



Around the West End of Edinburgh



A Geoheritage walk in Edinburgh



Lothian and
Borders
Geoconservation



Building Stones of the New Town of Edinburgh:

West End, Charlotte Square and George Street (West)

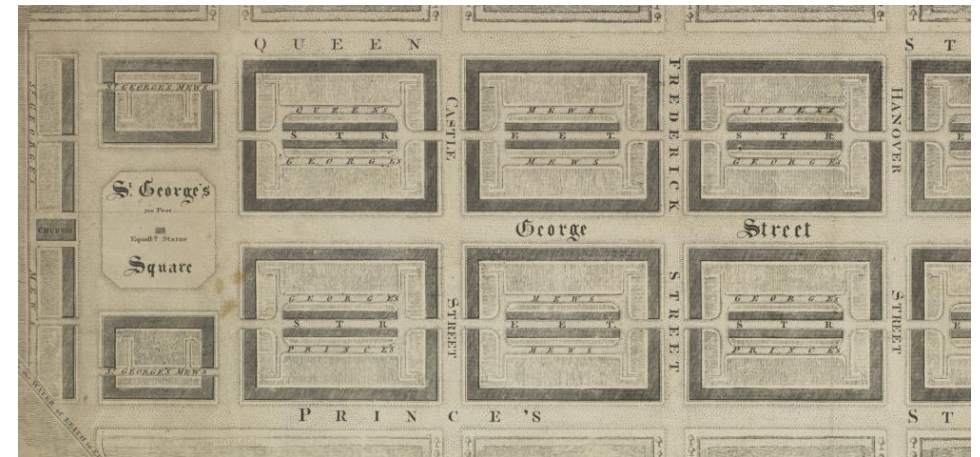
The walk enables us to see the geology preserved in the largely sandstone masonry of a selection of neoclassical buildings and monuments in the western part of Edinburgh's First New Town constructed in the late 18th and early 19th century. Imported igneous and metamorphic rock types employed in more recent architecture also feature. Designed by some of Scotland's and the world's most famous architects the buildings have a fascinating story to tell about the use of stone in the built environment.

Edinburgh's dramatic landscape owes much to the varied nature of the underlying geology and the geological processes that operated in the past. The rocks were formed some 360 to 300 million years ago, during the Carboniferous period. Hard volcanic rocks stand up as steep hills (e.g. Arthur's Seat, Calton Hill and the Castle Rock) while the softer sedimentary rocks such as sandstone, siltstone and mudstone have been largely worn down to form lower ground. During their deposition, the land we call eastern Scotland today was occupied mainly by river deltas depositing great thicknesses of sands and muds. Since Carboniferous time, over millions of years, the land has been eroded by long-gone rivers and repeated weathering. During the Ice Age, which lasted from over 2 million years ago to about 15 thousand years ago, an ice-sheet over 1km in thickness moved slowly from west to east, covering the Edinburgh area on several occasions and preferentially eroding the softer rocks. This produced a series of west to east trending ridges and valleys which can be seen today.

The western part of the First New Town is underlain by interbedded early Carboniferous sedimentary rocks belonging to the Gullane Formation. These strata have from time to time been exposed in temporary excavations. Sections of drains excavated in Frederick Street and Castle Street were first recorded in the 1780s by John Clerk of Eldin whose extensive collection of geological drawings were prepared to illustrate James Hutton's groundbreaking late eighteenth century *Theory of the Earth*.

In 1750 the land lying to the north of today's Princes Street Gardens (formerly a swampy lake called the North Loch) consisted of open fields, known as Bearford's (originally Barefoot's) Parks which culminated in a low ridge known as the Lang Dykes. George Street now runs atop this ridge. To relieve the overcrowded small town of Edinburgh (the Old Town) occupying the ridge descending from the Castle to Holyrood Palace, a pamphlet entitled

Proposals for carrying on certain Public Works in the City of Edinburgh was published in 1752. These ambitious proposals included the expansion of Edinburgh to develop a New Town (now part of the UNESCO Edinburgh World Heritage Site) on Bearford's Parks. James Craig's Plan, adopted by the Town Council in 1767, detailed the development of a series of parallel streets, the major thoroughfares being named from south to north as Princes Street, George Street and Queen Street. Charlotte Square (originally proposed as St George's Square) and St Andrew Square were designed at either end of George Street.



