in 1945 (shaded), superimposed on the University Master Plan (cf. fig. 11). This extended north to Chambers Street, but excluded the south, east and west sides of George Square that had been included in the Master Plan. Both anticipate development on north George Square, the 'Island Site' and Buccleuch Place. (*EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 141.*)

triangle. Both schemes would involve purchase of the Watson's school and the first two houses on the north of the square, as well as properties between Crichton Street and Marshall Street. The Island Site block was already largely under University control, though committed by the terms of the Pollock Trust for student amenities. By contrast, to achieve its Master Plan the University would have to acquire only an additional two houses on the east, two on the south, and eleven on the west side of the square. The area between east George Square and Chapel Street was considered a distant future acquisition.

By Oliver's reckoning, the City's site fell short of the Master Plan's total of 900,000 square feet by some 300,000 sq. ft. Although the actual building area in the two plans was similar, a crucial factor was the open area between buildings. The open spaces in the City scheme depended on purchase and demolition, whereas the Master Plan included 325,000 sq. ft which already existed as George Square Gardens (Oliver's calculations involved some special pleading, as the Gardens would have remained in either scheme).³⁹ However, the City plan was rather tightly constrained, and, as was pointed out at the time, a far greater number of residents would have to be rehoused. That in itself was not insurmountable, but to be reliant upon the Corporation's public housing programme was not acceptable to the University. Furthermore, gaining control over all the properties in George Square was the only way of ensuring that private development would not impinge upon University activities in the area.

HOLDEN'S UNIVERSITY PRECINCT

In January 1946 the new Principal Sir John Fraser sought the advice of Patrick Abercrombie, who recommended that the University should appoint a professional planning consultant to negotiate provision for University expansion within the City Plan he was preparing. When pressed, Abercrombie suggested either Sir Frank Mears or Robert Matthew. Instead, Sir John approached an old acquaintance, Dr Charles Holden, FRIBA.⁴⁰

The reasons for ignoring Abercrombie's recommendations are unknown, but are perhaps not difficult to deduce. Mears, already fairly advanced in years, would no doubt prefer his own scheme of 1931. He was also a Council member of the Cockburn Association, which opposed the destruction of George Square. As Sir Donald Pollock was Convenor of the

Cockburn Council, the possibility of creating an inner cadre opposed to the Master Plan must have been clear. It is not known if Matthew was approached by Fraser. Although Abercrombie felt that Matthew would happily give up his Scottish Office post for that of University consultant, it is likely that Matthew was already committed to the new position as chief planner for London County Council that he took up later the same year. Matthew's political profile might also have been a problem, as he was an active member of what was known as the 'New Left Caucus' within the Royal Institute of British Architects. By contrast, Holden was an establishment figure who had relevant experience of carving out a new campus for the University of London from a congested city site at Bloomsbury before the war. He was also well acquainted with Abercrombie as an academic colleague.

Oliver was dispatched to London in February

1946 to brief Holden on the University's position. The task was to create a campus based on George Square and the Island Site, and to relate these elements to existing University buildings, while allowing for future expansion. Holden dealt with the matter with an almost casual efficiency, providing an outline plan within a couple of months. He immediately realised that, to allow for the return of Science from King's Buildings and long term development, a much larger University precinct would be required, equivalent in scale to that of both Master Plan and City scheme combined. The existing street layout was a major obstacle to coherent development but, after discussions with Abercrombie in May 1946, it was agreed that Bristo Street, which ran diagonally between the McEwan Hall and the Island Site, might easily be closed off, allowing a rational disposition of buildings between George

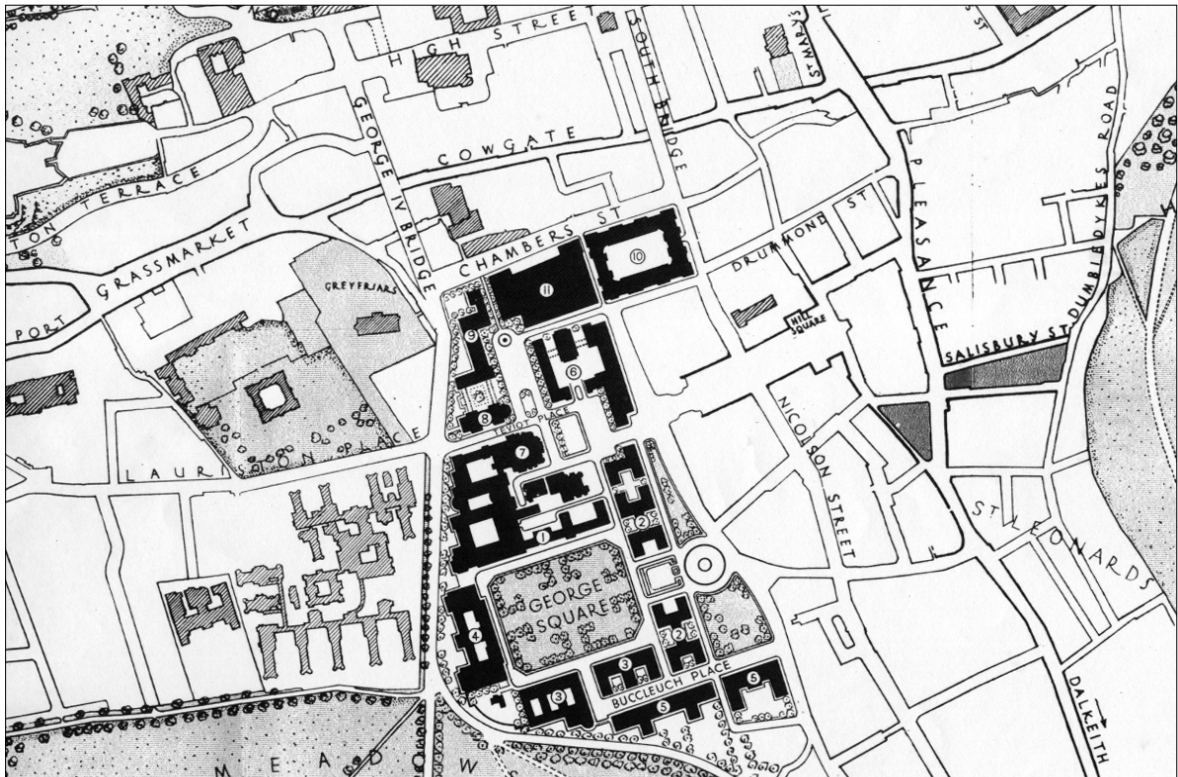


Fig. 13. University Development Plan, Charles Holden, 1946-47. (EU, Fenton Collection.)

Square and Old College.⁴¹

Holden's plan was more expansive than Oliver's, though more compact than that of Mears (fig. 13). The enlarged precinct was now bounded on the north by Chambers Street, on the south by the Meadows, on the west by Meadow Walk/Forrest Road, and on the east by Potterrow, with the whole of George Square and Buccleuch Place replaced by modern buildings. On the Island Site there was a quadrangular arrangement of amenity buildings, with Bristo Street erased to provide an open plaza. The Medical School extension was shown on the north of George Square, while on the west was a single large chemistry block. As in Oliver's scheme new science buildings had priority, with two more blocks for science in south George Square, and further science blocks extending east to Chapel Street. New administration buildings were to be provided, at Chambers Street/Forrest Road, to create more space in Old College for Arts and Law. The south side of Buccleuch Place was earmarked for staff residences and hostels, and the George Square campus was given a new east-west axis, and views to Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crags, linking to Chapel Street through a garden on the site of Windmill Street.

The first public airing of Holden's proposals appeared in the press in July 1946, after Sir John Fraser had discussed it with the Lord Provost's Special Committee on Post War Development.⁴² The scheme sparked a blaze of public controversy, though it was no surprise to the Town Planning Officer, Derek Plumstead, who felt that only minor adjustments would be necessary.⁴³ Lord Provost Sir John Falconer praised the bold scheme, and the Principal announced the reversal of the centrifugal tendency and lack of corporate life which the University had experienced for a generation. On the other hand, the prominent architect Robert Hurd, who was president of the Saltire Society, publicly attacked Holden's plan,

regarding the Mears Plan as superior.⁴⁴

Support for the scheme within the University itself was by no means complete. Professor David Talbot Rice (Fine Art), joined what was to become an avalanche of opposition when he pleaded for conservation of George Square.⁴⁵ Professor Archibald Campbell (Public Law) corresponded with the Cockburn Association about opposition to the plan while avoiding outright confrontation with the Principal's office.⁴⁶ Sir John Fraser also found himself at loggerheads with Sir Donald Pollock, who tried to direct University development according to his own ideas, arguing for retention of the square as University residences and claiming that the terms of the Pollock Trust created an insurmountable obstacle. But, in this respect, Pollock was incorrect: the terms of his trust did indeed tie up the Potterrow sites for the specific purposes that he had designated, but did not specify the survival of the actual buildings. Had he not foreseen that the proximity to George Square of these properties was actually a contributory factor in the decision to develop the square for academic purposes? Another potential hurdle emerged when the Merchant Company, though supportive of the Medical School expansion, revealed that it would be some considerable time before it could give up the Ladies College unless the University was able to fund a new replacement school.⁴⁷

Oliver had been concerned over Holden's initial report too, partly because of the allocation of individual sites but mainly because he felt that the University would be saddled with the cost of slum clearance for the properties to the north east of George Square.⁴⁸ The opinion that George Square was an island of amenity in a sea of slums was at that time universal. But, although slum clearance was only likely to commence at some distance into the future, Holden was aware that zoning was the essential issue. If a suitable area was zoned for University development in the forthcoming City Plan

its future would be secure. Subsequent development could proceed as and when finance became available. Additional properties could be obtained by compulsory purchase when necessary. If the City was fully co-operative, the sites should be handed over to the University already cleared of buildings.

Holden continued to correspond with Abercrombie, whose approval was intimated early in 1947.⁴⁹ In May 1947 the amended Holden scheme was published in a pamphlet entitled *Proposals for the Future Development of the University of Edinburgh*.⁵⁰ Together with Holden's plan, the pamphlet contained a brief statement of intent and, rather magnanimously, the Mears Plan for comparison. This document had undergone several rewrites in order to achieve the desired clarity. 'The Problem' was presented as the planning of a layout that would ensure the reintegration and co-ordination of the various University departments within a precinct on the best available city centre site – both practical and spiritual benefits were ascribed to this programme of reintegration. Needless to say, the Holden Plan offered 'The Solution'. The key factors in the problem were the inclusion of both Old College and the Medical School in the precinct, space for future expansion, a pleasant environment with a measure of seclusion, and a site offering the opportunity for first rate architecture in a unified development. It was further stated – presumably in order to attract public support – that the design of the buildings would be thrown open to public competition. Holden strongly advised against any compromise whatsoever – although he confided privately that a suitable site could be created along Potterrow if only the east side of George Square was demolished.⁵¹

Early in 1947 the University approached Edinburgh Corporation seeking general approval for the scheme. As a result, a meeting of the Lord Provost's Special Committee was held on 18 July 1947.⁵² The full Council attended, and the protagonists had a chance to air their views. Pollock regretted opposing the University which it was his

life's duty to serve, but pleaded that George Square was already a focus for University life, and that it should be retained as it was, for University residences. Other parties queuing up to attack the University included the Cockburn Association, the Edinburgh Architectural Association, the Old Edinburgh Club and the Society of Scottish Artists.

The scheme was fiercely criticised by the architect Robert Hurd, who lived at 49 George Square. He pointed out what he believed to be 'three insurmountable difficulties', claiming that Meadow Walk would have to be opened to traffic, that the University was assuming that it could acquire the Royal Scottish Museum extension site in Chambers Street, and that the properties in Sir Donald Pollock's trust were a barrier to development. In fact, the pedestrian status of Meadow Walk was not affected, and the museum site was not essential.⁵³ In Holden's plan Pollock's Island Site was still earmarked for amenities although the street layout was obliterated, and whether the site was redeveloped or not would not seriously hamper the plan. Hurd presented his own scheme for development to the east of Old College, and Holden retaliated by claiming that it was merely a last minute variation of the Mears plan.⁵⁴

The controversy which continued to rage unabated must have surprised inhabitants of cities less obsessed with architecture than Edinburgh's were. The Earl of Selkirk claimed that 'to destroy George Square would be a crime'; Robert Hurd said of George Square that it was 'not great architecture but human in scale'.⁵⁵ In contrast to the nostalgic outlook of Sir Donald Pollock, Professor Sir Alexander Gray asked 'whether we as a living community should have our freedom of action restricted to keep intact a memorial of an earlier age'.⁵⁶ Lord Provost Falconer was unwavering in his support for the University, and claimed that the extension plan was 'perhaps the greatest conception which has been submitted to the City of Edinburgh for centuries'.⁵⁷

The Lord Provost's Special Committee remitted Holden's scheme for further discussion.⁵⁸ Although no planning permission had been received, or indeed applied for, Holden was successful in getting his general plan included in Abercrombie and Plumstead's *Civic Survey and Plan for Edinburgh*, which was published in 1949.⁵⁹ This ensured favourable zoning of the area required for University development, subject to there being no material objections at the public enquiry scheduled for 1954.

