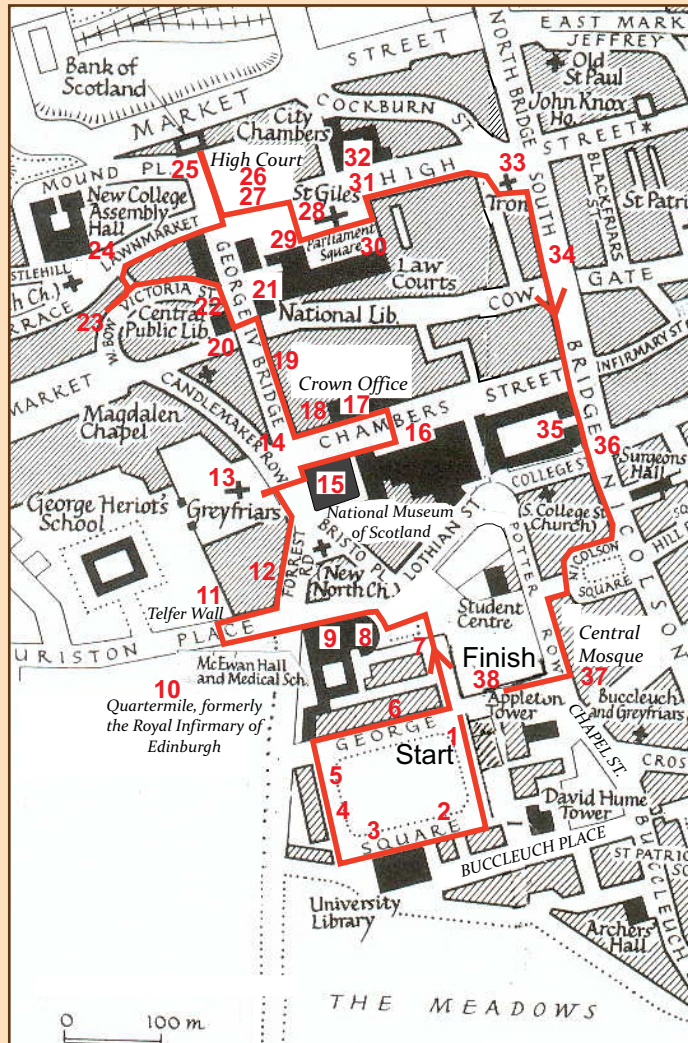


The route



Building Stones of Edinburgh's South Side

This tour takes the form of a circular walk from George Square northwards along George IV Bridge to the High Street of the Old Town, returning by South Bridge and Chambers Street and Nicolson Street. Most of the itinerary lies within the Edinburgh World Heritage Site.

The recommended route along pavements is shown in red on the diagram overleaf. Edinburgh traffic can be very busy, so TAKE CARE; cross where possible at traffic light controlled crossings. Public toilets are located in Nicolson Square near start and end of walk. The walk begins at NE corner of George Square (Route Map locality 1).

Further Reading

McMillan, A A, Gillanders, R J and Fairhurst, J A. 1999 Building Stones of Edinburgh. 2nd Edition. Edinburgh Geological Society.
Lothian & Borders GeoConservation leaflets including Calton Hill, and Craigleith Quarry (http://www.edinburghgeolsoc.org/r_download.html)

Acknowledgements.

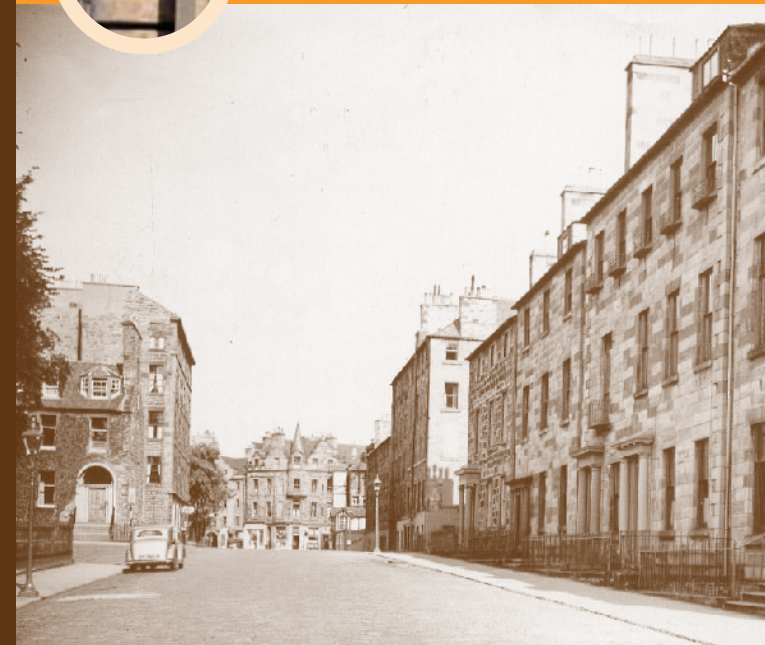
Text: Andrew McMillan and Richard Gillanders with contributions from David McAdam and Alex Stark.

