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## THE BUILDERS OF EDINBURGH'S NEW TOWN, 1767–69

*Today Edinburgh's New Town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a 'must see' for millions of tourists on their annual city tours and thousands of school children growing up in the city. I was once one of those children, and then a resident adult for the first half my life. The New Town had a profound influence on me – the scale, view and grand old buildings were still there to be seen. Despite being taught about the Edinburgh Enlightenment, my interest was in comparatively plain people who built the first buildings there over a thirty-year period. This paper outlines the political and economic contexts of the builders' professional development, names leaders, and references their plans and buildings to argue that the builders should be better acknowledged for their part in the New Town, and, indeed, Scottish urban history.*

Access to the history of Edinburgh New Town is somewhat hidden. If it were not for professional archivists and public archives it would still be bundled in boxes and cabinet recesses. Existing and established published histories on the New Town tend to recite references to people and places which were embedded in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: James Craig's plan, Robert Adam's Register House and Charlotte Square, and Sir William Chamber's majestic mansion for Sir Laurence Dundas still are key elements of every book. Builders are somewhat overlooked.<sup>1</sup> John Ruskin's Edinburgh Lecture of 1853 influenced perceptions of them, when they were condemned for being dull and uninspiring. Without becoming embroiled in arguments over taste or abstract aesthetics about what buildings look like, the fact is that the builders and labour history of the New Town remained neglected. Despite occasional names in reports, government lists and published inventories of surviving buildings, no attempt was made to write such a history. Ruskin's tonal range was repeated in articles published in the 1990s when bashing builders for ruining the New Town plan was once more in vogue via the fashions for revisionist history and presentations of the new and undiscovered. In the New Town's case this meant questioning Craig's authorship of the plan, and whether it was successful. Builders remained firmly overlooked, whilst polemics provided debates without necessarily an accurate factual history of the New Town.

### THE IDEAL NEW TOWN – BY REPUTE

To give some brief background and context, the concept of the New Town was to build a new little city. The plan was made by Craig based on a sublime, poetic aesthetic of public spaces and buildings, matched with new private housing and industrial or commercial areas. To the select philosophers the New Town presented a happy marriage of economic, political, social, legal, and architectural mores and norms. In theory, the New Town presented a vision of a cleaner, bigger and prosperous Edinburgh (Figure 1).

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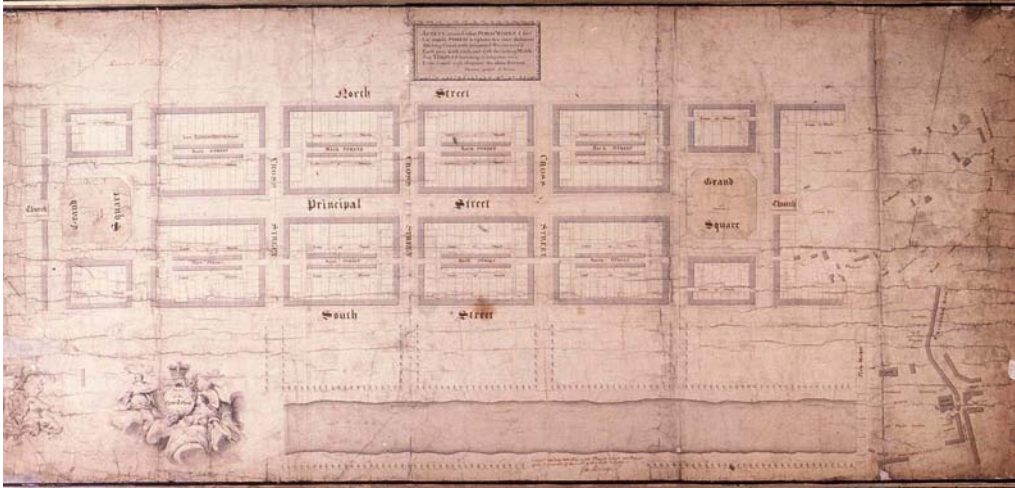


Figure 1. James Craig, New Town plan (1767); Edinburgh, City Museums. The New Town of Edinburgh was the largest urban building project in the country which on plan gave architects, builders and politicians reasons for optimism so long as sufficient credit and capital were available to raise money to purchase and develop the site