Although a national moratorium on major building projects together with the preparation of Abercrombie's City Plan enforced delays, the University resolved to put the first phase of its development into motion in 1948. This was the Medical School extension. Lacking any response from the City to requests for discussion, the Post War Development Committee resolved to enlist professional help. Since Holden's contract had ended, and since there was the added complication of a promised public competition, the advice of Sir Lancelot Key of the Royal Institute of British Architects was sought. There were further changes in the key characters in the drama. Sir John Fraser had died, and Sir Sidney Smith, Acting Principal, was now convenor of the PWDC. Sir John Falconer, an ardent supporter of the University scheme, had also been replaced by Sir Andrew Murray as Lord Provost.

Key duly attended a meeting of the PWDC in December 1948, and advised that the University should refrain from commencing the first phase of the project (for Pathology, on the north-west corner of George Square) until plans were prepared for the whole north side. This would ensure architectural continuity throughout the Medical School extensions and preclude the possibility of not getting planning permission for later phases. He also advised against an open competition, as less likely to produce a viable scheme and involving significant delays but, since the University was committed to a competition,

he suggested a closed competition, with competitors selected by the University.⁶⁰

The new University Secretary, Charles H. Stewart, approached the Planning Committee of the Corporation for an opportunity to explain these intentions and to seek outline approval, but the outcome was less than satisfactory. The Corporation was concerned that University proposals should accurately reflect future needs – neither in excess nor underestimated. After consideration, the Planning Committee resolved to recommend that there would be no objection to proposals for the north side of George Square, providing that no further development of the other sides was contemplated. This was a perplexing situation for the University, and advice was sought on the legality of the ruling. Such an assurance would bind the University Court and its successors for all time, and would be an unjustifiable limitation on future development, argued Stewart. As was pointed out, the planning authority was already entitled to refuse permission for any individual planning application on its own merits anyway. The PWDC suggested that development would be restricted to the north side for a few years, but that no commitment could be given regarding the rest of its future building programme.⁶¹

The Planning Committee reconsidered its recommendation in February 1949, and agreed to give outline consent on the basis of the following three clauses:⁶²

1. The University undertake to consider an alternative scheme or schemes which do not contemplate the destruction of the façade of the other three sides of George Square;
2. The arrangement under which the present scheme for the North side of the Square is approved commits neither the Corporation nor the University to the original George Square scheme, as discussed in earlier negotiations between parties;
3. The University undertake that they will not seek from the Corporation approval of any scheme contemplating alteration on the other three sides of George Square unless and until they

are satisfied that such a proposal is the only method by which such a satisfactory scheme is possible.

The University accepted these conditions. To the opposition groups it seemed that George Square had been saved from redevelopment. Note, however, that if the University should be ‘satisfied’ that there was no viable alternative, it might still seek permission for schemes involving destruction.

Decisions now had to be made about selecting the architect for the north side of George Square. Despite Key’s recommendation, the University decided to adhere to the original plan for an open competition and enlisted A. G. R. Mackenzie, president of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, as assessor.⁶³ Mackenzie defined the specification in terms of size, cost, suitability for building in phases, flexibility, and compliance with the City’s insistence that the new block must be in harmony of form, material and scale with the rest of the square. Walter Ramsay of Glasgow, who was announced as winner in February 1951, was the only entrant who actually met the exacting requirements. Mackenzie admitted that the design had its flaws, and there was little enthusiasm for Ramsay’s elevations, but he was instructed to press on with detailed plans for the seven storey Pathology block at the north-west corner.⁶⁴

SIR EDWARD APPLETON’S
RECONSIDERATION

In 1949 the University welcomed its new Principal, Sir Edward Appleton, the distinguished physicist. Appleton was firmly committed to a post-war expansion of university teaching generally, and science teaching especially. As a member of the Department of Industrial and Scientific Research he had made recommendations to the government to that effect. By the time he took up his appointment, he

was convinced that Edinburgh could become one of the major universities in the UK. Upon arrival he faced the onerous task of disentangling the conflicting commitments that the University had already made, and guiding the expansion project to a successful conclusion.

There is little doubt that Appleton was party to information about future government funding for universities, since he had served on the University Grants Commission (UGC). He therefore knew that an early, and irrevocable, settlement on the whole question of the development plan was essential in order to be prepared for the complexities of grant applications for capital projects. Appleton was also most anxious to appear even-handed, and to honour the obligation to the City not to seek execution of the Master Plan unless there was no satisfactory alternative.

The Post War Development Committee was reconvened in June 1949, and subcommittees were set up to assess four alternative schemes: (A) development to the east of South Bridge; (B) development to the south of Old College, between Potterrow and Nicolson Street; (C) complete removal of the whole University to King’s Buildings; and (D) the Master Plan based around George Square.

The subcommittee for Scheme A reported that it had some advantages. It would inspire public support by following the Mears Plan and by leaving George Square intact. Furthermore, a large slum area would be cleared in the process. Much of the property was already owned by the University, and it related well to Old College. The site, with its steep cross fall, did not favour a quadrangular layout, but a more axial solution. Although it was thought that overcoming the difficulties of the site might have actually led to a novel and original project, the disadvantages were felt to be too great. Many expensive commercial and industrial premises would have to be purchased, and

atmospheric pollution was a problem. Progress would be largely dependent upon the Corporation's housing and road projects, about which there were no guarantees. The area was already bisected by one busy route, the Bridges, and a new relief route along the Pleasance was included in the Abercrombie Plan. It would take many years before these issues could be resolved. As it happened, indecision over the roads issue impinged upon every proposed development in the area for another 20 years.

The proposal for Scheme B involved a fairly small area of ground between Old College and Nicolson Square, with the result that one vast building would have been required (fig. 14). While a new building there would have been contiguous to other University buildings and the amenity centre, Old College itself would have been dwarfed. Although in architectural terms, an institutional building might have been appropriate on the important South Bridge/North Bridge route into the city, traffic noise and pollution were thought to be considerable deterrents. The problem of rehousing residents was less than for scheme A, but much commercial property would have to be acquired.

Scheme C, complete removal of the University to a new campus at King's Buildings, was an entirely new option, and actually went against a previous University Court resolution to move science departments back to the city centre, but Appleton wanted a genuine appraisal of all the alternatives. Despite the loss of Old College, isolation from the Royal Infirmary, and the costs of removing, this scheme had much to recommend it. The University already owned the land and the layout could be designed with a free hand. There was unlikely to be difficulty in obtaining planning permission for individual buildings as and when required, and expansion of the site was also a possibility.

However, the advantages of Scheme D, the Master Plan, were considered overwhelming. George Square was contiguous to the Medical School, the Royal Infirmary and the Island Site, and it was reasonably close to Old College. The major part was already in University hands so that the costs of rehousing tenants and purchasing additional property would be moderate. There was room too for further expansion into Buccleuch Place, of which the University also owned a substantial part. George Square was quiet and airy compared to other city centre sites, and its central garden already existed and would not have to be created out of expensive built-

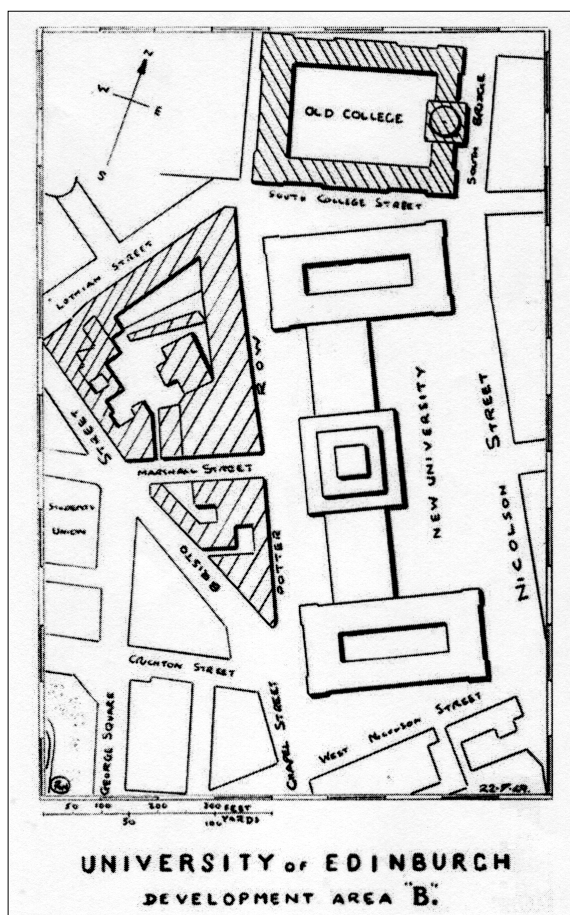


Fig. 14. 'Scheme B', feasibility study for University development between Nicolson Street and Potterrow, 1949. (*EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 143.*)

up ground. In addition, the Meadows provided a large expanse of green open space nearby.

In November 1949 the PWDC met to decide its recommendations to the University Court. Schemes A and B were ruled to be unsatisfactory, but although complete removal to King's Buildings under Scheme C was regarded as counter to the aim of re-integration, options C and D were held not to be mutually exclusive. The precise nature of future research and education in the sciences was not known, but it was widely accepted that a huge expansion was inevitable. Appleton, therefore believed that it would be unwise to abandon King's Buildings. Since the advantages of developing George Square were numerous and would give the University a 'heart in the city', a policy of dual development was felt to be the most prudent approach. Option C could be held in reserve should the City prove obstructive over the George Square issue.⁶⁵

By this course of action, Appleton can be said to have honoured the University's obligation not to propose development of the square unless satisfied that there was no satisfactory alternative. He had also signalled to the Corporation that any city centre development would be on the University's terms, with the latent threat that it might decamp to the suburbs and thus destroy the long cherished ideal of the University as cultural and intellectual heart of the City.

Once ratified by the University Court, the Planning Committee of the Town Council was informed of these decisions. Appleton personally attended a meeting on 5 December 1950 to invite the Corporation to agree that all possible alternatives had been examined, and that the George Square area was that on which development should proceed. The Committee agreed, and recommended to Magistrates and Council that proposals for planning permission

should be submitted on that basis.

A further meeting, to which the objectors were invited, was held the following January. It seems that Appleton's ultimatum had struck home, for all the objectors, including Hurd, made it clear that they were not seeking to hinder University development in the square, but only to ensure that existing buildings of architectural and historic interest should be preserved. The development was formally approved in principle by a full Council majority of 33 to 26. However, a further complication was added, for it was stipulated that no plan entailing destruction of the west, east and south façades should be submitted unless the University also submitted an alternative design, by an architect of standing, which retained the façades.⁶⁶

Such insistence on submitting two designs for each planning application was unprecedented. If the University were to comply with this, it would double the expense, and, given a choice between retention and destruction, the Corporation would doubtless choose the former. The Lord Provost, Sir Andrew Murray, described the ruling as a compromise.⁶⁷ For the preservationists, it appeared that the façades, at least, could not be destroyed. However, while the University did not rule out the possibility of retaining some portion of the old buildings, it had no intention of planning a new campus around such a restriction. Clarification of the aims of the ruling was sought. Was it not tantamount to insistence on preservation, at all costs, of an assortment of façades which were no longer in their original condition? The Town Clerk confirmed that the Corporation was seeking preservation unless 'it materially threatened the ultimate objective of a liberated and re-integrated university of proud proportions and commanding design, worthy of the city and its ancient college'. The University was free to obtain designs either by

public competition or by an architect of eminence.⁶⁸ Clearly, they needed the services of a first class architect, though the new stipulation demanding twinned designs now made it very difficult, if not impossible, to organise an architectural competition.⁶⁹

The recommendations of the Abercrombie Report (1949) were far reaching, and most fall outwith the scope of this article. Suffice to say that the City needed new roads, slum clearance schemes, recreation facilities, segregation of industrial and residential areas, and tight control over development based on population density per acre. Most importantly for the University, the proposed George Square development was now in print, with an artist's impression showing a bird's-eye view of Holden's layout, and the projected zoning for the University precinct was theoretically established. This would allow time for it to be digested and perhaps for it to supplant the Mears Plan in the public imagination before the Public Inquiry in 1954.

Although the matter was still clearly unresolved, and the amenity societies' alternative scheme for development to the east of Nicolson Street is mentioned, Abercrombie was far from neutral in stating that 'any question of preservation of existing buildings should be considered in the light of what can be achieved by building anew.'⁷⁰ Holden's critique of the buildings in George Square was also included. They were not particularly distinguished, it was claimed, and, as examples of Georgian architecture, they did not stand up well to aesthetic analysis. Edinburgh had a lot of eighteenth century architecture in everyday use and the square's domestic and vernacular elements were presented as vices rather than virtues. The square had been laid out as building plots, but not designed as an architectural entity; accordingly there were no palace fronts or end

pavilions. These were just simple houses in the Georgian taste with a measure of classical detail. The scale of the buildings was described as inadequate for the size of the central garden. A comparison was drawn with the scale and massing of Charlotte Square. In fairness, very little of the country's architecture could have survived comparison with Robert Adam's monumental conception, as was later pointed out.⁷¹

Abercrombie's zoning proposals were a major element at the 1954 Public Inquiry, and most of the appeals were for variations to permit specific planned developments. The zoning, once approved, would be very difficult to contravene. For example, the University went to great pains to safeguard its planned future development for halls of residence at Salisbury Green. Crucially, for the future of George Square, however, there were no objections to it being zoned for cultural/educational use. The amenity groups seeking preservation of the square missed a vital opportunity to oppose the zoning. A successful objection could have prevented redevelopment. Despite the Corporation's imposed conditions for twinned designs, the fate of the old buildings was sealed with scarcely a mention.⁷²

SPENCE, MATTHEW AND THE CENTRAL
DEVELOPMENT AREA
1954-1962

By 1954 it had become clear that the University needed expert help in the planning and construction of the new campus. Basil Spence was appointed planning consultant in April, on the recommendation of Robert Matthew, who had returned to Edinburgh to become the University's Professor of Architecture, and was in the process of setting up a new University department independent of the old school of architecture within Edinburgh College of Art.⁷³

Spence was a designer of acknowledged talent and, by virtue of pavilions at the Festival of Britain and his prize-winning design for the new Coventry Cathedral, was a well known public figure. He was regarded as Britain's premier publicist for modern architecture, with proven powers of persuasion. In addition to this he had been brought up and studied in Edinburgh, and was knowledgeable about the University's accommodation problems. His task was to create a development plan within the area zoned for cultural and educational use, to advise on architectural and planning matters and to lend his considerable authority to the University's case. Spence demonstrated his confidence by immediately advising that as much property as possible in the central area should be acquired, either for redevelopment or for housing displaced residents.