Map adapted with permission from The Buildings of Scotland: Edinburgh (Pevsner Architectural Guides, Yale University Press), by J. Gifford, C. McWilliam and D. Walker) Front photograph of George Square in the 1950s courtesy of Agnes Barr. Other photographs © Andrew A McMillan.

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Building Stones of Edinburgh's South Side



A walking tour



Lothian and
Borders
GeoConservation



Introduction

Local sources of Carboniferous (359-299 million years old) sandstone, for example from Craigmillar, Craigleith, Ravelston and Hailes quarries, provided builders, masons and architects with the excellent raw material that was used over several centuries. During the latter part of the 19th century, as local supplies dwindled and transport systems developed, sandstone was brought from quarries further afield, including West Lothian (Binny, Hermand, Humbie), Fife (Cullalo, Grange, Longannet), Stirlingshire (Polmaise), Dumfriesshire (Corsehill) and northern England (Blaxter, Darney, Doddington, Prudham). Many 20th C. buildings in Edinburgh used a variety of rock types as stone cladding (thin panels) to concrete and steel structures. Today, stone is used for conservation and repair as seen in the indents (replacement blocks) found in many buildings.

This leaflet describes a selection of buildings on a circular walk starting and finishing at George Square. Dates in brackets refer to the date of construction or other developments of the buildings, noting the principal architects and builders.

Two new bridges were crucial to development south of the Grassmarket/Cowgate hollow. Access from the old town was not easy until the building of South Bridge (1785-88) and George IV Bridge (1829-34). George Square, laid out by James Brown, (1766 –1785) was the first development beyond the Old Town. Originally some 60 houses, Nos. 28-59 were built of Craigleith Sandstone, a source of fine stone for ashlar work from the west side of the city. Redevelopment in the 1960s for buildings of the University of Edinburgh involved demolition of Nos. 30-54, including, No. 33 which was the Scottish office of the Geological Survey of Great Britain, 1906 to 1928.

The walking tour

1 No. 60 George Square (1774-79) local dolerite (black igneous rock) and pink sandstone from Craigmillar. Columns of portico are of grey micaceous sandstone.



No. 60 George Square

2 University George Square Lecture Theatre (1967, Robert Matthew, Johnson-Marshall & Partners) clad in Carboniferous sandstone from Wellfield quarries (Huddersfield).

3 University Library (1967, Basil Spence, Glover & Ferguson) cladding round base of Larvikite, a black Scandinavian granite; ramp parapet to west is clad in pale yellow-grey Portland Roach stone with Jurassic fossil bivalves and gastropods.



Fossils in Roach stone

4 West side Nos. 29-28 Craigleith Sandstone, droved ashlar. Nos. 27-23 (1770-75) Roman Doric and Ionic columned doorpieces and cherrycock pointed pink Craigmillar sandstone and dolerite rubble with dolerite snecks.

5 Nos. 22-16 (1767-74), the earliest surviving houses also with cherrycock pointing, have been restored to show probable original appearance. Pavements on north and west sides of the Square are made of sharp flakes of dolerite placed vertically into ground, known as horonising. Road setts mainly dolerite.



No. 20 George Square (detail)

6 Former George Watson's Ladies College, No7 (1876, MacGibbon & Ross), elaborate carvings, including name, in sandstone. Good example of modern stone replacement.

7 Edinburgh University Union (1887, Sydney Mitchell 1887) Hailes Sandstone, laminated.

8 McEwan Hall (1888-97, Sir R. Rowand Anderson) Carboniferous sandstones Polmaise (Stirlingshire) and Prudham (Hexham, Northumberland). Small red sandstone columns are of Triassic St Bees Sandstone from Corsehill (Annan).