In June 1767, as the corn grew tall and grass ever greener on the fields to the north of the city, a press release by Edinburgh Town Council was published in the *Caledonian Mercury*, *Ipswich Journal* (20 June 1767) and *Leeds Intelligencer* (23 June 1767) describing the aspirations of the town council and architect:

A letter from Edinburgh mentions, that the plan of the new town, for which Mr Craig, Architect, lately received a gold medal, will, when executed be a very elegant and convenient little city. This new town is to be built on the north-side of Edinburgh, where are now several fields and inclosures [*sic*], separated from the capital by the North Lock or Lake, which is to be drained and confined into a canal, over which a handsome stone bridge is now erecting: and that there will be several timber bridges over the same, after the Chinese taste, for foot passengers; on each side of the canal is to be a street and terras [*sic*] walk of 50 foot wide, and the sides or banks planted with rows of trees; the fields, where the new town is to be built on, rise with a gradual ascent facing the south, which are all planned out in regular streets from south to north, and from east to west, crossing at right angles; each allotment to be leased or feu'd [*sic*] out, is to consist of half an acre of ground, and no more, sufficient for one or two houses, offices and a small garden to be regularly built; there are to be common sewers, and the houses to have areas and cellars before them, to the same manner as those in London and Middlesex, great part of the ground is already purchased for building on, agreeably to the plan.

The plan was formally authorized by Edinburgh Town Council on 29 July 1767 and on the same day it passed the first New Town Building Act. ‘Let building begin’ Lord Provost Gilbert Laurie may have exclaimed! By 1769 Craig held an exhibition at St Andrew’s Masonic Lodge at the foot of the Royal Mile’s Carrubber’s Close where a wooden model of his plan was displayed showing visitors what the New Town would look like once built.<sup>2</sup> They were given a tour by the lodge’s caretaker and maker of the model, George Ogilvie. Reviews noted that models of buildings, plans and estimates for them were also displayed. A curious and admiring public arrived, some of whom were already patrons and residents of New Town architects and tradesmen building houses. Indeed, it is not impossible that they were displaying their buildings in this exhibition.

WHO WERE THE BUILDERS: PIONEERING ARCHITECTS AND INCORPORATION MASTER TRADESMEN IN THE 1760s?

The architectural concept and vision was to have a new little city planned by architects. But, ideal acknowledged, who actually designed and built the houses in which people lived? The answer is to set Craig to one side and review the names of feuars (those holding a feudal tenure of land) and tradesmen who purchased plots and worked for patrons in the New Town. From these a hierarchy of tradesmen emerges which can be explained in the following terms.

Firstly, the foremost designers of the first properties in the New Town were men called architects, including the king's architects, Adam and Chambers. Some were internationally famous, while others were best known in Scotland. One example is David Henderson, who, possibly anticipating the New Town, had moved from being mason in Sauchie near Alloa to an architect living in the Canongate burgh beside Edinburgh and its proposed extension to the north.

Secondly, were men from incorporations of masons and wrights (carpenters) in Edinburgh and surrounding burghs. The leaders (deacons) and members (freemen) can be seen as feuars and the workforce of others who had hired an architect and then hired a workforce to build the property. Of these men, the Edinburgh wright Deacon John Young is best known as the first for his Thistle Court, top the south of St Andrew Square. The foundation stone of the first house in the New Town was laid by Craig within this miniature square. Young's overall contribution to the New Town will be discussed below. But the fact that he, like the mason James Hill, had a street named after him adjoining Thistle Street signifies the impact tradesmen had on the New Town (Figure 2). By comparison, by 1795 there were no Craig or Adam Streets added to the



Figure 2. Thistle Court. Photo: author, 2005. Deacon John Young was a highly successful wright (carpenter) who is best known for his property on Thistle Court, top the south of St Andrew Square, and Young Street adjoining Thistle Street, which is named in his honour and signifies the importance of tradesmen to the New Town

plan. Meanwhile, fellow Edinburgh incorporation deacons could be found feuing and building on the north side of St Andrew Square such as mason Deacon William Jamieson and other main streets.