A plan was formulated in collaboration with Robert Matthew, who became internal architectural advisor to the University, and in November 1954 Spence outlined a six-step procedure:

1. Survey of the existing uses of the area;
2. Agreement on preferred locations for specific projects;
3. A block plan, with the area divided into suitable development sites;
4. A model for the whole area, indicating the tentative mass and siting of buildings;
5. Detailed block plans for specific sites; before, finally,
6. The start of design for individual buildings.

Of course, planning permission would have to be obtained for each individual building, but by this process the planning authorities would know what to expect, and proposals could be altered before becoming too detailed, should difficulties emerge at any stage.⁷⁴

Spence submitted his formal report in March 1955.⁷⁵ In his opinion, it would not be possible to

reuse the façades of all the George Square buildings, though the whole of the west side could be retained intact for use by smaller departments. In the light of this expert advice, the University considered itself discharged of the responsibility to submit alternative plans retaining the façades of the other sides. Spence also produced a model showing the massing and layout of the precinct (fig. 15).⁷⁶ At the south-west corner of the square, as the apex of pedestrian flow through the precinct but at the quietest location in the area, he modelled a large block for the new Main Library. Moving round the square from the Library, long low buildings enclosed the south and east sides, linking up with the east end of the Medical School extension to complete the quadrangle. Beyond the east side of the square, on Windmill Street and Chapel Street, a series of tower blocks constituted a radically new skyline. The northern section – the vaguest aspect of Spence's plan, since development here was seen as long term – contained a few blocks representing student amenities, while the Pollock Memorial Hall was replaced by a chapel.⁷⁷ Perspectives were also produced, showing how the precinct might appear from ground level, and these depict views from the Meadows with the buildings swathed in trees, while the inner areas are presented as a series of semi-enclosed spaces enlivened with sculpture and water details (fig. 16).⁷⁸

Spence was a good draughtsman, and the standard of his work impressive. His proposals, illustrated by seductive sketches of modern facilities which would attract students and teachers, won the overwhelming support of the University Court. The next step was to present these proposals to the Corporation's Planning Committee, at the same time as the planning application for the medical buildings. At first submission the Planning Committee had refused to consider the first phase of the Medical School extension until proposals for the whole north side

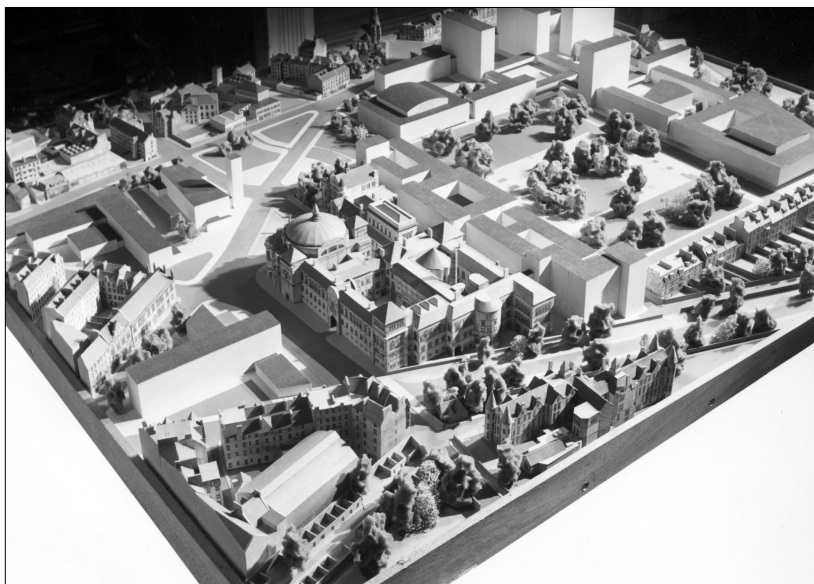


Fig. 15. Photograph of University Precinct model, Basil Spence and Partners, 1956. (*EU, Fenton Collection.*)

were produced, and this was now a matter of urgency, since work had to commence in 1955 in order to ensure UGC funding.⁷⁹

In July 1955, therefore, Spence presented the whole University scheme to the Planning Committee. He was accompanied by both Appleton and University Secretary Charles Stewart. Ramsay's design was to be altered to fit in with these proposed future developments, and its façade was to be modified under Spence's direction. This involved lowering the height from that of the competition entry, and what was described as 'humanisation' of the severe frontage, with the introduction of a colonnade and balconies. It was stressed that the medical buildings were part of a larger scheme, and the architect explained the impossibility of retaining the façades of the remaining old houses within any viable scheme (besides, the new facade of the north side was regarded as suitable whether or not the east and south sides were redeveloped). The Committee recommended that consent for the medical building be given, subject to Spence's modifications, and

recorded that 'the foregoing recommendation is made on the clear understanding that acceptance is based upon the University's intention to proceed with the scheme along the general lines of the Spence plan – subject to detailed consideration'.⁸⁰ In this way Appleton and Spence gained what was tantamount to outline permission for the scheme, and concluded that the University was now free of the troublesome stipulation of façade retention.

Spence's amendments to the Pathology building

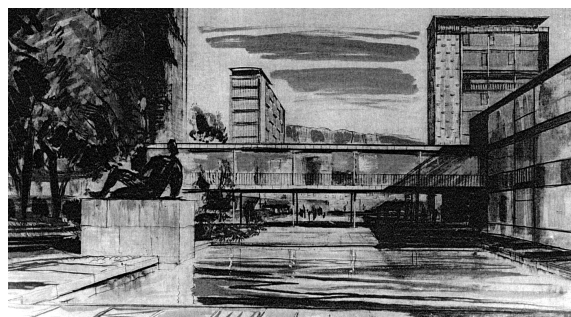


Fig. 16. Perspective view of proposed University Precinct looking east along the site of Buccleuch Place, Basil Spence, 1955. (*University of Edinburgh Appeal Brochure, 1959, EU, Fenton Collection.*)

involved the use of art-stone dressings to simulate traditional rubble walling on the elevations to Meadow Walk, and, for subsequent phases, modernistic modular glazed balconies at first floor level (fig. 17).⁸¹ Thus, after many tribulations, Spence advanced the project from the purely theoretical into the realm of practical building. There were still many hurdles to overcome since each building would be subject to a complicated process of consultations, with approval required by various committees within the University and the UGC, as well as being dependent upon successful applications to the planning authority.⁸²

The formulation of the future campus began to move from general to particular when the University Development Committee decided that there should be no residential or administrative accommodation within the new George Square.⁸³ Spence had suggested that Physics might be accommodated in Old Surgeon's Hall at High School Yards, and Appleton was convinced that first year science teaching should remain in the central area, although it took him some time to persuade the UGC of the merits of this proposal. With the retention of King's Buildings the academic orientation for accommodation within the square had swung from Science to the Arts and Social Sciences.

In 1959, with work well in hand on the Pathology building, Spence, together with Matthew, produced an amended plan.⁸⁴ This was bigger in scope than the 1955 scheme; taking in practically the whole area from the Meadows to the Pleasance. The precinct was now referred to as the Central Development Area (fig. 18). The scheme was becoming more detailed. The city block north of the Medical School was allocated to Medical Science, while the entire south side of Buccleuch Place was designated for future projects. The two triangular city blocks between Marshall Street and George Square were also clearly earmarked for



Fig. 17. Photograph of north George Square, 1999. To the right is the former Watson's school, and to the left Walter Ramsay's Pathology Building (1956–62), Phase 1 of the Medical Extension. In the centre is the Hugh Robson Building by Ramsay, with amendments by Basil Spence (1977–80), Phase 3 of the Medical Extension. (Author.)

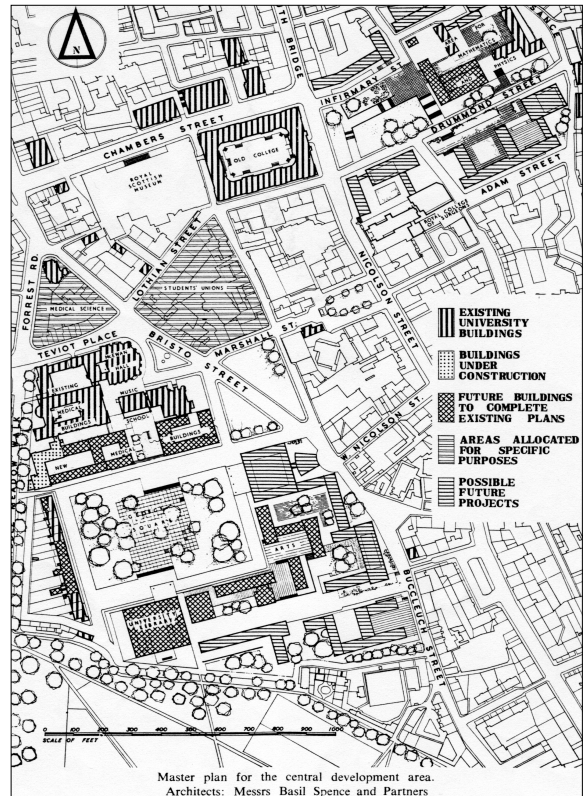


Fig. 18. Central Development Area, Basil Spence and Partners with Robert Matthew, 1959. Note that in this extended plan the area to the east of Old College is earmarked for development and thus could no longer be cited as an alternative to George Square. (University of Edinburgh Appeal Brochure, 1959, EU, Fenton Collection.)



Fig. 19. Photograph of model of Medical Extension project, Walter Ramsay, incorporating Spence's 1959 amendment. (*EUL, Special Collections, model in Percy Johnson-Marshall Collection, photograph by the author.*)

development. Under Spence and Matthew's guidance, Ramsay altered his design for future phases of the medical buildings, so that the new north range of George Square would be split into two blocks, as all the original sides of the square had been. In between the two blocks, a portico was to screen a courtyard, which in turn gave access to a new foyer on the south side of the Reid School of Music (fig. 19).⁸⁵

More imminent was the planning of the Arts Faculty buildings at the south-east corner of the square. It was proposed at this stage that a total of seven blocks could be built in three phases to provide 300 tutorial rooms, 22 lecture rooms and 13 departmental libraries. The first phase was for a 14 storey Arts Tower with an associated pair of lecture theatres to the east, on the site of Windmill Street. A four storey tutorial building, with a lecture block attached, on the east side of the square constituted the proposed second phase. For the third phase, a 600 seat lecture theatre and another tutorial block was to occupy the south side (fig. 20).

The commission for the Arts Faculty buildings had been awarded to Matthew's own practice, Robert Matthew Johnson-Marshall and Partners, in 1956, and the initial plan grouped the buildings on the south-east corner of the square on a shared podium,

with underground links, and car parking at the lower level of Buccleuch Place.⁸⁶ On the basis of the amended plan, the architects began working up designs to meet the requirements of the various departments, such as could be financed over the succeeding five years.

On the recommendation of Appleton, Basil Spence and Partners were given the commission for the Main Library, which was now expected to start in 1964. There had been some reconsideration of the siting in 1957, when questions arose about the morality of destroying Cowan House and Masson Hall while at the same time applying for funding for new halls of residence. But it was argued that the

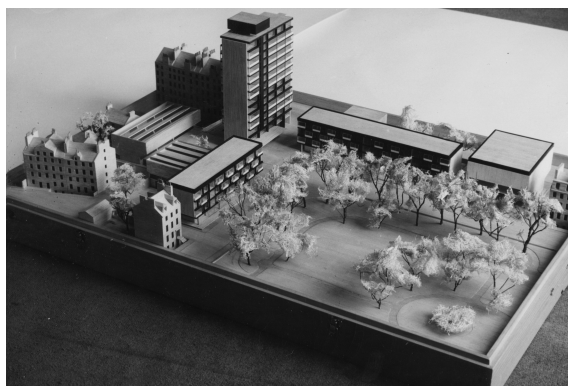


Fig. 20. Photograph of Arts Faculty model, Robert Matthew Johnson-Marshall and Partners, 1959. (*EU, Fenton Collection.*)

Library siting was fundamental to the whole University plan; if that principle was abandoned, then there was no plan.⁸⁷

THE PRESERVATIONIST STRUGGLE

As Spence and Matthew were refining the development plan, there was a resurgence of opposition by the preservationists. In early 1956, just when the National Trust for Scotland appeared to have accepted the redevelopment of the square as inevitable, a new society, the 'Georgian Group of Edinburgh', was formed primarily to press for its preservation.⁸⁸ A fresh campaign of opposition was mounted as the Cockburn Association called for a Public Inquiry, and the Georgian Group demanded that work on the Medical School extension be halted. Despite the influential support the amenity societies mustered, the Secretary of State for Scotland was loath to take action which would further delay the medical buildings.⁸⁹

The preservationists were in a weaker position than was appreciated at the time. They had made no representations at the Public Inquiry of 1954 when the zoning was established, but instead pinned their hopes on the Corporation's ruling on façade retention. That ruling, together with a petition with 3000 signatures, was felt to be adequate to block the development. But the opposition had failed to appreciate the true nature of the great changes that were occurring in university education. Sir Edward Appleton and Sir Robert Matthew were men of immense influence in their day, and political pressure was being brought to bear even on the potential supporters of conservation. The Secretary of State, John S. Maclay, was himself under governmental pressure to ensure that the project proceeded. The effects of the population bulge of 1942–47 would be felt at universities in the mid 1960s, and the forecast was for an increase in the national student population

of 50% by 1968, and possibly 80% by the 1970s. Edinburgh University was expected to be able to accommodate 12,000 students by the mid 1970s, compared to some 3700 in 1938.

