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Dislocation and Domicide in Edinburgh, 1950-1975.
"We never tried to push people out, unless it was for their own good."

DJ Johnston-Smith

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Edinburgh

2019

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

Signed:

Date:

7 February 2019

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Abstract

Civic Edinburgh has an amnesia problem. Despite a healthy secondary literature recounting its colourful history and a thriving heritage industry, the town appears to have forgotten that it evicted significant numbers of its citizens from their homes in the third quarter of the 20th century before violently erasing from existence entire streets and neighbourhoods that had once housed vibrant communities. My research recovers this story. Through extensive use of surviving primary documentation alongside testimony gathered in a series of personal interviews with individuals who experienced, witnessed or participated in clearance activities it has been possible to challenge existing narratives that suggest Edinburgh experienced little or no post-war urban renewal trauma. Further analysis of the uncovered quantitative data places Edinburgh's clearance activities within their wider Scottish context and reveals that a confirmed 35,237 individuals were compelled to leave their homes and 16,556 houses were either closed or demolished by Edinburgh Corporation between 1950 and 1973. A secondary, underlying narrative, that the majority of those cleared welcomed the opportunity of a new home, is brought into question by the discovery of an academic report from 1967 revealing that just 7.4% of the occupants of the most amenity deficient properties in the capital were on the waiting list for a new Corporation home. In researching the varied qualitative experiences of those who were subjected to statutory clearance an unexpected understory was identified of racial prejudice against ethnic minority households following their clearance notice being issued by the Corporation. Selected extracts from the interview transcripts from over two dozen individuals are offered, giving opinions on slum stigma, notions of "community," the politics of clearance resistance and views on corruption in Edinburgh, as well as revealing the well-meant paternalism of some officials and the crass indifference of others along with aspects of the emotional and psychological legacy of clearance. Taken altogether it is a body of work that adds serious substance to a previously thinly researched episode in the capital's history and will contribute significant new material to the disciplines of urban studies and oral history.

Lay Summary

Civic Edinburgh has an amnesia problem. Despite a healthy number of books about the Capital's colourful history and a thriving heritage industry, the town appears to have forgotten that it evicted significant numbers of its citizens from their homes in the third quarter of the 20th century before violently erasing from existence entire streets and neighbourhoods that had once housed vibrant communities. This PhD recovers this story through extensive archival research and personal interviews with individuals who experienced, witnessed or participated in clearance activities. Revealing, for the first time, accurate numbers for those forced to leave their homes, the problems faced by Edinburgh's ethnic minority population and an extensive qualitative assessment of the clearance procedures in the words of those that experienced it, this research adds some welcome substance to a previously neglected episode in the Capital's history and will contribute significant new material to the disciplines of urban studies and oral history.

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List of abbreviations used in this work

Institutions

NRS – National Registers of Scotland
ECCA – Edinburgh Council City Archive
NLS – National Library of Scotland

Literature

HCM – Minutes of the Housing Committee
PCM – Minutes of the Planning Committee
APHC – Annual Progress Report of the Housing Committee
APSC – Annual Progress Report of the Sanitary Committee
APSBC – Annual Progress Report of the Streets and Buildings Committee
APPC – Annual Progress Report of the Planning Committee
APHRC – Annual Progress Report of the Highways and Road Planning Committee

Clearance Terminology

CDA – Clearance Development Area
CO – Clearance Order
CPO – Compulsory Purchase Order
HTA – Housing Treatment Area
WMP – Well Maintained Payment
PLI – Public Local Inquiry

Acknowledgements

Having self-funded this project from savings made while working in the licensed trade in several of Edinburgh's best-known pubs, I'd like to begin by thanking the patrons whose custom and stories of Edinburgh's vanished communities told to me over many years helped pay for and spur my initial interest in this topic. Taking far longer than either of us had ever anticipated, I need to thank my supervisor Professor Gary West for his support, advice, friendship and patience with such a backsliding and distracted research student and the *School of Languages, Literature and Culture* for their generous indulgence in allowing me additional time to complete my research. I would also like to thank my two PhD examiners, Dr Elizabeth Carnegie and Professor Richard Rodger, for a robust and constructive viva and the opportunity to complete my study with minor corrections. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the library and archive staff at the *University of Edinburgh's School of Scottish Studies* and *School of Architecture Library*, *The National Archives of Scotland*, *The National Library of Scotland, The Edinburgh Room* in the town's *Central Library* and *The Edinburgh Council City Archive* for all their assistance in sourcing relevant research materials, and especially Arnot MacDonald at *The School of Scottish Studies* and Richard Hunter at the *City Archive* whose conversations, assistance and general words of advice as I embarked upon the project were especially enlightening. I am also most grateful to Professor Miles Glendinning for very kindly sharing his video interview with Pat Rogan from his personal archive. I would like to thank fellow *University of Edinburgh* PhD researcher Justine Gordon Smith for arranging an interview with her father and her regular much appreciated messages of encouragement to carry on with my research. I would also like to thank Chris Garner for advance sight of a chapter on clearances in his recent book on Newhaven, for his regular hospitality in his Newhaven home and for introducing me to several of my interviewees. I must also express my sincere appreciation and pay humble tribute to the many, many individuals who gave so generously of their time to be interviewed throughout my studies, willingly discussing sensitive and personal issues as we explored their memories of these events together.

Finally, I would not have been able to come close to finishing this gruelling endeavour without the unstinting emotional, financial and loving support of my incredible family. My supportive parents Janine and Iain, my amazing mother-in-law Evelyn Buddie who has provided countless hours of free childcare and words of encouragement throughout, my son Angus who is now more familiar with concepts of mid-20th century urban renewal than any child of primary school age should ever be, and most of all my inconceivably patient wife Lauren who has now endured my epic struggle to compose a large piece of academic prose for the third time, having previously witnessed me write my MA dissertation and MPhil thesis. Her unwavering support throughout has sustained me through the darkest of periods when completion seemed most unlikely. Mere words cannot do justice to the debt I owe her for encouraging me to see it through to the very end.

Introduction

During the third quarter of the 20th century, utilising the wide variety of bewildering statutory instruments it had at its disposal, Edinburgh Corporation oversaw the closure or demolition of thousands of its citizens' homes, evicting tens of thousands of them in the process. Virtually all such compulsory clearances, although there were exceptions, came with the promise of a new home elsewhere in Edinburgh, most often in one of the Local Authority's own housing schemes being built around the peripheries of the city. Presaged by a vague legal letter and a tiny advertisement, often lost amongst the classified columns on the rear pages of *The Scotsman* broadsheet newspaper, these state-sponsored evictions sometimes took months or even years to come into effect. This thesis will assess the scale of this human movement and examine the legacy that this act of massed urban displacement bequeathed to the town by searching for any lasting mark it left upon Edinburgh's physical, social and psychological landscape.

This research has two main foci. Firstly, it seeks to identify, narrate and analyse the precise extent of post-war state-sponsored urban clearance activities in Edinburgh, by extracting relevant material from surviving primary sources found in various archives in the city, and establish whether this agrees with the traditional historiographic narrative afforded to these activities within the related canon of secondary literature for Scotland and the UK as a whole. Secondly, it examines the effects that this demolition and displacement programme had upon its residents as expressed in the personal testimony of individuals who actually experienced it first-hand. By interviewing witnesses, recovering recent and archived personal interviews, as well as reviewing contemporary newspaper accounts and other sources, it will be possible to achieve a far superior qualitative understanding of these events and the effects they had upon the inhabitants of the Scottish capital, than has thus far been attempted or achieved as well as "…give back to the people

who made and experienced history, through their own words, a central place” (Thomson 1988/2016: 34).

True to the traditionally accepted practice of reflexive disclosure within oral history and ethnographic research, it is incumbent upon me to reveal the elements of my background which led me to this field of research and may inevitably colour its findings. Leaving the island of Islay to seek employment opportunities, not long after I was born in 1975, my family eventually settled in 1979 in the small village of Arrochar that sits squarely upon the Highland-Lowland border on the west coast of Scotland. There I would spend the majority of my childhood and youth, apart from a brief sojourn at boarding school in another small Highland village, Fort Augustus, half-way between Fort William and Inverness. Holidays and weekends were regularly spent between my maternal and paternal grandparents’ very contrasting homes in the tiny rural hamlet of Nerabus on the island of Islay or the hectic, sprawling, municipal housing estate of Ruchazie in Glasgow’s East End. On Islay and in Arrochar, I regularly wandered among the silent ruins of abandoned settlements and listened to the tales told by an elder generation of the lost communities who had once peopled these rapidly decaying and vanishing built remains. In Ruchazie, as a sensitive country lad, my strongest recollection is being frequently overwhelmed by the sights and sounds of the chaotic (to my mind) and frantic happenings taking place all around me in one of the most socially deprived housing estates in Scotland; although, like most children, I was blissfully ignorant of the structural poverty until many years later.

Undoubtedly formative childhood experiences, they certainly influenced my eventual choice of undergraduate and postgraduate interests at the University of Glasgow in the late 1990s. Latterly, much of my research came to be focused upon the last four centuries of human activity in North Loch Lomondside, in which I uncovered a rich seam of theretofore untapped material on the historic and archaeological legacy of the clan MacFarlane which once occupied this Highland-

Lowland border territory. Specifically, my undergraduate dissertation and later MPhil thesis (Johnston-Smith, 2002) would challenge the previously accepted grand narrative related to this small, geographically compact clan. Traditional accounts of both the area and the period, where the MacFarlanes were mentioned at all, had hitherto focused solely upon the clan's perceived reputation for warlike activity and brigandry to the exclusion of any conceptualisation of settled community and long-developed peaceful and productive culture. My research reset this narrative, dispensing with the Victorian 'shortbread-tin' caricature of this Highland clan and gave this small early-modern community at the head of Loch Lomond a more three-dimensional place in Scottish history once again.

In the years that followed completion of my postgraduate research I spent over a decade working in some of Edinburgh's most well-known public houses, latterly as landlord of two of the most iconic – The White Hart Inn in the Grassmarket and The Sheep Heid Inn in Duddingston. These well-known, historic hostelries attracted customers of all social backgrounds, local, national and international. Over the years, through regular and prolonged interaction with visitors and regulars alike, I became increasingly aware of an evident *understory* in Edinburgh's social history which occasionally poked through the capital's carefully manicured outer canopy. Just as in my childhood, I was often regaled with tales of lost neighbourhoods and communities, this time comprising of city streets and individual tenements rather than the abandoned farming townships and 'lost villages' of my youth. But a familiar notion of clearance by uncaring or remote authority figures seemed to connect the two; the difference being in the urban context it was carried out in the name of "progress" and "slum clearance" by "the Corporation" or "the University" rather than for profit and the black-faced sheep by the rural "landlord" or "factor". Most story-tellers talked with fond nostalgia, some with bittersweet memory, but almost all articulated their profound sense of regret for some intangible "thing" which had been lost to the generations which followed when these once solid and fixed landmarks of their youth were toppled into dust by

a faceless bureaucracy against which there had been apparently little or no opposition.

At my last pub, The Sheep Heid Inn, in the picturesque Edinburgh "Conservation Village" of Duddingston, I began to hear tales of one such vanished community which had previously existed in the vicinity of this relatively affluent suburb on the edge of Holyrood Park, known colloquially by many older residents as "the Prefabs". This had consisted of a large massed collection of Nissen huts, roughly on the site of where the modern Holyrood High School now stands. I heard tales, in passing, of billeted Polish soldiers, resident prisoners-of-war and cleared, homeless slum tenants, but could find virtually no reference to this settlement in the standard published or online local history sources and further archival research was necessary to reveal details of the camp's history. It transpired that these huts were constructed early in the First World War as a training and barracks facility for the King's Own Scottish Borderers and known then as either "Craigmillar Camp" or "Portobello Camp", before they were taken over and used throughout the inter-war years by Edinburgh Corporation for emergency housing accommodation. Upon the outbreak of the Second World War the camp initially resumed its former role, providing accommodation for allied military personnel, before apparently being repurposed late in the conflict to hold Axis Powers prisoners-of-war. Following the cessation of hostilities, the camp was once again requisitioned by Edinburgh Corporation as emergency housing for any homeless and overcrowded families who "…may not have the necessary qualifications to entitle them to an early chance of a new house" (APHC 1949-50: 5). The camp finally closed for good in 1954, shortly after its very embarrassing national public exposure in a January edition of the popular *Picture Post* magazine. At around the same time as the camp was winding down, a few local residents of the adjacent community in Duddingston Village, led by Nicholas Fairbairn, the young advocate and future MP and Solicitor General for Scotland, were in the process of establishing a local conservation society whose primary purpose was halting the wave of private bungalows and social housing

advancing rapidly towards their very gates. As part of their initial output, the fledgling utility society and its members quickly constructed a bucolic and Ruritarian history for their village, situated as it was in the geographic centre of ever-sprawling urban Edinburgh; it remains a perspective that persists in the psyche of the Society and many local residents to this day. A down-at-heel utilitarian corrugated iron camp that housed prisoners-of-war and then Edinburgh's homeless and destitute families clearly did not fit the middle-class, idyllic, Arcadian narrative of a rural village in the heart of the city that they were trying to cultivate. So, with every last material vestige of the camp burned to ash or hauled away for scrap and no trace left remaining above ground it had been possible to ignore its very existence in written accounts of the locality, but the retained folk memory was not so easily eradicated.

(Figure 1 – Three of the images from the Getty Images collection photographed by Haywood Magee to illustrate the accompanying article showcasing the "The Best, and the Worst, of Some British Cities" in 'The Picture Post', 30/01/1954).

The online *Getty Images* photographic archive contains six stark internal and external images of the camp at Duddingston taken by the photographer Haywood Magee to illustrate the 1954 *Picture Post* magazine article mentioned above (see Figure 1). Having obtained an original edition of the magazine, I showed it and these online images to many of my patrons in an effort to find out more about the camp. On one occasion, a customer upon viewing the pictures became visibly distressed and revealed that they had been born in the camp, but had spent a lifetime concealing this fact under strict instruction from their mother, who would still not talk about the camp to that day. I made rather clumsy attempts to smooth the situation and put the individual at ease by explaining my belief that a life lived in the camp was every bit as important to our social history as a life lived in Holyrood Palace, but the words seemed somehow hollow and unconvincing even as I uttered them. Talking the matter over in the months that followed with the person's partner revealed just how deep this sense of shame and stigma ran within that person's family as a consequence of even such a temporary stay in the camp. The episode served a dual purpose. Firstly, it shook me out of my own somewhat naïve middle-class complacency as I began to comprehend, perhaps for the first time, the powerful long-term consequences of territorial stigmatization on personal socio-cultural identity as unconscious elements of self-esteem manifested themselves in an indelible mental link to a previous, long-demolished home. Secondly, it provoked within me an even stronger burning desire to sensitively investigate similar overlooked and vanished neighbourhoods and localities which had once housed communities and individuals alike, but were now lost to contemporary sight for a variety of reasons. This awakened curiosity became the erupting wellspring that brought into being the current project.

Since commencing my research I have encountered roughly three distinct categories of reaction from those with whom I discuss it – animated curiosity, studied indifference and outright opposition; the latter very occasionally tipping into open hostility. On the first response, many individuals and groups have proven

(Figure 2 – Modified Ordnance Survey map of Edinburgh showing the locations of many of the neighbourhoods mentioned in this study. Reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland)

simply surprised to learn of the scale of the clearances in Edinburgh, a city that appears to many younger residents or visitors to have been relatively untroubled by the wrecker's ball and bulldozer. This inquisitiveness has often led to further discussions and on a small number of occasions to chats with older relatives or friends, who ultimately agreed to be more formally interviewed. The indifference fell into two categories, from those that lived through the period, who were in most cases just baffled as to why I should be interested in such a topic; to the academics I encountered (sometimes even in my own department) who simply dismissed the notion that Edinburgh as a town had experienced any notable social trauma during this period or who believed that there were other towns or localities elsewhere that were far more suitable for such a study. The third distinct reaction I encountered,

that of forthright opposition or hostility, was perhaps the most interesting and notable. Early in my research, in a discussion with a local archivist I was advised my investigation was too niche and “very School of Scottish Studies” and that, “It was in NO-ONE’s interest to keep a record of the evictions which took place in Edinburgh – Not the council’s, not the tenants’. Why would they? A tenant would struggle to get a new house if a future landlord was to find out they were evicted and the council wouldn’t want anyone to know that they had been forced to evict.” And in many ways this criticism proved to be somewhat prophetic as several potential witnesses to these events avoided or refused interviews, on one occasion withdrawing consent the day after the interview, having slept on it and coming to the conclusion that too much had been revealed during our discussions. Elsewhere, as I returned to academia after over a decade spent in a commercial and much rougher workplace environment, I found that I was perhaps overly desensitised to certain fragile scholarly sensitivities when I discovered that making a vocal comparison of the Highland Clearances to these Urban Clearances could quickly draw fierce opprobrium in certain quarters. The polite indifference to my research shown by some of my fellow scholars could just as quickly turn to blunt vocalised opposition, both at the scope of my thesis question and even my whole choice of study, with my perceived academic naivety for researching it at all being called into question.

