

Gerard Baldwin Brown and the Preservation of Edinburgh's Old Town

by

MALCOLM A. COOPER

It was not long after Gerard Baldwin Brown took up the post of Professor of Fine Art at the University of Edinburgh in 1880 that he became concerned about the rapid loss of early domestic vernacular buildings in Edinburgh's Old Town. With his broad knowledge of cultural history he was well placed to recognise the significance of these buildings in historical, cultural and aesthetic terms. He also had a detailed knowledge of the emerging urban preservation movement on the continent and believed that a similar approach should be adopted in Scotland's capital. This paper seeks to explore the process by which Baldwin Brown and a group of like-minded colleagues persuaded the town council to develop an inventory of historical buildings for Edinburgh's Old Town and to adopt a more sympathetic attitude to the town's early buildings.

INTRODUCTION

It is twenty years since David M. Walker gave a detailed account of the development of listing in Scotland in these *Transactions*.¹ His starting point was the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act of 1932 but, although he drew attention to earlier discussions in Scotland about inventories,² the focus of his paper was the 1930s onwards. The intention in this paper is to explore the events which took place in Edinburgh in the period prior to that investigated by Walker. In the last decade of the 19th and the early part of the 20th century, a small group sought to establish an inventory of buildings of historic and artistic importance for Edinburgh's Old Town. Their aim was to influence decision-making within the town council, the Dean of Guild and the town's various improvement bodies and to counter the 'slum dwellings' rhetoric which provided the justification for the seemingly unstoppable process of demolition and clearance. Attempting to preserve the vernacular domestic buildings in the Old Town in the face of the 'common-sense' health arguments and the desire for broader civic improvements appears to have been a highly dispiriting experience. Nonetheless, this period is of particular interest for the historiography of the preservation movement and its study sheds an interesting light on how the early preservationists went about the business of shifting political and public opinion.

Malcolm Cooper is an honorary research fellow in the School of History, Classics and Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh and is currently researching Gerard Baldwin Brown and the Conservation Movement. From 2005 to 2010 he was Chief Inspector at Historic Scotland.



Fig. 1

'Gerard Baldwin Brown', delivering a Fine Art lecture at the University of Edinburgh. Oil painting by James Cadenhead RSA, c.1906.

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As is well known, Patrick Geddes was a key figure in the preservation movement in Edinburgh at that time and the 'conservative surgery' approach he adopted for the Old Town buildings is of particular importance.³ The continuing fascination with Geddes has, though, drawn attention away from others who were also seeking a more sympathetic response to Edinburgh's ancient domestic vernacular buildings from landowners, residents and politicians. Of these, the tenacious efforts of Edinburgh University's first Professor of Fine Art, Gerard Baldwin Brown (Fig. 1) are highly significant and yet have been almost entirely overlooked. An active and visible figure in the town's early preservation movement, he sought not only to protect the vernacular domestic buildings, but argued against development which would have adversely affected the NeoClassical set pieces in the New Town and the town's gardens, squares and other green spaces. Following his arrival in Edinburgh in 1880, Baldwin Brown rapidly developed and articulated his views on the town's significance. He also set out to educate the public on the way in which its topography, buildings and spaces contributed to this significance in order to

gain broader support for its preservation. He was not, of course, the first to attempt to do this, but what is particularly striking is the comprehensive nature of his approach and his tenacity; it is also clear that he undertook this pursuit at no little professional and personal cost.⁴ Baldwin Brown also worked closely with a group of like-minded Edinburgh-based professionals. These included not only Geddes,⁵ but the architect and architectural historian, Thomas Ross,⁶ the Office of Works Principal Architect in Scotland, William Oldrieve,⁷ and the Town Council's curator and artist of Old Edinburgh, Bruce Home.⁸ This was a period when clubs, societies and associations were of particular significance for civil society and this experienced group also used their positions on a variety of professional and amenity bodies to influence their activities toward the protection of Edinburgh's ancient buildings.

EDINBURGH'S OLD TOWN DOMESTIC VERNACULAR BUILDINGS

The recognition that some Old Town buildings were of both historical interest and were aesthetically pleasing was already in place by the 18th century. In common with other long-lived towns in Britain, detailed histories with topographical and building descriptions began to appear by the mid-18th century, and illustrated town guides from the later 18th century onwards.⁹ There were also descriptions by visitors and other types of writing – Sir Walter Scott's Waverley novels, for example, were of particular significance for the town's identity and for the portrayal of its traditional buildings. At the beginning of the 19th century, the prolific Robert Chambers produced some of the most detailed descriptions of the Old Town. His *Traditions in Edinburgh* and *Walks in Edinburgh*, both published in Edinburgh in the 1820s, and *Reekiana: Minor Antiquities of Edinburgh* published in 1833, emphasised the association of Old Town buildings with key personalities and historical events.¹⁰ He also provided a thoughtful illustrated architectural study of the town's vernacular buildings in his *Ancient Domestic Architecture in Edinburgh*.¹¹ Meanwhile volumes of engravings of Edinburgh's modern and ancient buildings were becoming popular,¹² and artists such as James Drummond were exhibiting paintings of Old Town buildings at the Royal Scottish Academy's annual exhibition and elsewhere.

In 1848 the Scottish antiquarian, Daniel Wilson, published the first edition of his two-volume *Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time*,¹³ containing detailed drawings and descriptions of Old Town buildings. The timing is significant in that Wilson was responding to the accelerating losses that were taking place, of which the demolition of Trinity College Church and Hospital (a 15th-century royal foundation in the Waverley Valley, sacrificed by the Town Council to the rapidly expanding railways) became a *cause célèbre*. Under Wilson's influence, the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland was active in the mid-19th century, opposing not only the proposed demolition of Trinity College Church but other buildings and structures such as John Knox's House on the High Street and stretches of the town wall.¹⁴ However, despite broader campaigns, such as that mounted by Lord Cockburn,¹⁵ the preservation of the Old Town's vernacular buildings continued to be portrayed as the minority interest of antiquarians and artists.

In parallel with the creation of the New Town in the second half of the 18th century,¹⁶ Edinburgh's municipal authorities pursued a programme of modernisation in Old Town which was suffering from a sustained period of decline.¹⁷ These improvements included

the construction of new civic buildings, the 'restoration' of existing historic buildings,¹⁸ the laying out of new streets, and removal of 'obstructions' such as the Market Cross and Tolbooth.¹⁹ However, the scale of change was to shift dramatically with the Improvement Act of 1867. This was developed in response to the overcrowding in the Old Town, the major health issues that had resulted, and the problems of fire and building collapse. Under this Act, the Old Town was to witness the demolition of over 2,700 buildings in the following two decades, a number of which were both characterful and had significant historical associations.²⁰ In 1878, shortly before Baldwin Brown's arrival, the iconic jettied timber-framed building at the head of the West Bow was condemned by the Burgh Engineer and demolished along with 'several [other] houses of great historical interest, which have for two centuries formed notable and picturesque landmarks in Edinburgh' (Fig. 2).²¹

Improvement continued to be a feature of the Old Town, with the next major programme adopted in 1893. In comparison with the large area-based clearances of the 1867 Act, this adopted a smaller-scale and more focused approach and included the retention and adaptation of a small number of domestic buildings. In using this approach, the town council were influenced by Patrick Geddes, who by then had already successfully adapted a number of buildings, and argued that such an approach offered significant advantages in terms of social cohesion and identity.²² Indeed the Council were to invite Geddes to take responsibility for the work undertaken at the north end of the High Street at Riddle's Close and Wardrop Close.²³ However, even where building preservation was achieved, the level of intervention could be severe,²⁴ and elsewhere in the Old Town buildings continued to be declared unfit for human habitation and were demolished. Concerns certainly existed in some quarters:

The Town Council of Edinburgh by tacit assent and the Dean of Guild Court by positive "fiat" have doomed to immediate destruction a group of the finest old houses still remaining in Edinburgh. There is no question of over-crowding or of dilapidation. The tenements in the lower High Street to which I allude are solidly built of stone. They have weathered the storms of three centuries, and with decent care would withstand the profits of three centuries more. There is ample space round about them, and they are exceedingly good examples of old Scottish architecture.²⁵

However, the occasional critical letter was unlikely to influence a council with one eye on the city's serious health issues and the other on the civic improvements in London and elsewhere. It would take a sustained and far more comprehensive campaign to make a difference and it was Baldwin Brown who stepped to the fore.