The University scheme was achieving a more general acceptance, however, for when the Secretary of State wrote to the Chairman of the Historic Buildings Council (HBC) for his opinion he revealed that 'the Cockburn Association originally wanted a Public Inquiry, but now do not oppose the scheme if it is satisfied that it is inevitable, sooner or later'. One might have expected the Cockburn Association to resist redevelopment indefinitely, but after the appeal for a Public Inquiry was brushed aside in 1956, it appears that it was prepared to accept the scheme, if it was in the best interests of the University and the area as a whole. The HBC Chairman responded that 'the square as a whole is a valuable piece of urban layout, but the buildings individually are of varied architectural merit'.⁹⁰ But George Square was no longer a whole. No one had thought to preserve it until it was a quarter gone and the University had already begun to plan its redevelopment. Thus by 1957, the University Development Committee was able to report that 'with the exception of the Georgian Group, most objectors have accepted University needs. The Cockburn Association Secretary is satisfied too.'⁹¹

Nevertheless, the Georgian Group's campaign had an effect. At the same time as the University was launching a public appeal for building funds in 1959, Appleton addressed a stormy meeting of the General Council at which there was considerable opposition to the scheme.⁹² In December of the same year, the Secretary of State rejected another appeal for a Public Inquiry, because he believed that there was little hope of a resolution that would be to everyone's satisfaction. He suggested instead a tripartite working group with representatives from the University, the

Corporation and the amenity societies. The University agreed, so long as work on the Arts Tower could proceed; and this was initially accepted.

Some confusion, whether deliberate or accidental, appears to have occurred at this point. It seems that some Scottish Office staff thought that the Arts Tower did not actually involve the destruction of any of George Square itself, and the Secretary of State answered a parliamentary question to that effect.⁹³ Certainly, the building footprint of the tower was to be on the back gardens of Nos 47–51, with the lecture theatres on the site of 40–46 Windmill Street, but the nature of the podium on which it was to stand, and the access to the building, necessitated the removal of Nos 47–51 George Square together with those at 26–29 Buccleuch Place. There was great consternation at this. The Earl of Wemyss, Chairman of the National Trust for Scotland, suggested that there had been deception by the University. Appleton appeared not to know that the tower was incompatible with the east side of the square. Matthew, on the other hand, stated that he would under no circumstance have been associated with the suggestion that the east side of the square could be retained along with the Arts Tower. The chief architect of the Department of Health agreed with Matthew.⁹⁴

The working group comprised Charles Stewart, with his assistant R. Maxwell Young, and John Hardie Glover (of Spence, Glover and Ferguson) representing the University. John Kerr, Robert Hurd, A. T. MacIndoe (planning consultant to the National Trust) and T. A. Crawford attended on behalf of the amenity societies. T. T. Hewitson, the Town Planning Officer, represented the City. Hurd, on whom the onus of coming up with an acceptable compromise fell, found it a devastating experience, and felt that the University was merely going through the motions. Matthew, naturally, would have nothing to

do with it, and refused to consider re-siting the Arts Tower unless instructed by the University to redesign the whole Faculty group. It was especially difficult for Hurd as he had already been commissioned by the University to report on the conservation of the west side of the square.⁹⁵ This had been on the recommendation of Spence, though it is widely believed that it was an attempt to silence a relentless critic by putting him in a difficult position where he was being paid by both sides.

Hurd prepared an alternative scheme of partial new build and conversion, though the extensive reconstruction involved, clever as it was, could not be regarded as preservation (fig. 21). The upper floors of the buildings on the east and south sides of the square would have been converted to tutorial and research rooms with the insertion of a pair of 50 seat lecture theatres at ground floor level. The shortfall in accommodation would have been made up by redeveloping the land from George Square to the

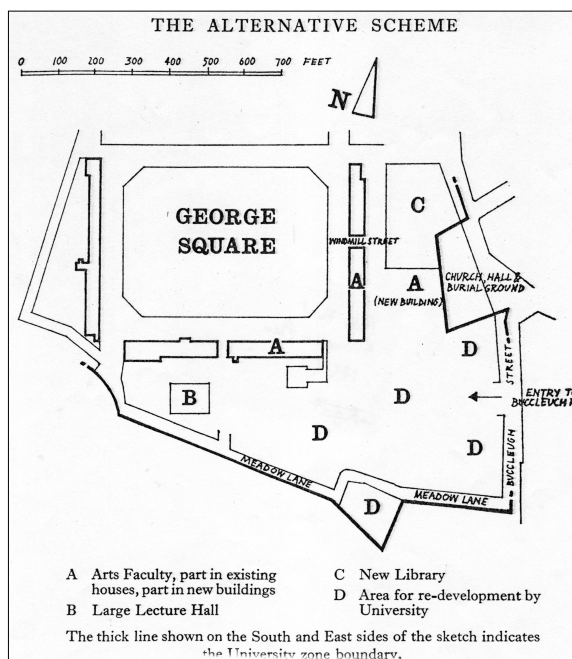


Fig. 21. The Amenity Societies' alternative scheme, Robert Hurd with John MacIndoe, 1959. (EU, Fenton Collection.)

Meadows, sacrificing Buccleuch Place, with a new Main Library between Chapel Street and the rear of the houses on the east side.⁹⁶

The working group was given two months to devise a scheme, but after six meetings in as many weeks the group was wound up. In Appleton's statement to the *Scotsman*, he claimed that there was a complete lack of agreement except on the thesis that the University scheme was best for the University and that any alterations to it would cause delay.⁹⁷ Wemyss accused Maclay of not giving the alternative scheme proper consideration. Although it would have been impossible to impose upon the University a scheme with which it was not in agreement, the Secretary of State did seek expert advice on technical aspects. His advisors calculated that replanning would cause delays of at least one year, with no guarantee of planning permission from the Corporation at the end of the process. Hurd's scheme assumed an immediate start on conversion, which was not practical as all the buildings involved were currently in use, whereas Matthew and Spence's scheme had taken careful account of the phasing of removals and rehousing of departments during the building process. The main criticisms were inadequate circulation and lavatory space for the 2000 students who were expected to use the facilities on a daily basis, and there was no car parking provision. The possibility of achieving the necessary floor loadings for the projected usage was uncertain. Furthermore the fire authorities were already concerned about safety within the old buildings, and it would be extremely difficult to satisfy them with a further conversion. In short, there was no guarantee that all difficulties could be overcome.

After the Secretary of State's ruling, Wemyss continued to demand that the tower be re-sited, but by that time the only way of stopping the process would have been to call in the permission to demolish

which the University had received on 25 March 1960.⁹⁸ The consequence of that would have been to oblige the University to replan the whole of the Arts Faculty buildings, and miss the starting date stipulated by the UGC. The Secretary of State could not justify such a course of action.

It is worth observing that the alternative scheme entailed significant demolitions, including the loss of Buccleuch Place. It should also be noted that all the parties involved claimed to be enthusiastic about modern architecture, and about the University's takeover of the area: 'It is important to make it clear that opposition to the scheme is not directed at the University's selection of architects which is wholly admirable, but only at the selection of the site.'⁹⁹ This statement reveals the lack of a consistent line of objection. The amenity societies had not objected to the zoning of George Square at the Public Enquiry, for at that stage their interest was in maintaining the appearance of the square after its transformation to a University campus. Clearly they were unaware of the scale of University expansion that Appleton envisaged. The emphasis of the preservationists then shifted to retention of the façades on the east and south sides: a condition from which the University had extracted itself in 1955. To then direct criticism at the choice of site when the University was at the stage of seeking planning permission for the first Arts Faculty building was naively optimistic.

It must be said that there was also considerable support for the University's scheme. The public appeal for funds raised £256,000 in six months.¹⁰⁰ In March 1960, in a timely gesture of support, Roy Thomson, proprietor of the *Scotsman* and Scottish Television, gifted £25,000. Then, in a transaction that was regarded as a good omen within the University, the UGC purchased the feudal superiority of Heriot's Croft and Windmill Acres, which gave the University effective control over George Square Gardens.

In the same month as the working group was wound up (March 1960), the University produced a booklet entitled *University Development and George Square*, clarifying the details of the processes and events leading up to its current proposals. This was felt to be necessary since much confusion had arisen in the minds of the public as a result of all the misinformation and rumour, and the claims and counter-claims which had appeared in the press. The situation regarding the demands on accommodation for teaching and research was duly presented along with the amended plan.¹⁰¹

The confusion over the whole business may have undermined public faith in the planning process, and that provoked a further attempt to obstruct the University's plans. The amenity societies harboured unrealistic hopes over a private action which was brought against the Corporation at the Court of Session. The action, by the Reverend Ian Simpson, owner of No. 25 George Square, came to nothing, however.¹⁰²

By the end of 1960 effective opposition to the development had petered out, and demolition work was in hand. At this stage, complete transformation of George Square seemed inevitable, but the attenuation of the projected time scale of the programme was later to allow a new wave of opposition to mount a campaign to rescue the remaining fragments of George Square and some neighbouring buildings. Nevertheless, the succeeding years from 1960–68 saw the creation of George Square as it is today.

THE HUME TOWER AND THE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT AREA

The first phase of the Arts Faculty project progressed relatively smoothly. Matthew was given formal

authority to proceed with sketch plans for the fourteen storey Arts Tower in January 1960. These were prepared fairly quickly, but then he had already presented a model to the University Development Committee as early as December 1958. Officially opened by Appleton in October 1963, and named after philosopher David Hume, the pristine new tower was, for a brief spell, a neighbour in striking contrast to the remaining older buildings on the south side of the square.

The concrete structure with brick infill is completely masked by stone slabs which clad the side walls and polished slate on the front and rear elevations. Most of the final design work was overseen by architect John Richards, but the building bears Matthew's stamp. His interest in an artistic use of materials in conjunction with the latest construction techniques put him at the forefront of modern Scottish architecture. His search for national character can be seen in the rubble-clad walls of the basement storey, which seems to pay homage to the eighteenth century buildings which were rapidly disappearing. When the tower first breached the Edinburgh skyline, vying with the Victorian church spires, the city had seen nothing else like it. Unlike many modernist point blocks, which rely entirely on windows for articulation, the David Hume Tower has several recesses on the façade originally intended to denote departmental libraries.

The lecture block to the rear of the Hume Tower contains three lecture theatres incorporating what was then state-of-the-art technology for audio-visual presentation. The façade of the block is fairly blank with glazing only at the entrance front, and the vestibule is created by the cantilevered overhang of the raked seating. Underground links to the tower and basement facilities were also created in anticipation of the further phases of the Arts Faculty group.

By the time of the David Hume Tower's opening

there were further changes in the long term plans for University development. These were to have far reaching consequences, with George Square just a small part of a proposed vast urban redevelopment scheme. It is probably fair to say that, having initiated the long expected post-war reshaping of the city, confidence within the University grew to such a level that a leadership role in urban planning seemed feasible. One should remember that this was the great era of faith in the principles of civic design and regional planning when, after a period of post-war stasis, major changes were finally being wrought upon Britain's cities. Often vast tracts of cities were totally replanned and designated Comprehensive Development Areas.

Towards the end of 1960 Appleton intimated to the Development Committee that the student population was likely to be even larger than had been anticipated. With the possibility of a far greater medium term expansion, it was felt wise to consider the University precinct in the light of its surroundings. The initial phases of the academic buildings were still going to be surrounded by decaying tenements and commercial premises. All these properties were sure to attract private developers who might negotiate commercial redevelopment with the city authorities. The University feared the sort of uncoordinated and piecemeal development that had occurred in the late Victorian era. New shops and offices would inevitably line the main thoroughfares and present their ugly rears and service entrances towards the new campus. Other developments might even erode the University zone itself. Furthermore, with the city's motor traffic increasing daily, the Corporation would soon have to come to terms with the transportation system, and might possibly implement the sort of urban motorways that Abercrombie had recommended. Robert Matthew advised that it would

be in the University's best interest to initiate and play a major role in formulating a comprehensive plan for the whole of the area known as the South Side. The University therefore recommended a Comprehensive Development Area for the South Side of the city at the end of 1960.¹⁰³

Basil Spence was still planning consultant for the University at this time, but he had recently been appointed president of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and it was thought that he would not be in a position to draft yet another development plan. Spence was also consultant for the new University of Sussex, and, with his main office in London, he could no longer be thought of as resident in Edinburgh. Matthew therefore recommended the University's own Professor of Urban Design and Regional Planning, Percy Johnson-Marshall, for the position, and Spence was asked to resign.¹⁰⁴ As qualification for the appointment, Johnson-Marshall had much practical experience gained during post-war replanning for London County Council, under Matthew's leadership.