At virtually the same time as I returned to university to embark upon my PhD studies I was also, for the first time ever in my life, drawn into the formal national and local political arena. As Scotland debated, for the first time since 1707, the very real possibility of becoming an independent state once again I unintentionally became a very active participant in this national discussion. I chaired the East Lothian multi-party activist group that sought and promoted independence in the September 2014 vote and, in the months that followed the decision to maintain the constitutional status quo, I went on to organise a successful general election campaign for a Westminster parliamentary candidate before coming second as the parliamentary candidate myself for my local Holyrood seat in 2016.

Throughout this period of intense political activity I attempted to keep my academic research life rigidly separate, suspending my studies for much of the duration of the two parliamentary campaigns. At any face-to-face interview that I undertook outwith campaigning time I would remove any outer, visible symbols of political partiality, and would discuss contemporary political questions only when the interviewee did so, as so often did happen during these politically febrile years. When campaigning, I immersed myself at the heart of national and local political affairs, undertaking the widest variety of political activities imaginable. Close quarters involvement with party political machinery and professional career politicians as well as long periods of intensely personal door-by-door contact with an incredibly diverse electorate has been an eye-opening experience in a whole multitude of ways. Witnessing first-hand how all political parties attempt to over-simplify, shape and manipulate their political messages for the widest possible audiences, interacting with many hundreds of individual constituents on a variety of issues and participating in multiple public meetings and local events has gifted me an insight into the realities of political life that I certainly did not possess when first embarked upon this research project. Perhaps inevitably, this unexpected life experience cannot avoid influencing my perceptions of the politicians and the political decisions that were responsible for the radical re-shaping of post-war Edinburgh. As Joan Sangster suggests in her analysis of *Politics and Praxis in Canadian Working-Class History*:

> …the assumptions we make about how to frame our studies, which questions to ask, what issues are important, and indeed, why we even do history, are all shaped by inherently political perspectives on our world. (2013: 59)

While the methodology underpinning this project will inevitably be heavily influenced by my previous experience of traditional historical and archaeological pedagogies that examined much earlier periods and vastly differing subject matters, I will also attempt to draw upon scholarship from other disciplines within the humanities and social sciences as I try to better understand the urban experience in Edinburgh in the third quarter of the 20th century. Such a diverse multi-disciplinary

approach to locality studies was pioneered by academics such as Alan Mayne and Susan Lawrence in the late 1990s and early 2000s as they attempted to reassess the traditionally accepted, often negative, historical narratives and mythologizing of demolished and rebuilt slum neighbourhoods within several cities in Australia and the United States (Mayne & Lawrence 1999 and Mayne & Murray 2001). Their work fundamentally challenged and ultimately transformed long-held social and historical preconceptions and stereotyping of these vanished communities and localities, encouraging a radical rethink of traditional academic approaches to the accepted narrative and chronology of the post-industrial Western city.

Chapter 1 of my thesis examines the historic and contemporary approaches taken by academics in the UK and further afield to analyse both the intrinsic nature of the urban slum and describe their clearance during urban renewal activities by the state. It offers an overview of the growth in more empathetic research methodologies within the social sciences that assess the emotional and psychological consequences of clearance, as voiced by dispossessed tenants and residents themselves, and the development of a growing toolkit of theoretical research that assists in the identification of previously unrecognised intangible outcomes of slum clearance, moving urban scholars away from their traditional focus upon demolished and rebuilt bricks and mortar and class or planning issues. Before concluding by taking note of the historically absent perspectives of those who were actually cleared from their homes in the Scottish and Edinburgh specific literature and showing how increasing our collections of oral testimony could address this gap.

Chapter 2 narrates and analyses the various post-war masterplans created by and for Edinburgh Corporation. It charts the evolution of town planning in the city from the late 1940s and through the 1950s and considers in particular the legacy of the Abercrombie and Plumstead's *Civic Survey*. It then recounts the frenzied activities of the Corporation Housing and Planning Committees throughout

this period, as extracted from their surviving records in the *City Archives*, in response to the successive pieces of national legislation encouraging local authority action to deal with obsolete housing. Before concluding with an account of a series of housing scandals that were massively embarrassing to the Corporation's ruling 'Progessive Association' councillors and catalysed several local politicians into action to deal with Edinburgh's slum housing, in particular Labour councillor Pat Rogan, who became adept at manipulating local media sources and council officers into backing his ambitious clearance plans.

Chapter 3 focuses on the political and ideological struggles in the 1960s and early 1970s that were being fought at a local and national level over the appropriate method to renew Edinburgh's obsolete neighbourhoods. Using a variety of primary sources, it follows the activities of Councillor Pat Rogan, who became the first Labour politician to convene the Housing Committee in 1962 and lost no time to use the opportunity to dramatically accelerate the local comprehensive clearance schemes and house-building activities on the fringes of the city. It charts the progress of the housing "crusade" that gripped Edinburgh Corporation and identifies the first murmurs of citizen resistance to clearance as some of the residents of the four thousand "prefab" homes built after the war make it clear that being evicted for the 'greater good' of the city is little compensation for the loss and destruction of their homes. Edinburgh's moment under the national spotlight of UK politics in 1964 is also discussed as Harold Wilson inspects some of the Town's most notorious and maligned slums before making a keynote speech at the Usher Hall while on his election lecture tour of Britain. The chapter concludes by charting the growing movement away from comprehensive clearance and utilises once closed Scotland Office files and other records to follow central government's determined efforts to convince a stubbornly resistant Edinburgh Corporation to move towards a massive programme of property rehabilitation instead of its default position of comprehensive demolition and removal of the older housing stock.

Chapter 4 scrutinises in far greater detail the actual procedures associated with state-sponsored clearance as they were implemented in Edinburgh in the third quarter of the 20th century. It begins with a brief overview of the advice handbooks that were available to council officials in the early days of post-war renewal activities, before revealing the results of my quantitative investigation of Scotland and Edinburgh's official house demolitions and closure figures during this period. Using figures collated from quarterly and annual official Scottish Development Department and Edinburgh Corporation reports it was possible to identify some significant discrepancies in the published data and produce for the very first time a comprehensive list of the Edinburgh streets cleared and demolished, houses closed and put a figure on the numbers of people moved (according to the Corporation). These results are discussed and listed in the chapter and appendices at the rear of the thesis. I then proceed to narrate and analyse the implementation of the procedures in Edinburgh and attempt to ascertain whether they were carried out as legislation demanded before assessing the qualitative experience of those subjected to these legal strictures using a combination of the witness testimony of my interviewees, contemporary media accounts and a selection of the surviving personal documents held in the archives. This material reveals exactly how dispiriting and disempowering clearance procedures could be to anyone with less than a legal degree under their belts. It examines aspects of legal process and compensation and also revealed that significant numbers of Edinburgh residents could find themselves evicted from their homes with no offer of a Corporation home and entirely at the whim of often less than helpful council officers.

Chapter 5 is the most substantial chapter of the entire thesis. It stitches together the personal recollections of my many interviewees into a series of their most common thematic discussions related to Edinburgh's clearance activities. After some reflexive disclosure explaining my interview technique and possible biases, I explore my interviewees' views on the stigma attached to living in a "slum," their notions of vanished "communities," their opinions on whether an alternative

approach to clearance should have been adopted, their recollections of the "politics of resistance" and their thoughts on dishonesty and corruption in civic Edinburgh. I conclude the chapter by offering a broad selection of my interviewees' personal attitudes towards Edinburgh's clearances in retrospect. In addition to the gobbets of conversation transcripts, each sub-section contains offers some historic context and an analysis of the views expressed.

Chapter 6 offers some concluding reflections on my research, examining the civic amnesia that has dominated discourses on post-war clearance in the capital, discusses the growth in online 'sites of memory' offering discursive space for new narratives and recollections to emerge and offers some possible future avenues of research and exploration of the topic.

Chapter 1: Slums, clearance and the lived experience of both - A review of historic and contemporary approaches to their study in Scotland, Britain and beyond.

An examination of the secondary literature analysing British urban renewal activities in the latter half of the 20th century reveals an extraordinary paucity of working and lower middle class perspectives on slum clearance. While a great deal has been written about the well-meaning efforts of the "crusading" politicians and urban planners as they battled to demolish British slums and rid its urban centres of these perceived moral and pathogenic morasses or the housing estates and tower blocks that were built to replace them and house their former inhabitants, there is significantly scant analysis of the act of clearance itself or the long-term social and salutogenic effects such dislocation had upon those that were dispossessed of their homes in Britain. Peter Shapely says of the history of housing and clearance in the UK at this time:

> It is a story of heroic reformers, sweeping success and spectacular failure. Finally, it is also a story of ordinary people and of how they benefitted or suffered as a result of policies formed and implemented from above. (Shapely 2007: Preface)

Having acknowledged the crucial position of the "ordinary people" to the history of UK housing, he then points out that "With a few notable exceptions, housing histories have relegated tenants to little more than bit players" (Shapely 2007: 9). This is a situation he attributes to their social position as normally passive recipients of state or local authority largesse. Similarly, despite acknowledging the compulsory clearance and rehousing of hundreds of thousands of urban dwellers across the country, in what he calls "one of the most important social processes at the time", noted urban scholar J.A. Yelling observes that "there has been very little historical interest in this period of slum clearance in Britain" other than a "discussion of annual national totals and generalized remarks on location" (2000: 234). He even concludes his article by issuing a challenge to future urban researchers to re-

examine the "simpler stereotypes about slum clearance… through more detailed enquiry and systematic attention to the variable contexts within which it took place" (2000: 254).

This failure by British academics to fully investigate the lived experience of, particularly working-class, urban-dwellers has been noted for some time. The pioneering urban scholar H.J. Dyos encouraged researchers, from the mid-1960s onwards, to step away from their "growing preoccupation with quantification" and statistics and instead "evoke the urban past in human and comprehensible terms" (Cannadine 1982: 213). *The Victorian City – Images and Reality,* the two volume collection of essays he edited with Michael Wolff in 1973 that examines city life in the 19th century through a variety of multi-disciplinary optics, still stands out as a seminal textbook for urban scholars nearly half a century after it was published. Dyos's own research output was spent predominantly examining the Victorian slums of England and London in particular. He was keenly aware that the experience of those living in and cleared from the slums was often overlooked and markedly undervalued by later British historians, something he in part attributed to the limited growth of the social science disciplines in the UK in the early 20th century. He recognised that "…slums have always been relative things" and that "…such a term has no fixity" (Dyos & Reeder, 1973: 363) and as consequence sought a more nuanced comprehension of these much-maligned neighbourhoods. He urged his students to seek out new methodologies to provide a "…dispassionate analysis of the way in which life in the slums was carried on" (Cannadine 1982: 213). But one such innovative approach he advocated, wherein he relied heavily upon the supposed social realism of Victorian novelists and commentators to get closer to the qualitative experiences of the slum-dwellers, was problematic. It is entirely questionable whether such sources offer an accurate and reliable insight into lives lived by the inhabitants of these stigmatised territories.

Stitched into the contemporary and later narrative accounts of virtually all industrialised urban centres across the UK from the second half of the 19th century onwards is a dark and dominant thread of repetitively revisualised tales of urban melancholy and wretchedness. Miles Glendinning rather neatly refers to this as an all-pervasive “slum tableaux” (1996: 3) and Mayne and Murray simply as the “slum myth” (2001: 1). Referring in part to more contemporary maligned neighbourhoods, but coming to the same conclusion, E.V. Walter calls it the “Myth of the Dreadful Enclosure” wherein: “Certain people or specific places take the rap for troubles that begin far beyond the boundaries of their own lives” (1977: 154). To the British elite, that commenced the 19th century having its imaginations fed on a diet of historical epic novels by Scott and the romantic idyllic prose of Wordsworth, Keats and Shelley the dark urban imaginings of later authors such as De Quincy, Dickens, Stevenson, McLevy, Wilde and others would be revelatory. For the first time the British intelligentsia’s collective consciousness became charged with thrilling accounts of a dangerous ‘foreign’ land that existed within their very midst – the dark and shadowy urban slum. Novelists, diarists, journalists and playwrights began to bring into the public eye these neglected and unfrequented neighbourhoods, using what David Ward called “exploration narratives” (1976: 323). These tales would be populated with a dissipated and recklessly immoral underclass, undoubtedly titillating the after-dinner conversation in many a front parlour but horrifying in equal measure an increasing number of Victorian moralists and urban reformers. These populist urban gothic imaginings established, perhaps for the first time, what Walter calls a “moral topography” of our urban environments (1977: 154), ultimately forming the feedstock that fed the massed slum demolitions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Housing reformers, Christian moralisers and urban politicians “…conceived that they had a political and social duty to bring help” to their social inferiors and alleviate the moral, social and unwholesome blight which they believed benighted their cities (Smout 1986: 31). Sensationalism sold books and provoked moral outrage, but whether it accurately portrayed life in the slums is a debateable point. The legacy of such writings would,

however, cast an enduring shadow over these defamed neighbourhoods, that lingered well into the late 20th century. As E.M. Gaskell noted in the introduction to *Slums*: "It is a remarkable feature of the slum as an historical phenomenon that its impact lessened little over a hundred years and its characterisation changed hardly at all" (1990: 31).

But this distorted "slum tableaux" stigmatising the poorest neighbourhoods of our post-industrial towns and cities is now being more robustly confronted by academics, both inside and outside of the traditional schools of history:

> Slums are constructions of the imagination: a stereotype that was fashioned in the early nineteenth century by bourgeois entertainers and social reformers, and that obscured and distorted the varied spatial forms and social conditions to which it was applied. Historians have perpetuated the slum myth. Mesmerised by the dramatic intensity of the caricatures that remain embedded in the documentary record, they have insisted that 'the essence of slums was their "environmental reality."' They have confused and thereby inadequately conflated the imagined reality of slums with the actualities of working class neighbourhoods that were labelled in this way. (Mayne & Murray 2001: 1)

In this multidisciplinary volume examining perceptions of slums neighbourhoods Mayne and Murray urge other researchers of this topic to "…read against the grain of one's expectations" (2001: 3). While archaeologist, Chris Dalglish, in an article exploring the "myths" that many urban historians have come to rely upon to understand modern Scottish cities, counsels that "The mythical past is one which eschews the complexities of Modern urban life and, as such, it is often a dehumanised past" (2005: 153). He decries many historians' habitually "myopic focus on the depravity of working-class and 'slum' housing" that has hindered a proper understanding of the "diversity that likely existed" (155) and argues for a fresh inter-disciplinary approach to offer improved insights into the character of everyday life in our modern towns and cities. But, as Richard Rodger points out, British urban historians have traditionally proven stubbornly resistant to embracing alternative academic methodologies and sources as a prism through which they might better examine urban life in the third quarter of the 20th century:

> Unlike current French and American research, British historians have largely disregarded the experiential side of housing. Representational and psychological dimensions of the home have been mainly subsumed within class based explanations of housing differences or functional explanations of housing types. (Rodger 1989: 22)

General Scottish/British urban histories of the 20th century follow mainly well-trodden paths, examining solid, traditional themes such as tenure patterns, class realities, planning issues and the architectural merits or weaknesses of suburban and central townscapes. They tend to seek dominant trends and universal themes that can be easily labelled and categorised. The almost ethereal nature of human concepts such as grief, happiness, wellbeing and the like have proven on the whole unattractive. George Gordon writes, "It is difficult to quantify the contribution which entertainment or moral fortitude made to the quality of life of the working-class residents of the cities." He acknowledges the importance these "less tangible facets of quality of life may have offered" by providing "…an important veneer of pleasure, happiness, excitement or contentment for many city-dwellers" (1985: 18) but the use of the word "veneer" is extremely revealing. It suggests that he views happiness or contentment of far lesser importance to the householders than the other more traditional housing topics he examines; that solid walls and watertight roofs, central heating and indoor plumbing were necessities, and everything else mere niceties. American psychologist Mindy Fullilove calls these urban intangibles the "emotional ecosystem" but cautions readers that, "The lesson of interconnectedness is as hard to learn as differential calculus or quantum mechanics." But unlike most British urban scholars she fully embraces the investigation of these abstract aspects of urban life in her research output as she develops her "psychology of place" thesis (2004: 17 and 1996: 1518).