Leasing of land (feuing) for house-building generally developed westwards from St Andrew Square. In Hanover Street the first feu was taken in 1784, followed by Frederick Street in 1786 and Castle Street in 1792. The bounding streets - George Street to the north and Princes Street to the south - were built up correspondingly. In these streets only a few of the earliest houses and public buildings remain unaltered. Redevelopment or new build during the 19th and 20th centuries has introduced many contemporary and varied architectural styles as well as a wide variety of local and far-travelled building stone. Charlotte Square is an exception. The celebrated architect Robert Adam was commissioned by the Town Council to design Charlotte Square. He made his design in 1791, a year before his death. By the end of the 18th century only the nine houses on the north side of the square had been built. The remaining sides were constructed in the early 19th century. All of the original houses in Charlotte Square, described as 'one of the major achievements in European civic architecture of the period', remain today.



Charlotte Sq. (north side)

Much, but not all, of the early Carboniferous very fine-grained, durable blonde sandstone for these houses came from quarries at Craigleith, Craigmock and Ravelston, west of Edinburgh. The predominant load-bearing building material of the early New Town buildings is Carboniferous sandstone almost all of which is of fluvial origin.

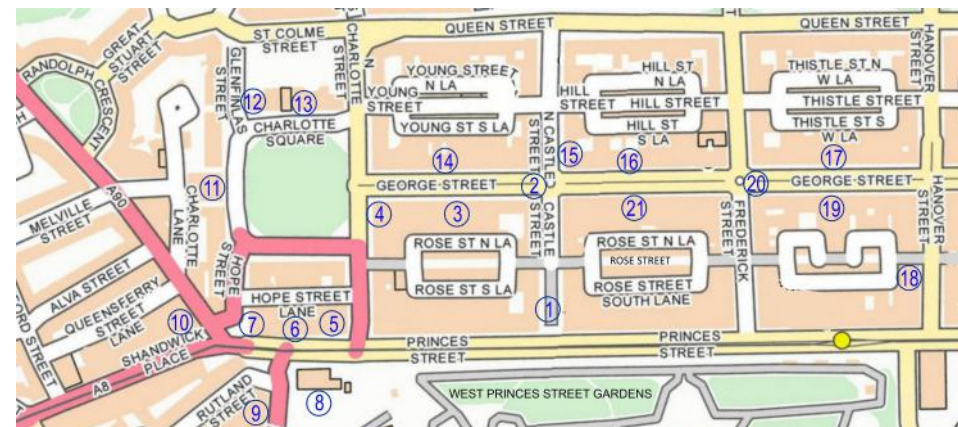
For some of the earliest buildings sandstones were worked locally in small quarries located near the present Waverley Station and in East Princes Street Gardens. As building material requirements rapidly increased during the 19th century Carboniferous sandstone from Craigleith and many other Edinburgh sources were used as well as from farther afield including West Lothian, Stirlingshire and the north of England. Permian to Triassic red sandstone, formed in desert dune environments, from Dumfriesshire started to be employed in the last decades of the 19th century. Igneous rocks capable of taking a fine polish, although of secondary importance in Edinburgh, make their appearance in buildings from the late 19th century. In particular granite sourced from Aberdeenshire, Galloway and Cumbria was the preferred building material of some prestigious institutions.



Corrennie and Peterhead Granites, Aberdeenshire (detail)

The buildings chosen in the itinerary display additional rock types, many of which have been used as cladding (thin panels) for shop fronts. These can be considered as 'geological wallpaper'. Obtained from other parts of Britain and overseas, they include sedimentary rocks (e.g. limestone), igneous rocks (e.g. polished granite, gabbro, diorite, and blue syenite), and metamorphic rocks (e.g. slate, serpentinite and marble).

Itinerary map



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1 Castle Street

We begin the walk with a fine view to the south of the crag of Castle Rock. The rock is basalt, a hard, finely crystalline igneous rock formed some 350 million years ago. Subsequent erosion of the surrounding softer sedimentary rocks, most recently by glacial action, has left the crag towering above Princes Street Gardens. Construction of houses in Castle Street began in 1792 and several of the original sandstone-constructed buildings survive.