McEwan Hall

9 Adjacent Medical School (1886, Sir R. Rowand Anderson) also Polmaise stone.

10 Former Royal Infirmary undergoing a major renovation. Scots baronial style by David Bryce begun 1872 and finished by his nephew John (1879). Succeeded William Adam's George Watson's Hospital (1738). Stone used from Hailes and Cullalo (Fife). Buildings laid out in a pavilion system, isolation of blocks allowing air to circulate.

11 Telfer Wall, (1628-36) Lauriston Place. An extension of Flodden Wall to incorporate George Heriot's Hospital. Rubble construction mainly of local sandstones.



12 Former Charity Workhouse, (1739-43) harled tenements in Forest Hill off Forest Road. Sandstone from City Quarry (Burgh Muir). Remnants were remodelled as dwelling houses down Candlemaker Row.

13 Greyfriars Kirk (1602-20). Uses second-hand stone from Convent of Sciennes. Munitions magazine in west tower exploded 1718. New church built (1722) to the west, with a wall dividing New Greyfriars from Old Greyfriars. Fire destroyed most of Old Greyfriars (1845), then rebuilt. Building restored recently with coloured lime harl. Graveyard contains the best collection of 17th C. monuments in Scotland. Notable figures buried here include James Hutton, Founder of modern geology and William Adam, architect.

14 The bronze sculpture of **Greyfriars Bobby** (William Brodie, 1872), at the head of Candlemaker Row, sits on a plinth of polished Cumbrian Shap Granite, with prominent pink feldspar crystals.



15 National Museum of Scotland extension (completed in 1998 to International competition - winning design of Benson & Forsyth, 1991). Cladding of mottled yellow and orange Permian sandstone from Clashach Quarry (Hopeman, Moray). Pavements on both sides of street grey Devonian Caithness Flagstone, durable fine laminated sandstone. Near the museum is Bristo Port, the site of the Society of Brewers (or Greyfriars) Quarry which supplied rubble stone for Parliament House (locality 29)



16 National Museum of Scotland West Wing (1885-89), Chambers Street, Hermand sandstone (West Calder), sculptured figures (1861) Doddington sandstone (Northumberland).

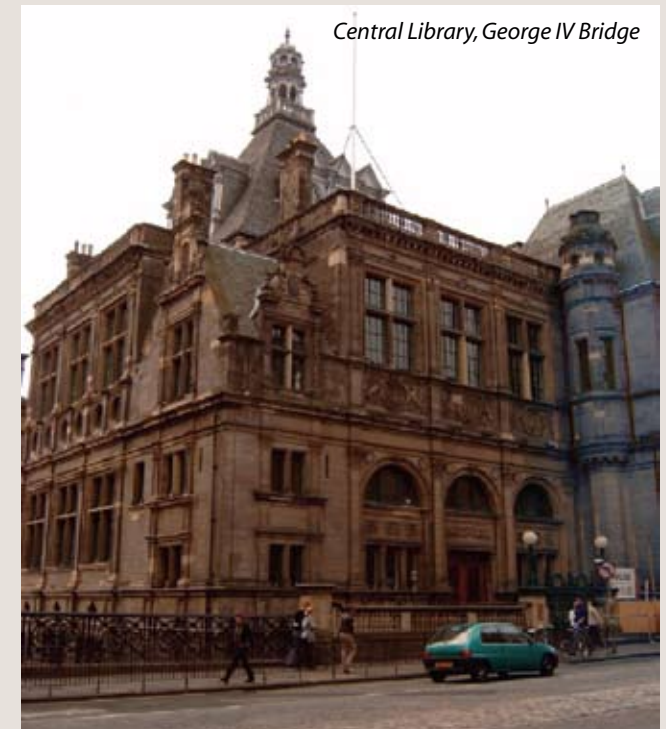
17 Crown Office, (1886-88), formerly Heriot-Watt University, Prudham sandstone (Northumberland).

18 Sheriff Court extension (1997) Catcastle Sandstone (Barnard Castle, County Durham).

George IV Bridge (1829-34) is an elevated street above the Cowgate with houses built up on both sides; two open spans. Buildings include: **19-21:**

19 The Augustine United Church completed 1861, tower recently restored with Blaxter sandstone, (Otterburn, Northumberland).

20 Central Library (1887-90, George Washington Browne) elaborately carved Polmaise sandstone (Stirlingshire).



21 National Library of Scotland, (started in 1938 & completed 1955, *Reginald Fairlie*), Blaxter sandstone (Northumberland) on grey granite.

22 Victoria Street (1867-8), Scots Baronial style India Buildings display fine vermiculated work. No. 1 occupied by the Geological Survey (1869-1879).