Fullilove's *Root Shock* examines the scale and legacy of the urban displacement of mainly African-American communities across the United States in the post war decades and particularly focuses on the psycho-social effects that this government-sponsored programme of urban renewal had on its so-called 'beneficiaries.' It is a radical departure from the traditional British urban histories

which examine broadly similar urban phenomena in the UK, but in a substantially different way. Practising psychologist Fullilove interviewed hundreds of evicted home-owners and tenants in the course of her research and identified in many a "traumatic stress reaction to the destruction of all or part [their] emotional ecosystem" which they had still been unable to come to terms with, sometimes many decades after their eviction. Struggling to identify an acceptable psychological classification for this unique emotional trauma, which she likened to post traumatic stress disorder, she coined her own term for it - "root shock". She borrowed this phrase from the horticultural condition whereby a plant, when unceremoniously ripped from the ground and moved to a new location, no matter how many more benefits the new site may offer in terms of additional light, water and nutrients, will oftentimes still wither and die because of the distress and ordeal experienced by its infinitesimal root structure when it was yanked out of its original home. She defines its human symptoms as akin "to the physiological shock experienced by a person who, as a result of injury, suddenly loses massive amounts of fluids. Such a blow threatens the whole body's ability to function" (2004: 11). Across America, she encountered compelling evidence of its manifestation, both on an individual and community-wide basis, ultimately concluding:

> I believe it is an accurate reading of the available data to say that community dispossession – and its accompanying psychological trauma, financial loss, and rippling instability – produced a rupture in the historical trajectory of African American urban communities. (2004: 78)

Fullilove's output is heavily influenced by the pioneering works of noted urban author and activist Jane Jacobs and the prolific urban sociologist Herbert Gans. Indeed, in the United States, Jacobs's ground-breaking *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* and Gans's *The Urban Villagers* have been shaping how many urban scholars as well as some city-dwellers themselves view cities, especially their stigmatised "slum" neighbourhoods, since both first appeared in print in 1962. These authors, along with a few like-minded contemporaries such as Marc Fried and Peggy Gleicher, were amongst the first post-war voices to robustly challenge the

dominant establishment urban renewal orthodoxies emanating from academia, business and central and local government.

Jacobs, by far the most active and well-known, came from a non-academic, journalistic background and lived in a stigmatised neighbourhood of New York that had been earmarked for demolition in a slum clearance scheme. She made it clear from the beginning of her most famous polemic where she stood on the whole concept of urban renewal: "…This is not the rebuilding of cities. This is the sacking of cities," likening the eviction of residents to being "uprooted much as if they were subjects of a conquering power" (1962: 4). She recognised that much of the basis for slum clearance was built upon long-held prejudices of the clearers against a culture and way of life they simply did not acknowledge as being of value, or worse, believed to be negative and harmful:

> Orthodox planning is much imbued with puritanical and Utopian conceptions of how people should spend their free time, and in planning, these moralisms on people's private lives are deeply confused with concepts about the workings of cities… (1962: 41)

Jacobs specifically developed an alternative methodology for viewing the city that recognised and championed diversity in culture, architecture and social class. She encouraged readers to look at urban spaces in a different way to that exhorted by the planning experts. She urged them to especially concentrate on how city-dwellers chose to use and occupy each parcel of external space – be it street, alley, park or wasteland – and more importantly recognise exactly why that activity was valued by the individual and the community. These participants in the "sidewalk life" she termed "the natural proprietors of the street" (1962: 62-63 and 34). Having observed several so-called slum areas across the United States, she had come to believe that all communities had the ability to "unslum" and that any imposition from above to try and force change upon these dynamic and diverse neighbourhoods was to the utter detriment of both those who were directly affected and the wider city as a whole.

Herbert Gans's paradigm-shifting 1962 work *The Urban Villagers* was a participant-observation study of the 7000, mainly Italian-American, residents of a poor neighbourhood in Boston's West End. Condemned as a slum by the city's authorities in the early 1950s, the area would eventually be completely demolished between 1958 and 1960. Like Jacobs, he came to the similar conclusion that the authorities and decision-makers were ultimately wrong in their assessments of this working class community. "The planners and housers," he would later write, believed fervently that the slum neighbourhoods actually "…'bred' the pathologies associated with poverty" and the only course of action that could address this infection was the demolition of their homes and dispersal of their inhabitants (1968: 35-36). Like Dyos, Gans also recognised the subjectivity of the "slum" label, its all-too easy application by outside observers that often overlooked or simply dismissed the myriad social network connections that he believed far outweighed any negatives associated with dilapidated buildings or relativist judgements on anti-social or criminal behaviour. Like Jacobs, he saw the dislocation of this inter-connected urban society as producing a loss that far outweighed any potential gain:

> For tenants, owners, and businessmen alike, the destruction of the neighborhood exacted social and psychological losses. The clearance destroyed not only buildings, but also a functioning social system. (Gans 1962: 320)

While Jacobs and Gans were examining the socio-cultural landscape of their respective neighbourhoods, Marc Fried and his team were simultaneously researching the specific effects of those "psychological losses" on the residents of Boston's West End, both before and after their enforced clearance from their homes. Fried discovered that many of the recently displaced interviewees were suffering from a form of grief which one would normally expect to encounter in someone mourning a deceased family member. In assessing grief and sadness in the dispossessed Fried made clear he did not want to downplay other significant factors such as loss of personal relationships and social organisation, he simply wished to:

> …alert us to the greater generality of spatial conceptions as determinants of behaviour. In fact, we might say that a sense of spatial identity is fundamental to human functioning… It is based on spatial memories, spatial imagery, the spatial framework of current activity, and the implicit spatial components of ideals and aspirations. (Fried 1966: 365)

Similar to the findings of the others, he felt that the visual cues and social conceptions he had identified were relativistic and would most likely be overlooked or misunderstood by those outsiders who naively believed they could reform the lifestyles of the slum's inhabitants solely by demolishing and rebuilding the bricks and mortar that housed them.

Since the late 1950s then, from this American group that Christopher Klemek calls the "New Left urbanists," a "fierce backlash" against the prevailing urban renewal practices of their day has gradually emerged (2011: 3). But while later writers have come to value their works and agree with and develop further theories upon many of their observations, their ground-breaking methodologies struggled to gain traction with contemporary politicians and planners or conservative urban theorists. Klemek notes that the mainstream urbanists in both the United States and the United Kingdom rejected the works of an 'amateur' like Jacobs, expressing a defensive and elitist attitude often bordering on misogynism, seeing her ideas as ideologically opposed to their own:

> In sharp contrast to Jacobs, most British planners supported government-mandated decentralization of cities. The American woman thus smacked of political traditions largely unfashionable in the era of robust government programs under Labour prime minister Harold Wilson. (2011: 20)

The majority of primary and secondary writings about the redevelopment of Britain's post-war towns and cities, while affording occasional sympathy with the cleared, reflect the prevailing political prejudices against slums and rarely indulge in the American Left's fascination with urban intangibles. Even among the small body of British sociological literature that touches upon particular elements of place-attachment in poorer residential neighbourhoods, from academics such as Young and Willmott (1957), Brennan (1959) and Harrington (1965) or journalists such as

Nairn (1959) and Tucker (1966), it is made abundantly clear that the authors concur that the massive compulsory clearances and population dislocation are a necessary and inescapable part of urban existence.

This impression, repeated in many local and national accounts of British housing history, that a regular episodic "slum clearance" was simply a natural part of the life-cycle of our towns and cities may be in part attributable to the term itself. The American housing theorist Jeff Crump has identified several "spatial metaphors" in use by modern policy-makers which mask "…the social and political processes behind poverty and helps to provide the justification for simplistic spatial solutions to complex social, economic and political problems" (2002: 581). Long before the 1960s, this two-word refrain had steadily progressed from being a part of the lexicon of the policy-makers and politicians to become common verbal currency among both commentators and the public alike. The destruction and demolition of poor, obsolete and discredited quarters of British towns and cities had been regularly occurring since the 19th century, so post-war era slum clearance was seen as nought but the necessary response to the "natural process" of "urban decay" in these "twilight areas" (Medhurst & Parry Lewis, 1969). Scholars examining the period readily examine the housing and planning ambitions and policies of central and local governments, the architecture and general environment of the new estates and the national and local legislative objectives, but detailed quantitative data on localised British post-war urban clearance is often patchy at best. While qualitative accounts from or about those that actually underwent the mass residential dislocation are almost non-existent. This is clearly challenging for those researchers who may wish to fulfil Fullilove's fiat that "…we cannot understand the losses unless we first appreciate what was there" (2004: 20).

In his exhaustive examination of the history and politics of housing in Glasgow during the first three quarters of the 20th century Michael Keating warns: "We must guard against the common tendency to romanticise the old communities,

marked, as they so often were, by poverty, squalor and violence" almost reluctantly acknowledging their inherent "sense of social solidarity" (1988: 155). He recounts the various attempts by the local authority and national government to solve Glasgow's longstanding 'housing problem' and is highly critical of many of the housing and economic policies of the ruling political administrations. The pros and cons of the various undertakings advocated by radical proposals such as the 1946 *Clyde Valley Regional Development Plan* are analysed in detail, but the dehumanising terminology which referred to the "decentralisation" of some 716,000 men, women and children who would henceforth become labelled simply as "overspill" is never challenged. He examines in great detail the bureaucratic figures, central government diktats and political party manifestos that drove the seismic changes to Glasgow's (mainly working-class) urban fabric over this period, but he rarely pauses to consider the cumulative and long-term negative social, psychological and health legacy that clearances created for those who experienced them. Like other similar histories of towns elsewhere in the UK during this period, Keating's work, perhaps unwittingly, also restates many of the prejudices of the clearers that he is commenting upon. He repeats their trope that the slum areas (and by association their inhabitants also) were monolithic social entities, utterly beyond redemption either morally or physically. The "…poverty, squalor and violence…" he accords pre-clearance neighbourhoods is simply taken as a given certainty. As Mayne and Murray might contend, "To call life in these places 'hell' makes impossibly remote the social contexts that shaped the data we study. It drains them of human agency" (2001: 3).

It is significant enough that those who experienced the social, physical and psychological upheaval of state-sponsored clearance were exposed to the bureaucratic euphemisms that attempted to camouflage and soften the negative consequences they were being subjected to without housing historians uncritically perpetuating them. "Overspill", "displacement", "dehousing", "decanting", "decrowding", "decentralising" and similar "spatial metaphors" were not natural

habitational phenomena; they were the consequence of human agency that began with the stroke of a city planner's pen or a show of hands in a council chambers. Michael Pacione's observation (1985: 280), that most major cities in the UK experienced a "centrifugal movement from the inner cities to peripheral estates" in the second half of the 20th century may indeed be technically correct but, in an effort to bring academic order to the chaos caused to hundreds of thousands of citizens, such clinical terminology blinds us to the individual or community experience hidden in the bureaucratic language. In his assessment of the *Scottish Townscape* by the mid-1970s, Colin McWilliam identifies a "mandarin attitude" emanating from architects, planners and Scottish urban commentators in the mid-20th century. As these experts became the adjudicators on behalf of the wider public and local authority planning departments of exactly which buildings were worth saving and which should become acquainted with the wrecker's ball, MacWilliam believed their aestheticism and desire for order similarly blinded them to other important qualities. Urban buildings, he writes, should be judged "…irrespective of their moral tone or architectural worth" instead we should remember that they "…are a valid part of some people's life and expression" (1975: 177).˙ But the recording of the feelings or expressions of the masses of people that lived in these maligned buildings or neighbourhoods has proven an extremely elusive beast for later housing historians and architectural commentators to track down.

In his study of British slums and the continuous efforts to clear them, D.A. Kirby acknowledged, by building on the earlier work of Fried in Boston, that dispersal and clearance had deprived British "slum dwellers" of "the emotional support and informal patterns of mutual help and tolerance which characterise slum communities at the one time in their lives when they are required" (1979:40). But his overall analysis of life in these stigmatised areas remained throughout his book resolutely abstract and quantitative. He examines the lived experience of the "slum-dwellers" with much the same detachment as a zoologist might objectively

describe a pack of wildebeest on the Serengeti plains. On the rare occasions that personal recollections from any individuals intimately connected with slum clearance are discussed in the secondary urban literature, it is more likely to be an account belonging to a clearer rather than one of the cleared. In their epic study on the British tower block building phenomenon of the mid-20th century, Miles Glendinning and Stefan Muthesius were quite open that the ultimate experience of the end users of these high rise habitations was not their concern. Instead they intended to concentrate upon the "concept of the user [as] largely envisaged by the providers," pointing out that any academic study of the tenants' lived experience post-clearance would necessitate a wider research parameter than they intended to undertake (1994: 5). Throughout 420 pages on the British Tower Block, descriptions of the actual experience of those that lived in these buildings is scant, but the testimony of the "housing crusaders" who built them, in the vast majority of cases to re-home those people they were clearing as part of their urban renewal efforts, is quoted liberally throughout. At the beginning of *Rebuilding Scotland - The Postwar Vision, 1945-1970* Glendinning persuasively argues that "…in a controversial subject such as this, the most accessible way of beginning a reassessment is to listen to the voices and concerns of those who were actually involved" (1997: xii). What follows however, in this unapologetic hagiography of Modernist architecture and planning principles, are a series of first-hand personal accounts from an urban elite – the architects, the planners, the civil servants and the politicians. Rather than dispassionately analyse the central themes that underpinned the massive rebuilding of urban Scotland in the mid-20th century Glendinning instead makes explicit his intention to rehabilitate both the Modernist movement and the "mandarins" who propagated it. He condemns what he perceived as the narrow nostalgia of pre-clearance community mythologising that he believed had dominated the previous two decades. He cites the dual aims of his book as "…to begin the task of clearing away the blanket condemnations, and of dissolving the Utopi-Dystopia polarisations." He continues:

> Today's blanket anti-Modern rhetoric, which brands an entire generation as base and corrupt, is not only in itself implausibly simplistic but also, in the process, silences the potentially invaluable testimony of participants from those years – people whose experience could be of help not only to the academic historian and researcher, but also to those concerned with remedying the practical problems which arise out of any revolutionary period of building. Only when the raucous background noise of invective finally ceases will this historical 'silence' also end, and today's real concerns about postwar buildings begin to be properly recorded and addressed. (1997: xii)

By gathering the personal testimony of the individuals who were responsible for much of the demolition and rebuilding of huge swathes of urban Scotland, Glendinning does an enormous service to future researchers of the topic and era, including myself. But by simply ignoring the voices of the dispossessed tenants and former residents, or, worse still, dismissing them as "raucous background noise," his overall analysis of the political and professional urban elite's "revolutionary" activities is lacking in social balance and counterpoint and is weakened as a consequence.