PROTECTING OLD EDINBURGH

Of those working for preservation in Edinburgh at the end of the 19th century, Baldwin Brown was particularly well placed to recognise the importance of the Old Town's vernacular domestic buildings and he also understood the key role that an inventory might play in the move for preservation, based on his interest in early ecclesiastical architecture.²⁶ He had long believed that Thomas Rickman's *An Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of Architecture in England* was the key textbook on English architecture. Rickman had intended to publish a companion volume on Anglo-Saxon architecture and in

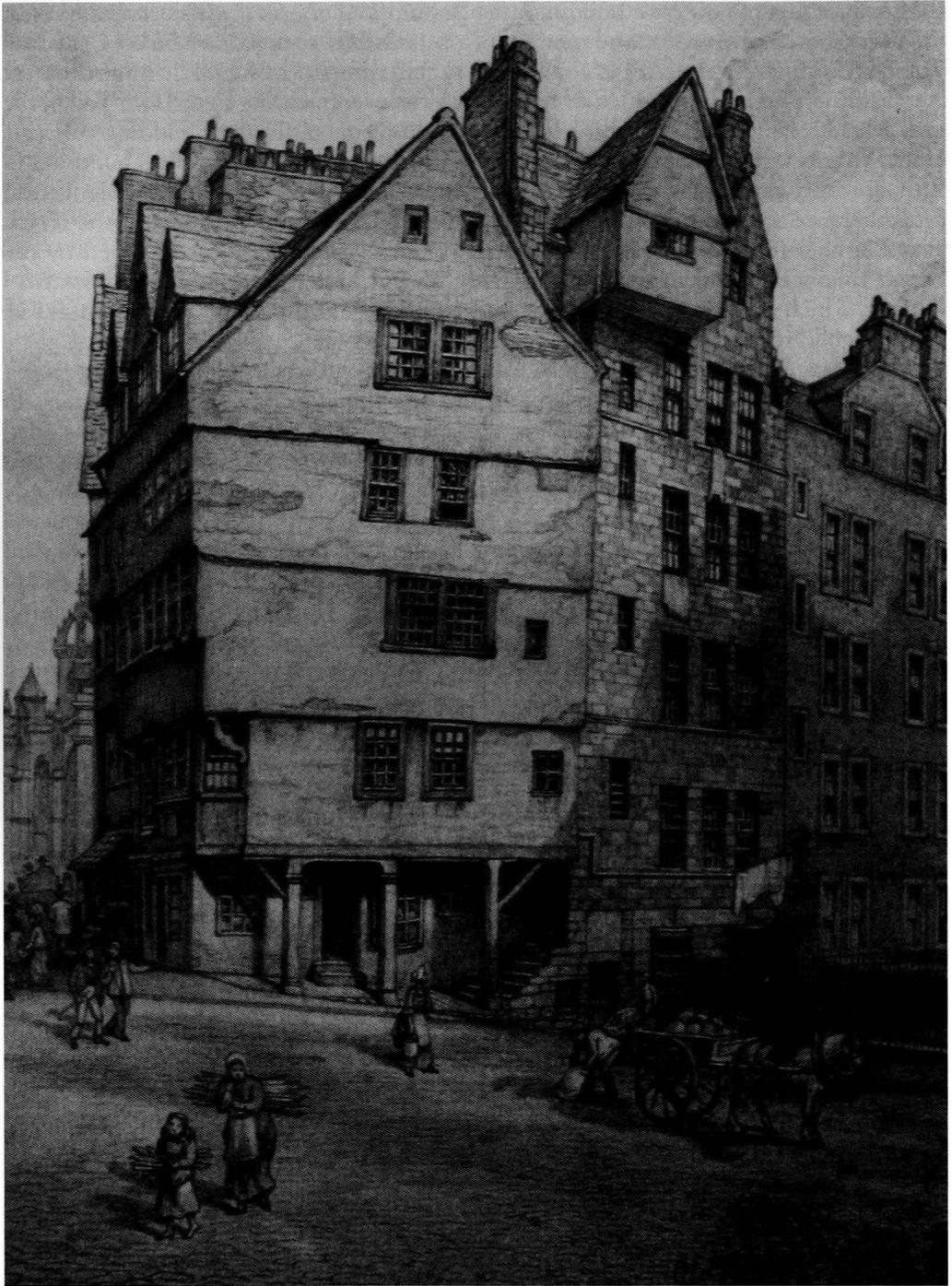


Fig. 2

'Old Bow Head', demolished in 1878. Pencil drawing by Bruce J. Home, from B.J. Home, *Old Houses in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1905/07).

anticipation of this, had removed the information relating to this period from the 1881 edition of his work. However the companion volume did not appear and Baldwin Brown therefore decided that he would produce the definitive study.²⁷ It was to take him ten years to assess all of the published research and to visit the known pre-Conquest sites, and during this time he prepared single-handedly what was in effect the first detailed inventory of Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical architecture in England (and this was from his base in Edinburgh!).²⁸ He therefore knew *at first hand* the importance of inventories for those wishing to locate, study and assess the comparative significance ancient sites and buildings. Baldwin Brown was a regular traveller in Europe, collecting material for his lectures and research, and he benefited from accomplished language skills. He knew also therefore that inventories were crucial not just for academic research but were being used as the basis for the preservation process on the continent.²⁹ Some four years into his study he reflected that:

No one explorer can make the needful minute examinations of sites and fabrics all over the country, through the number is no so great as to preclude the possibility of one person visiting them all ... What is required first is what the French would call the *statistique monumentale* of pre-Conquest architecture, such as would be furnished by verified list of sites, with a brief indication in each case of the character of existing remains, or a map giving the names and geographical distribution of places where pre-Conquest work is to be found.³⁰

Finally, in studying the nature and development of art across the world's major civilisations, Baldwin Brown had developed the belief that architecture formed a key part of culture and identity, and reflected them.³¹ He also had a particular knowledge of urban history and culture – in his lectures on Renaissance art, for example, he analysed the broader historical, topographic and architectural development of the northern Italian cities in a manner akin to that of an urban geographer. To Baldwin Brown, Edinburgh Old Town's vernacular domestic architecture was significant both on its own terms and as an element of Scotland's broader cultural development and identity.³²

Baldwin Brown knew that the preservation battle had to a great extent been won in the public's mind with regard to iconic Scottish sites such as Edinburgh Castle and the Palace of Holyrood House.³³ This was not the case however for the town's domestic vernacular architecture and he rapidly joined battle. By the start of the 20th century he had already spent the best part of two decades protecting buildings and spaces in Edinburgh's Old and New Towns and was a regular correspondent in the *Scotsman* on matters relating to the town's 'amenity'. He had also stood (unsuccessfully) for election as a local councillor in order to oppose a series of proposed railway expansion schemes.³⁴ Baldwin Brown was an accomplished committee man and at various times he had harnessed the support of the Royal Scottish Academy, the Scottish Arts Club and the National Association for the Advancement of Art and its Application to Industry.³⁵ In 1903 he sat on the council of the Cockburn Association,³⁶ was on the management committee of Edinburgh Architectural Association (having previously been its President),³⁷ and was elected onto to the Council of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. These organisations gave Baldwin Brown a powerful platform from which to pursue his preservation agenda and he frequently encouraged them to work together on preservation campaigns in order to strengthen their influence further.³⁸

Shortly after his appointment to their council, the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland met with the Cockburn Association to discuss the continuing loss of the Old Town buildings. The outcome, in 1904, was *The Care of Historical Cities*, a booklet researched and written by Baldwin Brown.³⁹ This reviewed the protection of historical cities on the continent and was a precursor to the broader discussions contained in *The Care of Ancient Monuments* which was published a year later.⁴⁰ *The Care of Historical Cities* was specifically written with the protection of Edinburgh in mind and it stressed the importance of creating an inventory: 'Such an inventory is the necessary first step towards any measures for preservation'.