The incorporation of Edinburgh was joined by that of Canongate whose Deacon wright Duncan Drummond was also prolific in the first years of building. He was hired by bankers Sir William Forbes and James Hunter (later best known as Sir James Hunter Blair, Bt) to build houses on the north side of George Street to Henderson's plans, and replicated the partnership Hunter had hired for his house in New Street, Canongate, just a year beforehand.

Drummond then set about building houses for other clients on the north side of St Andrew Square which followed a business and architectural plan to construct one after the other to one design.

This relationship between Henderson and Drummond illustrates a hierarchy of designer and constructor which was being actively challenged by Drummond himself. He was soon called an 'architect' by some admirers. It also allows the third rank of tradesmen to be introduced: the journeymen or workers who actually built the houses having been hired by Drummond. They were collectively represented by Edinburgh's Society of Journeymen masons. These men were ultimately to become Edinburgh's builders – a new emerging class of architectural professional.

To review these professions it is useful to think of Russian dolls as one group subcontracts another revealing more and more tradesmen. So, once the architect (Henderson) was hired a principal contractor was revealed (Drummond) who then hired and revealed tradesmen in several crafts to build the property. Fortunately, enough documents about Drummond and his hired tradesmen have survived to name his team of masons and wrights. The best source of information about Drummond's team is the notebooks of one of his masons, William Christie, a successful journeyman mason who in turn hired other journeymen. The Christie family made money from selling and delivering cut stone from their quarry at Hailes, to the west of Edinburgh. William, together with John, James and Walter Christie, subscribed to an architecture book published by Canongate mason George Jameson in 1765. Titled *Thirty Three Designs with the orders of architecture according to Palladio*, the book follows the success of London pattern books for builders by authors such as Thomas and Batty Langley and was written to inspire journeymen to follow London's builders. Jameson also offered classes in design and drawing to journeymen from his flat in Canongate, for which students paid a fee and attended after their twelve-hour days on building sites or stone yards.

Christie also worked beyond Edinburgh. He regularly moved men and materials from place to place and managed several projects at the same time. William, James and Walter Christie worked in Edinburgh's Argyle Square and Canongate's Young Street and at Thurston House, near Innerwick, East Lothian. They built stables and offices for Robert Hunter from 1774 to 1776 having completed his Edinburgh New Town house on Queen Street over the previous three years. From 1767 to 1769, Christie worked for Drummond for the New Town houses along the north side of St Andrew Square and the two neighbouring houses on George Street for banking partners Forbes and James Hunter. He was among the team of masons the Canongate wright hired. The bankers had paid Henderson to design their houses and then Drummond to build them. Christie was then hired as a mason and in turn employed up to ten masons, four carters and seven suppliers. Among the masons were some who themselves became New Town builders over the following decades: James Traquair, John Burn, Robert Calder, Alexander Porteous, Alexander Purdie, Peter Logan, Robert Inglis, Robert Wright, John Hay, James

Hill, James Morrison and Alex Porteous were all masons, and Alex Young a wright, who all could trace their careers as builders to Christie's business.

Drummond, through Henderson, was also involved in the earliest buildings of St Andrew Square. From 1767 to 1769 Drummond believed he was contracted to build seven houses. These were for Forbes, Hunter, David Ross of Inverhasey (the judge, Lord Ankerville), and Sir Adam Fergusson, Bt, and another three on the square for soldier and diplomat Col. Robert Murray Keith, banker John Fordyce of Ayton and judge David Smith of Methven. Drummond also had a verbal agreement to build another house for magistrate and merchant Gilbert Meason.<sup>3</sup>

#### EDINBURGH TOWN COUNCIL'S SUPPORT FOR BUILDERS 1770s-90s: A RESPONSE TO POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CRISES

Like Christie, Drummond was also a subscriber to Jameson's book as were other masons he hired, such as James Marshall and James Currie from Calton's St Ninian's Row, and Thomas McInnes. In turn, these men would develop the plans Drummond had shown them, so that Messrs Marshall and Currie copied plans and drew details of buildings, such as those for Fordyce of Ayton's New Town house. Over time, Drummond's team of men, including Christie's men, grew increasingly confident in design and by the 1770s set themselves up as builders.