It is difficult to comprehend why the working-class individual or group experience of clearance and eviction in the name of urban renewal in the second half of the 20th century has been so regularly overlooked in general housing histories of the period, perhaps the industrial scale of the "revolutionary period of building" has made it too daunting a task? In Tom Begg's standard textbook on Scottish housing policy, the customary consensus that massive urban renewal "was both necessary and inevitable" is repeated and any critique of the clearance process itself is relatively mild. He concedes that "the way the task was completed from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s was desperately lacking in imagination and understanding," (1996: 150) but his criticism of how national and local authorities dealt with dilapidated neighbourhoods through clearance and demolition is mainly limited to utilitarian quantitative discussions of the consequences of population decline and consequence in various localities. His ire is mainly directed at the built legacy of clearance, the sprawling peripheral estates that were built to house the

cleared, which he describes as “huge engines for generating and perpetuating poverty” (1996: 154). He readily accepts that the inhabitants themselves, as a collective, should bear no blame for the economic circumstances in which they found themselves, but he also makes the decision not to analyse the effect dislocation had upon them nor hear their personal or collective responses to the clearance process. Indeed, a researcher will search in vain through the output of general analysis of 20th century housing in Scotland for qualitative accounts of the lived experience from those subjected to the act of clearance. In another core textbook, *Scottish Housing in the Twentieth Century* edited by Richard Rodger, the actual practice of “slum clearance” elicits just fourteen mentions from the various authors within, the vast majority of which reference pre-World War One or inter-war clearance activities. The small scattering of mentions of post-Second World War clearance are in connection with the now-familiar spatial metaphors of overspill, decrowding and decentralisation; depersonalised accounting terminology that strip the individual human cost out of the narrative. Only one mention is made of the post-war slum clearance in Edinburgh and that is in passing as the author describes the building of New Towns as relieving the “pressure on older inner cities, permitting slum demolition” (Gibb 1989: 164). In a rare reference to the post-World War Two clearances, Richard Rodger suggests that it was the “negative reactions to the social implications” of the housing schemes built to home the cleared that sped the demise of massed demolition and clearance in favour of rehabilitation policies. The social, physical and psychological legacy associated with enforced dislocation and their contribution to ending massed compulsory clearances are not considered (1989: 5). To address this academic disregard of the “experiential side of housing” mentioned previously, Rodger suggests “Further attention could usefully be devoted to the interaction of resident and his/her home…” (1989: 22). The way to do this is through an increased use of oral histories, as he explains in *Testimonies of the City: Identity, Community and Change in a Contemporary Urban World* that he co-edited with Joanna Herbert.

> Oral testimonies also allow an insight into human agency… In the context of urban history, oral testimonies also show how people's experience of the city is not a passive one, rather, they are active agents that attribute meanings to and invest in the urban landscape… This focus on the subjective perceptions of particular areas, particularly the discrepancy between official views and the opinions of the actual inhabitants has been an enduring theme of oral histories of urban working class life. It highlights a further value of oral testimony to elucidate how and in what ways spaces have different meanings for different social groups.
>
> Oral testimony can reveal how groups create mental maps of the city and in essence create spaces for themselves that are typically distinct from dominant cultures. (Richard & Herbert, 2007: 4)

They continue:

> In challenging traditional histories, oral testimonies draw our attention to the complexity of urban life. They remind us that there was no single static determinant, but a host of factors at work (2007: 7).

Only by dramatically increasing our collections of urban oral testimonies, Rodger and Herbert contend, can scholars of urban history begin to properly comprehend what each home and neighbourhood means to their inhabitants, both collectively and as individuals. Valentina Zrnić calls this the "phenomenological and symbolic experience of city life" and asserts that:

> The corpus of urban narratives as it emerges from interviews, illuminates how people construct their own experience of urban life in the interplay between defined physical expectations, and the imagining of the city (Zrnić, 2007: 115).

Cultural geographers Hoelscher and Alderman suggest that any "study of social memory inevitably comes around to questions of domination and the uneven access to a society's political and economic resources" and this aspect has attracted the interest of a wide variety of academic disciplines (2004: 349). Researchers of urban history are being joined by colleagues from fields of anthropology, psychology, epidemiology, sociology and more as each attempts to extend our theoretical and practical understanding of the relationship between humans and their urban cultural environments.

Contemporary urban academics willingly acknowledge that the emotional attachment to neighbourhoods and streets earmarked for demolition is more than 'mere' nostalgia or lethargy on the part of those individuals scheduled for eviction or previously displaced from their homes. The identified psychological and physical trauma endured by many of those that are forced to leave their long-cherished homes, even in stigmatised and downtrodden "slum" communities, has led today's urban scholarship in a more empathetic direction:

> Human beings have no choice but to occupy a place in the world, and more often than not develop strong emotional ties to that place, so being displaced by external forces – having that place taken away, given to someone else, or bulldozed – is among the most appalling of social injustices. (Slater 2013: 384)

Porteous and Smith go even further, suggesting that the "wilful destruction of a home" can cause "one of the deepest wounds to one's identity and self-esteem" (2001: 5). Like Fullilove, they too struggled with the lack of an appropriate term that adequately captures this brutal act and properly conveys its full social and psychological impact upon the individual or group that loses their home. They recognise Fried's conceptualisation of "grieving for a lost home" but urge their readers not to compare the loss and destruction of that home at someone else's instigation with the loss of a relative or friend, because human life is, in the end, finite and temporary whereas:

> …many of us believe that our dwellings, neighbourhoods, landscapes, and valleys have inherent permanence. They are bigger than us; they are centres of stability in a rapidly changing world. (2001: 193)

Consequently, they coined a neologism of their own to describe "the deliberate destruction of home against the will of the home dweller" that "causes suffering to its inhabitants," they call such an act "domicide" (2001: ix & 3). They elaborate further:

> The wilful destruction of a loved home can thus be one of the deepest wounds to one's identity and self-esteem, for both of these props to sanity reside in part in objects and structures that we cherish. If the house has been built or restored by the dweller and the surroundings been lovingly shaped, the pain will be much worse. But one's house is much more likely to fall victim to government fiat than to an angry lover. And when this occurs,

> mental anguish is accompanied by bewilderment, for we are invariably told that the destruction of our home is in the public interest and that our loss is a contribution to the common good (2001: 5).

The severe emotional distress and suffering caused to some individuals when they lose their homes through no fault of their own has been acknowledged by a trickle of academics for decades. In 1939, a category of severe mental depression characterised as “Demolition Melancholia” which was clearly “attributable to the unwilling expulsion of the patient from a lifelong home such as sometimes occurs under the compulsory slum-clearance scheme” was identified in English cities by psychologists and published in the *British Medical Journal* (Thorpe 1939: 127). In 1942, Winston Churchill’s scientific advisor Frederick Lindemann sent the Prime Minister his now infamous “Cherwell Memorandum” (named after Lindemann’s later baronetcy) in which he argued for the carpet bombing of civilian targets by explaining:

> Investigation seems to show that having one's home demolished is most damaging to morale. People seem to mind it more than having their friends or even relatives killed. At Hull signs of strain were evident, though only one-tenth of the houses were demolished. On the above figures we should be able to do ten times as much harm to each of the fifty-eight principal German towns. There seems little doubt that this would break the spirit of the people (Quoted in Hastings, 1999: 128).

As the 20th century progressed, the once seemingly unassailable belief that the positive benefits of enforced slum clearance outweighed any negative repercussions began to be more robustly challenged and critiqued by scholars and researchers, particularly in the field of public health. Increasing numbers of academics began to independently develop new methodological theories to identify what Wister calls the “envirogenic pathways to health and illness” (2005: 64).

> The built environment can be construed as a medium to health, acting as both a direct and indirect pathway to health in isolation or in tandem with other elements of the broader environments in which we live, in particular family, friendship, and community networks (Wister, 2005: 55-56)

Such research often builds upon Antonovsky’s ground-breaking theory of “salutogenesis” that seeks to detect the wellsprings of health rather than of

disease; those invisible factors that enable some individuals to cope with difficult and intensely stressful circumstances far better than others. According to Lindström and Eriksson, his theory postulates that some people possess a "Sense of Coherence" that gives them a clear sense of comprehension, manageability and meaning about their lives that "functions as a 'sixth sense' for survival and generates health promoting abilities." These are borne out of "General Resistance Resources" created by a variety of "biological, material and psychosocial factors that make it easier for people to perceive their lives as consistent, structured and understandable" (2006: 241). When one or more of these three emotional props is tampered with or removed entirely, like when someone is forced to leave their familiar, long-term home, an individual's ability to cope with stress will be tested to the full. Psychologist Jan Golembiewski employs salutogenic theory to investigate the causal relationship between architectural or human-made environmental contexts and the neuro-biological mechanisms that can affect human health (2012). While many epidemiological studies have shown that emotionally "taxing environments" can actually provoke "biological responses" that adversely affect the health and wellbeing of individuals. Such as Takotsubo Syndrome, a condition where individuals literally die of "a broken heart" as a direct result of short or long-term "emotional or physical stress" (Wallstrom et al, 2015; Yoshikawa, 2015) or more common-or-garden forms of heart-disease, with recent research suggesting that positively "perceived neighbourhood social cohesion" can protect individuals against myocardial infarction (Hawes & Smith, 2014: 1). But despite the availability of a growing multi-disciplinary methodological toolkit offering scholars new insights into the phenomenological and physical legacy of urban clearance, research into these long-term consequences in Scottish urban contexts remains stubbornly superficial, with accounts of Edinburgh's renewal schemes rarer still.

While accepting, mostly in passing, that there were some localised episodes of slum clearance in the town, the collective consensus appears to be that the "Athens of the North" escaped the worst ravages of the urban renewal programmes

normally associated with the post-industrial ”Workshop of the World” on the Clyde. To most commentators the keenly emphasised cultural and social dichotomy that has divided Scotland’s two largest cities is far greater than the forty-two physical miles that separate them. Political and cultural sociologist Johnathan Hearn sums this up in his brief study of urban symbolism in Scotland:

> Edinburgh is a receptacle of civic tradition, but it is also conveniently symbolically detached from the weight of the immediate industrial past and ensuing industrial decline. It evades the 'Glasgow problem.' (2003: 77)

Edinburgh has become a town “laden with cultural and historical imagery carrying various nationalist meanings… a storehouse of images” (Hearn 2003: 69), but precious few of these symbols or images are associated with its working class localities or inhabitants. “A refined capital city image of culture, class and castle…” always pushed to the forefront as the city fathers carefully “…constructed an identity that downplays the industrial” (Madgin and Rodger, 2013, 527) and its working class inhabitants and districts. The survival, protection and celebration of so many elements of the Scottish capital’s most significant built heritage has helped drive an underlying unanimity among secondary commentators that its late 20th century working-class demolitions and clearances warrant negligible analysis and discussion. The editors of *Edinburgh – The Making of a Capital City* offer a typical observation that the city did not undergo particularly substantial alterations during this period:

> …between the 1960s and the late 1980s one could be fairly sure that, on returning to Edinburgh after a prolonged absence, little would have changed, especially in the central area… (Edwards & Jenkins 2005: 183)

Given the scale of clearance and demolition in working class central areas that I have uncovered and the discussions I have had with former residents of these neighbourhoods, I find the very opposite to be the case. Returning visitors are often completely surprised by the sheer intensity of the destruction that took place during these twenty years in the areas around their former homes and they can be left stunned by just how unrecognisable their old neighbourhoods now are. But in a

later chapter, analysing the Edinburgh's mid-20th century urban planners and their legacy, professor of planning Cliff Hague also concurs with the editors' opinion:

> Edinburgh changed less than most large UK cities between 1900 and 1975. In part this was because it suffered little war damage, but it also reflected the way that planning operated, especially after 1945. (2005: 178)

Working-class streets and neighbourhoods are evidently not part of the "storehouse of images" that many observers have traditionally associated with mid-20th century Edinburgh, so their partial erasure from the city's built environment has simply failed to stimulate significant comment. The reasons for this omission may be complicated.

Porteous and Smith assert that the act of domicide is often inextricably linked with this act of "memoricide," which they define as:

> …deliberate attempts to expunge human memory, chiefly through the destruction of memory's physical prop, the cultural landscape (Porteous & Smith, 2001: ix).

They reinforce Lindsay Dubois's assertion that "…Landscape has an identity, and carries a symbolic load. It is both the object of and context for memories" (2000: 76). Oral historian Steven High identified a particularly blatant variant of this while researching the demolition of a cherished sawmill, a multi-generational place of employment in a small town in rural Canada, that coincided with the deliberate destruction of all of its associated documentary archival records that helped anchor it within the history of the community that had grown up around it. He flatly condemned both deeds as a single act of "cultural erasure" (2011: 560). But not all acts memory expurgation are nearly so overt. Sociologist J.K. Olick explains how recollections of specific events, places or experiences can often be lost because:

> …Accounts of the collective memory of any group or society are usually accounts of the memories of some subset of the group, particularly those with the access to the means of cultural production or whose opinions are more highly valued (1999: 388-339).

Maria Franklin, in a paper examining the sensitive and contested issues unleashed by recent archaeological research and interpretation of the material remains left behind by various African-American communities and neighbourhoods, shares Olick's opinion:

> History belongs to everyone ideally, perhaps, but in actuality it belongs to those who have access to its material remnants, to those who control its penning, and to those who possess the power to authorize and disseminate it (1997: 41).

Few contemporary or recent commentators about Edinburgh during the period under research appear to take the time to reflect upon their own position within the story. Nor do they consider whether their accounts, at worst, perhaps protect individuals or groups who might be culpable in the "murder" of homes or memories or, at best, unintentionally privilege an elite narrative at the expense of the memories of other sections of Edinburgh's population.

Certainly the contributors to *Edinburgh – The Making of a Capital City* never dwell upon this reflexive dilemma. Miles Glendinning draws heavily upon the testimony of his favoured local "housing crusader", Councillor Pat Rogan, retelling the former Housing Convener's account of his and his party's well-meant motivation for clearance. Glendinning never rigorously interrogates Rogan's assertions and his praise for the councillor's determined housebuilding drive is fulsome; singularly ignoring the prosecution of the actual clearance process and its consequences and legacy for those that were forced to move. Indeed, the attitudes and responses of the actual people most directly affected by Rogan and the Corporation's activities only appear in a passing aside as Glendinning suggests that an ungrateful electorate whose "rising expectations pushed aside old gratitude for a new home provided by the 'authority'" contributed in ending the Rogan initiated housing drive in the late 1960s (2005a: 165). Even in a chapter discussing the gradual decline of clearance activities in Edinburgh, in part due to the efforts of the growing conservation lobby working in tandem with local resident groups, the writers give the distinct impression that this was a middle-class only activity, with little resistance, input or

comment emanating from the cleared working class residents of Edinburgh (Jenkins & Holder 2005: 185-203). From its gushing foreword from Sarah Boyack MSP claiming that Edinburgh "managed to transform itself from a sleepy provincial city to a globally recognised city, without losing the identity that makes it attractive," to the editors' self-congratulatory conclusion that "…Edinburgh has struck a better balance than Glasgow which has periodically destroyed itself…" (2005: 237) the unwary reader is left with the impression that Scotland's capital city experienced no significant social trauma connected to housing in the latter half of the 20th century.

But there are occasional hints of the late 20th century turbulent social upheaval to be found in other local secondary sources. In *Edinburgh – Portrait of a City*, Charles McKean begins his post-war analysis breaking the element of consensus on Edinburgh's undisturbed urban fabric writing: "By comparison with other cities, Edinburgh escaped lightly in the Blitz, but it was not quite so fortunate in the blizzard of improvement that followed." Over the course of his analysis he outlines the successive development plans that followed the war, noting of Abercrombie's that it "accelerated the process" that inter-war clearance had begun when it "drained the old centre of a quarter of its population"(1991: 217). He lamented both the lack of Geddesian sympathy for Edinburgh's built fabric in the ambitious plans made by the Corporation and University, as well as the exportation of its inhabitants to the city's periphery, to live in "dormitories" that "became ghettos." He describes the moment the tide turned against clearance in favour of restoration and rehabilitation:

> Once the Cowgate was virtually derelict and ready for stretching into an internal bypass, and the Pleasance, much of Nicholson Street, Tollcross, George Square, Torphicen Street and Bristo Street almost a memory, the mood began to change. If Edinburgh was to survive as recognisably Edinburgh, its citizens would have to shed their comfortable suburban disengagement to challenge the city's febrile pursuit of fashion inspired by the envy of other cities. (2005: 220)

The catalyst for this volte face, McKean believes, was ultimately another powerful symbol from Edinburgh's iconic image "storehouse" – Edinburgh's 'original *New*

Town', the middle-class enclave of George Square. McKean saw its partial destruction as "Edinburgh's necessary sacrifice to modernity, upon its ruins much of the rest was saved" (2005: 218). A turning point of sorts, its demolition apparently awoke in many residents of the town a clear visualisation of exactly what ought to be preserved as "recognisably Edinburgh." Significantly though, it is clear this awakening was not provoked by the destruction of the nearby so-called slums and the clearance of the numerous inhabitants of those streets immediately adjacent to this cherished 18th century town square. Edinburgh's middle-class citizens were roused by the desire to oppose developers and developments that offended their aesthetic tastes, not by the discomfort being experienced by any neighbours being dispossessed of their 'slum' homes. Although it acknowledges the dislocation process, *Portrait of a City* unfortunately offers neither an objective assessment of the many individual acts of clearance that occurred nor does it capture the opinions and experiences of those who were actually being cleared.