In 1804 the designer of the Second New Town (north of Queen Street) Robert Reid lived at 10 Castle Street. The builder William Sibbald also lived in this street [at '29 South Castle Street'], and James Gillespie Graham's offices were at No.15. Modern stone cladding can be seen on shop fronts, for example a pale yellow shelly limestone of unknown origin at No.7, above and next door to the Vodafone shop, and a polished Norwegian larvikite (a distinctive coarse-grained

syenite – an igneous rock with feldspar crystals which exhibit a blue-grey iridescence) at No.13, Costa Coffee.

Grey Caithness flagstones (fine-grained laminated sandstones laid down in lakes of the Devonian Period) and foreign granite setts (possibly Portuguese) and street furniture have been employed in the pedestrianised part of Castle Street.

The geology of Castle Street was elegantly portrayed by John Clerk of Eldin who drew a geological cross section of a drain on E side of street between 1786 and 1788. The section shows thin glacial clay overlying faulted (the faults being described as 'slips' or 'dykes'), interbedded sandstone, limestone, ironstone and shale (mudstone).



The Castle from Castle St.

The strata generally dip northwards but are folded about a gentle anticline to dip southwards at the south end of the section.



2 Statue of Thomas Chalmers

(1869-78, Sir John Steell), Bronze on a pedestal of pink Peterhead granite. View from pavement, do not attempt to cross over to the roundabout (Peterhead Granite can be seen close up at locality 5).



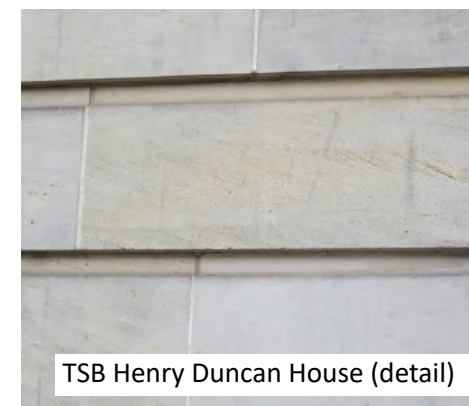
Statue of Thomas Chalmers

3 George Street (South side) from Castle Street to Charlotte Square: No.106 Isio (with modern shop front on the ground floor), Nos. 108-112 and 120-124 are all early 1790s sandstone-constructed buildings with Corinthian pilasters. The pale yellow to blonde sandstone has prominent brown iron nodules. The masonry has been mechanically cleaned resulting in the stone faces exhibiting a randomly chiselled pattern.



120 George St.

A smooth 'polished' facing is reserved for the window surrounds. No 112 (1790, James Hill for Alexander Porteous) has an architrave doorpiece with original fanlight. Nos 114 to 116 (1963, Morris & Steedman), also in sandstone, are modern reinterpretations of Georgian architecture. Nos.120-124,TSB Henry Duncan House, former Tontine Building (1792, James Nisbet) was recently (1986) faced with Dunmore Sandstone (Upper Carboniferous) from Stirlingshire.



TSB Henry Duncan House (detail)

In common with many excavated basements the sandstone masonry has a rock-faced finish. The upper floors of No. 128, fronted by the Alexander Graham Bell pub (1978, originally part of R Seifert's office development), is built of blonde sandstone with a horizontal broached finish. This was once the home of Sir James Hall (1761-1832), friend of James Hutton and Father of Experimental Geology.



128 George St.

4 The west end of George

Street provides a first view of Charlotte Square (for detail see localities 11 and 13) elegantly and uniformly designed in 1791 by Robert Adam (d.1792) with modification by several other architects and builders. The only late 18th century houses occupy the north side of the square, the remainder of the square being built in the first two decades of the 19th century. James Craig's Plan of 1767 indicated it should be called

St George's Square but the name was changed to avoid confusion with George Square in the South Side of Edinburgh. In the centre of the garden is John Steell's equestrian statue (1868-76) of Prince Albert in bronze on a pedestal of pink Peterhead Granite with relief panels of groups of figures by several sculptors. The early 19th century corner block of George Street and Charlotte Square (Nos 39 and 38 (Kimpton Charlotte Square Hotel, formerly the Roxburgh Hotel) and, to the south, Nos. 33-37 are mainly the design of Robert Reid, with modifications. The large number of 20th century repair indents in sandstone, particularly around windows, are picked out by their cleaner yellowish appearance.