What at first seems to indicate an impressive succession plan of builders into the city's architectural professions once dominated by architects and incorporations of masons and wrights does not reveal that necessity drove it on. The first thoughts on planning the New Town identified the need to source a labour force to build the new city, and, in turn, to entice journeymen to set themselves up in business as builders – much to the annoyance of some architects and incorporations. The New Town was initially marketed as an exercise in free trade. However, by the 1770s attracting builders to work there was a necessity as the city and country grappled with financial and political crises brought on by the collapse of the Ayr Bank (Douglas, Heron & Co.) which led to hugely increased loans by the Royal Bank of Scotland to Edinburgh Town Council while income from feu purchases in the New Town, which was the major revenue, dropped dramatically. Building, businesses and income withered as it appeared that the New Town might never be completed.

The crisis prompted Craig to suggest an alternative plan: a circus plan. Proposed in 1770, 1774 and 1781, he believed it would return the control of New Town architecture to him, and stimulate renewed interest and confidence in the whole project. By 1776 he was architect and manager of the design and construction of the new hall and library of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in the New Town's George Street. The chief mason was Christie, whose men had moved from Drummond's St Andrew Square houses to their own on Hanover Street.

In short, Craig was soon surrounded by builders. The architect's plans to build wings to either side of the hall were defeated in favour of builders' houses (by William Smith to the east and George Veitch to the west). Despite Craig's protests to the town council, even the Royal College of Physicians' president, and friend to the architect, warned the magistrates that 'if the Builders do not get fair play it will retard finishing the plan'.<sup>4</sup> The council backed the builders and the New Town was completed as they grew in confidence and developed increasingly large feus, working as partners, for developers (such as Messrs Brown and Butterworth), and attracting more wealthy patrons.

Desperate for feuing and building to continue from which to collect income, Lord Provosts backed builders and overlooked grander schemes by architects which dictated

facades and functions but put off developers and residents who could not afford to build and buy such properties.

#### DEACON JOHN YOUNG AND THE BUILDERS

From the very first to last buildings in the New Town, a constant friend to builders was the Edinburgh incorporation wright, Deacon John Young. Unlike fellow deacons in Edinburgh who allied themselves with Sir Laurence Dundas, and looked to monopolize patronage for themselves and their members, Young remained an independent fellow. In fact, as opposition to Sir Laurence's regime grew through the 1770s from the Ayr Bank crash, and led by Henry Dundas and the Duke of Buccleuch, by 1780 Young himself became an active opponent to the Baronet Member of Parliament in St Andrew Square. The two clashed in the Court of Session over Young's 'accidental' development of the baronet's garden (Figure 3).

By this time, the city's elections commonly sought to oust Sir Laurence and his party from parliament and the city's chambers. By 1781 the 'Independent' party triumphed in the town council and Young was rewarded with public work in a way he was denied in the previous decade. We can see the values of his leadership and social capital of his



Figure 3. Royal Bank of Scotland, St Andrew Square. Photo: Edinburgh University Architecture Department. Sir Laurence Dundas built himself a town house from which to dominate the New Town and Edinburgh. He envisaged it to be where he worked as the city's Member of Parliament, and where Edinburgh Town Council and the Royal Bank of Scotland board would meet. Opposition grew to his dominance, which attracted tradesmen led by John Young