In *Renewing Old Edinburgh: The Enduring Legacy of Patrick Geddes*, authors Johnson and Rosenburg examine the redevelopment of Edinburgh from late-Victorian era until 2010. They concern themselves mainly with examining the methodology and vision of the progenitor of the discipline of Town Planning, Sir Patrick Geddes and how his legacy was both ignored and honoured by successive generations of planners and councils in Edinburgh. They identify some key Geddesian principles that underpin the concept of "conservative surgery":

(1) Minimising the unnecessary destruction of the built heritage
(2) Avoiding significant disruption to the daily lives of local residents and
(3) Respecting the social and cultural traditions of the community (2010: 25).

And they agree with McKean's assessment that these planning precepts were thoroughly out of favour with post-war planners and councillors alike. They also concur with the prevailing view that the 1950s and 1960s was the era of the professional expert who always "professed to know what was best for the general public" and who "had few inhibitions about sweeping away the vestiges of the past

to accommodate the motor car" (2010: 200). Johnson and Rosenburg explore in great detail the many varied plans that emerged and actions taken by the Corporation and the University to modernise the medieval city, but ultimately reach the same conclusion as other writers, that Edinburgh had a lucky escape from the worst ravages that could have befallen it.

> Although Edinburgh did not manage to escape entirely from the pitfalls of 1960s-style comprehensive redevelopment, there is little doubt that the inner South Side of the city could have fared much worse… Very much against the odds, the central spine of the inner South Side of the city, from South Bridge to Clerk Street, managed to survive largely intact and it was possible to preserve and upgrade many of the Georgian buildings in the locality. (2005: 218)

The possibility that things 'could have been worse' may have been lost on the tens of thousands of Edinburgh residents who were forced to relocate from their homes during the third quarter of the century, and it also unconsciously reveals another reflexive deficit that underscores many local secondary housing sources. Authorial or editorial biases in British urban writings are rarely acknowledged, but competing ideologies of left versus right-wing or conflicting nationalisms or identities, or class and gender preconceptions are rarely far from the surface in many texts. Sometimes the influence of competing political ideologies is easy to detect, such as in two of the key texts mentioned above which both begin with forewords from sitting government ministers of their eras, from entirely opposite sides of the political spectrum. In other secondary sources, political influences are perhaps less overt, but it is still often possible to detect subtle hints of authorial agreement with or opposition to the prevailing political housing orthodoxies of the day. On competing nationalisms or identities, Murie and Currie note that there had been a tradition in studies of housing in the UK to extrapolate data from diverse and disparate geographic and social localities and apply it to all, resulting in an unintentional Anglocentric bias. They posit such research is:

> …most obviously flawed at a national level within the UK where economic differences are overlaid with differences in cultural history, in forms of social and community organisation, in institutions and legislation, in local politics, and in the organisation of government… Too often, what purports to be accounts of the UK housing system are more narrowly based

> accounts assuming that what obtains in England, or even in the South of England can form the basis for generalisation for the whole system. (Currie & Murie 1996: 1-2)

This may in part be accounted for by Johnathan Hearn who suggests that "…nationalism and urbanism are not just 'like' each other, they are deeply interrelated" (2003: 77). But the consequence is that general British urban scholarship, in an effort to establish universal principles or establish national housing or renewal models, has often unintentionally overlooked differences occurring in its geographic fringes. In Scottish urban writing of the latter 20th century, this marginalisation has often manifested itself along class lines. Perhaps this is to be expected in books or studies that set out to purposely rehabilitate or protect the legacy of upper and middle classes architectural movements, like Modernism, or government instigated planning constructs, like the New Town Movement, where the establishment prejudices of the author are often to the fore as they seek to overcome a conflicting public body of material or opinion. But in the study of post-war urban renewal, where the vast bulk of the activity was directed against the working class population of towns and cities, the exclusion of the opinions and testimony from most secondary sources of those individuals that actually experienced the effects of clearance is inexcusable.

Fortunately, this is a gap that can be partially filled by providing new "ethnographies of place" that offer fresh insights into these "vanished communities" and allow urban historians the opportunity to explore those "neighbourhoods which were torn apart by the redevelopment pressures that flowed from slum myths" (Mayne & Murray, 2001: 4). We can see this beginning to happen in the Scottish urban context with a recent publication by Chris Garner (2016) who uses oral testimonies he has collected to continue telling the history of the fishing village of Newhaven during its clearance and redevelopment from late 1950s to the mid-1970s and a 2017 article by Kearns et al assessing the long-term impact of clearance upon a number of Glasgow residents who were re-located to high-rise housing elsewhere in the city in the 1960s and 1970s. Prior to Garner's

account, the most recent authoritative history of Newhaven claims that the village "died" around 1959 , " killed by kindness" when Edinburgh Corporation embarked upon its redevelopment programme and wearily concludes that "…in knocking down the houses they somehow knocked out the memories…" (McGowran 1994: vii & 231). By actively engaging in an oral history project with former, recently-returned and remaining long-term residents of Newhaven Garner annulled McGowran's somewhat rash obituary for the village. While Kearns et al attempt to test what they perceive as a recent tendency to uncritically accept the notion that "community" and personal "agency" were automatically sacrificed during clearance procedures by re-analysing survey interviews carried out at the time of relocation and a series of contemporary oral history interviews with surviving individuals. Re-connecting with the personal narratives of some of those who were actually cleared revealed that the long-term effects of clearance to high-rises in Glasgow were more varied than had previously been believed:

> On balance, it cannot be said that relocation was a wholly negative or indeed entirely positive experience for those involved; on its own, it neither made lives nor wrecked lives. Moreover, relocation did not have an overtly negative influence on long-term social outcomes, as portrayed in accounts of social dislocation and community destruction… oral histories showed that while relocation may not be the main life-time determinant, combined with other factors it could affect subsequent residential trajectories, particularly for the younger generation (Kearns et al, 2017: 21).

Scottish folklorist and ethnographer Calum MacLean wrote in 1959 that "There are two histories of every land and people - the written history that tells what is considered politic to tell and the unwritten history that tells everything" (2006: Chapter Four). This poststructuralist dictum, an example of what Sangster calls "scepticism about grand narratives" (2013: 60), underpins the work of modern oral history academics whose output "offers a challenge to the accepted myths of history, to the authoritarian judgement in its tradition" (Thomson 1988: 39). But, in bridging the evidential gap between recognising a significant hidden story and encouraging individuals to provide sufficient corroboration, by sharing their often very personal accounts, oral historians are confronted by several serious methodological, ethical and moral obstacles.

Decades after the first "organised" academic-led oral history projects of the 1940s and 1950s (Thomson 2006: 51) researchers are still grappling with fundamental theoretical issues such as the "dual authority of the oral history interview" (High 2009: 13), self-reflexivity (Wong: 2009) or the subjectivity of memory and recollection (Johnston & McIvor: 2004). Pertinent to my own body of research, in an evaluation of oral historical praxes utilised in the study of communities, Linda Shopes notes that oral historians sometimes fall into the trap of making "naïve assumptions about what properly constitutes history and how to approach it." Instead of asking their interviewees "critical questions about broad themes of social life that cut across individuals' experience" she suggests oral historians in this arena are often diverted by autobiographical life stories and unfocused, localised minutiae due to a fear of "disturbing an ongoing, comfortable social relationship by asking difficult or challenging questions"(2002: 591). Conversely, she also cautions that "scholarly projects" about communities can be too "narrowly focused" on their "very specific research questions" causing interviewers to accidentally overlook or wilfully ignore potentially significant information being offered by their interviewees (2002: 592). Her most crucial advice offered to researchers undertaking projects, such as my own, when encountering sensitive or troubling lines of questioning during an interview, is to always "approach interviews in a spirit of critical inquiry," adding:

> In part this means asking the hard questions that may cause discomfort, that address difficult or controversial topics, that may reveal ruptures in the community… The conversation may not be easy, but the result may well be to foster a more nuanced and humane understanding of the way individuals live in history-which is what oral history does best (2002: 997).

In practice, the emotional detachment between participants that Shopes demands in discussions that provoke controversy or upset is undoubtedly one of the most challenging aspects of the oral history interview process. Elizabeth Carnegie discusses this in a paper examining museum exhibits constructed around oral histories that often unexpectedly confound visitor expectation because they are

perceived to have failed to capture some aspect of the lived experience being portrayed:

> In relation to people's memories… individuals who know (or fear) themselves to be stigmatized by poverty, profession or abuse will be careful about how and what they say for fear of disclosure or exposure. Thus 'stigma management' has a direct impact on the memories which people consent to share and therefore on the shaping of displays (2006: 73).

In this context, the end result of the oral history project has been adversely affected by the interviewer's failure to recognise or pursue sensitively a topic that the narrator has been reticent to discuss.

Building upon her experiences of the disinclination of her interviewees to discuss certain difficult topics, oral historian Lenore Layman has developed an outline "taxonomy of reticence" to assist oral historians who encounter this barrier to positive collaboration during their interviews. She sees this reluctance as a singular strength of the discipline, suggesting that it firmly establishes "…the narrators' authority in the collaborative process of oral history making" and forces interviewers to continually examine and revise their methodological approach and responses during interview situations (Layman, 2009: 248). Lindsay Dubois advises interviewers to listen to the silences of their interviewees, as "It calls attention to the difficulties posed by unpopular narratives about the past" (2000: 75). While Kathryn Anderson goes further, warning that the scholarly pursuit of "generalizations" can undermine an interview, suggesting that "Ideally, the processes of analysis should be suspended or at least subordinated in the process of listening" (Anderson & Jack 1991: 183). Dana Jack records later in the same article her own difficulty, when interviewing individual members of two very different female populations, suppressing "…the theories that told me what to hear and how to interpret what these women had to say" (Anderson & Jack 1991: 186). But Steven High, in an essay examining the negatives and positives of shared authority within the interview situation, worries that too much deference to the interviewee might, on occasion, "…lead (or force) researchers to abdicate their responsibility to

“speak truth to power”” adding, “It requires courage for researchers engaged in collaborative projects to draw conclusions that might prove unpopular with community partners” (2009: 20).

These are just some of the contradictory ethical and methodological dilemmas that confront oral history researchers while attempting to recover problematic, sensitive or contentious community experiences. In Chapter 5 I discuss my own experiences of how I approached and navigated such challenges when they emerged during my interviews with individuals that witnessed or experienced dislocation and domicide in post-war Edinburgh. But before I relate and analyse these clearance narratives I shall, in the following chapters, re-examine the surviving relevant primary documentary sources and attempt to develop a more nuanced quantitative and qualitative account of the state-sponsored clearance activities in the Scottish capital in the third quarter of the 20th century than has perhaps been achieved before.

Chapter 2: Edinburgh's Post-War Grand Plans - Modernising a "Political and municipal museum piece."

On the 28th May 1943, sandwiched between advertisements for a magic lantern lecture at the Edinburgh Psychic College on apparitional "materialisations" and a Royal Scots Band tea dance in Princes Street Gardens, there appeared on the classified page of *The Scotsman* an "anxious" plea from the recently established "Advisory Committee on City Development" to the readers of Edinburgh's premier newspaper of record. The Committee, consisting of a King's Counsel, the Rector of the University and a former Lord Provost, sought the views of "all bodies or persons interested in the welfare and future of our City and its surroundings" as they prepared a report for the Town Council "upon the general questions of principle which should govern the preparation of planning schemes for the city." Indeed, the distinguished gentlemen were so anxious to proceed with their report that they gave those interested in such matters only a little over a fortnight to respond. Readers of that day's *Scotsman* may have been forgiven for being somewhat diverted by the news contained elsewhere in the same issue about American bombing raids on Germany, Japanese operations in the Pacific or the account of the recent dam-busting activities of the 617 Squadron in the Ruhr Valley, but in the end over 150 of the Scottish capital's citizens did respond to the Committee's plea before the given deadline. The resulting forty-six page document, entitled *The Future of Edinburgh – Report of the Advisory Committee on City Development 1943*, drew heavily upon these submissions, along with those of a selection of local organisations and the Committee's own personal experience. It was published in October that year and war or no war it would, according to its authors, herald for the city "a rendezvous with destiny" (1943: 10).

The Advisory Committee had been tasked by the Town Council to examine the "general considerations governing the development of the City as the Capital of Scotland and preparations of planning schemes in relation thereto" but with special

emphasis placed upon identifying the influences and forces that moulded the city into its mid-20th century form (1943: 3). The authors were clearly keenly aware of the increasing dominance of "the new science of planning," acknowledging that there was a growing tension among members of the city council on this evolving discipline. Some authorities were inclined to wait for the publication of national planning strategies by central government, such as the Barlow (1940), Scott (1942) and Uthwatt (1942) Reports, to see how Edinburgh could be "fitted in to the general picture," rather than develop a plan for Edinburgh alone. The Advisory Committee, however, profoundly disagreed with this view believing instead that Edinburgh needed its own plan (1943: 6). From the outset the report stressed a deeply-held view that the city possessed a singular topographical, economic, social and cultural ecology, unlike any other:

> In the first place Edinburgh is a unique city. It is not possible to foist upon it the blue-print for urban development or redevelopment adequate for the normal city. For Edinburgh contains in its crown priceless gems which, if displaced or destroyed, can never be recreated. Moreover, its historic buildings are not empty shells, attractive only to the antiquarian or the tourist. They still constitute the centres around which revolves the life of the City and of Scotland itself… Any schemes which disregard the past and attempts to guide development in spite of it will fail. (1943: 5)

Recognising that urban change was inevitable and imminent, the Committee decided its core task was to establish what it hoped would be the firm guiding principles that would shape and mould any and all future masterplans for Edinburgh's development. To do this, its members expressed an outline of what they saw as the essence of the city – what must be preserved, what must be altered and what must be swept away. They decided the city was defined by its national and regional civic administrative history and its continuing part to play in this role, by its legal and educational institutions and by its banking and financial industries. Similarly its main shopping, hotel and tourist thoroughfares were deemed insolubly cemented in the public consciousness of what made Edinburgh 'Edinburgh'. Each of these constituent parts was deemed worthy of protection and preservation in situ. The panel then turned its attention to those parts of the town that required urgent, what it termed, "decongesting" – namely housing, industry and transport. In so

doing, the Advisory Committee would lay the foundations of the essential structure of urban planning and thinking in Edinburgh for the next quarter of a century.

At the turn of the 20th century the visionary town planner Patrick Geddes had originated and practised in Edinburgh a style of urban renewal he termed "conservative surgery" which placed a premium on the minimisation of social, architectural and cultural destruction and disturbance to the town. He advocated small-scale, block by block, street by street evaluation, restoration and reconstruction of existing structures and urban configurations, saving all that could be saved of a town's built and social fabric. In the first half of the 20th century, even with the significantly increased pace of central government sponsored slum clearance that emerged in the 1930s, these Geddesian first principles were essentially maintained in the various fragmentary urban interventions of the Edinburgh City Architect E.J.Macrae (Johnson & Rosenburg, 2010). Annette O'Carroll also points out that, that despite adopting this conservative approach, when compared with Glasgow's interwar equivalent housing activities, Edinburgh still "…succeeded in demolishing more substandard housing per head of population than Glasgow, and building more housing for slum clearance under improvement and reconstruction schemes" (1999: 215). But in 1943, the authors of *The Future of Edinburgh* envisioned an even bolder plan of action for the city. They defined its "housing problem" as essentially one of shortage of supply, compounded by significant pockets of overcrowded slum conditions. *The Advisory Committee on City Development* firmly believed many of the town's centrally located industries needed moved to the peripheries and in so doing would free up the land necessary to alleviate emerging transport infrastructure issues. The solution they advocated would entail large area demolition and construction programmes that allied the building and design expertise of private enterprise with the capital subsidies of central government, guided by the firm oversight of local government. The town's slum and overcrowding problems would be addressed by identifying, demarcating and eradicating its "defective cores" along with their "borderline fringe"

neighbourhoods and relocating their inhabitants, and the dirty, heavy industries in which they worked, to the edges of the town. It was, in the opinion of the Committee only possible for a "fraction of the whole population" of these areas to be rehoused in their former neighbourhoods once redevelopment was begun. [Edinburgh Corporation, 1943: 13-14) And so, by cementing the concept that Edinburgh's working-class residents were essentially a portable resource, the tone and tenor was set for the housing and planning activities which followed.