The Comprehensive Development Area (CDA) was to be developed by a tripartite co-ordinating committee drawn from University, Corporation and private enterprise. The costs of the surveys were to be shared three ways, but otherwise the University had no financial involvement. The new planning consultant began working up a design for a 125 acre area, and entered into negotiations with the Corporation and with a development company, Murrayfield Real Estate. In February 1962 the CDA was approved by the University Court, and in November it was approved, in principle, by the Corporation.

A new brochure was published which declared that the University wanted to give the benefit of its own expertise in the replanning of the area in order to ensure that there were good buildings around its new campus, and that a transport system appropriate to its

own layout would be instated.¹⁰⁵ In this Appleton declared that ‘the University, as you all know, has decided to stay where its roots are, as an institution built into the life of the city and wishes to achieve a harmonious integration between itself and the city in which it is set’. David Allan’s engraving of the laying of the foundation stone of Old College in 1789 formed the frontispiece, in an effort to invoke the ‘spirit of co-operation between City and University’ in a project of intellectual and physical rebuilding. For such an ambitious proposal it was important to win popular support, and to this end Johnson-Marshall’s model outlining the future shape of the area was put on display at Adam House, to the

wonder and amazement of the public (fig. 22).

The CDA proposals were far reaching, although apart from the University’s own buildings it ultimately came to naught. A detailed discussion of the proposals is beyond the scope of this history of George Square. However, Johnson-Marshall was now directing University development, and further amendments to the proposed form of the campus were involved. The three stages of development of the CDA were to be synchronised with specific University plans.

Stage One would see the completion of the Arts Faculty (now Arts and Social Sciences) buildings as per the 1959 plan, with the second phase of the



Fig. 22. Photograph of first Comprehensive Development Area model, Percy Johnson-Marshall, 1961. (EU, Fenton Collection.)

Medical School extension. The Student Centre buildings on the Island Site were to be arranged to create a new public square in front of the McEwan Hall.¹⁰⁶ Further adjustments to the plan for George Square were also made. Spence's 1955 plan had suggested a group of towers behind East George Square, but this was now reduced to two – the existing Hume Tower, with a second for Fundamental Science. The Science Tower would rise from Windmill Street, with tutorial buildings fronting George Square, uniform with those of the Arts group, on the site of Nos 55–60. The science block would complete the enclosure of the square when given a portico link to the planned medical buildings on the north side.¹⁰⁷ On the south side of George Square the components were unchanged, but they were broken up into individual units, rather than the unified façade that Spence had proposed.¹⁰⁸ Further academic buildings, including a new Department of Architecture, were to be located between George Square and the Meadows.

Stage Two would consist of the Main Library, to be built by Spence's partnership, together with University buildings in the Drummond Street sector, and the commercial development of Potterrow. Stage Three would have been the development of a residential area – including three large tower blocks – to the south of Buccleuch Place. Within the commercial development, the University expected that complementary businesses, such as coffee shops, book shops and privately funded student hotels might be located. There are resonances of Robert Adam's projected University crescent facing Old College in this aspect of the CDA. Indeed Johnson-Marshall claimed as much in an article in the *Architectural Review* in 1964.¹⁰⁹ But, the CDA scheme owes much more to the South Bank development in London, and to the cultural centre of the rebuilt Coventry. Johnson-Marshall's book *Rebuilding Cities* (1966) features these and other large

scale projects such as that at Rotterdam. Unlike Rotterdam and Coventry, however, enemy action had not reduced Edinburgh to a sea of rubble.

The unique aspect of Johnson-Marshall's CDA was the integration of a University campus into an urban megastructure. The podium structure on which the Arts Faculty buildings were to stand was to be extended across the city to the east. This would permit complete segregation of pedestrians and traffic, with pedestrians at the upper level, and carriageways and basement car parks below. Had it been achieved, it would have been possible to walk eastwards at this upper level from the University campus, across the motorways by means of bridges, through the shopping area and into the residential sector.

Johnson-Marshall's projected completion for the whole scheme was 1982, but the CDA was finally abandoned in 1973. Indecision over the road layout resulted in a lack of commitment and long term postponement. Then a rival commercial development opportunity on the site of St James's Square attracted the financial backers away. Throughout the years from 1962–72, however, the University proceeded with its part of the scheme. The expectation of mass demolitions meant that alternative developments were frozen, and a great many properties gradually rotted for a decade. This did little to enhance the reputation of the University, which was blamed for every crumbling tenement and gap site.

Johnson-Marshall's main contribution to George Square was in the circulatory system at podium and sub-podium level. With the buildings linked at two levels, integration of departments, it was felt, would inevitably follow. The York stone cladding given to most of the buildings as a unifying material appropriate to the city's architectural heritage was another of his suggestions.

During the Comprehensive Development Area era the reshaping of George Square continued incrementally with varying degrees of success. The Medical School buildings continued to be plagued by problems. The original first phase, at the west end of the north side, had to be subdivided into three. Phase 1a, which involved demolition of the end house, No. 15, was in partial use by March 1961, and scaffolding was required to shore up the gable of No. 14 (see fig. 24 below).¹¹⁰ In 1965 Government and Faculty priorities for funding had changed, and Nos 11–14 were still

in University use, so it was decided that the Pharmacology phase should be built on the site of the houses at Nos 1 and 2 at the east end of north George Square, and that Biochemistry should follow once Nos 11–14 were vacated. Demolition of the Watson's school would then permit the final phase to be built.

Warrants for the demolition of Nos 1 and 2, the least altered of the original buildings, together with the neighbouring tenement at 19–25 Charles Street, were issued in November 1966. Ramsay was still the architect, but the design of the elevations was overseen by both Matthew and Johnson-Marshall. The problems which had plagued the first phase of the new medical buildings was avoided by the appointment of Ove Arup as consulting engineers, and the building was ready by 1970. The entrance, at street level, shelters within a portico of rectangular columns while, at first floor level, modular projecting balconies, specified by Spence, brand it a product of the 1960s. The cladding is in York stone, and the façade is enlivened by pseudo pilasters – also on Spence's instructions. As a building in its own right, the Pharmacology building is unremarkable, but it was intended as the eastern corner pavilion for the whole Medical Faculty frontage to the square.

For the Arts and Social Sciences buildings, Matthew's firm was instructed to quantify

departmental needs and then to formulate building proposals in line with the planning consultant's guidelines. According to Matthew's rationalist principles, extremely detailed survey-led reports were produced. These outlined the phased redevelopment of the south-east corner of George Square and Buccleuch Place.¹¹¹

However, mainly due to financial stringency, building proceeded more slowly than expected, and only the first two phases were achieved. These were largely realised by 1967 when the George Square Theatre opened. This 600 seat lecture hall, for general University use, takes up the central position on the south side of the square. Its cladding in stone slabs almost allows it to blend into the overall scheme, but its cantilevered form, originally considered as boldly expressive, was rather ubiquitous by the time of completion. At the podium level it contains only a foyer giving access to a staircase after entrance by a revolving door in the centre of a glazed shopfront. Under the overhang, the true nature of the concrete construction is revealed. Incongruously, the rear elevation on Buccleuch Place clamours for more attention than might be expected from what was intended as a service road to the underground car park.

The two tutorial blocks facing the square, which became the William Robertson and Adam Ferguson Buildings (on the east and south respectively), entailed the demolition of Nos 52–54 and Nos 39–46 in 1964. These achieved their final form in 1967 and 1970. The four storey buildings, also dressed in York stone slabs, present a blank basement storey at podium level without providing sufficient overhang to complete the covered walkway as was envisaged. The concrete pilotis which are expressed on the bottom storey may be faintly suggestive of the vanished Tuscan columns of the old houses. In practical terms, the central spinal corridors do allow

circulation through the buildings from end to end, to incorporate something of the prescribed cross-fertilisation between departments, and a flexible approach to spatial allocation is possible. Behind the Adam Ferguson Building, the sheer face of the incomplete podium, and half of a garden court at street level in Buccleuch Place indicate where the project came to an end. The William Robertson building remained in L-plan form after ingenious schemes to extend it by bridging at first floor level over the old burial ground and on to the site of the church in Chapel Street were abandoned (see fig. 23).

At the end of 1964 the buildings at Nos 30–38 were demolished for the erection of the Main Library on the site first designated by Spence in 1954. Spence's partner Hardie Glover did most of the designing, and work was completed in 1967. The original specification was for a capacity of two million books and 1900 reader places. After the Robbins Report of 1964 this was increased to 2500 places. The fact that it maintains a fairly unobtrusive presence despite its great bulk, is evidence of skilful disposition of volumes. And, as Spence predicted, very little of the rumble of the city's traffic can be heard within. Open-plan floor space for book stacks is arranged around a service core – each floor has an area of one acre – and the horizontal strips of windows are shielded by projecting balconies. Economies in the upper floor partitions permitted the use of high quality materials, such as teak, stainless steel and quartzite flooring in the double-height concourse area. Johnson-Marshall's dictate on York stone cladding was set aside, and the exterior treatment contrasts polished black granite and riven sandstone with polished concrete where the framing of the building is exposed to form a prostyle portico. Viewed favourably, the articulation of structure

seems almost classical, and the opinion that the Library will come to be regarded as one of the city's superior twentieth century buildings is convincing.¹¹²

The buildings at 55–69 George Square have survived, against the odds, as a result of the demise of the principle of first year science teaching in the central area. The first phase of the Fundamental Science buildings, the Appleton Tower, looms over them from the site of the former Crichton Street. Demolition of the old tenements there and in Chapel Street and Windmill Street in 1963 preceded its erection. Designed by Alan Reiach, Eric Hall and Partners, the Appleton Tower was named in posthumous honour of the Principal who had overseen the transition from vision into concrete reality of the new University. Seven floors of laboratory accommodation surmount a double-height circulation concourse, with various facilities provided in its podium. A block containing five lecture theatres clad in conglomerate concrete and pebble-imbedded slabs is attached to its southern side. The tower's completion in 1966 created a symbolic manifestation of Appleton's vision, with twin towers of Arts and Sciences dominating the University area. Since then its cladding of pre-cast concrete slabs with mosaic detailing has suffered badly from the Scottish weather. Contrary to rumour, however, the structure has been declared sound.¹¹³

The Appleton Tower might be thought of as non-formalist, or non-hierarchical, in its lack of an obvious entrance front, and it appears rather isolated when viewed from the empty site which stretches from Marshall Street to Crichton Street. This predicament is a result of the breakdown of the system of which it was an element. An associated teaching block for east George Square, and a Mathematics and Physics building for the 'car park site' on north Crichton Street, were intended to interlock at this sector. The latter project was relocated to King's Buildings in the 1960s, and the succeeding project for the site, the Dental Hospital and School, also had to be abandoned when



Fig. 23. Aerial view of George Square area, 1989. Note the three completed phases of the Medical Extension, the Main Library, and the Arts Faculty group and Appleton Tower. To the north east lies the Student Centre with the cleared Marshall Street/Crichton Street site serving as a 'temporary' car park between this and George Square. (RCAHMS, No. B21816.)

funding was withdrawn. Thus there is (at the present time) a yawning gap between the podium of the Appleton Tower and that of the Student Centre.

THE MOVEMENT FOR CONSERVATION

In the 1970s the University's George Square project gradually ground to a halt. Initially this was due to the shrinking value of capital funding from the government. But other factors made it difficult to build in the central area of the city.

Mounting criticism of Johnson-Marshall's stalled CDA project, in particular, and the growing popularity of conservation in general, forced the University to re-evaluate its position. The delay in reaching firm planning conclusions for the South Side area resulted in many derelict buildings and undeveloped sites. Although most of these were not owned by the University, much bad publicity and criticism of its policies ensued. The press discovered a new ailment called 'planning blight', and that which had been thought of twenty years previously as an area of chaotic slums was nostalgically recast as a once-thriving community torn apart by the University and its planners.

From 1968, a growing preservationist movement within the University began to influence planning policy. Encouraged by the success of the Mound/Lawnmarket rehabilitation scheme, and in the light of diminishing funding for capital projects, the University Court cancelled the impending demolition of Buccleuch Place in 1969.¹¹⁴

In an article in *Country Life* in 1969, Alistair Rowan, a lecturer in the Fine Art Department (and recent recruit to the Georgian Group), was scathing about the University development, describing it as 'a cuckoo in the nest' of a historic city. In his opinion, the CDA was old fashioned and doctrinaire. His criticism of the scale of the new buildings, in contrast to those long earmarked for destruction, provides a

curious reversal of Holden's criticisms of the old George Square buildings as being inadequate in scale. Nonetheless, to an extent, he anticipated future policy in calling for a Conservation Area to be set up. Such areas, he felt, should preclude further demolitions: '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.'¹¹⁵ In this respect the new conservationists were quite different from those of the 1940s and 1950s, who wanted good new architecture as well as old.

The old properties on the land to the north east of George Square became a bone of contention. This site, between Marshall Street and what remained of Crichton Street after the Appleton Tower was built, was traversed by Bristo Street, creating two triangular blocks. It had been declared a clearance area by the Corporation in 1966 and it was zoned for educational and cultural use.