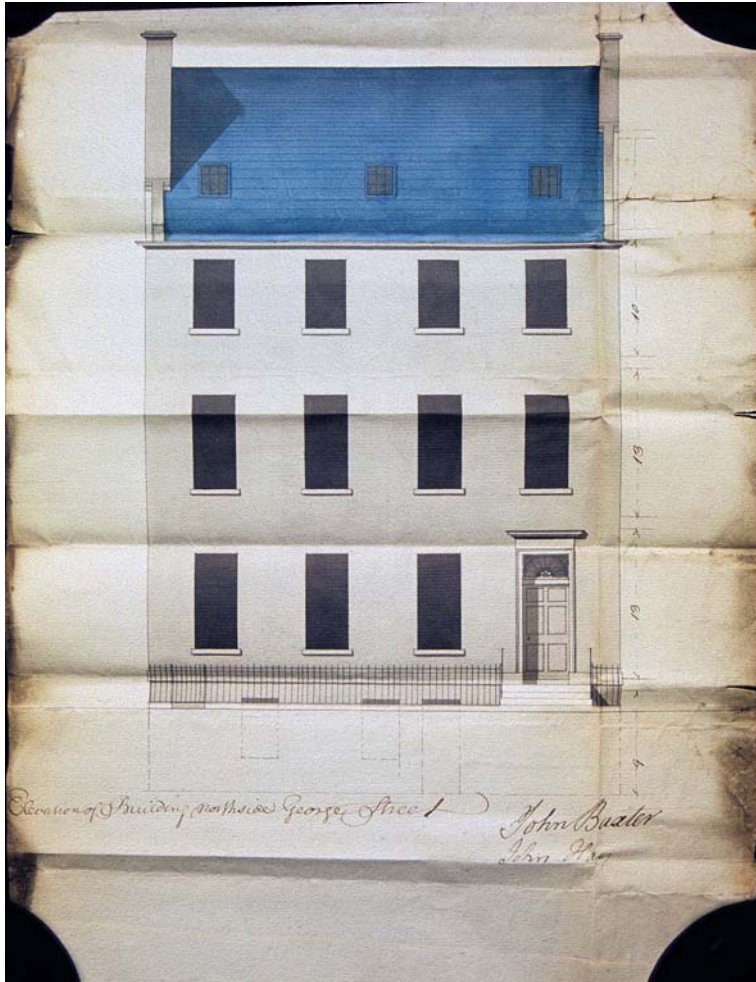


Figure 4. John Hay and John Baxter, George Street (1786); Edinburgh City Archives (ECA). By 1781 John Young's reward for supporting the Independent party's success in toppling Sir Laurence Dundas was increased social capital among builders. Young allied with new businesses such as Messrs Hay, Baxter and John Crooks to build extensively along George Street and thereby increase his influence in the New Town

relationship with builders to the new Lord Provost David Stuart in Young's collaborations with builders working in partnerships. Messrs John Hay, John Baxter and John Crooks feued and built extensively along George Street (Figure 4). In 1786, George Loch wrote to George Foulis to tell him he had bought such a house on north George Street, the third one west of the corner of Frederick Street, and that it was 'really a handsome chearfull [*sic*] house and large enough to serve the family for ever'.<sup>5</sup> Loch gave the dining and drawing room dimensions, and welcomed the cow house and hay loft at the back of the house. This note was a reminder that even New Town houses on George Street accommodated livestock.

Young was a constant partner to them and the practice could be easily understood as Baxter, Crooks, Hay and Young. Compared with the doldrums of the 1770s, the builders offered a New Town boom and by 1784 feuing had picked up so rapidly that Lord Provost John Grieve and Member of Parliament James Hunter Blair harmoniously congratulated one another. In March 1783 Grieve wrote: 'We have granted more Fews [*sic*] in the new Town this Season, than at any one period since the

new Town Commenced which in time will bring in sumes [sic] of money as will make the Chamberlain smile.<sup>6</sup> From February to March 1784 Grieve wrote again with a similar message. Now two hundred and seven feet of the north side of George Street, and in all six hundred and thirty-seven feet of all streets had been feued, more than any year.<sup>7</sup> The building season (April–September) was going to be an exciting one and the *Caledonian Mercury* newspaper reported in March that ‘building in the New Town of Edinburgh goes on with astonishing rapidity. Foundations are digging upward of thirty new houses, besides those now building’.<sup>8</sup>

So what did these New Town buildings look like? Despite Ruskin’s later complaints about monotony, surviving plans, elevations and interiors in the New Town point to diversity of form and function as well as an approach which, conversely, can be called a ‘builders’ style’ of architecture. For while it true that the facades of a builder such as John Marshall offered for properties on George Street and Rose Street complemented one another, neither matched their neighbouring properties by other builders (Figure 5).

The New Town was a typical Scottish urbane mix of residential and commercial properties. Sometimes this was because not only did the builders differ but also the properties’ functions. Houses and tenements stood side by side with the latter on main and cross streets sometimes looking like they should be houses before you entered the main door to find a common close and hanging stair to flats – storey after storey. On the other hand, sometimes the tenements also held shops and warehouses, and more often on the cross and minor streets – bakers, candle-makers, confectioners, grocers, milliners, perfumers and watchmakers were just a few of the shops to be found, along with resident architects and builders.