Their official minutes record that on the 4th May 1944 Edinburgh's Town Council resolved to establish a formally constituted Housing Committee for the first time, transferring to it the housing role that had been previously performed by the Public Health Committee. The two primary functions of the Committee in its early days were, firstly, the identification of sizeable land banks on the outskirts of Edinburgh for building new temporary and permanent housing upon and, secondly, the "extensive replanning and redevelopment of certain areas in the City." The fledgling committee was quick to acknowledge the "formidable" task needed to perform the latter following the Town Council's decision to suspend for the duration of the war all measures for dealing with insanitary and overcrowded conditions. To rehouse "the large numbers of tenants displaced from the areas" now under scrutiny, in a bold departure from the past, the Housing Committee considered for the very first time a motion for the "building of blocks of flats higher than any hitherto constructed in the city" (APPC, 1944-45: 1-9). In 1945, the Town Council took two further bold planning steps when its Streets and Buildings Committee created a Planning Sub-Committee exclusively tasked with the oversight of new developments and the Corporation appointed eminent town planner Sir Patrick Abercrombie as "Town Planning Consultant" along with a new "Town Planning Officer" and team who would assist Abercrombie in producing, along with the existing City Engineer's department, a grand master-plan for the redevelopment of Edinburgh (APSBC. 1945-46: 3-4).

Initially presented to the Town Council in 1947, the impressively sumptuous, outsized and colourful tome *A Civic Survey and Plan for Edinburgh,* penned by Sir Patrick Abercrombie and Derek Plumstead, the Town Planning Officer, would eventually be published in 1949 and made available to Edinburgh citizens at a cost of 25/- per copy. Its core purpose was outlined in the optimistic foreword by the Lord Provost, Sir Andrew Murray. The *Civic Survey* would comprehensively address the troika of planning issues recommended by the *Future of Edinburgh*. Murray was unequivocal, the overcrowded neighbourhoods would be "ironed out", the "badly situated" industries would be "adjusted" and the city's infrastructure routes re-planned to "meets the needs of all sections of the community." Edinburgh had recently held its first International Festival which had placed the town on a global stage, and Murray was determined this was Edinburgh's opportunity to shine. The austere make-do-and-mend war and rationing years were drawing to a close and the second half of the 20th century offered an opportunity to bring fresh architectural innovations and planning concepts to the twilight areas of the capital. He concluded: "Buildings outworn in their usefulness and forms of architecture that are ugly and without merit must yield their place to new ideas and new conceptions." Patrick Abercrombie rose to this challenge.

The emergent post-war dominant discourse in governmental and administrative circles of an exuberant planning professional 'Mandarin' class of civil servant was greeted with cautious optimism by some members of the Scottish political establishment. In his autobiography, that behemoth of the Scottish Labour movement, Tom Johnston described his sense of alarm during those wartime occasions when "some ingenious gentleman in London would exude a plan" for the centralisation and zoning of Scottish industry, housing, transport and other vital functions that might be approved in a "rapturous moment" by some faceless bureaucrat in a Westminster ministry. He decided it was far better to "ward off the menace" by encouraging local authorities to embrace the planners before such an imposition should come to pass, encouraging them to shed their inherent "fear" of

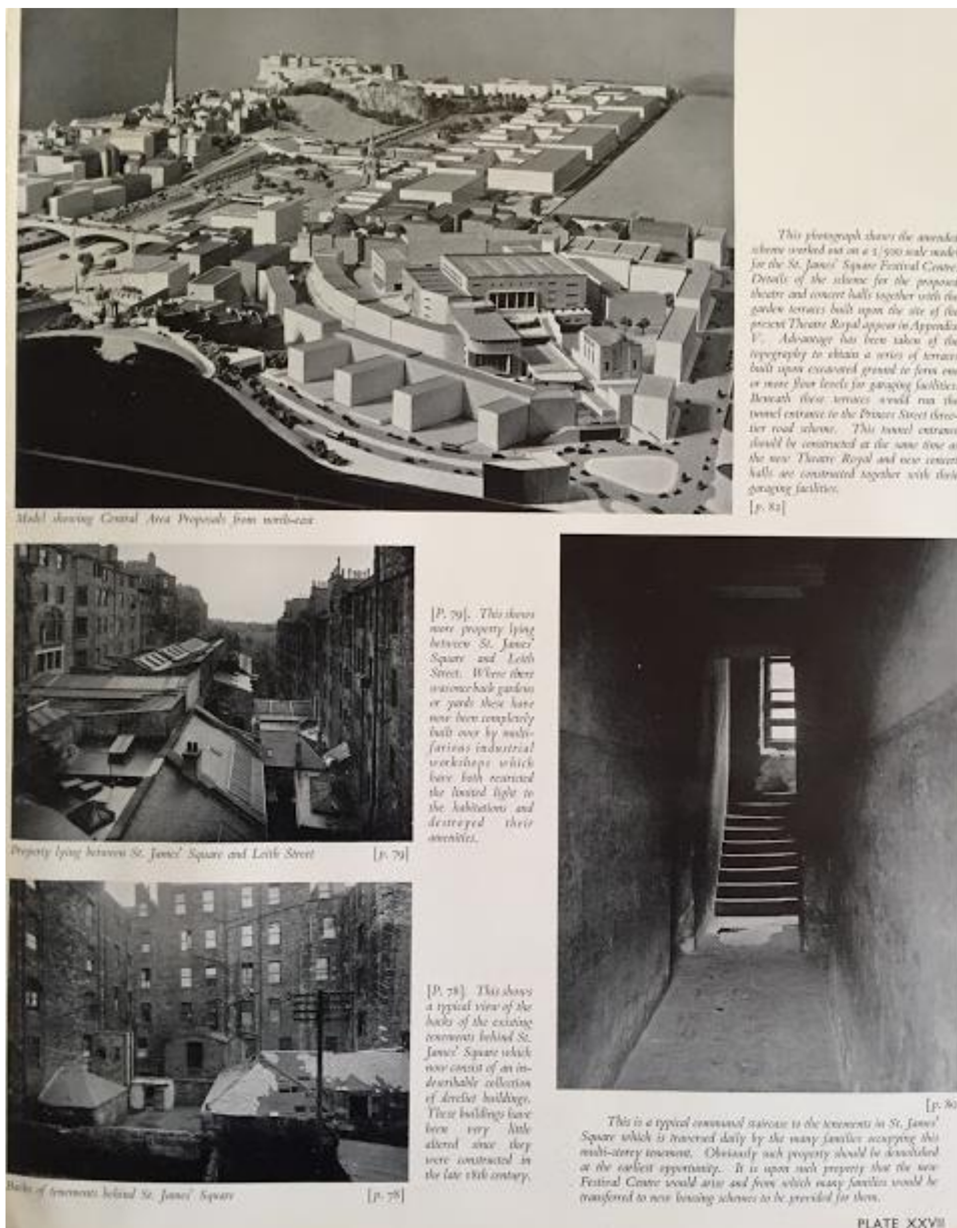
loss of “sovereignty and autonomy,” their fear of rising “costs” and their fear of the “jargon of planners” (Johnston, 1952: 166). In this spirit, in 1943 he had invited Abercrombie to help plan the post-war reconstruction of west central Scotland. Abercrombie had lengthy experience working with local authorities north of the Tweed, having been appointed by the Scottish Secretary of State in 1936 as an advisor to the Department of Health to give his considered opinion on the plans submitted by Scottish councils for the building of housing estates (*The Scotsman*, 05/03/1936: 11). A renowned academic expert in town planning, with a prodigious work ethic and literary output, Abercrombie is perhaps better remembered for his post-war plans for Plymouth, London and the Clyde Valley. In their preface Abercrombie and Plumstead acknowledged the work of Geddes, but were clear that the discipline of town planning and the expectation of urban dwellers had significantly changed since the other Sir Patrick’s ideas were common currency in Edinburgh. While the planning and rebuilding opportunities of an erased urban palimpsest afforded to Abercrombie in other badly war-damaged British towns and cities were unavailable to him in Edinburgh, which had escaped the Luftwaffe relatively unscathed from World War Two, he did not see this as an impediment to his plans. He felt the ascendant ideals of the Garden City movement and the concepts of rigidly zoned functional boundaries could still be imposed on a town like Edinburgh regardless:

> The results of bomb devastation led to a tremendous impetus being given to crystallising these original thoughts as they are interpreted in planning reports… The authorities whose cities had escaped devastation rightly realised that the inherent problems were similar to those of the bombed towns and that the biggest stumbling block to solutions was the old bogey of compensation. The new [Town and Country Planning] Act removed that obstacle and redevelopment of outmoded areas is well within the combined resources of central and local authorities (Abercrombie & Plumstead, 1949: vii).

In the preamble to their work, Abercrombie and Plumstead make clear their respect for the “ancient and venerated shrine” that Edinburgh had become in the public consciousness, but they also make equally clear that not every part of this shrine was sacrosanct, to remain forever inviolate. The “regrouping” of those Edinburgh citizens living in overly dense central neighbourhoods by sending them to

the peripheries was part of the envisaged solution to the congested centre, where "monumental buildings" currently co-existed with "humble homes" and other accrued manifestations of disorganised urban chaos (1949: 2). An anathema to Abercrombie's conceptualisation of urban order, clearly defined functional urban zones were proposed – residential, academic, civic, industrial, commercial, leisure – all given their own place in a grand scheme served by a new transport infrastructure which would allow the free and easy movement around and between each sector. No locality within the city boundaries escaped the critical eye of Abercrombie and Plumstead as they identified what was worthy of saving and what must give way to progress. Drawing heavily upon detailed work completed previously by the City Engineer's department, enormous pull-out maps and surveys were produced that revealed a wide variety of recent data and outlined their proposed changes. From historic building density and condition, to population concentrations and family sizes, from traffic flow rates to green belt and public park distribution, every conceivable facet of how life was lived in Edinburgh was analysed and published. Elaborate architectural drawings and models offered glimpses of the clean, light monumental Modernist city that was just waiting to be built, while contrasting stark, enlarged detailed photographs of the interior of dark, dank tenement closes and dilapidated and ruinous back courts assured the readers of the *Civic Survey* of the common sense of the proposition that "Obviously such property should be demolished at the earliest opportunity" (1949: Plate XXVII – see Figure 3). Numerous clinical graphs and bald statistical tables further bolstered the authors' case for radical urban surgery.

On the central issue of housing, Abercrombie and Plumstead claimed that some 7,000 of Edinburgh's 123,265 dwellings were unfit for human habitation, and these contained a fraction under 25,000 inhabitants. Further, due to the advancing decay of much of the remaining housing stock, they warned grimly that ultimately the city could be looking to rehome as many as 262,926 of its 478,769 citizens to ensure "a good home environment for all" (1949: 28). But the health and wellbeing



(Figure 3 – Plate XXVII from 'A Civic Survey & Plan for the City & Royal Burgh of Edinburgh' (1949) showing a selection of photographs of tenemental scenes in Edinburgh and a model for a Modernist megastructure to replace the 18th century St James' Square)

of its citizens was not the sole motivation for encouraging the authors to write a detailed and statistics-driven chapter on Edinburgh's "Population Redistribution." Eradication of overcrowding and insanitary housing conditions were just two of the driving forces impelling redevelopment, some neighbourhoods may be:

> …best cleared entirely of residential property in favour of a commercial use as in the case of the St. James Square area, or, the proposed industrial zone for Leith or for the University precinct about George Square (1949: 34).

In addition to these commercial, educational and industrial considerations, the *Civic Survey* also advocated the clearance of structures and properties for the purposes of improved transport infrastructure. Some of the schemes suggested have become infamous in recent Edinburgh folklore. They included a proposal for an “inner ring road” dual carriageway that would have cut a huge swathe through the Old Town and parts of Edinburgh’s South Side, connecting with a traffic tunnel that would emerge at the top of Leith Walk. The authors of the *Civic Survey* never dwelt upon the details of the difficult and distressing social upheaval that would inevitably be involved in the eviction and removal of thousands of individuals and businesses that unfortunately found themselves in the path of their proposed schemes. When affected neighbourhoods come up for discussion, Abercrombie and Plumstead resorted to euphemisms that drew a thin veil over the human cost. A new road layout in Newhaven that “cannot avoid disturbing the village” failed to divulge the true price of that ‘disturbance’ on Newhaven residents (1949: 48). The creation of a new commercial and theatrical zone in the St James Square area that would see an existing population of 3763 people “decentralised and redistributed,” was simply just another inevitable consequence of ever-evolving city life that these residents would have to accept in the name of progress (1949: 58).

Their approach to Edinburgh’s built heritage was similarly problematic – on the one hand they were clear that a case could be made for the preservation of unique examples of historic architecture (though unique was very evidently a heavily subjective term); while on the other hand they asserted firmly that any perceived value that merited preservation must always be balanced against “the possibilities of what can be achieved by building anew” (1949: 59). This schizophrenic approach to preservation and renewal of the town’s architectural inheritance was no more clearly displayed than in their attitude to the hotly

contested 18th century properties around George Square into which the University authorities dearly wished to expand their growing campus. Abercrombie and Plumstead recognised the square's cherished historic legacy, and advocated, at least in the short term, a partial retention of those town houses that could be modernised for contemporary functionality. But, they also paradoxically judged that the buildings "by no means deserve pride of place in Edinburgh's heritage," concluding ominously, so "Why then allow them to stand in the way of a great project?" In a recent volume, narrating the growth and expansion of the University of Edinburgh during its entire history, Clive B. Fenton explains that "professional opinions" such as these, that encouraged redevelopment rather than preservation, "…would be difficult to counter" in the years that followed (Fenton, 2017: 149). He confirms this in a later sub-section he calls "The Battle for George Square" in which he describes how strenuous objections made to the Secretary of State for Scotland about University plans for the Georgian square in the subsequent decade could be legitimately dismissed by the politician because opponents had failed to object to "…the creation of an educational/cultural zone" when it was so clearly outlined by Abercrombie and Plumstead in 1949 and subsequently accepted in principle by Edinburgh Corporation (2017: 158).

Assessment of the impact of the *Civic Survey* by other commentators is varied, with some content simply to point out that the majority of its most radical recommendations were never realised. Robert Naismith dismisses it as just another constituent part of its wider contemporary canon of similar planning literature that aimed for Utopia but ultimately delivered little:

> The post-war years thrust planners upon Scottish town councils who should have known better than to permit their fantasies to be published. Abercrombie's plan for Edinburgh was so absurdly unachievable as to suggest that he probably did not know himself what he was up to. (1989: 143)

Rebecca Madgin and Richard Rodger compare it to other contemporary "aspirational" plans drawn-up elsewhere in the country, but conclude that its ambitious proposals were simply "…beyond the reach and resources of the city in

the immediate post-war years" (2013: 518). Charles McKean faintly praises its detailed rationality, but decries the authors for a perceived failure to grasp "…the *idea* of Edinburgh," for thinking it merely "just another large city, with unusual obstinacies of terrain" (1991: 217). Miles Glendinning is more generous, when placing it in its wider planning context, he notes positively that its suggested movement of residents only within the confines of the city presented "…a far more conservative formula of internal population redistribution" than Abercrombie had proposed elsewhere (2005: 155). Michael Fry ably recounts the contemporary opprobrium from the Edinburgh citizenry, but ultimately dismisses its legacy as doing "…no more than blight certain areas as decisions were awaited on their future. Decisions never came," adding boldly that "On the whole, the planners lost and the people won" (2009: 357). But, I would contend, like the *Future of Edinburgh* before it, the *Civic Survey* cast a long shadow over many Edinburgh neighbourhoods. The social, cultural and psychological stigma its prescriptions would formally affix to many localities, a little too casually dismissed by Fry simply as 'blight', assured their destruction or lack of investment for the following quarter century or more. Some of these areas will be discussed in much greater detail in later chapters, but it is possible to discern Abercrombie and Plumstead's influence almost immediately in the decisions taken by the Council and its new Planning Committee. Their continued role in the refusal of permission to the proprietors of the Theatre Royal (adjacent to St. Mary's Catholic Cathedral) to rebuild following a fire in 1946 in order to facilitate the *Civic Survey's* redevelopment plans for the nearby St James Square area is one significant early example of this (APPC, 1944-45: 5).