Rowan, together with his colleague Duncan Macmillan, demanded preservation, and refused to accept architect John Reid's estimates for preservation of a favourite block containing seventeenth and eighteenth century buildings at the Bristo Street/Charles Street/Crichton Street triangle. This was extremely awkward for the University, since the land was due to be acquired from the Corporation to serve as a temporary car park until the Student Centre, the pedestrian square and the First Year Science buildings could be erected. Rowan claimed that, once renovated, this block would fit in well with the proposed pedestrian plaza. The UGC ruled that restoration could only be for the purposes of student residencies, and at a cost of £3000 per head, it would not finance such a scheme.¹¹⁶ As it happened, all the necessary legal processes for demolition had already been completed and the Corporation destroyed the old tenements in order to clear the site.

But an ideological shift had taken place since

planning of the George Square campus had begun. In architecture, a rejection of the Modern Movement and its principles has been observed to have begun in the late 1960s. Linked to this, the notion of authority, as an essential tool of social improvement, as advocated by visionaries of the 1930s, underwent revision. Against such a background the determination to pursue programmes based on Modernist principles of mass provision was undermined. Similarly the role of the University as a paternalistic provider of education, leisure and recreation was challenged.¹¹⁷

Commitment to large scale redevelopments, such as the CDA, was in nation-wide decline. Ideas about community coherence and public consultation, which had been rather neglected in the initial drive for post-war reconstruction, became major issues in the planning profession. The new profile fitted well with conservationism, as 'spirit of the age was challenged by spirit of place.'¹¹⁸ The changing attitude within the University might be seen as a reflection of this.

Indeed, Sir Robert Matthew, who was in many ways the foremost promoter of redevelopment, took credit for the successful campaign to conserve Edinburgh's New Town.¹¹⁹ Johnson-Marshall too proved to be extremely flexible in adapting to the prevailing climate within the University. His Ideas Study in 1973 was strongly focused on the possibility of conservation and improvement in the area around the University, while still assuming the completion of the Medical School extension, Student Centre, and the Dental Hospital then planned for Crichton Street.¹²⁰ In February 1974, in a bid to improve the University's image, policy statements began to be issued stressing the need for conservation of the 'historic South Side', assurances were given that no more property was to be acquired, and the desire to return much property to residential use was announced.¹²¹

Principal Michael Swann, who succeeded Appleton, was sympathetic to conservation without

being totally committed to it, and he found himself between opposing factions as the Science Faculty campaigned for extensions to the Appleton Tower and the conservationists demanded the retention of the remaining houses on the east side of George Square. But the tide had really turned – so to speak – on the post-war project. The effects of this shift can be seen in what was built and in which schemes were abandoned in the 1970s. When Professor A. J. Youngson was Vice Principal and Convenor of the Development Committee, in 1973, the committee began to question the values which had led to its creation. With the decision that Buccleuch Place was worth preserving, the Arts Faculty project was at an end.¹²²

BUILDING IN THE 1970s

The third phase of the Medical School buildings was intended for Biochemistry and the Medical Library, but by 1970 lack of commitment from the UGC was threatening the medical extension project. Of course, University expansion was slowing down nationally, and the level of finance available for capital projects was shrinking in real terms. Despite the uncertainty, the University decided to proceed with planning. This decision was inspired by the bold schemes of the past and the principle that having no plan could only lead to no funding, whereas a good plan might attract funding. As with the Pharmacology building, Arup and Partners were appointed consulting engineers and, although Ramsay remained the project architect, Hardie Glover was appointed as specialist designer for the medical library.

Permission to demolish Nos 10–14 was obtained in 1972, but by the time the project was rescued by a grant of over £600,000 from the Erskine Bequest in October 1975, conservationist attacks were once more being brought to bear. Protesters within the University opposed demolition, and there was a

revival of the old furor of the 1950s.¹²³ But, whereas the original opposers of the George Square development were in favour of the development of the north side, the new opposition aimed to halt any further demolition whatsoever. The Forestry building of 1912 and the modified houses which remained now fell within the scope of preservationist concern (fig. 24). Conservation was also a major consideration within the University Development Committee, which by this time included Acting Principal Berrick Saul, as convenor, and Alistair Rowan, who convened the newly formed University Conservation Group. Percy Johnson-Marshall was instructed to look for alternative sites for the next phase of the medical buildings, but all viable alternatives entailed prohibitive additional expense and alteration of other plans.¹²⁴

However, since the University had based the whole of its post-war development on the understanding with the City that the north side of George Square could be redeveloped, the Secretary of State upheld the planning permission. Work finally commenced in 1977 on what was to become the Hugh Robson Building and the Erskine Medical Library (see fig. 17 above).

The Robson building employs the elements of the Pharmacology building; thus indicating their relationship to each other as disjointed parts of the same façade. The York stone cladding and the pattern of fenestration is the same, and the modular balconies echo those at the east end. The balconies continue along the portico as it detaches itself from the main block and links with Ramsay's first phase of the 1950s to create a garden court within. During the design process, embellishments such as mosaics were omitted whenever the finances became strained, and an earlier version of the building with underground car park was abandoned for reasons of cost. Completion of the Robson Building in 1980 marked



Fig. 24. Nos 13 and 14 George Square before demolition in 1976. No. 15 has already been removed, and scaffolding supports the gable wall. Part of the Pathology Building can be seen behind. (Courtesy of Andrew Fraser.)

the final new building in George Square in the twentieth century.

Acquisition of George Watson's Ladies College took many years longer than had been anticipated. By the time the Merchant Company was ready to sell, the price was beyond that which the UGC was prepared to pay, and a deal had to be struck which involved the transfer of University playing fields to the Merchant Company. When the property was finally acquired in 1976, the University was seeking alternative accommodation for the Department of Psychology. Its home at the Pleasance had long been under threat from the proposed ring road, and a site in Roxburgh Street had been earmarked for a new building. When this latter site was requisitioned by the Town Council for housing purposes, and the UGC turned down requests to finance a new building elsewhere, there was little choice but to convert the old school for Psychology.¹²⁵ Spence, Glover and Ferguson found itself with a commission to adapt the old building, instead of building a new one, and the aim of achieving a unified façade for north George Square was thwarted.

By 1978 it was clear that the surviving houses on the west side of George Square (Nos 55–60) would be retained as they stood. The conclusion

of the Arts and Social Sciences buildings came with the abandonment of a scheme to replace the Chapel Street Church, and the conversion of the Argyle Brewery maltings and Minto House in Chambers Street for the Department of Architecture, instead of the large purpose built school that Matthew had lobbied for. And Buccleuch Place was thus saved from further demolition.¹²⁶

CONCLUSIONS

Thus ended a century of change in George Square. Any possibility of achieving a unity of architectural styles now seems almost impossible, short of war or natural disaster. The surviving eighteenth century buildings are probably too old now to become the subject of a demolition warrant. Even the much reviled Watson's College has become an important record of the Victorian era. The Hume Tower and the Main Library, although still vulnerable to unsympathetic alterations, will undoubtedly be retained and preserved as works by illustrious Scottish architects of the twentieth century. It may be that associations with the post-war education expansion and with the late arrival of modern architecture in the city will make the buildings of the 1960s as historically important as others of greater antiquity.

As mentioned in the introduction, the controversy over the redevelopment of the square has scarcely subsided. This may be because of the close knit academic and architectural circles within which the main protagonists revolved, and the divided loyalties which were evoked from the outset. We saw the Ashworth rebellion of 1926 fail over conflicting interests in the south side of the square. The negotiations for the Medical School extension lasted from about 1920 until 1976 due to varying priorities within and outwith the University. The pre-war appointment of J. R. Mackay as architect for the

Medical School extension, while he was also advisor to the Merchant Company, suggests a small world of Edinburgh architects and educationalists.

In the post-war period, vociferous support for the George Square scheme, and impassioned opposition to it, were so intense as to elevate it to a national debate. Again, the relationships between the characters is intriguing. Frank Mears and Sir Donald Pollock were both members of the preservationist Cockburn Association, who each tried to promote personal visions of a new University. Mears' conception of 1931 was too ambitious for its time, while Pollock's was too rooted in nostalgic longing for his own student days to be successful in the era of mass educational provision. Pollock contributed materially to the project while yet opposing it. Although he wanted to save George Square at all costs, he was persuaded to prove his allegiance by making further donations to the appeal fund for its destruction. Pollock remained both a benefactor and an obstacle to the University's plans until his death in 1962.¹²⁷

Robert Hurd worked hard to save something of George Square and yet still create a new University precinct. His motives and loyalties were particularly complex. He wanted to preserve old Scottish architecture, yet he also desired to regenerate and modernise the nation, as is indicated by the polemic of his collaborative treatise with Alan Reiach, *Rebuilding Scotland*, in 1944. At the same time as he was devising an alternative University scheme, he was renting a house from the University at No. 49 George Square.¹²⁸

Hurd was also friendly with Basil Spence and Robert Matthew who obtained for him the consultancy for the preservation of the west side of the square in 1959. In the same year he was also appointed by the National Trust for Scotland to serve on the tripartite working party set up by the Secretary of State to create a less destructive plan for George Square. This caused him much soul searching, but neither the University authorities nor

Spence thought he should resign the University commission.¹²⁹ It must have been difficult for Hurd to maintain the friendly relations with Matthew and Spence indicated by their correspondence.

Matthew – who was probably the most influential architect in determining the new form of George Square – was himself a student of Mears. Matthew’s close friend Alan Reiach was a fellow student at the College of Art, and both had a minor role in the Lorimer and Matthew projects of the 1930s. How curious that Reiach should be designing the first year science buildings while Hurd was planning the aborted restoration of the west side of the square. Simultaneously, Matthew was encouraging Percy Johnson-Marshall to completely eradicate the fabric of the surrounding area. How curious too that William Kininmonth, the University’s architect of choice in 1950, should have no actual role

in the architecture of George Square, while his partner of the 1930s, Basil Spence, facilitated realisation of the new precinct. Such a closely knit society seems archaic today.

As for further changes in the coming century, one can only speculate. Although the Appleton Tower has few admirers today, this writer suspects that its functional viability and accruing landmark status will guarantee it a place in University life for many years to come. The removal of the Royal Infirmary and Medical School to a suburban site at Little France at the start of a new century is certain to have an effect on the uses to which the old medical buildings are put (it should be noted that – parallel with the University’s development – Matthew was also involved in a project for the complete rebuilding of the Infirmary on the Lauriston site, of which only

NOTES AND REFERENCES

Much of the research leading to this article was undertaken in connection with the author’s postgraduate studies at the University of Edinburgh between 1998 and 2002. His PhD thesis, ‘Appleton’s Architects: Building the University of Edinburgh, 1949–65’, submitted in 2002, was the main outcome. In the course of the work the author accumulated a variety of photographs and pamphlets, some of which have not been traced elsewhere. This material, cited here as ‘EU, Fenton Collection’, is at present held in the Department of Architecture, University of Edinburgh, with the ultimate intention of transfer to Edinburgh University Library Special Collections. Those interested in consulting items in the Fenton Collection should therefore check with both of these institutions.

- 1 Margaret Tait and W. Forbes Gray, ‘George Square: Annals of an Edinburgh Locality, 1766–1926’, *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club (BOEC)*, 26 (1948), pp. 1–176. See also Margaret Tait’s supplementary ‘Early Inhabitants of George Square’, *BOEC*, 32 (1966), pp. 223–226, and William N. Boog Watson, ‘George Square, Edinburgh, 1766–1966’, *University of Edinburgh Journal*, 22 (1965–67), pp. 239–250. George Square is also described in Royal Commission on the Ancient Monuments of Scotland, *The City of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1951), p. 212.
- 2 For Ross House (also known as Park House), see A. D. C.

Simpson, ‘James Hamilton’s Lying-in Hospital at Park House and the Status of Midwifery Instruction in the Edinburgh Medical School’, *BOEC*, New Series 3 (1994), pp. 131–141.

- 3 Tait and Gray, ‘George Square’, pp. 3–5; the original feuing plan for George Square was reproduced opposite p. 16. See also Robert Hurd, ‘The Threat to Edinburgh’s George Square’, *Scotland’s SMT Magazine*, March 1947, and *SMT Annual*, 1950.
- 4 For photographs of the original buildings see Edinburgh University Library (EUL), Special Collections Division, University Archives, E89.24, George Square Photo Album (c. 1959–60). See also the George Square file in the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments Scotland, National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS). No. 38 George Square on the south side had no accommodation at street level, but was a common entrance stair to flats on the first and second floors. No. 46 had an entrance to upper flats in the gable wall at the east end of the south row. No. 44 was a house at ground floor, basement and sub-basement levels, while No. 45 was a common stair entrance to five flats above.
- 5 The Greek Ionic portico at No. 60, however, is likely to be a nineteenth century addition.
- 6 There is no evidence as to whether or not the rubble walls

the initial phase was realised). But, speculation aside, it would be surprising if the twenty first century could possibly be more eventful for George Square than the twentieth century has been.