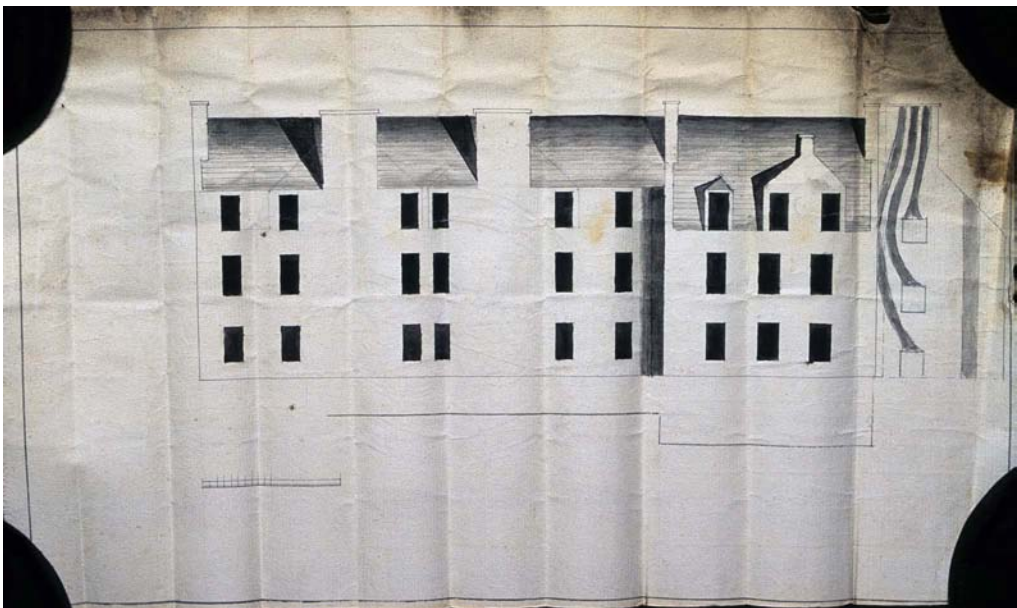


Figure 5. John Marshall, George Street; Edinburgh City Archives (ECA). The first New Town’s architecture was not an exercise in uniformity and repetition of the same facade and function.

Builders built what they knew would return a profit and to meet a client’s demands. There were a variety of tenements, shops and houses. Builders such as Marshall offered properties on George Street and Rose Street that complemented one another, showing that he knew about the values of symmetry and uniformity. However, his building did not match those of his neighbours or fellow builders



## JAMES NISBET – BUILDER AND NEW TOWN PLASTERER

By 1790 one resident builder and self-styled architect was plasterer James Nisbet who had built himself a house on the south side of George Street beside his Tontine Hotel and facing his houses for Lady Balcarras and others. It had taken him nearly a decade to make his name and get his title, from plastering the ceiling of George Street's church of St Andrew and St George to a variety of properties under his own name and those of fellow builders. Such was his popularity among builders that by 1790 he was a leader of the Society of Master Builders, wrights and masons of Edinburgh. He worked for its membership alongside mason Robert Inglis (formerly a journeyman to Christie) and wright James Salisbury (formerly an employee of Adam at Register House).<sup>9</sup> The traditional Scottish tenement hanging stair was by then lit and contrasted with the glazed and plastered cupolas decorated with moulds celebrating the arts, and a theme loosely based on attributes associated with Apollo. These moulds in turn correspond to designs made for carved wooden fireplaces. Lyres, quivers and arrows here and on the ceilings gave an aesthetic, or coherency. Because they were repeated from property to property, despite calls for the provision of the 'best' and 'incomparable' work, the plasterwork was also cheaper.<sup>10</sup> As an older man, from 1809 to 1810, Nisbet worked for builders George Winton and Thomas Morrison, themselves active in the first New Town in the 1790s, for two houses on Abercromby Place.<sup>11</sup>

Nesbit would have been able to tell them that when Lady Balcarras hired him to build her George Street house, she wanted the house to be 'one of the most substantial compleat [*sic*] and elegant of any of that size in the New Town'.<sup>12</sup> Nesbit was to decorate it in

an elegant and handsome manner, such at least as is usual for houses in the New Town of Edinburgh to be built and finished [...] with all conveniences, particularly to have the mason, wright, slater, plaisterer [*sic*] and stucco work all of the best kinds and the house well and plentifully supplied and finished in wood, the windows, doors, locks and hinges all of the best kinds and to have the chimney pieces substantial and elegant.<sup>13</sup>

The stucco was to be 'uncommonly elegant', although the house's cupola has the same moulds as Nisbet's Queen Street houses (Figure 6).