33-37 Charlotte Sq

5 Charlotte House, on the corner of South Charlotte Street and Princes Street, was built in three instalments for the bakers McVittie Guest (1903, T Duncan Rhind of Hamilton Paterson &

Rhind, 1924 corner by J D Cairns, 1935 N extension by Cairns & Ford). Nos.135-136 Princes Street, including Pret A Manger and No.6 South Charlotte Street, Bank of Nova Scotia, are faced with pink Peterhead Granite (a post-tectonic granite of the Grampian Highlands dated to c. 406 million years old. Notice the latter contains small xenoliths (fragments) of a grey granite (Forest of Deer Granite) which were incorporated into the younger granite. The frame of the entrance to No.6 is of Cippolino Verde marble, sourced in Greece. Viewed through a window to the right of the entrance is an interior stair made of travertine, a hard, compact limestone deposited from solution by springs.



Charlotte House

The western extension of the building on Princes Street together with No. 4 South Charlotte Street, Shandwick's,

are faced with coarse-grained, orange-pink Corrennie Granite from near Alford, a late-tectonic granite older than the Peterhead Granite.



Bank of Nova Scotia

6 No.141 Princes Street, Tesco Express (1926, H O Tarbolton of Dick, Peddie & Walker Todd) has an Art Deco design, unique on Princes Street, with an Aberdeen style frontage with ashlar, piers and pediment of silver grey Kemnay Granite (with a mineral foliation), west of Aberdeen.

This is a 'Late Tectonic' granite, emplaced some 470-475 million years ago. The black entrance columns, thought to be from Rustenburg, South Africa, are of 2 billion year old polished gabbro (trade name 'Bon Accord') of the Bushveld Igneous Complex.



Tesco Express

7 No.145 Princes Street and No.1 Hope Street

Johnnie Walker (an Art Deco building which was formerly the department store of successively Binns and then Frasers; 1935, R Mackay) is clad in black 'Bon Accord' gabbro from Rustenburg, South Africa.

Around the corner, No.3 Hope Street is built of Middle Coal Measures (Upper Carboniferous) sandstone from Heworthburn, Tyne & Wear on a silver-grey Dalbeattie Granite (Galloway) (397 million years old) base course. A chiselled angled droved finish was applied to the sandstone masonry.



Johnnie Walker



3 Hope Street (detail)

8 St John's Church (1815-18; William Burn) at the foot of Lothian Road, West End, Princes Street (see cover plate) employed early Carboniferous Redhall Sandstone, quarried close to the Water of Leith at Slateford. Late Carboniferous sandstone from Stainton Quarry, County Durham, was used for repair work. Ronnie Rae's *Mark of the Nail* sculpture (1986) in silver-grey Kemnay Granite sits outside the church.



St John's Church



Mark of the Nail

9 The Waldorf Astoria

Edinburgh – the Caledonian Hotel (1899-1903, J M Dick Peddie and G Washington Browne), at the West End, Princes Street, incorporates three arches and monolithic Corinthian columns of the former Caledonian Railway station entrance (1890-3, Kinnear & Peddie). The hotel is constructed of Permian red desert dune-bedded sandstone quarried from Corncockle, Lochmaben and Locharbriggs, Dumfriesshire.



Waldorf Astoria

10 Greggs, Queensferry Street corner with Nos.2-4 Shandwick Place (former Commercial Bank with Caledonian United Services Club above) (1901, Sydney Mitchell & Wilson). Sandstone masonry was used for the walls of the upper elevations but the ground floor was redesigned in Shap Granite, Cumbria, by Tarbolton & Ochterlony in 1938-40. This pink granite, distinguished by its large tabular potassium feldspar phenocrysts, was formed between 404 to 394 million years ago. Recent dating research on microscopic zircon crystals indicate that the granite cooled from a melt over a period of some 20 million years. The Shap Granite can be compared with Peterhead Granite used for the ground floor of No.3 Shandwick Place. Above the entrance to the former Caledonian United Services Club (now International Backpackers' Hostel) crests of Army, Navy and Royal Air Force are carved in Shap Granite.