In July 1904, he lectured on *Old Edinburgh: The Secrets of Its Charm*. The large audience included the Lord Provost and number of the town's councillors and magistrates.⁴¹ This is an important talk for understanding his thinking and is deserving of detailed scrutiny. While pressing for a significant change of approach in Edinburgh, he clearly understood that moderation was necessary and his arguments had to be presented in terms of the wider benefits of preservation for the citizens as a whole. He started by analysing the Old Town's character, stressing that he intended not to speak of the Edinburgh of world-famous monuments such as the Castle, Holyrood or St Giles,

but rather of the Edinburgh of the smaller picturesque features, which singularly were of minor importance, though in combination they imparted to the street their special physiognomy. By these were meant the division and grouping of the masses of the older houses and their rugged masonry; the frequent gables, the dormer windows, with their carved finials, the timber projections, the rough stone slating, the harling, the moulded doorways and inscribed lintels, all of which helped to impart such a pleasant old-world aspect to the more ancient thoroughfares. The secret of the charm of Edinburgh resided partly in the natural features of the site, and partly in the general architectural treatment of the site, with the effective contrast between the classic regularity of the New Town and the picturesque confusion of the crowded and towering "lands" of the Old. ... These older architectural relics, with the historical associations which gathered so thickly around them, were amongst the attractions of Edinburgh which intelligent strangers found of especial interest. They were in this sense civic assets that had really a commercial as well as an artistic and historical value. Their preservation was from all points of view a matter of importance, for it must be remembered that they were a class of possessions which, when once destroyed, could never again be restored.⁴²

He noted that in other large cities, the early buildings eliminated by improvement scheme often had no value and were in tumbledown condition. However:

In Edinburgh ... the older houses, dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, were as a general rule solid stone structures, many of which might stand for centuries, and they possessed the artistic and historical value already referred to. For their preservation it was worthwhile taking a good deal of trouble, and even facing some immediate outlay, which, if Edinburgh retained all her attractions to visitors, would soon be repaid. It was a matter for congratulation that a policy of wise conservation was now in the ascendant in that department of municipal government which had this matter in charge. The old "lands" might have to be gutted and their interior spaces redistributed, but the matter of importance for the charm of old Edinburgh was the judicious reparation and preservation of the external fabric.⁴³

He suggested that, although there was currently no move at national level to introduce protective measures for occupied buildings, the local authority might consider

introducing its own controls as it had done successfully to reduce the adverse visual impact of advertising on the city's amenity.

Baldwin Brown also wrote two long and informative articles which appeared in the *Scotsman* in August of that year.⁴⁴ In the first, he summarised the recent efforts by cities in Germany to 'take stock of their possessions' in order to 'make the most of what remains to them'. He noted that Edinburgh town council was now considering the preparation of an inventory, and he went on to set out a number of further steps he thought should be pursued:

Local regulations for building should be enlarged and strengthened along the lines of the German ones ... The city should be able to control the laying out of new districts that will presently be forming part of the city.... There should be no more demolitions of frontages to the High Street or the Canongate, and no atrocities in brick and concrete should be permitted in the conspicuous parts of the city. New work on old domestic buildings should not borrow fancy architecture from models of quite a different character, but should accord in style and treatment and material with the mass of structures of the same kind in the vicinity. Builders, when they point an old rubble wall, should be taught not to smear all their superfluous mortar over the ancient stones; and when they plaster a rubble wall they should not rule lines upon it to make it look like squared ashlar. Brick should, where possible, be avoided in the repairs of the chimney stalks and other parts of the old stone houses.⁴⁵

In the second article, Baldwin Brown explored in more detail the preservation-related activities on the continent, undertaken in response to the rapid changes being experienced. As was his intention, the relevance to Edinburgh is immediately apparent:

...the demand for broad, level, and straight streets, roomy places of business, imposing frontages, and domestic interiors supplied with the latest apparatus of health and comfort, has led to wholesale demolitions and rebuildings, which have altered out of all knowledge the older parts of many of our historical cities ... It is not to be wondered at that misgivings have arisen in the minds of many as to the wisdom and economy of some of these sweeping changes.⁴⁶

He emphasised in particular the recent activities in Germany:

Thoughtful and patriotic citizens who saw the traditional aspect of cities of the fatherland dissolving before their eyes were wounded in their historic sense and in their affection for home. From this has arisen a powerful movement, dating from about five years back, the tendency of which may be summed up in the word recently adopted as the title of a patriotic society – "Heimatschütz", or "The Defence of Home". As our neighbours across the North Sea are nothing if not systematic, they have taken up and discussed these questions with characteristic thoroughness. An annual congress, under the title "Tag für Denkmalpflege", or "Meeting for the Care of Monuments", is held in different towns of the Empire, and a special journal, the organ of the movement, gives every month a chronicle of all that is tried or accomplished for the cause, in Germany or abroad, either by legislation or by private agency.⁴⁷

He also quoted at length from a sympathetic speech given by the Burgomaster of Hildesheim, regarding the duties of civic authorities in regard to historical cities. The mechanisms for protection being pursued there included not only the purchase of ancient buildings by the municipal authorities, but grant-aid to owners for repairs, the use of architectural competition to ensure sympathetic designs for new buildings and the occasional use of compulsive measures where owners were unsympathetic to preservation.

In considering the varying national and regional political arrangements on the continent, Baldwin Brown had also come to recognise that a distinction might be made between the management of buildings and monuments of national importance and those which, while of lesser significance, were of historical and aesthetic significance in terms of the character of a specific historic town. This encouraged him to the idea of a two-tier system in Britain, with both national and local protective systems, each supported by their own inventories.

In parallel with his public campaigns, Baldwin Brown presented his views to professional audiences, writing articles on urban protection for, amongst others, the *Builder* and the *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*. He returned to the press at the end of the year, however, to draw attention to a conference he had recently attended, organised by the German movement for the protection of historical cities:

... a long discussion took place on the question of the treatment of the older examples of domestic architecture in historical cities, and it was urged that they should not only be catalogued, photographed, and measured, but should be preserved.⁴⁸

He undoubtedly chose to emphasise this discussion, as this was exactly the approach he was pursuing in Edinburgh.

THE CREATION OF AN EDINBURGH INVENTORY

By the end of 1904 it seemed that all the ingredients for preserving significant domestic vernacular buildings in Old Edinburgh were being brought together. There were a number of visible and active bodies with an interest in protecting the town's amenity and these were coordinating their efforts under Baldwin Brown's influence. The Edinburgh Photographic Society was in the process of preparing a photographic survey of Old Edinburgh.⁴⁹ Most important of all, by January 1905 Edinburgh Town Council had under serious consideration the formal proposal by one of its number, Bailie W. Fraser Dobie,⁵⁰ to prepare 'a register of all the old buildings in Edinburgh of historical or architectural interest, and to consider whether any steps should be taken for the preservation of those considered of sufficient importance to be retained or restored'.⁵¹ The council responded positively and gave Dobie and the Town Clerk the task of preparing 'a report containing a list of such houses with details of their measurements, historical account, &c., and the cost of carrying out the register'.⁵² By the start of 1906, however, an inventory had not appeared and in a speech delivered to Edinburgh Architectural Association on *The Aesthetic Duties of a Corporation toward a City*, Bailie Dobie sought to encourage progress.⁵³ Offered perhaps as a stalking horse, he also included the suggestion that the town council and Dean of Guild might benefit from the services of an Artistic Advisory Committee, the make-up of which might include the Presidents of the Royal Scottish Academy, the Edinburgh Architectural Association and the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, and the Chairmen of the Cockburn Association and the new Art School – and, of course, the Professor of Fine Arts!⁵⁴ In parallel, Baldwin Brown was continuing to press for the local inventory:

Independently, however, of any Acts of Parliament or legal procedure, the Town Council of Edinburgh might accomplish the work for our older buildings which is being done in many similar towns abroad. This is the work of drawing up an official list based on

actual survey of the ancient features of the city architecture which still remain to us. It is everywhere being recognised that this process of inventorisation is a necessary first step towards any measure of protection, and some eighteen months ago a proposal was made, and ultimately agreed to in the Town Council, for such an inventory to be drawn up. The project could be carried out in practice with ease, and at slight cost, but it is unfortunately still in abeyance. Is it too much for the Edinburgh public interested in these matters to press on the Town Council the carrying out of this very valuable and interesting piece of work? No doubt outside help would be readily given by citizens of architectural, historical, and antiquarian tastes ... it is essential that the Town Council take the lead and give to the work its official imprimatur. On such an inventory any future conservative measures must be based, and these are necessarily the concern of the civic authorities, who should be concerned in the matter from the outset.⁵⁵

In the meantime however demolitions in the Old Town continued. In June 1906 one of the last surviving stretches of the Flodden Wall was under threat and Baldwin Brown once again raised the matter of the inventory: 'Other cities have been accomplishing such inventories; is our own action to be confined to empty resolutions and references to committees that show no activity in the matter?'.⁵⁶

Although the inventory proposal appeared to have stalled, another initiative was also being pursued. Adopting an approach similar to that being followed in the German city of Hildesheim, this sought to secure the ownership of key Old Town buildings by sympathetic individuals or organisations (including the town council itself). A letter written by Patrick Geddes in 1907, for example, identifies a group of houses which might form a 'municipal museum' collection along the 'Historic Mile' and which he felt should be acquired by the council. He also notes that his own work over the preceding twenty years had secured buildings at each end of the Old Town and he highlighted the support of the former Prime Minister, Lord Rosebery, who had acquired Lady Stair's House and donated it to the town council. Rosebery was also amenable to acquiring other historic buildings in the Old Town:

Does not all this clearly show how the preservation of Old Edinburgh, indeed the preservation and resuscitation of the Historic Mile, interests not only Edinburgh citizens, but eminent Scotsmen everywhere. ... Pray talk this over with Mr Home and Mr Baldwin Brown, and any others you think fit.⁵⁷

Matters regarding the inventory were progressing at glacial speed, but in June 1908 the council's museum curator, Bruce Home, finally was able to circulate his *Provisional List of Old Houses Remaining in High Street and Canongate of Edinburgh* to the councillors and magistrates.⁵⁸ The *Provisional List* provided a description of the historic buildings along the historic mile. It then described the 'outlying parts of the Old Town, beyond the central avenue, but within the limits of the City Wall, the Nor' Loch, and the North and South Backs of the Canongate.' The report concluded with a numbered list of buildings, divided into three parts: 'List of Older Public Buildings in Edinburgh Which are Not Threatened at Present'; 'List of Older Public or Semi-Public Buildings in Edinburgh Whose Outlook is Less Assured'; and 'List of Buildings Possessing Historic, Antiquarian, or Architectural Interest Which it is Desirable to Preserve as Far as May Be Possible'.⁵⁹ This list appears to have been both adopted by the council and re-titled as, shortly afterwards, the council's Plans and Work Committee were asked to 'report as to the best means of protecting

and retaining any Antiquarian or Historical Buildings in Edinburgh that is one of the subjects detailed in the Municipal Register of Historical Buildings'.⁶⁰

As with the inventory itself, the council took its time in reaching a view on how buildings on the *Municipal Register* might be protected. The Old Edinburgh Club therefore decided to encourage matters along. Founded in early 1908 to draw together historical and archival material concerning Edinburgh, the Club rapidly involved itself in the broader preservation movement.⁶¹ Bruce Home used the Club's first volume (published in March 1909) to reproduce his 1908 list (slightly amended and with a map added) and he took the opportunity to introduce a provocative introduction.⁶² This opened with the statement: 'It may be safely affirmed that, since 1860, two-thirds of the ancient buildings in the Old Town of Edinburgh have been demolished'.⁶³ The *Edinburgh Evening News* picked this up, reflecting that 'The contents of the Book show how useful the club will prove in preserving the history of old Edinburgh, and in bridling that spirit of vandalism which has destroyed many of the interesting buildings in the Scottish capital'.⁶⁴

The council was clearly stung but, as ever, matters continued to progress slowly. However, the Lord Provost, as an honorary Vice-President of the Old Edinburgh Club, was due to attend its second annual meeting on 28 January 1911. He clearly anticipated that he might be given a rough ride, particularly with Lord Rosebery in the chair,⁶⁵ and it is no surprise therefore that on 20 December 1910 the council finally concluded its considerations on how they might protect the buildings on the Municipal Register:

the various officials of the Corporation be instructed to report to the Town Clerk (for submission to the Magistrates and Council or appropriate Committee) any proposals which may come under their cognisance affecting such buildings.⁶⁶

It seemed that the level of pressure being brought by the amenity bodies was having an effect and a more sympathetic mood was gradually developing at the council. In 1910, for example, the Cockburn Association, despite facing its own internal struggles, had launched an appeal to purchase and preserve Moubray House, lying adjacent to John Knox's House, on the High Street (Fig. 3). The ownership was to be vested in a purpose-created trust,⁶⁷ and subsequently this was proposed to operate both buildings as a tourist attraction and as gallery space for the sale of locally-produced arts and crafts.⁶⁸ The Association was however struggling to find the funds for the purchase and, in what seems a highly significant decision, the council agreed to make a financial contribution allowing the building's future to be secured.⁶⁹

There were, however, further issues to be pursued. The first related to the level of expertise available to the council with regard to historic buildings and the town's broader amenity.⁷⁰ In what might have been the final element for an effective protective system, in April 1911 Bailie Dobie formally submitted to the council his earlier idea for an 'Advisory Committee of specially qualified persons to assist them in their consideration of questions regarding the preservation and improvement of the amenity of the City'.⁷¹ However, his was a step too far for the councillors and the proposal was rejected.⁷² The second issue was that the Municipal Register only covered a limited area of the Old Town. Baldwin Brown and his colleagues recognised that the Old Town inventory needed to be expanded as soon as possible.

EXPANDING THE MUNICIPAL REGISTER

At this point it is helpful to shift the focus of our attention. One of the outcomes of *The Care of Ancient Monuments* was the creation in 1908 of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Constructions of Scotland.⁷³ Baldwin Brown was appointed as one of the founding Commissioners⁷⁴ and he immediately saw the possibility of using the Commission's formal status to give momentum to the expansion of the inventory. In October 1908 the Commission's Secretary, Alexander Curle, wrote to Edinburgh's Town Clerk and to Councillor Dobie, to congratulate the council on their inventory and to suggest that a complete schedule of Old Edinburgh houses should be completed by Bruce Home.⁷⁵ The Commission also decided that urban inventories should be commenced elsewhere:

With the view of interesting local authorities in Burghs in the preservation of their monuments and in case these should be destroyed or interfered with before the Commission are able to undertake the work of recording them, it was resolved to ask the Town Councils of Royal Burghs to make up local inventories and the Secretary was directed to communicate with such Town Councils accordingly.⁷⁶

By November of that year, Curle reported that he had received favourable replies from over half of the sixty councils contacted, some of whom were already in the course of making up such lists, and it was agreed that individual Commissioners would visit