## PROCUREMENT

As Winton and Morrison knew, it was up to Nisbet to procure the materials for his team of tradesmen. A review of where New Town builders purchased these shows that they had extensive contacts throughout the city, Scotland, England and, indeed, Europe. The best examples are given in the accounts of the business John Brough managed. Stone, brick and lime were often sourced locally. Popular quarries were at Hailes, Redhall, Ravlestone and Broughton. Often builders and tradesmen rented them to be self-sufficient and make money.<sup>14</sup> The same is true of lime used by masons and plasterers. Farmers and builders from Gilmerton (William Handyside, Gilmerton farmer<sup>15</sup>) or Nicolson Street (masons Robert Baird, William Haldane and James Taylor<sup>16</sup>) were able to mine for lime and sell bags of it to builders such as Brough, or the Dean mason and New Town builder Alex Peacock and his partner Andrew Neil, Brough's overseer.<sup>17</sup>

Other tradesmen used local clay and iron to make bricks and nails, screws, and brackets. There were two large local brick factories owned by builders: one by the mason Jamieson and another by the brothers Adam and Thomas Russell. They enabled them to build and supply others in the New Town and elsewhere. Jamieson exported his bricks to America.<sup>18</sup> The Russell brothers won the approbation of Mr Lees of Staffordshire who was



Figure 6. James Nisbet, George Street, cupola. Photo: Carsten Flieger, 2011. Lady Balcarras instructed Nesbit to decorate her New Town houses in 'an elegant and handsome manner, such at least as is usual for houses in the New Town of Edinburgh to be built'. The stucco was to be 'uncommonly elegant'. Nisbet gave it the same moulds as those he gave the Queen Street houses he built with builders such as Robert Inglis and other members of the Society of Master Builders of Edinburgh

called to Edinburgh by the council to advise on brick production.<sup>19</sup> Elsewhere, builders could buy materials from the Leith where the Edinburgh Glass House Company<sup>20</sup> and the Edinburgh Roperie Company,<sup>21</sup> or they went to Cramond where Messrs Edington and Caddell at Cramond made ironmongery.<sup>22</sup>

Further afield, builders sourced materials from elsewhere in Scotland with which to build and fit out their properties. These included roof slates from Easdale, an island near Oban in the west of Scotland. Millions of slates were quarried every year by the Easdale Marble and Slate Quarrying Company and transported east or elsewhere in the British Empire. Builders also fitted out houses with carpets made in Stirling by firms such as Archibald Gilchrist, Robert Harvey and John Bowie.<sup>23</sup> Glaswegian merchants like John Shirra, William Stirling & Sons, and Robert Brown, McAlpine & Co., also supplied builders with goods.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, Falkirk's Carron Iron Company supplied builders with fireplaces, railings, pipes, cisterns and cookers. Fireplaces were bought as kits to be fitted into houses. They joined with the vents and chimneys and gables on the roof. These would also have been built into the superstructure as the house was going up. The most impressive and dramatic fireplaces were made of plaster and marble, and gave

plasterers and carvers opportunities to show off their skills as designers and craftsmen, though some wooden fireplace surrounds were also used, such as Gilbert Meason's house on St Andrew Square.<sup>25</sup>

Builders such as Brough also purchased goods from England. He had a large network of Northern English manufacturers and merchants in Manchester, Leeds, Wakefield and York, and he did business in the Midlands at Birmingham, and also in the South in London. To illustrate what was being sent, Brough's account lists Birmingham's brass founder, John Clark, and York's Thomas Wolstenholm, who made him an 'ornamental chimney piece'.<sup>26</sup> Timber was also ordered from Europe and modern-day Latvia's Riga and Libau wood and Swedish iron from Gothenburg were shipped into Leith.<sup>27</sup> Brough was surely one among many builders who ordered such materials. Leith timber merchants such as Robert and Alex Sheriff could supply this wood, seasoned and cut to specified measured parts for the buildings and then transported to the sites. As early as 1767 John Hume, coach-maker and property developer, had developed Canal Street in the New Town to accommodate a timber yard for his coaches, and probably for tradesmen to purchase and source building timber too.