Shap Granite (detail)

11 Charlotte Square (West side) like many buildings in the square West Register House, formerly St George's Church (1811-14, Robert Reid) was constructed of Craigleith Sandstone, a compact, highly siliceous sandstone.



Register House



Register House column

Other notable buildings on the west side in Craigleith stone include No.14 where Henry Cockburn lived from 1813-48 and No.13, owned for a time by the builder William Sibbald. Typical of many contemporary early 19th century New Town houses, they had rock-faced basement levels and V-rusticated polished ashlar on the first floor. Subsequent storeys often displayed a horizontally chiselled broached finish.



14 Charlotte Sq., Henry Cockburn's house

12 On the east side of **Glenfinlas Street**, to the north of Charlotte Square, there is an example of a horonised pavement composed of dolerite slivers (not in the best state of repair).



Glenfinlas St., horonised pavement

13 Charlotte Square (North side): here, the oldest buildings of the Square were built between 1794-98 in Craigleith Sandstone according to Robert Adam's design. By 1800 only two-thirds of the north side had been constructed. Later, the Town Council authorised a relaxation of stone specification for building the remainder of this side and for other parts of the Square. After 1807 good quality Edinburgh stone from several quarries including Redhall, Craigleith, Craigcrook and Ravelston were permitted to be used. Carriage stones and much of the pavement stone on the north side is original. The sandstone was obtained from Hailes on the south side of Edinburgh (early Carboniferous) and Arbroath (early Devonian).



Ripple marks in sandstone

Bedding planes on some pavement stones exhibit current ripples.



Pavement, Charlotte Sq. (north side)

14 George Street (North side) between Charlotte Square and Castle Street, Nos.127-141 are original sandstone-built houses of c.1790 with modified ground floors built out much later. Nos.141-143 Las Iguanas with pale yellow sandstone cladding,

No.135 Gusto with cladding of blonde sandstone or is it marble?, No.133 Clarence House with a red Finnish 'Balmoral' granite entrance step and a pale yellowish, coarse-grained 'Angola Red'? granite base course which it shares with No.135 (Brown's). Nos.127-129, Eden Locke, were restored by Robert Hurd in 1973-74.



133 George St. (detail)

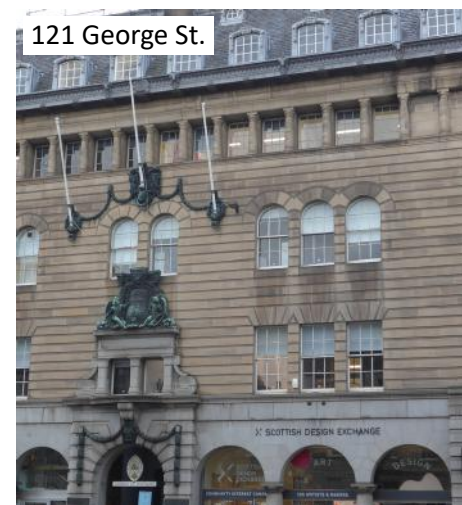
No.125, Tigerlily, is the best intact Georgian house-front in the street, with an original fanlight in the arch of its Palladian style doorway. No.123, Hadeel (formerly occupied by the Scottish Amicable and Scottish American Investment Company, 1880, Peddie & Kinnear) has a tall classical, square and prosaic frontage. Nos.117-119, Anta and Scottish Design Exchange, No.121, Church of Scotland Offices (1909-11, Sydney Mitchell & Wilson; 1932 East Bay, Auldjo Jamieson & Arnott, following the

union of United Free Church and the Church of Scotland in 1929): ground floor triple arcades resting on Greek Doric columns of white coarse-grained granite possibly from Dalbeattie and/or more likely, judging by the presence of igneous xenoliths, from Clinterty, Aberdeen. Xenoliths are fragments of pre-existing rock incorporated into the once molten igneous rock.



Xenolith in granite, 121 George St (detail)

The doorway, in granite, is crowned with a bronze sculpture of a great



121 George St.

burning bush; the upper walls of channelled masonry in sandstone, unspecified, with Roman Doric eaves in the gallery above. No.115, occupied by several businesses, is the only survivor of a trio built c.1790. Notice the channelled blonde sandstone masonry with fluted Corinthian pilasters above. No.111, Slug & Lettuce, is thought to be a 19th century building, constructed of pale yellow sandstone with horizontal broaching. No.109, NatWest on ground floor, is clad in pale yellow sandstone showing efflorescence near the pavement.