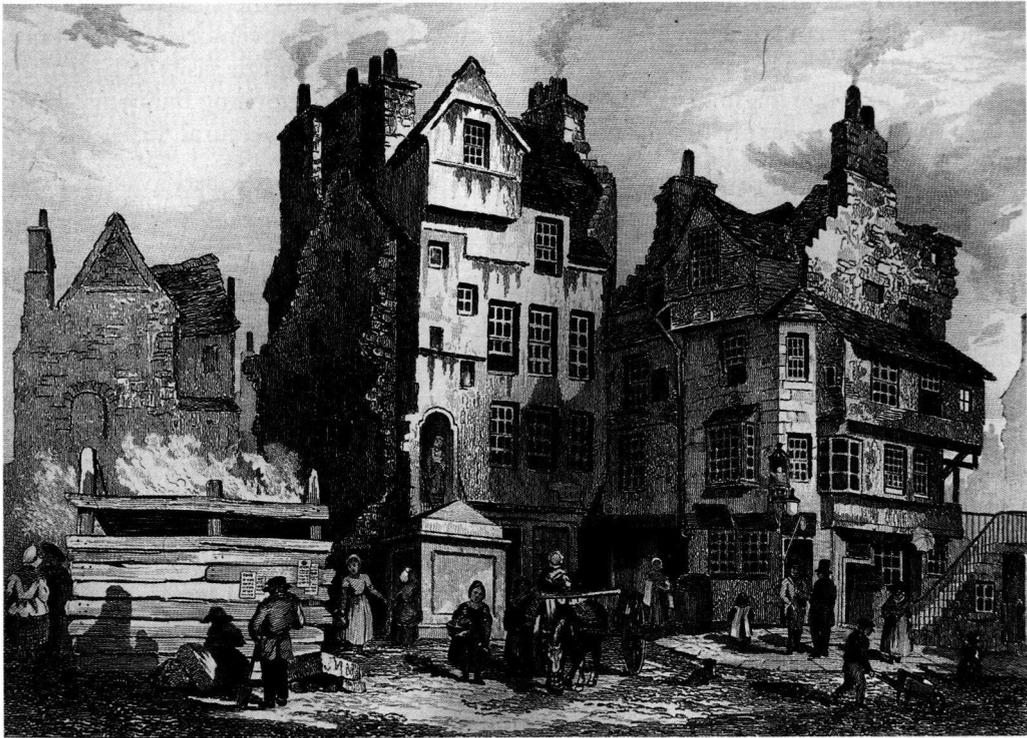


Fig. 3

'John Knox's House, Netherbow, 1843'. Pencil drawing by Daniel Wilson, prepared subsequently as an engraving, from D. Wilson, *Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time* (Edinburgh, 1848), vol.ii, opposite p.38.

specific towns to inspect the buildings once individual inventories had been received. Curle wrote to Bailie Dobie again in April 1910:

The Commissioners last year directed a communication to the Town Councils of all the Royal Burghs of Scotland requesting their assistance by furnishing Lists of all Antiquities such as old Buildings, ecclesiastical and secular, crosses, armorial stones, sun-dials inscribed lintels, bells &c, of date prior to the year 1707. Thanks no doubt to the initiative taken by the Corporation of Edinburgh in framing an Inventory of ancient houses along the historic mile from the Castle to Holyrood, the request has met with a great measure of success. Of a total of some 60 Burghs communicated with almost the whole have replied furnishing or promising the information desired. Among others list have been received from Glasgow, Perth, Aberdeen, Inverness, and Ayr. In a number of cases photographs of the objects themselves have also been sent. The interest in the ancient and historical relics of the Royal Burghs which this evinces is very gratifying to the Commissioners. Knowing to what an extent you have identified yourself with the movement for the preservation of all that is of historical interest in the City of Edinburgh, I write in the hope that you may bring this matter to the notice of your Council and induce them to undertake the compilation of such an Inventory as has been completed or promised by practically all the other important Royal Burghs in Scotland. Without local cooperation in this national undertaking the task of the Commissioners is rendered extremely difficult.⁷⁷

One has to admire the tactics adopted here. Having used the positive progress in Edinburgh to encourage other Scottish councils to prepare inventories, the resulting progress in the Scottish burghs (and particularly in Glasgow) was then used to encourage Edinburgh to expand their own list! Curle had already received inventories from twenty-eight councils and by June the process of dividing up the burgh visits between the Commissioners had begun. In November a sub-committee comprising Baldwin Brown, Ross and Oldrieve was created to supervise the Reports on Architectural Structures and to deal with the Burgh Inventories.⁷⁸

Matters were going from strength to strength, and in 1910 the Commission had decided to enhance their expertise by appointing the architect A.L. MacGibbon.⁷⁹ Curle indicated to the Treasury that 'should Mr MacGibbon's appointment be approved of, he is ready to commence forthwith with the City of Edinburgh, and a volume of Royal Burghs, should, I think, be ready for publication next year'.⁸⁰ The following February, Curle was able to write in highly positive tones to the Town Clerk at Edinburgh:

I expect that the Inventory of the Edinburgh monuments will be undertaken very shortly, and the representative of the Commission will, as your Committee suggest, see Mr Bruce Home with a view to obtaining any further information regarding these.⁸¹

However, something then went badly awry and in March the sub-committee recommended to the Commissioners 'that separate inventories for the Royal Burghs should not be proceeded with on the grounds that it is undesirable to separate the antiquities of the towns from those of the Counties in which the towns are situated'. Work on the burgh inventories therefore ceased.⁸² The decision must have been extremely difficult for Baldwin Brown, Ross and Oldrieve to make, especially given the extremely positive progress which had been made. Although the reason for this sudden about-face is not immediately apparent, the explanation most probably lies with Lord Pentland who we know was becoming increasingly frustrated at the slow progress of the county inventories.⁸³ It seems likely therefore that the Treasury directed that MacGibbon should

be employed on the county-based surveys and that work on the burgh inventories should cease. The sub-committee, however, did take a number of steps to save the Edinburgh and Leith inventory, which was intended to be included in the Midlothian volume. To head off criticism about resources, it seems that they suggested that the Commissioners themselves, rather than the Commission staff, should lead on the work. They also intended to spread the load by taking advantage of the knowledge possessed by members of the various bodies and individuals interested in Old Edinburgh more broadly. A few days later, Curle contacted a number of organisations and individuals in Edinburgh to seek their assistance in expanding the inventory.⁸⁴ There was a positive response and an 'Old Edinburgh' meeting, chaired by Baldwin Brown, was held on 2 May 1911 where it was agreed that a permanent committee be set up to this end.⁸⁵ However the initiative rapidly lost momentum, possibly because in June 1911 the council, in the person of Councillor Dobie, met formally with Baldwin Brown (representing the Royal Commission) to discuss an expanded the inventory and in October the council formally agreed to undertake the work. This was given to Bruce Home to undertake under the council's Museum sub-committee's supervision.⁸⁶ Regrettably, Bruce Home died four months later and this, together with the disruption caused subsequently by the First World War, appears to have brought matters to a halt.⁸⁷

AFTER THE WAR

In 1918 the Edinburgh council returned to the subject of housing provision and employment, and by 1919 the pre-War proposals for a new Improvement Scheme, focused on sites in the Grassmarket and Cowgate area lying in the valley on the south side of the Old Town, were brought forward. As had been feared earlier, this exposed the limitations of Bruce Home's 1908 list. The response from the amenity bodies was swift and this included the Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland, which had been created in 1913.⁸⁸ It approached the Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Scottish Academy, the Cockburn Association, the Old Edinburgh Club and the Institute of Scottish Architects, with 'a view to formulating definite policy for dealing with the protection of old Town houses within the City of Edinburgh, and submitting that policy to the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Councillors'.⁸⁹ The other amenity bodies were already in action, with the Old Edinburgh Club and Cockburn Association⁹⁰ writing to the town council that 'every care should be taken to preserve not only buildings possessing interesting historical associations, but also those which exhibit the architectural characteristics of past periods of our national history'.⁹¹ They encouraged the council to consider the adaptation or the preservation of street elevations and, crucially, they also provided a list of those buildings affected which they believed were of particular significance.⁹²

The issue of the council's expertise remained a concern and, in parallel, the Edinburgh Architectural Association and the Cockburn Association both pressed the council to ensure that appropriately experienced architects were appointed to deal with ancient buildings under the improvement scheme.⁹³ The Cockburn were also pressing for the creation of what they now termed a 'Civic Amenity Council' to assist the council with town planning matters, writing to a reportedly sympathetic Town Clerk on the basis of a memorandum drawn up by Baldwin Brown.⁹⁴ Baldwin Brown, Ross, Oldrieve,

and the architect Frank Mears also appear to have inspected properties affected by the improvement proposals and it is no coincidence that a detailed paper on the 17th-century Tailors' Hall complex situated on the Cowgate, written by Ross, Baldwin Brown and a colleague, appeared at this time.⁹⁵ The threat of the emerging improvement scheme also encouraged the Royal Commission to restart its work on Edinburgh. In 1921 the decision was taken that 'the principal architect should co-operate with Professor Baldwin Brown, Mr Oldrieve and Dr Ross in continuing the architectural survey of the City of Edinburgh',⁹⁶ and draft entries were drawn up for a number of buildings between 1921 and 1923. However, other priorities intervened and, following the decision to exclude Edinburgh from the Midlothian volume in 1927, work halted once again.