Soon, an image of an army of carters supplying builders can be easily seen as builder after builder set about their work and project management on many sites at once. The 'nuisance' factor of having building materials left on the streets was addressed by Town Council Acts passed in 1770 and 1777 and enforced by its Overseer of Public Works. It was imperative that the town council's own commitments to building New Town sewers and water pipes were not damaged by rogue builders. The Nuisance Acts were, perhaps, influential on Glasgow Town Council's first police acts a decade later which also marshalled that city's builders.

A New Town builder had twenty-four hours to clear away earth and rubbish from digging out foundations (which were checked for legality and proper construction) or be fined, water pipes could not be put on the outside walls of houses, timber had to be removed from the streets within three hours of delivery. As usual, stone, earth and rubbish had to be removed from the street and masons could not hew or dress stones there. By 1786 the overseer of public works also had to ensure the removal of encroachments and obstructions. The onus was on the builder to manage his men, materials and workplace efficiently and legally.

#### CONCLUSIONS: MANAGING TOWN PLANNING AND BUILDERS

From this brief review of who builders were and what they did, it is soon clear that they were more important to the history of the New Town and Edinburgh than they have been given credit. They partook and complied with Edinburgh Town Council's management of the planning and building process of the largest urban development of its kind in the country. Rising from Jameson's night classes in Canongate in the late 1760s and early 1770s to the 1790s, the members of the Society of Master Builders could climb Calton Hill and view the New Town they had helped to complete. It is surely time that their work was recorded, commemorated and celebrated with the same commitment shown to New Town architects.

#### REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account, see Anthony Lewis, *The Builders of Edinburgh New Town, 1767–1795* (Reading: Spire, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> *Edinburgh Courant* (18 March 1769).

<sup>3</sup> *Duncan Drummond v James Marshall and another*, 1770; National Archives of Scotland (NAS), CS271/4904.

<sup>4</sup> Miscellaneous Council Papers 1778, Petitions and Miscellaneous Council Papers 1 January 1768–31 December 1779; Edinburgh City Archives (ECA), D0015R.

<sup>5</sup> NAS, GD268/270/23.

<sup>6</sup> Provost Grieve to Hunter Blair, 12 March 1783; Ayr Archives, Blair of Blairquhan.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 March 1784.

<sup>8</sup> *Caledonian Mercury* (29 March 1784).

<sup>9</sup> Some examples of the plasterwork Nisbet provided for his fellow builders and patrons survive to be seen today in Queen Street and George Street.

<sup>10</sup> National Library of Scotland (NLS), Acc 9769/22/1/13.

<sup>11</sup> *Decisions of the Court of Session: from November 1825 to [20th July 1841]*, By Scotland. Court of Session, F. Somerville, J. Tawse, John Craigie, George Robinson, Charles Gordon Robertson, Faculty of Advocates (Scotland), Faculty of Advocates (Edinburgh, Scotland), Scotland. High Court of Justiciary, Great Britain. Parliament. House of Lords, pp. 376–89.

<sup>12</sup> NLS, Acc 9769/22/1/13.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> A. A. McMillan, R. J. Gillanders and J. A. Fairhurst, *Building Stones of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Geological Society, 1999).

<sup>15</sup> NAS, CS231/Seq/B1/7.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Baird, William Haldane and James Taylor, 13 July 1787; NAS, SC39/17/387.

<sup>17</sup> *Alex Peacock v Thomas Dickson*, 23 January 1788; *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> ECA, Petitions and Miscellaneous Papers of Edinburgh Town Council, 1 January 1765–31 December 1767, Petitions 1765, D0014R.

<sup>19</sup> ECA, Town Council Minutes, 30 April 1788.

<sup>20</sup> NAS, CS231/Seq/B1/7.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *William Keys v Gilbert Meason*, 30 March 1774; NAS, SC39/17/306.

<sup>26</sup> Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, *York Historic Buildings in the Central Area, A Photographic Record* (London: HMSO, 1981).

<sup>27</sup> NAS, CS231/Seq/B1/7.