15 On the east side of **North Castle Street** the late 18th century ensemble of houses is virtually unaltered except for south-east corner where the original house at No.107 George Street was replaced by a yellow sandstone-clad office (ESPC, former Royal Insurance, 1969, Dick Peddie & McKay). Of the six remaining double-bow fronts in blonde sandstone, thought to be Craigleith Sandstone, Nos.39-43 have a pedimented Corinthian centrepiece (1793, Robert Wright and James McKain). Sir Walter Scott lived at No.39 from 1802-26.



Stainton sandstone (1998). Some of the original masonry is suffering from salt efflorescence.



Sandstone replacement, Contini (detail)

In 1975 the former Bank buildings at Nos.97-99 were re-developed with a smooth 'Georgian' house front by Robert Hurd & Partners and further restoration was effected in 1980 with Permian coastal dune sandstone from Clashach Quarry, near Elgin. No.93, J O Malone (re-fronted and reconstructed in 1833, Thomas Hamilton for grocer Andrew Melrose; in 1980-2 Robert Hurd & Partners restored part of his design, reproducing first floor veranda with slim iron pillars). No. 91, Strathmore, Quantum House, late 18th century, with Victorian railings and lamp standard, (notice the horizontal broaching is like that on the New Town Church, 13 George Street). No.89, White Stuff, formerly Grays Ltd. (1902, Harry Ramsay Taylor of Cousin Ormiston & Taylor) has Peterhead Granite with grey xenoliths of Forest of Deer Granite, forming the shop surround with unspecified sandstone.

16 George Street (North side) from Castle Street to Frederick Street Nos.101-103, Contini (formerly Bank of Scotland, 1883-5, J M Dick Peddie) of a thinly bedded yellowish grey sandstone from Hermand Quarry, West Lothian; outside the entrance to No.101 there are repair indents of



No.87, Hamilton & Inches the shop front marble decoration is Breccia Capraia Marble from the Apuan Alps in Tuscany, Italy.



No.83, Virgin Money, formerly ESPC (1901, Hamilton, Paterson & Rhind) to be from Dumfriesshire. Here, in 1990, repairs were carried out using Permian sandstone from the Newton Quarry at Gatelawbridge, Dumfries & Galloway. No. 75, Cass Art, and No.73, formerly the Bank of Scotland, with silver grey granite panels, is a late development of a Georgian house (1974, George Walls and Partners). No.71, the corner block of the former Gresham House (1908, T P Marwick), an Edwardian Baroque fantasy with its octagonal tower, is built of yellowish sandstone, probably from the north of England.



17 George Street (North side) from Frederick Street to Hanover Street. No.65, currently to let, (Jack Wills) (1907-8, J N Scott and A Lorne Campbell) is built of a Northumberland early Carboniferous sandstone from Doddington, Wooler.



65 George St.

No.47 was raised and refaced in 1830-1, with the ground floor extended by John Bryce in 1880. It has Corinthian columns and a travertine floor. Nos.43-45 were refaced and heightened by Thomas Hamilton for William Blackwood 1829. No.43, Fairhurst, with Corinthian colonnade by A W Macnaughton (1897), displays a micaceous pale yellow sandstone. No.45, L K Bennett (currently vacant) was refaced in 1974 using early Carboniferous sandstone from Darney

Quarry, West Woodburn, Northumberland. The Ionic ground floor colonnade is in urgent need of repair.



45 George St. (detail)

18 The symmetrical front of **The Merchants Hall**, 22 Hanover Street (1865-6, David Bryce Jun.) with its canted bay-windows and replacement coupled Corinthian columns of the doorway (1959, L Grahame MacDougall) employed the Bishopbriggs Sandstone (Late Carboniferous) from Dullatur Quarry near Kilsyth, Stirlingshire.

The building was finished in 1901 (T P Marwick) using Early Carboniferous cream-coloured, micaceous sandstone from Prudham Quarry, near Hexham, Northumberland.