- were originally stucco rendered, as was the case in St Andrew Square. However, 1 George Square retained its wooden moulded window architraves until demolition, and it seems likely that other houses also had them (see photographs cited in note 4 above).
- 7 John Gifford, Colin McWilliam and David Walker, *The Buildings of Scotland: Edinburgh* (Harmondsworth 1984), pp. 242–243.
 - 8 Browne's petition and drawings for Nos 3, 6 and 7 are in Edinburgh City Archives (ECA), Dean of Guild Court Archive (DGCA), 4 August 1910. A set of drawings by Browne is surprisingly located within the files containing the George Square Survey of 1959–60 carried out by students in the Department of Architecture: EUL, Special Collections, Gen 983–985, George Square Survey. The survey itself is of variable quality and its value was questioned when Robert Hurd undertook to produce a report on the conservation of the west side in 1960: NMRS, Hurd Rolland Archive, HR 14/8.
 - 9 Masson Hall was originally under the auspices of the Edinburgh Association for the University Education of Women, and Muir Hall, for female medical students, was also independently run. They came under the control of the University Court in 1919 and 1918 respectively.
 - 10 In 1927 the basement flat at No. 30A was added to Masson Hall.
 - 11 This work was carried out by the firm of Cousin, Ormiston and Taylor: ECA, DGCA, 15 June 1911.
 - 12 The Hughes Bennett Laboratory for Physiology was erected in Charles Street Lane as early as 1901.
 - 13 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 140 VE, Statements regarding present prospective needs, 1919.
 - 14 ECA, DGCA, June 1912. At some stage prior to 1947 an upper storey was added to the building, though there is no record of an application for planning permission. Unless a photograph of the building conforming to Clark's original design comes to light, it might be assumed that a deviation to the original design took place before it was built.
 - 15 ECA, DGCA, 13 George Square, 3 November 1904.
 - 16 *Ibid.*, 14 and 15 George Square, 12 June 1913. The George Square elevation has a tripartite arrangement rising three storeys above a basement. The wings are each of three bays supporting a central block which contains the main entrance. The elevation to Meadow Walk has a 2–3–2 bay arrangement, and more of a vertical emphasis by virtue of its four storeys and lack of an entrance. Mansard roofs and horizontal channelled stonework complete the French atmosphere, but note the typically Caroline lantern on the Meadow Walk elevation. The only concession to contemporary progressive design is in the elliptical arch and cave-like portico of the entrance, which resembles work by Lutyens and Lorimer.
- The plan continues the stepped arrangement down Middle Meadow Walk which Rowand Anderson's building had begun, and there are two internal courts, around which are lecture rooms, laboratories and a museum, with links to No. 13.
- 17 Nineteen petitioners favoured a site on south George Square: EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 20, King's Buildings, Note of Principal's meeting of 28 January 1919; Petition of 14 May 1926 and related correspondence.
 - 18 Zoology was soon followed by Animal Genetics (started 1929), Engineering (also 1929) and Geology (1930).
 - 19 Roy Pinkerton, 'Of Chambers and Communities: Student Residence at the University of Edinburgh, 1583–1983', in Gordon Donaldson (ed.), *Four Centuries: Edinburgh University Life, 1583–1983* (Edinburgh 1983), pp. 116–130.
 - 20 ECA, DGCA, 33–37 George Square, 24 June 1927.
 - 21 *Ibid.*, 52–53 George Square, 25 September 1919.
 - 22 *Ibid.*, 52–53 George Square, 17 June and 8 July 1927.
 - 23 *Ibid.*, 26 George Square, 26 September 1912. This work was not actually carried out but a mansard roof was applied to Nos 16 and 17, apparently without consent, while similar accommodation was created with box dormers at Nos 18, 19, 21 and 28.
 - 24 The 'Mears Report' was formally titled *Preliminary Suggestions for Consideration by the Representative Committee in regard to the Development and Planning of the Central Area* (Edinburgh 1931). On this committee the University was represented by Principal Sir Thomas Holland and Professor Sir Thomas Hudson Beare. The Merchant Company, George Heriot's Trust and Heriot Watt College were also represented. For a fuller account of the Mears Report see C. B. Fenton, 'Frank Mears and the Collegiate Mile', *Edinburgh Architectural Research*, vol. 24/25 (September 1998), CD ROM and <http://www.caad.ed.ac.uk/publications/ear/>.
 - 25 University-owned buildings on this site included Alexander Laing's Old Royal High School, James Smith's Old Surgeons' Hall, and David Bryce's Old Surgical Hospital in Drummond Street.
 - 26 The house at No. 15 was shared by the Agricultural College and the Indian Students Union, with residences connected to Muir Hall on the attic level.
 - 27 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 141 VE, Minutes of First Meeting, 5 December 1939. The committee consisted of Professors Oliver, Thomas Hudson Beare (Engineering), Sydney Smith (Forensic Medicine) and Ivan Daly (Physiology).
 - 28 *Medical Buildings Extension Scheme: Statement from the University Court for the Information of the Development Commission* (1939). This document also included a plan by

- Cordiner for the joint project for Agriculture buildings at West Mains. See EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 140 VE, Medical Buildings Extension File, Minutes of Special Committee, July and December 1939.
- 29 See note 27 above.
- 30 The Dick Peddie and McKay drawings have now been transferred to the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland, NMRS, Peddie and Kinnear collection. Something of the machine aesthetic of 1930s modernism is evoked by the nautical looking handrail around the parapet. The first and second floors each have seventeen windows to George Square, while on the ground and fourth floors the fenestration forms horizontal bands with scarcely discernible divisions between windows. On paper, the design seems entirely utilitarian, and in that respect the architect was certainly giving the Medical Faculty what it wanted.
- 31 *The Future of Edinburgh: Report of the Advisory Committee on City Development* (Edinburgh 1943), pp. 28–29. The Advisory Committee consisted of J. L. Clyde KC, former Lord Provost Sir Thomas B. Whitson LLD, and Sir J. Donald Pollock bart.
- 32 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 141 VE, Memorandum on behalf of the University of Edinburgh, 19 July 1943.
- 33 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/007, box 28, Halls of Residence, Salisbury Green, Schedule of properties of Sir J. Donald Pollock's University Trust, 1942; Statement of Pollock regarding his trust, 1943.
- 34 The University purchased the church in Marshall Street with the J. M. Barrie bequest in 1945, but it was put under the control of the Pollock Trust.
- 35 Salisbury Green and St Leonard's House were for halls for men and women respectively, while Abden House was intended as the Principal's formal residence.
- 36 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 141 VE, Minutes of Post War Development Committee (PWDC), 24 November 1943.
- 37 ECA, Minutes of Lord Provost's Special Committee, 7 February 1945.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 27 February 1945.
- 39 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 141 VE, Prof. Oliver's analysis of City and University schemes, 22 November 1945.
- 40 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 142 VE, Correspondence, Abercrombie to Fraser with recommendations, January 1946; Fraser to Holden requesting help, February 1946.
- 41 Holden's plan was published in 1947 in *Proposals for the Future Development of the University of Edinburgh*: copy in EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 141 VE.
- 42 ECA, Minutes of Lord Provost's Special Committee.
- 43 Derek Plumstead was described as Town Planning Officer at this time, though the position was not included in Town Council lists until the appointment of T. T. Hewitson in 1953: *Post Office Directory, 1953–54*, p. 1231.
- 44 *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 26 July 1946.
- 45 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 142 VE, Letter from Talbot Rice to Sir John Fraser, May 1946.
- 46 NMRS, Hurd Rolland Archive, HR 14/8, Letter from Cockburn Association to Campbell, 1948.
- 47 EUL, Special Collections, Da 23.5, Edinburgh University Court Minutes, April 1947.
- 48 Holden's initial outline, in May 1946, suggested that administration buildings should occupy the west side of George Square, and a chapel should be located in the centre of the Island Site. Both were moved north of Teviot Place in the amended scheme in October 1946.
- 49 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 142 VE, Letter from Holden to University Secretary, R. Jardine Brown, on allegiance of Abercrombie and cost of slum clearance, 31 January 1947.
- 50 Copy in EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 141 VE.
- 51 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 142 VE, Letter from Holden, 31 May 1947.
- 52 ECA, Minutes of Lord Provost's Special Committee.
- 53 The Scottish Office had apparently intimated that this site might not after all be required for museum extension. In practice the Chambers Street site, formerly Brown's Square, was cleared of buildings in the 1970s, and an extension to the museum eventually opened there in 1999.
- 54 Hurd's 1947 plan has not been traced.
- 55 *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 29 May 1947.
- 56 *Scotsman*, 19 July 1947.
- 57 *Scotsman*, 3 June 1947.
- 58 It is interesting to note that, although the matter was still undecided, the City's Planning Committee began to turn down private and commercial planning applications that might conflict with the University scheme.
- 59 Patrick Abercrombie and Derek Plumstead, *A Civic Survey and Plan for the City and Royal Burgh of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1949). Abercrombie was the external planning consultant and Plumstead the Town's Planning Officer.
- 60 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 143 VE, PWDC Minutes, 3 December 1948.
- 61 ECA, Planning Committee Minutes, 15 December 1948 and 3 February 1949, and letter from Stewart to Town Clerk, 26 January 1949.
- 62 ECA, Planning Committee Minutes, 3 February 1949.
- 63 For details see EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 143 VE, PWDC combined meeting for preliminary consideration

- of architects in Court Room of Old College, 10 February 1949. A private meeting was held to consider the work of various invited architectural firms, including Farquharson and McMorran, Leslie Grahame Thomson, William Kininmonth, John Needham and Louis Soissons. In fact J. R. McKay questioned the legality of the competition since he had been given the commission before war intervened, but it was held that this had lapsed, and the University settled his unpaid bill.
- 64 See *Architect and Building News*, 9 February 1951, pp. 165–167. Described as ‘a modern interpretation of the classical and Georgian style’, the façade is redolent of the severe neo-classicism of the 1930s. A five storey central block is linked to two flanking blocks of four storeys by means of a pair of staircase blocks. Phase 1, a seven storey block on the strip of land flanking Middle Meadow Walk, is coupled to the rest by a four bay portico. The plan reveals inner courts to the east and west, with a 600 seat conference hall in the centre.
- 65 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 143 VE, PWDC Minutes, July–November 1949.
- 66 ECA, Planning Committee Minutes, 26 January and 3 February 1949.
- 67 See EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 144, Communiqué – Notes for Principal, and message from Provost to Principal. This note regarding a conversation between the Town Clerk and University Secretary (dated January 1951) states that 20–30 councillors were in favour of the scheme, including a block of Labour Party members, 5–10 were resolutely opposed, and the rest were ‘waverers’. The Town Clerk and Lord Provost did not force the issue but accepted a compromise in order to avoid alienating the waverers.
- 68 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, box 144, Letter from Town Clerk to Secretary of University, 7 February 1951. See also *Scotsman*, 23 January 1951.
- 69 William Kininmonth sketched out an unsolicited scheme involving retention of most of the façades in 1951. He proposed removing four houses on the south side and the addition of a pair of grander elements to form a gateway from the Meadows, which would create a central north–south axis terminating on the dome of the McEwan Hall. However, this was a confidential suggestion by the architect which went no further than the Principal’s office. For Kininmonth’s letter and sketch see EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, part 1, box 144. Kininmonth obviously did not wish to alienate the University, which had recently awarded him two major commissions (for examination halls in Chambers Street, and student residences at Salisbury Green). Capital funding for university projects was negligible before 1954, and Edinburgh was unusual in starting several new projects as early as 1950: EUL, Special Collections, Da 23.5, Edinburgh University Court Minutes, April 1950, University Grants Commission approval received for the Medical Extension, the School of Agriculture, the Examination Halls and reconstruction work at the Reid School of Music.
- 70 Abercrombie and Plumstead, *Civic Survey and Plan*, pp. 58–59, 71–72, pl. xliv.
- 71 The demand for accommodation within the University meant that George Square properties earmarked for ultimate destruction continued to receive various alterations with apparently little restriction or objection over the loss of internal features: ECA, DGCA, Building warrants issued 20 June 1947 (new lecture room at No. 60); 30 June 1950 (subdivision into two houses of No. 45); 14 September 1951 (internal alterations at No. 39); 18 July 1952 (subdivision of No. 44); 27 July 1952 (subdivision of No. 49).
- 72 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/002, part 1, box 146, Report of Public Local Inquiry, 1954.
- 73 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 98/005, Estates and Buildings, Development Committee Minutes, 11 and 22 March 1954.
- 74 *Ibid.*, Development Committee Minutes, 29 November 1954. This was a crucial meeting at which Appleton, Matthew, Spence, Stewart, Carlyle Gifford and Professors Hirst, Mackie, MacMurray, Newman, Orr, and Wreford Watson were present. Appleton emphasised that the development must not be jeopardised by retention of façades. Spence’s report now suggested preserving the west side of George Square to contrast with new buildings, and Spence’s intervention in the Medical School extension was also agreed: EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/007, Miscellaneous box 56, bundle 1.
- 75 This report was substantially that presented in November 1954: see EUL, Special Collections, Memo for information of Secretary of State, July 1959, with DRT 95/007, box 56, bundle 1, Development Committee Minutes, 11 June 1959.
- 76 The model has not been traced, but see EUL, Special Collections, DRT 98/005, Development Committee Minutes, 13 December 1954, 7 November 1956, 19 June 1957. A photograph of the second version of the model was included in the pamphlet *University Development and George Square* (University of Edinburgh 1960).
- 77 Spence’s chapel was opposed by Pollock and then finally dropped on the recommendation of Percy Johnson-Marshall in 1962.
- 78 Pamphlet, *University of Edinburgh Appeal* (1959).
- 79 ECA, Planning Committee Minutes, 25 May 1955.
- 80 *Ibid.*, 13 July 1955. Very little went smoothly for the Ramsay building, however. When the application for demolition of

No. 15 was submitted later in the same month it met no objection, but the modified façade was not approved. The Corporation had put forward its own suggestions for improvement of the design, such as ironwork balconies and pilasters, and the whole affair was becoming a *débâcle*. The University appealed against such interference, and gained the support of the Lord Dean of Guild (Councillor Robert Farrer). He recommended deference to the ‘expert advice’ of Spence and Matthew, who argued that the Corporation wanted to impose an alien style upon the building. Farrer’s motion was carried and Phase 1 of the project finally commenced.