It is certainly the case that another group of early domestic buildings in the Old Town were lost under the improvements taken forward in the 1920s and early 1930s, but there were also signs that the council was becoming gradually more sympathetic to preserving the increasingly small number of early buildings that remained. They were persuaded, for example, to adapt rather than to demolish the run of early buildings adjacent to Greyfriars churchyard, on the west side of Candlemakers' Row. The council also took the important step of purchasing Huntly House and Acheson House on the Canongate (Fig. 4).⁹⁷ Matters were not always straightforward, however, and in this period we also see the very significant level of reconstruction at 74-82 Grassmarket. This was undertaken by the newly-appointed and highly talented council architect, Ebenezer J. MacRae,⁹⁸ who had led on the Candlemaker's Row work but found himself in the Grassmarket

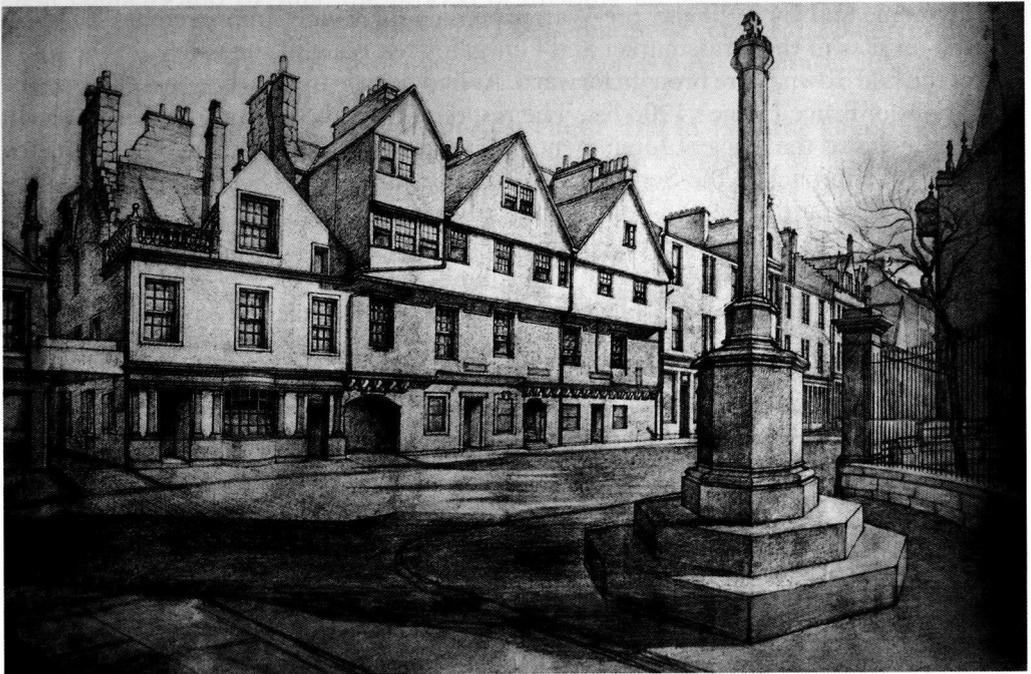


Fig. 4

'Huntly House, Canongate'. Late 19th-century pencil drawing by Bruce J. Home, from B.J. Home, *Old Houses in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1905/07).

case constrained by an extremely unhelpful Medical Officer of Health, who refused to approve the refurbishment scheme as the floor-to-ceiling height was only 7ft 6in.⁹⁹ It is nonetheless an interesting reflection on the council's more positive attitude, and suggestive that the Register was still in place, that one of MacRae's formal responsibilities was:

To report to the Town Clerk or the appropriate Committee on any proposal which may come under his notice, either by examination of the Dean of Guild Court plans or otherwise, for alterations on or demolition of any buildings in the City of antiquarian or historical interest, and particularly of buildings contained in the Corporation's Register of Historic Buildings.¹⁰⁰

CONCLUSIONS

The latter years of the 19th century and first three decades of the 20th century are of undoubted significance for the preservation movement in Edinburgh. The developments which took place over this period also provide an interesting early chapter for the origins of the formal listing process in Scotland, discussed by Walker in 1994. By 1908 Edinburgh town council had adopted a *Municipal Register of Historical Buildings* and two years later they had a notification procedure in place which was intended to provide some level of protection for buildings on the Register. The council had on occasion acquired Old Town buildings because of their historical importance, had supported others doing so, and were gradually moving away from demolition and toward adaptation. However it is also clear that the attitude to preservation at the council ebbed and flowed and the shift of public health from the council to the Scottish Board of Health in 1919 also made matters more complex. The council did not have a free hand, however, as Edinburgh's highly energetic amenity bodies closely monitored the council's activities and vociferously challenged their less sympathetic approaches.

While the preservation movement made significant progress over this period, the ten years between 1922 and 1932 saw the passing of the generation whose achievement this was. Oldrieve died in 1922, Dobie in 1926 and Lord Rosebery in 1929. Ross resigned as a Royal Commissioner in 1930 (the same year as Baldwin Brown retired as the Professor of Fine Art) and had died by the end of the year. Baldwin Brown died in the summer of 1932, outliving Geddes by just under three months. Regrettably, when the long-awaited Royal Commission volume on Edinburgh finally appeared in 1951, there was no mention of Baldwin Brown, Ross or Oldrieve in the main acknowledgements section.¹⁰¹ The present paper is intended therefore to shed some light on their efforts, together with those of Bruce Home and Councillor Dobie, to ensure that at least some domestic vernacular buildings survived Edinburgh's improvement programmes and continued to contribute to the Old Town's remarkable character and importance.

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NOTES

- 1 D.M. Walker, 'Listing in Scotland: Origins, Survey and Resurvey', *TAMS*, 38 (1994), 31-96.
- 2 D. Murray, *An Archaeological Survey of the United Kingdom* (Glasgow 1896).
- 3 See, for example, V.M. Welter, *Biopolis* (Cambridge, Mass., and London 2002); J. Johnson and L. Rosenberg, *Renewing Old Edinburgh* (Glendaruel 2010).
- 4 The Royal Scottish Academy, for example, felt that his preservation work was a distraction for a Professor of Fine Art. For more information on Baldwin Brown and his preservation activities, see Malcolm A. Cooper, 'Gerard Baldwin Brown, Edinburgh and the Care of Ancient Monuments', *The Historic Environment: Policy and Practice*, 4(2) (2013), 175-96.
- 5 Baldwin Brown was, for example, a committee member of Geddes's Edinburgh Social Union from 1888-1898 and was also closely involved in another Geddes initiative, the Franco-Scottish Society.
- 6 Ross is best known for the 5-volume study with David MacGibbon, *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1889-1892) and the 3-volume *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1896-1897). See *Dictionary of Scottish Architects*, http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=201067 (accessed 08.08.13)
- 7 Oldrieve was a pupil of Baldwin Brown's, 'winning the class medal and Cousin prize in the Architectural Section of the Fine Art Class at Edinburgh University'; see *Dictionary of Scottish Architects*, http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=200735 (accessed 08.08.13).
- 8 The architects Henry F. Kerr and Frank C. Mears were also highly active in seeking to preserve the Old Town but space precludes a detailed consideration here.
- 9 See, for example, W. Maitland, *A History of Edinburgh, from its Foundation to the Present Time* (Edinburgh 1753); H. Arnot, *The History of Edinburgh, From Earliest Accounts to the Present Time* (Edinburgh 1878).
- 10 R. Chambers, *Traditions of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1825), 2 vols; R. Chambers, *Walks in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1825); R. Chambers, *Reekiana: Minor Antiquities of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1833).
- 11 The paper was read before the Archaeological Institute in Edinburgh in 1856.
- 12 For example, John Britton, *Modern Athens, Displayed in a Series of Views or Edinburgh in the Nineteenth Century* (London 1829) and *Picturesque Views of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1825).
- 13 D. Wilson, *Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time* (Edinburgh 1848). This was originally published in serial form. A second edition was published in 1891.
- 14 The Dean of Guild had ruled that John Knox's House was in unsafe condition and in the summer of 1849 ordered it to be taken down.