22 Hanover St., Merchants Hall

19 George Street (South side) from Hanover Street to Frederick Street Nos.40-42, Ardmore House, formerly Trotters Opticians, was faced in 1984 with sandstone from Stainton. The shop front 'Ionic' columns display a play on the "I" (eye) to depict spectacles. Nos.52-54, Assembly Rooms and Music Hall (1787, John

52-54 George St, Assembly Rooms



Henderson; 1818 portico added by William Burn who was responsible with David Bryce for Music Hall of 1843 behind; ballroom apse built out into portico in 1865; R Rowand Anderson and A F Balfour Paul bridged the side lanes with pend arches in 1906-7) The original masonry is of both fine-grained and coarse-grained bedded sandstone of local origin, the fine-grained stone probably from Craigleith. There are good examples of dewatering structures where the bedding is contorted. The later arches are probably in a north of England sandstone. Indent repairs to the original masonry are obvious owing to the newer stone being unbedded and of a different colour.



Assembly Rooms (detail)

Nos.62-66, The Standing Order (former the Bank of Scotland, 1874-5, David & John Bryce) built of early Carboniferous light grey, slightly micaceous Binny Sandstone from Dalmeny, West Lothian; The pilasters are of polished Peterhead Granite.

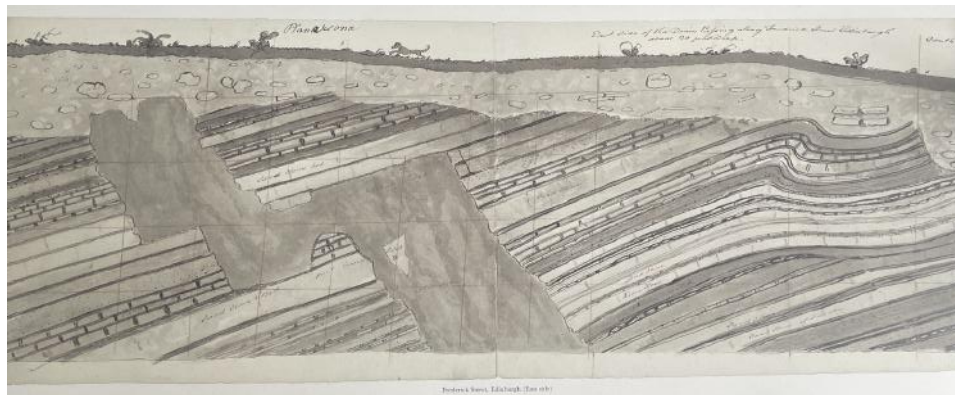


62-66 George St., The Standing Order

Nos.68-70, French Connection (former Sun Alliance Office, 1955, T W Marwick) is faced with early Carboniferous buff, micaceous sandstone from Blaxter Quarry, Otterburn, Northumberland. The base course is of black 'Bon Accord' gabbro.



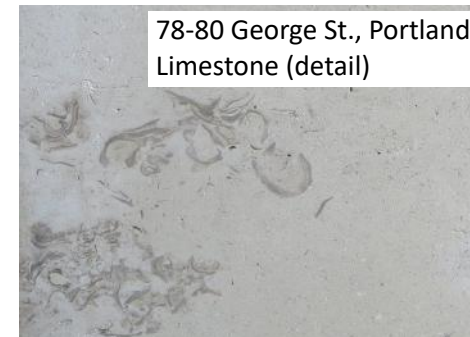
Statue of Sir William Pitt



John Clerk of Eldin's geological cross section of E side of a drain in Frederick Street was drawn in 1785. The drain was about 20 feet deep. The section shows N-dipping interbedded sandstone, shale ('schistus' or slate), limestone (Gullane Formation, Early Carboniferous) cut by a whin (basalt) dyke. A fragment of sandstone is shown caught up in basalt.

20 Statue of Sir William Pitt (1831-33, Sir Francis Chantrey) is in Bronze on a pedestal of Craigleith Sandstone. View from pavement, do not attempt to cross over to the roundabout.

21 George Street (South side) from Frederick Street to Castle Street Nos.78-80, WeWork, Hollister, Amor Cashmere, are being refurbished. The ground floor facing includes a pale shelly limestone from Portland (South of England) and tuff 'Slate' likely to be from the Borrowdale Volcanic Group of the Lake District.