While the planners sketched and refined their intellectual visions for an Edinburgh to be built and rebuilt over the decades to follow, the new Housing Committee got to grips with the practicalities of the significant house creation task that confronted it. As the daily threat to mainland Britain gradually receded towards the war's end, key central government departments began turning their attention

to post-war reconstruction and the national housing issue, publishing several reports and internal circulars on the subject to provoke action from the local authorities. Operating within the new basic housing standards as laid down by the Department of Health for Scotland, council officers calculated that Edinburgh would very soon require around thirty to forty thousand new homes to be built. As a short-term solution to this massive residential shortfall, the Corporation came under intense pressure from Westminster to accept a substantial quota of the prefabricated homes being churned out by re-purposed British armaments factories. Preferring permanent solutions to temporary, the Corporation somewhat reluctantly, in August 1944, opted to accept 7500 houses from the government before its elected members and officers turned to the vexing question of exactly where to site these “prefabs”. The city’s public parks were proposed by the City Architect as one contentious possibility, but the Secretary of state gave his “indication” that such a course of action must only be a “very last resort.” The City Architect also argued with the Ministry of Work over which type of available temporary structure was most suited to Edinburgh. The Department of Health eventually told the Corporation that they would receive an allocation of 4,000 units of whatever was available by the summer of 1945 and urged them to begin appropriate site preparations. Plans for the sites for 2,000 temporary houses were approved by December of 1944, with three sites now set aside for the prefabricated structures at Muirhouse, Sighthill and West Pilton and negotiations continued over further private sites with “private enterprise builders” who had put services into certain plots but not as yet built upon them (APHC, 1944-45: 5-7).

As the war concluded, the activities of the Housing Committee intensified. Central government soon launched a “Finish the Homes” campaign to encourage local authorities to accelerate the completion of partially built permanent homes on their books, but the Committee found its efforts in this respect frustrated by lack of both human resource and necessary building supplies. The debate over whether it was wasteful to use land earmarked for permanent homes for temporary ones

would rumble on, but long-term solutions had to wait until the immediate and acute housing shortage was addressed. With only 53 of the promised 4,000 temporary homes arriving by early 1946 and having completed a mere 142 permanent houses the previous year, the Housing Committee had a very difficult job housing the 2,500 families it had on its waiting list in need of emergency housing by the end of the year. Building 30-40,000 homes was beginning to look like an absurdist fantasy. An increasingly desperate Housing Committee took to placing adverts in the local press looking for available spare rooms and scouring the town for empty properties that could be utilised or adapted to house homeless residents. They found and sub-divided several large historic houses across the town, but, in the first year, this provided homes for just 80 families. The Committee also "approached the appropriate authorities regarding the possible use of service huts for emergency housing accommodation" (APHC. 1945-46: 3). Their entreaties were initially rebuffed. But by late 1946, as various former military sites slowly became surplus to immediate post-wartime requirements, the Corporation began to take over former POW and army training camps, beginning with 76 huts at Craigentinny which had recently been occupied by desperate squatters. The squatting families were allowed to remain, but on condition that their already cramped Nissen huts were further sub-divided in order to provide accommodation for around 150 families in all. By the following year the Corporation had taken over similar camps at Prestonfield, Duddingston and Sighthill. Conditions, as the chair of the Housing Committee admitted, were far from satisfactory for the thousand or so families now being homed in the huts:

> The use of these camps brings its own problems. The accommodation is definitely sub-standard, the only cooking facilities in the huts themselves being gas rings or small stoves. The major cooking facilities are provided on a communal basis as are also sanitary and washing facilities. The severe weather of last winter placed a great strain both on the occupiers of these and on the officials responsible for the smooth running of the camps. One of the essentials in the successful functioning of such emergency housing is the fostering of a community spirit, and in the adaptation of Prestonfield and Duddingston Camps which are particularly isolated provision is being made for centres which will form the focal points of camp activities (APHC, 1947-48: 5-7).

It would not be until January of 1949 that the Housing Committee could record with some sense of achievement that they had finally received and built all but 77 of their allocated 4,000 prefabs; the Committee Chair, Councillor George Romanes, recording in the minutes:

> …whatever their aesthetic and structural shortcomings, however wasteful they may be of land, they have afforded a substantial and welcome alleviation of the dire needs of the City and have given satisfaction to a vast majority of their tenants (APHC, 1948-49: 1).

However, this satisfaction must have been short-lived as the Emergency Housing Officer was recorded in that year's minutes as having 4,500 names on his waiting-list requiring immediate homing with not a single house available.

Around this time, another institution emerged that would come to dominate Edinburgh's urban redevelopment. Having been created as a subordinate group of the long-established Streets and Buildings Committee, the latter was rendered immediately obsolete by the instituting of a full and distinct Planning Committee, gifted its new authority by the ground-breaking *Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act, 1947.* It held its first official meeting in April of 1948, and, having worked closely with Abercrombie and Plumstead as they produced their *Civic Survey*, made clear their intention to implement their planning experts' preliminary recommendations. First among their intended significant projects would be the clearance and rebuilding of a large area of Leith around the old Citadel. Identified as confusingly congested with obsolete housing and mixed industry, the area was viewed as ripe for wholesale redevelopment. However, the Committee minutes recorded a significant, almost inconvenient, hurdle to be overcome in the execution of their grand scheme: "The principal obstacle in the way of a speedy realisation of the proposals is that they involve the rehousing of approximately 1,000 families" (APPC, 1948-49: 4). By the end of its second year, the Planning Committee had succeeded in approving the St Leonards and St James Square areas as the first two "Comprehensive Development Areas" and, after meeting with representatives of the University to discuss plans for the educational institution's expansion around

the George Square area, it had granted permission for the construction of an extension of their medical buildings that would intrude upon the north-west corner of the historic square. Acknowledging the growing controversy in the latter decision, the Committee was keen to point out that it made it clear to the University authorities that this decision in no way set a precedent for further expansion in the square and for its part the University apparently "…undertook to consider alternative schemes which would not contemplate destruction of the facades of the other side of George Square" (APPC, 1948-49: 5). Emerging opprobrium to the University's plans taught the Planning Committee that good public relations could be vital to the successful implementation of the new planning ideals. So keen were they to sell the city envisaged in the *Civic Survey*, that they supported its publication in 1949 by organising and funding a series of public magic lantern shows and discussions that would share a vision of Edinburgh's planned urban 'materialisations' as opposed to any historic apparitional ones (APPC, 1949-50: 1).

As the new decade dawned the Planning Committee intensified its efforts to implement certain key recommendations of the *Civic Survey*. Derek Plumstead, as Town Planning Officer, was tasked with zoning land in the city by its appropriate functional usage - "Commercial and administrative," "industrial", "residential" and "communication." According to their annual minutes, Plumstead regularly expressed his dissatisfaction to the committee about the intolerable accommodation and facilities provided for him and his team. The Committee sourced additional funding for the Planning Department, but the extra provision apparently proved insufficient for Edinburgh's first Town Planning Officer. Patrick Abercrombie had only been employed on a temporary consultative basis until the *Civic Survey* was completed, when Plumstead resigned in June 1951 Edinburgh also lost the services of the co-author of its bright new masterplan (APPC, 1950-51: 2).

While the Planning Committee sorted out its teething troubles, the Housing Committee pressed on with its programme of providing emergency accommodation for Edinburgh's registered homeless. Bolstered by the new *Housing (Scotland) Act* of 1949, which dispensed with previous restrictions only allowing local authorities to build houses for the 'working classes' and provided subsidies for the renovation and conversion of obsolete or larger houses to contemporary standards, the Committee felt confident enough to schedule 89 homes as a Clearance Area. Burns Street in Leith had originally been scheduled for clearance before the start of the War, but like several other areas its clearance had been halted for the duration of hostilities, and it was not until 1951-52 that the Committee could instruct the Corporation Finance Committee that it should secure sufficient funds for the rehousing of those about to be cleared (APHC, 1951-52: 3). The Committee was increasingly experimenting with more non-traditional, system-built homes which required less skilled labour. Its early multi-storey flats in Gorgie were proving problematic in both build-time and cost, so the Committee was looking elsewhere for ideas. Elsewhere, tensions between the Housing Committee and various branches of central government were starting to show.

In his detailed examination of the relationship between central and "sub national government" departments and their officials during third quarter of the 20th century, R.A.W. Rhodes describes the years 1945-51 "…as the era of post-war reconstruction and the subsequent decade as one of growth" during which "conflict between central and local government was spasmodic and had a certain novelty value" (1985: 42). Despite hosting the Scotland Office in their city, relations between the government department and Edinburgh Corporation often exhibited both characteristics. Having lobbied the Secretary of State for Scotland to lift the ban on private builders constructing homes for non-specified public needs in late-1949, to no avail, the Housing Committee began entreating the Town's Magistrates and other Councillors to make similar representations to the Secretary. The petitions that emerged were similarly rebuffed. To add insult to injury, the

Secretary of State had set local authorities house-building targets which Edinburgh was failing to meet. Relations with the Scottish Department for Health were also strained as the Housing Committee could not proceed with Clearance Orders until the civil servants were fully satisfied that there were enough houses available for those displaced. Intense internal debate followed within various Corporation departments about exactly what percentage of Council new-builds could be ring-fenced for the cleared, eventually a figure not exceeding 19% was agreed upon. While the Corporation welcomed “the growth of expenditure” in Scotland “the gradual expansion of the functions of the Scottish Office” that came with the funding (Rhodes, 1985: 44) would require some further adjustment to their long-established working relationship.

As the 1950s progressed, the Housing Committee was, on the whole, pleased with the speed of construction of its favoured non-traditional house-building, if not with the associated rising costs when compared to traditional house-building techniques. But, as the Corporation finally began to reach or even exceed house-building targets set by central government, pressure grew on them to increase the use of these non-traditional buildings. For the first time, the Housing Committee began to seriously contemplate the construction of blocks of multi-storey flats in central districts as well as the outer fringes, holding architectural competitions to find appropriate designs. It also began to express a confidence that it was now at a stage where it had the human, physical and monetary resources to take on larger redevelopment schemes in areas such as St Leonards and Leith. To assist with the latter, the Planning Department had been busy producing a new *Development Plan* for the city which was first submitted to the Secretary of State for his approval in 1953. A total of 66 objections to its proposals were received, so a public inquiry was convened. By meeting with the objectors and directly addressing their complaints in the intervening period between the plan’s submission and the actual inquiry, the Planning Committee noted that it had successfully reduced the

number of objectors to 26, only 14 of which eventually bothered to turn up at the inquiry (APPC, 1954-55: 1-2).

In contrast to the colourful and expansive *Civic Survey*, the statutorily required *City and Royal Burgh of Edinburgh Development Plan* is a far more sober and concise corporate document. Where the former had attempted to sell and market to the douce residents of Edinburgh a contemporary conceptualisation of the town's selective urban renewal, the latter is a more definite statement of planned intent. The *Development Plan* laid out the Corporation proposals for the careful phasing of the city's redevelopment, with phase one taking place over the five years following the approval of the *Plan* and phase two spread across the fifteen years thereafter. Concise tables listing the city's vital statistics as they stood in the middle of the 20th century accompanied its various strategies for the better zoning and regulation of Edinburgh's infrastructural, cultural, educational, medical, residential, industrial, commercial, recreational, agricultural and even cemetarial and crematorial needs. The final publication cautioned readers on multiple occasions that such improvements came at a cost, warning that:

> Much of the proposed redevelopment will involve the demolition of property and the displacement of population... (Edinburgh Corporation, 1957: 28)

Despite assurances that "…the Corporation are satisfied that it will be possible to rehouse the population displaced," this was nevertheless an unequivocal declaration that individual citizen wellbeing and security was of secondary consideration to the Corporation's perception of enhanced urban functionality for the town as a whole.

The biggest single intrusive urban intervention that the *Development Plan* proposed and sought central government sanction for was the implementation of a Comprehensive Development Area (CDA) in the St Leonard's/Dumbiedykes area. Having identified and classified a 3.5 acre neighbourhood of mainly residential

property, intermixed with small industrial and commercial premises, as fit only for complete demolition, the Planning and Housing Committees were not content to await a decision on the whole scheme. They lobbied the Secretary of State for permission to begin purchase and clearance of the site as soon as possible. This was granted in March 1955, and so began the first intensive large-scale slum clearance and comprehensive redevelopment scheme of the post-war era in Edinburgh. The Housing Committee soon discovered that the legal procedures necessary to acquire this land and property were far more complicated than the last time such schemes had been attempted. Utilising "Declaration of Unfitness Orders" on properties was highlighted as having eased their acquisition by the Corporation, with compensation paid at site value and any objections heard by the Secretary of State. By late 1956, around 58 residences, seven shops and six other premises had been purchased by the Corporation, but some owners had steadfastly refused to accept the terms offered. Undeterred by these increasingly protracted legal obstacles however, the Planning Committee's appetite for redevelopment had been whetted and they began to contemplate the extension of this trial scheme to an area of approximately 32 acres around St Leonards, along with the comprehensive redevelopment of two Leith neighbourhoods (APPC, 1956-57: 6-9).

The entire *Development Plan* was not fully approved by the Secretary of State for Scotland until December of 1957. Sanctioned in the *Plan*, the Housing Committee resolved to begin the process of evicting some of their "prefab" tenants in order to redevelop, at a far higher population density, the land upon which these nearly 4,000 temporary houses had been built. The Committee also recorded its intense frustration at the slow progress it was experiencing in acquiring property in Leith and St Leonards, encountering increasing difficulty in negotiations to secure sufficient plots of land that would permit the substantial neighbourhood demolition and redevelopment it envisaged as necessary:

> It is found that whereas in the era of pre-war clearance areas it could be reasonably assumed that practically all of the houses were let, and the only problem was the rehousing of the

> tenants, to-day a high proportion of the houses are individually owned. This involves separate negotiations with a large number of individuals, and in the event of failure to agree on price, arbitration. There is also the occasional instance of the stubborn tenant who refuses to accept the alternative accommodation offered (APHC, 1959-58: 2).

By the end of 1958, the final property in the original St Leonard's Comprehensive Development Area was eventually acquired utilising a Compulsory Purchase Order, with a price still to be agreed through independent arbitration. Rather than risk a lower price, the tenement owner in the end accepted an earlier offer made by the District Valuer on behalf of the Corporation. The Housing Committee's Annual Progress Report was fairly scathing about the "attitude" of the female owner who had held-up the clearance scheme for months, concluding "This experience emphasises the need for obtaining a compulsory purchase order at the outset" (APHC, 1958-59: 3). It proved to be a formative experience that the Local Authority would not forget in the years that followed. The Housing Committee also soon came to an arrangement with the Finance Committee to fund 700 homes per year that would be entirely ring-fenced for families evicted as part of clearance schemes. This allowed the Planning Committee to accelerate its slum clearance and redevelopment plans, sure in the knowledge that at least 700 families a year could be rehoused from properties they singled-out for destruction. In 1959, the Planning and Housing committees established a joint sub-committee to work more closely together to expedite and accelerate the assault upon Edinburgh's slum areas using their collective knowledge of the appropriate legislation. Their efforts were further supported by the introduction of the *House Purchase and Housing Act (1959)* that empowered local authorities to offer financial assistance to private house-owners to provide and install any of the following amenities that the Act deemed necessary to render a home a fit for human habitation:

> (a) a fixed bath or shower in a bathroom;
> (b) a wash-hand basin;
> (c) a hot water supply;
> (d) a water closet; and
> (e) satisfactory facilities for storing food; (Part III, Para 19 (1))

This was the first time that an objective base standard for housing amenities had been enshrined by central government in legislation, and though altered in subsequent years, it established a minimum amenity level for much of the future Housing legislation (Kirby 1979: 64). Although it had been specifically intended to provide funds for the rehabilitation of property, it also provided the technical benchmark that local authority health and sanitary officials needed to objectively evaluate, condemn and close a home lacking as little as a single one of these amenities. It was perfect timing for the increasingly vocal advocates of slum clearance within Edinburgh Corporation's Housing and Planning Committees, whose closer co-operation also soon proved to be invaluable as media and political pressure for increased action to deal with the Edinburgh's 'slum problem' intensified in the years that followed.