- 15 *Letter to the Lord Provost on the Best Ways of Spoiling the Beauties of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1849).
- 16 Developed from 1760s onwards; see A.J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1966).
- 17 For an overview of Edinburgh's development, see B. Edwards and P. Jenkins (eds), *Edinburgh: The Making of a Capital City* (Edinburgh 2005) and the works cited therein.
- 18 These included controversial restoration works at St Giles.
- 19 Objectors to the removal of ancient buildings included Scott and his antiquarian friend, Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe.
- 20 See *The Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes*, vol.V, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index as to Scotland (London 1885), para.18,706. There is some evidence that the scheme architects, David Cousin and John Lessels, saw themselves following the process of 'isolément' by which important historic buildings were revealed by the clearance of surrounding buildings.
- 21 *The Scotsman*, 8 February 1878.
- 22 See P. Geddes, 'Civic Education and City Development', *The Contemporary Review*, 88 (1905) 413-26.
- 23 For a detailed description of Geddes and the 1893 scheme, see Johnson and Rosenberg *Renewing Old Edinburgh* (op.cit. in n.3).
- 24 At the opening of the Lady Stair House Museum by Lord Rosebery, attended amongst others by Baldwin Brown and Councillor Dobie, Rosebery made a gentle criticism of the level of restoration (undertaken by the architect, George Aitken); *The Scotsman*, 6 December 1913.
- 25 *The Scotsman*, 4 April 1902, letter written by 'Autochthon.'
- 26 G. Baldwin Brown, *From Schola to Cathedral* (Edinburgh 1886), sought to provide a broad history of early Christian architecture.
- 27 Baldwin Brown wanted, though, to move beyond Rickman's detailed descriptions of architectural features and to combine the architectural data with topographic, archaeological and historical information in order to allow a broader understanding of culture and society of that period. This was to lead to his 6-volume study, *The Arts in Early England* (London 1903-1937).
- 28 G. Baldwin Brown, *The Arts in Early England*, vol. 2: *Ecclesiastical Architecture in England from the Conversion of the Saxons to the Norman Conquest* (London 1903). His fieldwork took from 1891 until 1902. The 2nd edn (1925) was seen subsequently as the definitive work on the subject.
- 29 In *The Care of Ancient Monuments* (Cambridge 1905), for example, Baldwin Brown reviewed the history and practice of inventORIZATION in countries including France, Italy, Holland, Germany and Austria.
- 30 G. Baldwin Brown, 'Some Characteristics of Pre-Conquest Architecture', *Jnl of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 3rd ser., 2, (1895), 485-505. The paper was delivered at the Royal Institute of British Architects' Annual General Meeting on 20 May 1895.
- 31 Baldwin Brown was strongly influenced in his approach by German art theorists and cultural historians such as J. J. Winckelmann and, in particular, Gottfried Semper. There is no doubt that Baldwin Brown's wider knowledge and enthusiasm for German culture was a strong influence on his approach to preservation in Edinburgh.
- 32 He shared this belief with other architectural historians who were exploring Scotland's architectural traditions, including the key figures of David MacGibbon and Thomas Ross. While praising some of the replacement architecture in the Old Town, the irony of replacing authentic Scottish vernacular architecture with new buildings using a Scots Baronial idiom would not have been lost on Baldwin Brown.
- 33 Baldwin Brown was, however, drawn into heated discussions over proposed restoration projects at both sites. More generally he was somewhat sceptical of the Scots' sympathy for older buildings: see, for example, G. Baldwin Brown, 'Our Ancient Monuments and their Place in Modern Life', *Saint George*, (July 1906), 185-206.
- 34 He stood for election in the St. Giles Ward in 1890 but was defeated by 267 votes. One of his proposers was Patrick Geddes.
- 35 The last of these had held their annual conference in Edinburgh in 1889. Baldwin Brown had drawn their attention to the railway proposals and a local permanent committee of the National Association was created to oppose the schemes.
- 36 Edinburgh's amenity body, created in 1875. He was to be on their council for 31 years and their convener from 1913-20.
- 37 He had been its President from 1888-90.
- 38 Although not commonly recognised, he was appointed to the Council of the National Trust in 1896,

- probably due to the influence of his boyhood friend, Hardwicke Rawnsley, and was involved with a range of other organisations in England.
- 39 G. Baldwin Brown, *The Care of Historical Cities* (Edinburgh 1904).
- 40 G. Baldwin Brown, *The Care of Ancient Monuments* (Cambridge 1905).
- 41 These included Bailie W. Fraser Dobie, who was a strong supporter of Baldwin Brown and became a key figure in the council on matters relating to Old Edinburgh preservation and the town's museums. Tellingly, Dobie succeeded Baldwin Brown as convenor of the Cockburn Association.
- 42 *The Scotsman*, 14 July 1904.
- 43 *Ibid.*
- 44 Although unattributed, their content and style allows us to identify their author with confidence.
- 45 *The Scotsman*, 17 August 1904.
- 46 *The Scotsman*, 19 August 1904.
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 *The Times*, 1 November 1904. Baldwin Brown also published a letter in *The Times* on 27 December 1904 regarding the *Demolition of Ancient Monuments*, noting the recent appointment of a Royal Commission in Holland 'to make an inventory of all the historical and artistic monuments of the country'. His letter was prompted by the proposed demolition of one of the medieval town wall towers in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. A year previously Baldwin Brown had actively opposed proposals to demolish a stretch of the late 13th-century town wall at Berwick-upon-Tweed. He also discussed threats to early buildings in Dunfermline where the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust was reluctant to act on a report prepared by Patrick Geddes. A letter of support from Baldwin Brown's friend, Canon Hardwick Rawnsley, appeared in *The Times* on 5 January 1905.
- 49 It held an extremely popular exhibition of its work in Edinburgh, commencing on 3 December 1904. This included 359 photographs, 50 paintings and 107 engravings, prints and plans. Baldwin Brown was an enthusiastic photographer. He lectured to the Photographic Society on a range of topics and chaired at least one of their talks. He was present when the first completed portfolio of photographs was presented to the town council in 1914.
- 50 A 'bailie' was a local authority magistrate in Scotland.
- 51 Edinburgh Town Council, *Minute Books*, 29 November 1904.
- 52 *The Scotsman*, 26 January 1905.
- 53 It was no coincidence that this was highly reminiscent of that given by the Burgomaster of Hildesheim two years earlier. See *Trans of the Edinburgh Architectural Association*, 5 (1910), 49-58.
- 54 There seems little doubt that Baldwin Brown lay behind both the presentation and the proposed Advisory Committee and he continued to encourage the creation of such a committee.
- 55 *The Scotsman*, 16 February 1906.
- 56 *The Scotsman*, 14 June 1906.
- 57 Geddes was writing to Andrew Murray, who was amongst other things Secretary and Treasurer of the Cockburn Association; University of Strathclyde, Patrick Geddes Collection, T-GED 9/804.
- 58 The document was dated March 1908 and was a revision of a document produced by Home in 1902. Home was an accomplished artist of Old Edinburgh and Baldwin Brown was to write an introduction for a book of Home's drawings published in 1905/1907.
- 59 The phrases 'historic, antiquarian or architectural interest' and 'desirable to preserve' are significant for later organisations, legislation and guidance.
- 60 Edinburgh Town Council, *Minute Books*, 18 June 1908.
- 61 They key mover was the publisher and antiquarian, William Hay, who owned John Knox's House and was to publish, amongst others, Bruce Home's drawings of Old Edinburgh. Membership of the Club is a good indicator of those who were active in Edinburgh's preservation movement. Bruce Home, Baldwin Brown and Thomas Ross were all members of the first Council; Oldrieve, while not on the Council, was a founder member. Andrew Murray was one of the vice-presidents and was joined by Fraser Dobie in the Club's fourth year.
- 62 B.J. Home, 'Provisional List of Old Houses Remaining in High Street and Canongate of Edinburgh', *The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, 1 (1908), 1-30.
- 63 This was repeated by the President of the Club, Lord Rosebery, at the Club's annual meeting; his speech is reported at Appendix 1, 5-11, of *The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, 1 (1908).