78-80 George St., Portland Limestone (detail)

Tuff 'slate' also forms floor of entrances to these shops. No. 80, former Professional & Civil Service Supply Association, (1903-5, John James Burnet) with The Four Seasons

sculptures in sandstone (from left to right Spring to Winter represented by women) (attributed to William Rhind) high above. Nos.82-84, Commissioners of the Northern Light are two late 18th century houses which were reconstructed into one in 1973 by Rowand Anderson, Kininmonth & Paul. The sandstone-constructed façade which is mainly original, displays horizontal broaching. The Ionic sandstone columns have been cleaned.



82-84 George St.

No.96, Freemasons Hall (1910-12, A Hunter Crawford) which replaced an earlier 19th century building, is built of early Carboniferous sandstone from Black Pasture Quarry, Hexham, Northumberland; the statue of St Andrew (1912, Henry Gamley) is of sandstone from another Northumberland quarry at Pasturehill; Kemnay Granite forms the base course and steps.



96 George St., Freemasons Hall



Freemasons Hall (detail)

Nos. 100, Slater Menswear, No.102, Fazenda Rodizio and No.104 (former Victor Hugo Deli) (former Pearl Assurance Building, 1924-25, Alfred G Lochhead, with modifications in 1937-8 by Basil Spence) is clad in yellow sandstone. A polished black gabbro, possibly South African, forms the base course on the Castle Street side.



104 George St.

Location & facilities Based on the 1767 New Town Plan by James Craig, West End of the First New Town of the City of Edinburgh includes the iconic and relatively unchanged Charlotte Square. On-street car parking in West End streets is very limited. There are many local bus routes in Princes Street. Edinburgh Trams operate through Princes Street. The nearest public toilets are situated down the steps into Princes Street Gardens.

Safety The walk described in this booklet follows pavements and paths that may be uneven in places and busy through much of the year. The itinerary necessitates crossing a few busy city streets. The statues and their pediments (Localities 2 and 20) situated on mini roundabouts are best viewed from surrounding pavements. Do not attempt to cross over to the roundabouts.

Access and conservation The itinerary falls entirely within the UNESCO Edinburgh World Heritage Site. For further information about Edinburgh World Heritage and the city's history and culture visit <https://ewh.org.uk/>. Maps and trails are available from this website as free downloads. Details of Listed Buildings and Monuments in Charlotte Square and George Street are available on the Trove website <https://trove.scot/> and the British Listed Buildings website <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/>. Charlotte Square Garden is privately owned, only accessible to its owners (surrounding residents and businesses). There are no geological exposures. Although the itinerary follows a normally accessible route reference to buildings, property or land does not imply any public right of access.

Find out more about Edinburgh's geology This booklet is one of more than 20 geology and landscape publications about local sites available from Lothian and Borders GeoConservation as free downloads from <https://www.edinburghgeolsoc.org/publications/geoconservation-leaflets/>. A complementary booklet Around St Andrew Square, describing building stone of the east end of the first New Town, was published in 2025. Books including Lothian Geology and Building Stones of Edinburgh give more detail and are available from the Edinburgh Geological Society at <https://www.edinburghgeolsoc.org/publications/>.

Acknowledgements Written by Andrew McMillan and members of Lothian and Borders GeoConservation. Images: Andrew McMillan, Mike Browne. Designed by Barry Tymon. We are grateful to the late Professor Gordon Walkden, University of Aberdeen, for information on the sources of granite used in several of the buildings. We thank Sir Robert Clerk of Penicuik for permission to reproduce the two drawings by John Clerk of Eldin. The cover illustration is of Edinburgh from the West End of Princes Street, 1824. Aquatint by T. Sutherland after J Gendall. Extract of James Craig's Plan of the New Town, Edinburgh by Patrick Begbie (1768) sourced from the National Galleries of Scotland website <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/63266/james-craigs-plan-new-town-edinburgh>.

Produced by Lothian and Borders GeoConservation, a committee of the Edinburgh Geological Society, a charity registered in Scotland Charity No: SC008011.

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An example of rock-faced and rusticated polished Craigleith Sandstone

Writing about the City of Edinburgh R L Stevenson commented that “this dream in masonry and living rock, is not a drop-scene in a theatre, but a city in the world of everyday reality...’. Take some time out with this booklet to discover more. Explore the sources and geology of building stones used from the 18th century in the West End of Edinburgh’s First New Town.