23 Victoria Terrace is raised above street. From far end are fine views in foreground of crow-stepped gables and irregular slated roofs, in the middle distance old buildings of Grassmarket, and beyond in the far distance George Heriot's Hospital (School) (1628-1660, William Wallace, King's Master Mason from 1617), Ravelston, Craigmillar and Craigleith stone, the last used for refacing (1833).



24 Lawnmarket of the Old Town comprises late 17th and early 18th C. tenements (lands) & closes. Nos.312-320 have ashlar fronts. Off Lawnmarket are: Mylne's Court (1690, Robert Mylne), Fisher's Close (c. 1700) Gladstone's Land (c. 1620). Thomas Gladstone was a merchant. Arcading demonstrates a continental influence.

25 Bank of Scotland, founded 1695 (1802-6, extended by *David Bryce*, 1865-70), Mound Place. Binny sandstone (1846) with indents of Stainton sandstone (County Durham) (1986).

26 High Court of Justiciary former Sheriff Court (1934-37 *A J Pitcher & J Wilson Paterson*), at top of High Street. Darney sandstone (Northumberland).



27 David Hume Statue (1997 *Alexander Stoddart*) sits on plinth of yellow Clashach sandstone.

28 St Giles Cathedral with its late 15C. Spire faced with Cullaloo stone (1829-33, *William Burn*). Cullaloo recently used for repairs on S. side.

29 Parliament House (1632-39, *Sir James Murray of Kilbaberton HM Master of Works*). Original ashlar work from Ravelston and Burgh Muir. Facade refaced with Craigleith stone (1807-1810, *Robert Reid*).

30 Charles II statue (c. 1685) taken down in 1824 for rebuilding of St Giles' and Signet Library (1813). Reinstated with new plinth of Craigleith (1835). Original marble inscription tablet retained.

31 Mercat Cross (originally 15th C. with its capital of that date) rebuilt (1617) by *John Telfer* and *John Mylne* (senior). Removed (1756) and re-erected (1866). Restoration (1885) *Hermann sandstone* (West Calder). Present shaft replacement by *City Architect* (1970).

32 City Chambers, Royal Exchange (1753-61, *John and Robert Adam*; builder *John Ferguson*), Craigleith and Longannet sandstones. Additions: *Prudham sandstone* (1904) and the *Cockburn Street extension* (1934) *Darney sandstone*.

33 Tron Kirk (1635-1647, *John Mylne*, *Master Mason to Town & Crown*), built for the displaced congregation of St Giles when it became a cathedral. Sandstone from *Society and Craigleith quarries*. Roof covered with copper from *Hamburg* (1647). Building of *North Bridge* and formation of *Hunter Square* (1785 and 1787) led to the shortening of

kirk to E, W & S. Dutch steeple with covering of copper destroyed in the *Great Fire* of 16th Nov 1824. Steeple rebuilt in *Humbie sandstone* (Winchburgh) and largely refaced with *Darney sandstone* (1974-76).

34 South Bridge (1775-88, *Alexander Laing*), 19-arch viaduct. Prepared the way for building of *University* and provided access from old town to *Nicolson Street* and *George Square*.

35 Old College (1789-1827, *Robert Adam*, completed *William Playfair*). Doorway framed by six monolithic pillars of *Craigleith sandstone* (1791). Sandstone from *Grange Quarry* (Burntisland) used to support dome (1887, *R. Rowand Anderson*).

36 Portico and front of Surgeons' Hall (1829-32 *W.H. Playfair*) sandstones from *Humbie* and *Cullaloo*. Additions (1890) *Craigton Quarry* (Winchburgh).

37 Mosque and Islamic Centre, (1998, *Basil Al-Bayati*) *Potterrow*, clad with *Dunhouse* (Staindrop) and *Blaxter* (Otterburn) *Carboniferous sandstones*; base of *Baltic Brown orbicular granite*. Just to south, *Windmill Lane*, connecting *Chapel Street* to *George Square*, is near site of a 17th C. quarry, as in *Quarry Close* on *West Crosscauseway*.

38 Dugald Stewart Building and University Informatics Forum (2008, *Bennetts Associates Architects*) clad in honey-coloured *Leistadter sandstone* from *Kichheim* (near *Frankfurt, Germany*). Inspace building clad in *Dunhouse Grey limestone* (County Durham).



Entrance to the University of Edinburgh Old College



Surgeons' Hall