- 64 *Edinburgh Evening News*, 29 March 1909.
- 65 He took the opportunity to defend the council's actions and to claim that Bruce Home 'had gone somewhat beyond what were the real facts'. See *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, 2 (1909), Appendix, 10-11.
- 66 Edinburgh Town Council, *Minute Book*, 20 December 1910.
- 67 Both Baldwin Brown and Councillor Dobie were Trustees. In December 1910, Baldwin Brown wrote to *The Times* as part of a fund-raising campaign. This was at a time when the Cockburn Association was close to collapse and proposals for its replacement by a National Trust organisation in Scotland were well advanced. Both Hardwick Rawnsley and Sir Robert Hunter appeared at a public meeting in Edinburgh with Baldwin Brown to provide support for the proposed new organisation, but the new Trust was not to progress at this time; *The Scotsman*, 27 October 1908.
- 68 As a result of the disruption of the First World War, the proposed use ultimately failed and it was subsequently turned over to residential usage.
- 69 In response to a proposal by Dobie in 1911, the town council contributed towards the purchase of Moubray House from its Common Good fund.
- 70 While the council had the services of its own architect and burgh engineer, these were understandably sympathetic to the broader health and improvement agenda and clearly lacked internal support for a less invasive approach.
- 71 Dobie's strategy was to argue that a group of expert advisors working formally with the council, and therefore with a greater understanding of their work, was preferable to the same group working against the council from the outside.
- 72 Edinburgh Town Council, *Minute Book*, 2 May 1911. The council's discussions were reported in *The Scotsman*, 3 May 1911.
- 73 The Scottish Secretary, Lord Pentland, had a copy of the 1905 book and met with Baldwin Brown to discuss his proposals for a national inventory organisation. The first meeting of the Scottish Commission was on 26 February 1908.
- 74 The Commissioners also included Sir Herbert Maxwell as Chairman, Lord Guthrie, Dr H. Bryce and F. C. Buchanan. However, it was the other three Commissioners, Baldwin Brown, Thomas Ross and William Oldrieve, who were particularly active, undertaking a range of casework.
- 75 19 October 1908.
- 76 RCAHMS *Minute Book*, 15 March 1909. Curle wrote to the councils on 7 April 1909 and also sought the permission of Edinburgh's Town Clerk to circulate copies of the Edinburgh list to the councils as an exemplar.
- 77 RCAHMS, *Letter Book*, 1919/30. Dobie responded that the Commission's request had been remitted to one of the council's committees. Interestingly, he asked Curle specifically to send him a copy of the Corporation of Glasgow's inventory (as an experienced municipal politician he no doubt felt that sight of the Glasgow inventory would encourage further progress in Edinburgh!).
- 78 RCAHMS, *Minute Book*, 23 November 1910.
- 79 David MacGibbon's son.
- 80 RCAHMS, *Letter Book*, 1910/103, 29 November 1910.
- 81 RCAHMS, *Letter Book*, 1911/16, 9 February 1911.
- 82 RCAHMS, *Minute Book*, 8 March 1911.
- 83 The Commission's Chairman, Lord Guthrie, pointed out that progress was still faster than achieved by the Welsh and English Commissions and indicated his intention to resign should matters not be resolved.
- 84 The bodies invited were: the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, the Cockburn Association, the Old Edinburgh Club, the Edinburgh Architectural Association, the Edinburgh Photographic Society, the Outlook Tower and Edinburgh town council. Baldwin Brown was closely involved in each of these organisations.
- 85 In September 1911 M. Headrick at the Commission sent Baldwin Brown drafts of two 'schedules' or forms that were intended to be used to gather the information. The first was to be used for 'old houses' and the second for monuments and memorials other than buildings; RCAHMS, *Letter Book*, 1911/113, 22 September 1911.
- 86 Minutes of the Plans and Works Committee, 26 October 1911.
- 87 There is a reference in a letter from the Commission to the Under-Secretary for Scotland in November 1912, noting that 'The Inventory of ancient monuments in the City of Edinburgh is being undertaken

- by one of the Commissioners'; RCAHMS, *Letter Book*, 1912/160, 22 November 1912. This seems most likely to be a reference to Baldwin Brown, although it is clear that Thomas Ross, William Oldrieve and Baldwin Brown all continued to work together on Old Edinburgh. In 1916 the work of the Commission was suspended due to the War and the staff redeployed.
- 88 There is something of an irony here in that there is evidence to suggest that in bringing forward the 1913 Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendment Act – which brought the Ancient Monuments Boards into being – Charles Peers and Schomberg McDonnell took careful steps to ensure that occupied domestic buildings were excluded from the legislation. The resulting lack of locus allowed the town council in Edinburgh to ignore the advice of the Ministry of Works and the Ancient Monuments Board with regard to the Grassmarket proposals.
- 89 Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland, *Minute Book*, 29 April 1919. They continued to involve themselves in Old Edinburgh with periodic meetings with the town council, and the Town Clerk was instructed to seek the Board's approval of their proposals for 74-82 Grassmarket and Candlemaker Row; see Housing and Planning Committee Minutes, 15 June 1925.
- 90 Edinburgh Town Council, *Minute Book*, 15 June 1921.
- 91 The town council discussions refer to the Old Edinburgh Club and the Cockburn Association's Memorial but also mentions a statement by Baldwin Brown; *The Scotsman*, 15 January 1920. By the 1923 General Meeting of the Club, the Lord Provost was able to report that the council were seeking to preserve the external appearance of the old buildings with which they were dealing.
- 92 Patrick Geddes's son-in-law, Frank Mears, was also closely involved in this process. He was by then on the Council of the Cockburn Association alongside Baldwin Brown and Ross. It was under the convenorship of Fraser Dobie at that time. For a copy of the memorial and list, see *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, 11 (1922), Appendix, 5-7.
- 93 They also suggested subsequently that the Corporation should obtain the benefit of the advice and assistance of citizens with expert or other special qualifications and experience in connection with a regional survey of the city, town planning, and city development generally, and with a view to this an Advisory Committee should be formed; Edinburgh City Council, *Minute Book*, 1 February 1923.
- 94 Cockburn Association, *Minute Book*, 4 December 1922.
- 95 The Tailors' Hall, Cowgate, *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, 11 (1922), 125-72. The third author, Forbes Gray, was also an Old Edinburgh Club member. Ross and Baldwin Brown had previously written an article on the Magdalen Chapel, also situated on the Cowgate, in *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, 8 (1915), 1-78. Both articles were intended to be included in the Royal Commission survey of Edinburgh.
- 96 A.L. MacGibbon had died by then and was succeeded by George P.H. Watson. The Commission's records suggest that Watson gathered information from a number of building owners over this period.
- 97 Not all were convinced. During the council's discussion of the repair costs, Councillor Baxter stated his strong disapproval of the proposed works: 'this was pure sentiment. He had never seen a house in the Canongate worth preserving for any reason whatever'; *The Scotsman*, 12 October 1923.
- 98 See *Dictionary of Scottish Architects*, http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=200699 (accessed 08.08.13). Macrae studied under Baldwin Brown in 1901-02.
- 99 There is an entry in the Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland *Minute Book* for 24 May 1929 which records that the council 'on various pretexts' declined to put into effect the recommendations of the Ministry of Works regarding 74-82 Grassmarket. For a broader, and overly positive, assessment of this building reconstruction and other cases, see Robert Hurd, 'Clearing the Slums of Edinburgh', *The Architect's Jnl* (26 March 1930), 491-94 and (2 April 1930), 542-45. Baldwin Brown raised his concerns over the council's regulations on ceiling heights at the Royal Commissioners' meeting on 8 January 1929.
- 100 Job description, Edinburgh City Council, *Minute Book*, 5 March 1925.
- 101 RCAHMS, *An Inventory of the Ancient and Historical Monuments of the City of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh 1951). The discussion on the rediscovery of David's Tower on page 15 mentions that: 'In 1912 Professor Baldwin Brown, Dr. Thomas Ross and Mr Oldrieve, three members of this Commission to whom had been delegated the survey of the historical buildings of Edinburgh ...'. Ross and Baldwin Brown's work on the Tailors' Hall and Magdalen Chapel was also identified within the specific building entries.