- 81 *Ibid.*, 22 February 1956.
- 82 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/007, Planning Committee, Miscellaneous box 56, UGC Procedure for Capital Projects:
- a) University obtains authority from UGC and fixes provisional budget. Consultant and architect invited to advise.
 - b) University prepares schedule of accommodation, with architect’s report, which are sent to UGC.
 - c) UGC considers and approves a cost limit.
 - d) Architect prepares a sketch design.
 - e) Design and outline to UGC.
 - f) UGC considers and sets revised cost limit.
 - g) Architect completes detailed design and invites tenders.
 - h) University recommends tender to UGC.
 - i) Authority to proceed from UGC to University to architect to contractor.
- 83 A new committee structure was set up in 1958, in order to cope with the expected workload: EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/007, box 56, part 1, Development Committee Minutes, 1 May 1958. The University Development Committee retained responsibility for collecting data from faculty and department committees regarding needs, and for steering the development generally by making recommendations to the University Court. The old Works Committee, traditionally responsible for overseeing building work, was not capable of dealing with the scale of the ensuing projects, so a new committee, the Major Buildings Committee (MBC), with Matthew as convenor, was set up to take responsibility for all new buildings. Professors Arnold and Hunt, together with University Secretary Stewart, joined Matthew on this committee. The appointment of Stewart allowed the Principal’s office to stay in direct contact with this new level of the decision-making structure, and Stewart’s assistant, Maxwell Young, acted as Factorial Secretary to the MBC. Matthew was therefore in a position to make recommendations on the choice of architects. A Minor Buildings Committee was also set up to deal with smaller projects and alterations, and the Works Committee assumed a role in the maintenance of existing buildings.
- 84 Published in *University of Edinburgh Appeal* (1959), and in *University Development and George Square* (March 1960).
- 85 *University Development and George Square* (1960), featured Spence’s model of 1956 altered to include the amended medical extension. Interestingly, the University’s claims about the environmental unsuitability of the Infirmary Street/ Drummond Street sector were now forgotten, for it had been necessary to include the High School Yards area in the new plan. Work had already begun on conversion of Old Surgeons’ Hall, and plans were being prepared for an L-plan building for Mathematical Physics on the site of the old Surgical Hospital in Drummond Street. This ‘Drummond Street Sector’ included the north side of Infirmary Street, a site adjacent to the Royal College of Surgeons, and a block between Drummond Street, Adam Street and the Pleasance. The idea of a new façade opposite Old College, which both Mears and Abercrombie had suggested, was also now incorporated into the plan. Development in this area could no longer be regarded as an alternative to George Square, but as an addition to it.
- 86 Matthew’s partner was Stirrat Johnson-Marshall, brother of Percy, Professor of Planning in the University; after 1986 the practice became RMJM Ltd.
- 87 Professors Talbot Rice and Arnold questioned the Library site, but Professors Wreford Watson and Sharp defended it: EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/005, box 1, file 2.
- 88 Eleanor Robertson, wife of Professor Giles Robertson, founded the new group, with support from Colin McWilliam: Eleanor Robertson, ‘The Story of the Society: The Georgian Group of Edinburgh and the Scottish Georgian Society’, *Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland Magazine*, 6 (1997), pp. 14–16 (the Georgian Group developed sequentially into the Scottish Georgian Society and then the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland). The formation of a new pressure group surprised the chairman of the English Georgian Group, Angus Acworth, who wrote to Robert Matthew asking if the Cockburn Association was defunct: EUL, Special Collections, Sir Robert Matthew Papers, MS 2533, file no. 1.
- 89 ‘The Trust realises that it might not in the end prove possible to save George Square if the essential needs of the University could not be met without remodelling the area’: EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/008, box 1, University correspondence with Department of Health Scotland and National Trust for Scotland (NTS), 2 February 1956. The Earl of Wemyss, Chairman of the NTS, claimed that the University refused to give information about the scheme until after any Public Enquiry. When the University offered Wemyss a meeting with Spence, in return for withdrawing the demand, the NTS quibbled over whether or not it had actually demanded a

- Public Enquiry, although Wemyss had clearly supported the Cockburn Association's demand.
- 90 National Archives of Scotland (NAS: formerly Scottish Record Office), DD 32/84, 'Advice on the architecture of Geo. Sq.'
- 91 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 98/005, box 1, Notes for the Principal, 22 January 1957.
- 92 *University of Edinburgh Appeal* (1959). Review of General Council meeting: *Scotsman*, 28 November 1959.
- 93 Secretary of State, Draft Parliamentary Statement, 8 December 1959: copy in NMRS, Hurd Rolland Archive, HR 14/8.
- 94 NAS, HH 041/01836, Letters from Maclay to Wemyss, 26 February 1960, and Wemyss to Maclay, 4 March 1960.
- 95 Letter from University Secretary to Hurd offering commission for report on west George Square: NMRS, Hurd Rolland Archive, HR 14/11; Draft letter from Hurd to Spence describing the unpleasant experience of the working party and suggesting that he ought to resign the University commission, January 1960, HR 14/8; Letter from Hurd to NTS, doubting the sincerity of the University in the undertaking, 25 January 1960, HR 14/8.
- 96 NAS, DD 12/2724.
- 97 Appleton's Statement: *Scotsman*, 14 March 1960. Report of the Working Group, 12 March 1960; Wemyss to Maclay, 4 March 1960: NAS, HH 041/01836.
- 98 ECA, DGCA, Warrant for demolition at 47–51 George Square, 26–29 Buccleuch Place and 40–46 Windmill Place, 25 March 1960; Warrant for building at 47–51 George Square, 16 September 1960.
- 99 Eleanor Robertson, 'Thoughts Provoked by a Particular Occasion', *Prospect* (Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, Winter 1959).
- 100 'Money pours in for University': *Scotsman*, 3 November 1959. Donors included Appleton (£1011) and Sir Donald Pollock (£25,000).
- 101 *University Development and George Square* (1960).
- 102 Simpson claimed a breach of planning regulation, but it emerged that this was due to a misleading statement by Appleton in October 1959, claiming that the University had received planning permission four years earlier. Simpson further claimed that the development was contrary to the zoning in the Abercrombie City Development Plan. But the zoning had been adhered to, and Holden's scheme had been included as a general outline – the Arts Faculty buildings were not actually printed in the plan since they were unformulated at the time. The Court found that the Corporation could not be held responsible for a statement by the Principal being misconstrued, and that the programme for the City Plan could only include known developments. Simpson's main grievance, however, was on the grounds of loss of amenity to himself, and a possible reduction in the value of his house. These are not material grounds in planning matters and it seemed unlikely that he would suffer financially, or through nuisance in the manner he had claimed. It was therefore found that the pursuer had no title to sue. See NAS, Court of Session extract, DD 12/2724; Opinion of Lord Guest *in causa* Rev. Ian Simpson, DD 12/2725.
- 103 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/007, box 56, part 2, Minutes of special meeting of Major Buildings Committee, 5 December 1960.
- 104 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 98/005, box 1, Correspondence between University Secretary and Spence, December 1960. Johnson-Marshall's appointment was approved by Court on 25 January 1961: University Court Minutes.
- 105 *University of Edinburgh Comprehensive Development Area* (Edinburgh 1962, reissued 1963).
- 106 Although the Student Centre project did not commence until 1967, the architects Morris and Steedman were recommended for the commission by Matthew in 1960.
- 107 The Science group replaced the convocation hall outlined in Spence's 1955 plan (see fig. 15).
- 108 A pamphlet was prepared for the Corporation in order to explain the changes made to the scheme from that for which outline approval had been given in 1955: *University of Edinburgh George Square Redevelopment 1963*, pp. 3–4.
- 109 Percy Johnson-Marshall, 'The University of Edinburgh: A Case Study of Evolution and Planned Redevelopment', *Architectural Review*, July 1964.
- 110 Ramsay had a difficult task, due partly to constantly changing requirements. His original design was for a steel frame building, but because of a shortage of steel he was instructed to change to a concrete frame in 1951. Then steel came off ration and he had to design a steel frame version again, but with an increase in cubic capacity. Then in 1958 he had to change the façade design to accord with Spence's amended scheme. Mistaken estimates for heating and services meant an increase in the University's own contribution to costs, and difficulties in erection of the first section produced delays and further increases in costs. Uncertainty over Medical Faculty requirements led Ramsay to suspend work on the plans in October 1960. All these problems were compounded by the UGC process of incremental finance and the increasingly expensive scientific equipment that the Faculty hoped to receive. When Phase 1a came into full use in the spring of 1962, it appeared as if the succeeding Phases 1b and 1c (both intended for Biochemistry) would not be in use until 1970, almost twenty years after the competition. Phase 2, to be built on the site of Nos 11–14, was intended for Pharmacology, but this project had to be removed from the programme for the year 1965–66.

- 111 Robert Matthew Johnson-Marshall and Partners, *Edinburgh University Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences Development Plan 1964–70*, 1st report, January 1964; 2nd report, October 1964: copy in EU, Fenton Collection. The components of the project were essentially as follows. The ‘podium’ provided a continuous platform level with dual circulation and basement parking, relieved at various points with garden courts at sub-podium level which would permit lighting of basement facilities such as refectories. The ‘linear teaching block’ with variable cellular division by means of demountable partitions and storage walls allowed for expansion and contraction within departments, and the rectangular blocks would be easily expandable into L-plan, and subsequently C-plan blocks. Other elements were described as ‘special buildings’, including a lecture theatre with raked floor, which was expressed as external overhang providing shelter on the podium. A total of 613,000 square feet of floor space would be provided in six phases from 1964–1970. After the land on the south east of the square had been developed, further phases were outlined to proceed on the site of Buccleuch Place.
- 112 *Edinburgh University Library, Main Library, George Square* (Edinburgh 1968). The building was described by J. Hardie Glover in *Yearbook of the Edinburgh Architectural Association*, 13 (1969).
- 113 I am grateful to the architects Rory Lennon and Remo Pedreschi for information on the structural stability of the building.
- 114 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/007, box 56, Development Committee Minutes, 13 February 1969. There had been no applications for further demolitions in Buccleuch Place, and there were no schedules for proposed replacement buildings.
- 115 Alistair Rowan, ‘A Cuckoo in the Nest’, *Country Life*, 25 December 1969.
- 116 EUL, Special Collections, DRT 95/007, box 56, Correspondence between Rowan and Maxwell Young, May 1970; Development Committee Minutes, 26 March 1970.
- 117 See, for example, *New Edinburgh Review*, No. 8, August 1970; Helen Peacock (ed.), *Forgotten South Side* (Edinburgh 1973); Helen Peacock (ed.), *The Unmaking of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1975).
- 118 Miles Glendinning, Ranald MacInnes and Aonghus MacKechnie, *A History of Scottish Architecture* (Edinburgh 1996), pp 476–478.
- 119 Sir Robert Matthew, John Reid and Maurice Lindsay (eds), *The Conservation of Georgian Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1972).
- 120 University of Edinburgh/Nicolson Street Area – 1973 Review: Ideas Study by the University Planning Consultant, March 1973: copy in EU, Fenton Collection.
- 121 Supplement to *University Bulletin*, February 1974.
- 122 For Youngson’s proposal on Buccleuch Place see EUL, Special Collections, Development Committee Minutes, 20 June 1973.
- 123 Letter of protest from Professor Barbier (French) in *Scotsman*, 25 November 1976; Statement in *University Bulletin*, 11 February 1976.
- 124 The Crichton Street car park site had adequate space, but was already over-committed. The Watson’s College site could not provide the accommodation required on its own. Other suggested sites already contained historic buildings. The report concluded that the Medical Faculty had a strong case for demolishing Nos 10–14: Percy Johnson-Marshall, University of Edinburgh North George Square, draft report by the Planning Consultant, March 1976, copy in EU, Fenton Collection.
- 125 EUL, Special Collections, Development Committee Minutes, 31 May 1976; DRT 95/007, box 57, UGC refuse to fund new Psychology building.
- 126 *University Bulletin*, Supplement, October 1978. It was also announced that work was about to commence on the public square between the Student Centre and the McEwan Hall. It was still considered possible that a science tutorial building, the Dental Hospital and a third phase of the Student Centre might take place between Crichton Street and Marshall Street, but all of these projects were later abandoned.
- 127 See EUL, Special Collections, Miscellaneous box 135, Pollock Trust, correspondence. According to Appleton, Pollock disliked any scheme which he had not thought up himself. The Pollock Trust Development Committee met only once between 1950 and 1954, while Sir Donald took personal control of the properties. Pollock disapproved of redeveloping the Island Site, and the first large scale development at Salisbury Green that Kininmonth designed. Although the University Court had approved Kininmonth’s plans in 1950, Pollock privately commissioned Mears to draw up an alternative scheme which the University refused to be associated with.
- 128 Hurd’s notice to quit was served by the University on 19 February 1948: NMRS, Hurd Rolland Archive, HR 14/8.
- 129 After Hurd’s unexpected death in 1963, his practice sought to continue the conservation contract but Stewart insisted that the commission was only for a consultancy report, and that it was between the University and Hurd personally. Possibly Hurd’s recommendations were thought to go rather far, for they would have resulted in an expensive reduction in actual accommodation as additional storeys and attics were removed. See NMRS, Hurd Rolland Archive, HR14/8, Preliminary notes, 28 July 1960, notes on proposed work, and correspondence between Hurd and Stewart and between Ian Begg and Stewart.