National and local media sources had taken intermittent interest in Edinburgh's housing situation for decades, but in January 1954, the short-lived but innovative photo-journalist magazine *The Picture Post* treated its wide UK readership to a six-page spread on the "best and worst" of Scotland's capital city. One of these pages was given over to the town's "dark side" featuring detailed pictures of children experiencing life in "Edinburgh's Black Spot", the repurposed military camp at Duddingston, and climbing the dilapidated spiral steps of a condemned tenement in Edinburgh's Old Town (see Figure 1). After describing the "stone staircases, black as hell" with "lavatories which have been overflowing into the courtyard for a couple of weeks," the journalist is particularly scathing when describing conditions in the camp:

> Here in a Nissen hut, roughly 24ft. by 20ft., I met the Blackie family. Six of them live in this tin shelter, through which the rain seeps. There is one tap and no hot water. There are four children, the youngest six months old, who has been to hospital with dysentery or some other sickness every month since birth. But all the children have sinister coughs. The Blackie family pay 10s. per week out of the £5 9s. the father earns as a coal porter for the privilege of living in conditions inferior to those allotted to coolies on Sumatra I visited before the war (*Picture Post*, 30/01/1954: 16).

The piece also featured two of Edinburgh's political titans, the town's then Provost Sir James Miller and his predecessor, Edinburgh South MP, Sir William Young Darling. Being so closely associated with such conditions in the town that they and their loosely defined Unionist/Conservative/Liberal/Independent political alliance firmly controlled was politically awkward, especially while they were actively involved in establishing Edinburgh's reputation as an international festival city. All ex-military camp housing would be closed by the end of 1957, but the scandal they caused would be as nothing compared to that which would engulf the City Chambers and its ruling political "Progressive Association" towards at the end of 1959.

In the early hours of Saturday 21st November, between fifteen and nineteen families (accounts vary) resident in a five storey tenement in Beaumont Place in the Dumbiedykes area of the town were rudely awoken as the rear gable wall of their block sheared away, collapsing into the back court below. Several residents were said to have been very lucky to escape with their lives as they plunged into the flats beneath theirs, but all survived this near catastrophe. The tenement in question was infamously known locally as "the Penny tenement" in reference to its owner's attempt in 1952 to dispose of it to William Reid, the Labour MP for Camlachie, for one penny "to draw attention to the plight of tenement landlords," following a meeting of Labour MPs which refused to discuss the repairs of old houses at a meeting that year. The tenement block was in very poor order; the Corporation was forced to take the owner, Donald Rosie, to court in 1953 to force him to do necessary repairs. Rosie was eventually hauled back to court in 1958 to pay for roof repairs carried out by the Council. In his defence, he explained to the sheriff he had spent the previous five years attempting to persuade the Corporation to take the block over free of charge, but, like his earlier offer to Reid, these approaches had been rebuffed (*The Bulletin,* 17/01/1958: 5 and *The Evening Times* 2/10/1953: 14). These repeated attempted sale or gift stunts were emblematic of a longstanding complaint from landlords like Rosie about the imposition of Rent Controls by central

government in 1915 (Glendinning, 2005: 159). Introduced at the height of the First World War to fend off growing discontent from working-class tenants being squeezed by unscrupulous property owners, it was long argued that the state had "…intervened in a manner which was to bedevil housing for many years to come" (Begg, 1996: 13). Prevented by statute from raising rents, investment in maintenance and repair was kept to an absolute minimum by most owners, leaving the "…properties of many landlords in a condition that was intolerable" (Begg, 1996: 150). Rent control measures were reinforced during World War Two and then maintained by the post-war Labour government, but the Conservative administration that followed was able "…to tie rent increases and repairs together" using the issue as "…the wedge that would allow strict rent control to be broken" (Yelling, 1995: 55). In 1957, they "…introduced a *Rent Act* to remove in stages most of the rent controls imposed in 1939 and before, starting with the highest rented properties" (Coleman, 1988: 236). But one unintended consequence of their legislation saw unscrupulous landlords, like the notorious Peter Rachman (O'Malley, 1977: 29), using fair means or foul to persuade tenants to vacate properties in order that they be renovated and let for higher rents. In Edinburgh, where rents were decontrolled on privately owned houses with a rateable value greater than £40 by the *Rent Act*, it was reported "…that some tenants have been threatened with eviction unless they bought their house" with Edinburgh Corporation forced, as a result, to give "…special consideration to requests for loans from persons in this predicament (Burns & Gregor, 1966: 379). Public awareness of this issue ensured that "…it became impossible to proceed with any further measures that appeared to benefit landlords" (Coleman 1988: 236) for many years, as successive governments "…lacked the political courage…" (Begg, 1996: 13) to relax rental restrictions any further.

The near disaster on Beaumont Place that winter morning in 1959 was seized upon by the opposition Labour Party in Edinburgh. Before the weekend was even complete they had convened a special meeting to discuss Edinburgh's housing

problem, produced a report on the subject and passed a resolution condemning the "procrastination" of the town's ruling "Tory majority" in their handling of slum clearance and house-building. They sent copies to the press, their local MPs, the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Town Clerk demanding that "…an end might be put to the squalid acres which are a disgrace to a city which aspires to be a centre of culture." Going on to insist that the Corporation stop putting first the interests of:

> …the slum landlords, the property factors, the building contractors, and their like, and look to the needs of the ordinary citizens, who, through no fault of their own, are condemned to live and rear their children in crumbling and insanitary prisons which make a mockery of this atomic age (*The Glasgow Herald* 23/01/1959 :1).

The following week the matter was raised in heated exchanges in Parliament by Scottish Labour MPs led by Tom Oswald, the MP for Central Edinburgh in which the Penny Tenement stood and who had only just clung onto the seat with the narrowest of majorities earlier in the year. Both the Secretary of State for Scotland John MacLay and the Under-Secretary Tam Galbraith were sympathetic, but that was as far is it went. Neither believed further slum clearance legislation was necessary and both were reassured by the Corporation that the affected tenants were being rehoused, seeing no further reason to intervene. Labour MPs sensed political capital to be made and kept the pressure on the Conservative Government. More allegations about a "lackadaisical" approach to slum clearance by Edinburgh Corporation were levelled in the House of Commons the following week as more dilapidated houses were identified and their residents forced to leave their homes. Once again, Maclay assured Parliament that he was in contact with the Corporation and that he was completely satisfied that they had the situation fully in hand (*Hansard,* H.O.C. Debate, 01/12/1959 and 08/12/1959). The careful responses of the seasoned Conservative politicians failed to satisfy their Labour opposition, in Edinburgh and elsewhere, the party's local politicians greatly intensified their efforts to clear the slums and radically increase council house construction. The dramatic overnight destruction of a scruffy and badly neglected Edinburgh

tenement would help considerably in the rise and increasing dominance of the "councillor 'housing crusaders' who pushed through their large-scale construction and letting in all urban parts of Britain." (Glendinning & Muthesius, 1994:6)

In Edinburgh, the embodiment of the 'Crusading Councillor' came in the person of Patrick Rogan. Elected in 1954 to represent Edinburgh Holyrood ward, he made it his singular mission to eradicate the decayed and obsolete housing in Edinburgh's working-class neighbourhoods:

> That was the whole purpose of me being in the town council, just merely to see these hideous properties removed once and for all and I looked forward, ever so much to the day, when they would be removed and I was very happy indeed when that day came around when these properties were demolished… (Transcribed from taped interview of Pat Rogan by Miles Glendinning in Glendinning's personal collection)

Rogan quickly became wise to the utility of enlisting the assistance of the Fourth Estate in the furtherance of his housing crusade. As he recalled in another interview many years later:

> …One night, when I was having a chat with a reporter from one of our two local papers, I recounted to him some of the miseries endured by my slum-dwelling constituents. He was interested, and very soon stories began to appear about the hidden face of Edinburgh, and the citizens who were compelled to live in repulsive conditions. Before long the rival Edinburgh paper approached me, and from then on, I supplied both papers with horror stories that highlighted the obscenity of our slums. (Glendinning 1997: 72)

In October 1959, while frustrated at what he felt was the interminably slow progress of the St Leonard's Area Clearance Area, Rogan took journalists from the *Edinburgh Evening News* on a tour of some of the worst neighbourhoods in his ward. Keen to showcase the filth and disrepair, he took them to a tenement on Dalrymple Street with a leaking downpipe spewing raw sewage into the back-court where children played and mothers hung out their washing. A well-known local figure, he and his visitors were granted access to several homes, each in exceedingly poor condition, overcrowded, cramped, beset by dampness, lacking basic amenities and overrun with vermin. Rogan's ire was not solely directed at slum conditions

however, he was also troubled by what the Housing Correspondent called the "speculative investment in the slums" the "gambles on squalor to win a short-cut to occupancy of a good Corporation house." It was claimed that comprehensive clearance activity was being slowed by significant numbers of owner-occupiers who had recently purchased relatively cheap homes in clearance areas on a "system of hire-purchase" in order to secure a preferential place on the Corporation housing list that would in turn procure for them a desirable council house. The consequent increase in voluntary negotiations to purchase properties from hundreds of individual owners, where before single landlords had owned multiple numbers of these tenement homes, was apparently proving extremely time-consuming for the Corporation's legal department. The journalists were convinced. "Remove the people and attend to the legal formalities afterwards," demanded a leading article in *The Edinburgh Evening News* following the site visit (20/10/1959). With the dramatic collapse of the Penny Tenement Rogan would get his wish to circumvent the interminable legal procedures that were slowing up the clearance activities.

Following the near catastrophe on Beaumont Place, Rogan claimed to have taken legal advice which he shared with the Council officers. This, he insisted, confirmed that the Corporation would be held legally responsible for any injuries or deaths suffered by citizens resident in dangerous dwellings. Intense media and parliamentary scrutiny, now coupled with a desire to avoid a rise in the rates caused by expensive compensation payments had the effect desired by Rogan and the Labour Party; emergency closure and demolition orders increased significantly in the weeks and months immediately thereafter. By January 1961, Thomas Morgan, the Housing Committee Convener, claimed in his annual report that the previous year had been their most significant since the War. Though the annual completion rate of new house construction had declined, his report notes that the Committee had successfully rehoused 701 "displaced" families from the Carnegie Street, Canonmills and Greenside areas, leaving just ten families behind in these neighbourhoods "still to be dealt with" as well as rehoming a further 128 families

from other unfit property. Such was the urgency of the task, the Housing Committee also sought funding for a further 300 houses per year from the Finance Committee, rising to a planned total of 1,000 properties per year ring-fenced for slum-cleared householders. The Committee also firmed up their plans for the tenant eviction and demolition of their roughly 4,000 "prefabs." Spread across multiple neighbourhoods throughout the town, totalling almost 500 acres of land, the Planning Department believed these low-density homes and gardens could be replaced by around 9,000 houses. The Committee was keen, however, that this redevelopment was done in such a manner that "full-scale clearance of each site" might be avoided. Utilising existing site layouts, they advocated a piecemeal approach of clearing and rebuilding each neighbourhood parcel by parcel before moving onto the next, in order "that it might be possible to rehouse in the area those families who have their roots there and wish to stay." (APPC, 1960-61: 1-5). But any sense of satisfaction felt by Morgan would be short-lived as the progress made by him and his Committee in clearing the slums was very publicly lambasted the following month.

On February 27th 1961, the BBC's *Panorama* primetime current affairs programme ran a twelve minute segment on the "squalid" slums normally associated with the Britain's industrial towns and cities not the "Athens of the North." The BBC correspondent interviewed several anguished local residents in the vicinity of Arthur Street, each anxiously concerned with their prospects to gain entry to a Corporation house. The background material leading into the piece focused in on footage of a toddler playing in the street with her toy beach-spade, but instead of sand the little girl was using excrement to build castles. The camera then picked out, in intricate detail, stark images of the fetid back courts and basement "gardens" abundantly seeded with broken glass and rotting detritus before finally focussing in on another fractured downpipe liberally spraying effluence down a rear tenement wall into the filthy backcourt below. The journalist interviewed Pat Rogan in front of the pipe, questioning him on how these conditions came to pass, who

was to blame, and what the solution was. Rogan responded that structural faults with buildings were the responsibility of the house-owners or, in the event of their failing to deal with such problems, the City Engineer was responsible, but there was so much repair work to do that the latter was overwhelmed. The mess round about them he laid squarely at the doors of the "bad tenants" and the "lazy types" who failed in their responsibility to dispose of their rubbish properly. The housing shortage he blamed upon the peculiar "academic fashion" in dealing with the problem adopted by the conservative coalition administration that ruled the Council; accusing them of a failure of priorities and investment that stretched back decades, but had now reached critical point. Thomas Morgan was given the right to reply. He robustly opposed the accusation of "apathy" and a "lack of social conscience," claiming, "it is the wish of every member of the Town Council to get the slums cleared as quickly as possible." He similarly opposed the notion that the Corporation was more concerned with its tourist image than slum problem, but was not so confident when challenged that at the current rate of work it could take at least fifteen years to clear away such housing. The BBC correspondent left UK viewers in no doubt of his pessimistic evaluation of Edinburgh's efforts with his concluding remark that in Edinburgh, as in many other similar industrial towns, too slow a rate of clearance would ensure "…many of our slum children can look forward to bearing their children in slums."

While viewers were still digesting the explosive content of the *Panorama* programme, two days later the *Socialist Vanguard Group* published an incendiary article entitled "Scotland's Shame" in their widely circulated and hugely influential *Socialist Commentary* journal. Its anonymous author, in strikingly similar tone and language to that of the *Edinburgh Evening News* exposé quoted above, made the bold claim that Edinburgh was "the city with the worst housing conditions in Europe." The piece claimed the city possessed numerous "appalling skeletons in various dingy cupboards, the continued existence of which are a permanent affront to human dignity;" and singled out Arthur Street as its worst "abomination of

squalor." With no apparent concern for possible offence given, the writer makes the impossibly hyperbolic parallel:

> If German concentration camps are now maintained as memorials to the horror and beastliness of Nazism then part, at least, of present day Arthur Street should remain intact, a permanent memorial to the beastliness of a political and social system which permits such degradation in these days of supposed affluence.

Describing in flowing prose the "plight of the slum-dwellers", the writer harshly criticised the perceived indifference of Edinburgh's ruling conservative coalition administration and many of its wealthier citizens. The article rages against the Council's apparent fixation on winning the 1966 *Empire Games.* It condemns as perverse the contemplation of building athletic arenas, velodromes and swimming pools while "human excrement oozes from damaged soil pipes to swill around in back courts with other horrible flotsam." Affluent, vocal and disproportionately influential New Town citizens forming into amenity societies and "fog-horn voiced pressure group[s]" to protect from destruction "a few sad trees living precariously in dank sooty earth" and some antiquated kerbside horse mounting blocks are similarly lathered with scathing opprobrium. Describing Edinburgh as "a political and municipal museum piece" the author concludes with a damning indictment, calling it:

> …a city where the selfish get what they want, virtually without let or hindrance, while the majority must painfully inch and fight their way towards a very minimum of decent conditions.(Anonymous, 1961: 16-18)

Two prominent, nationwide airings of their city's dirty laundry in as many days sent shockwaves through Edinburgh society, to the discomfiture of the local ruling political establishment and the evident glee of local newsrooms. *The Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* reported the next day how, "Millions of viewers gasped as the cameras picked out the squalid conditions in Arthur Street" along with views of another Labour councillor who claimed "the people didn't see half of it. Edinburgh got a showing up – but not enough." The *Dispatch* also canvassed the opinions of several local residents about the BBC segment. Evelyn Conibear told the reporter:

> When tourists come to the city they are shown the finer parts and go away with the wrong impression. The Panorama team showed up Edinburgh as no Utopia. We have slums like everyone else… It will let the nation know there is more to Edinburgh than Princes Street (*Evening Despatch* 28/02/1961).

The Glasgow Herald, quoting extensively from the *Socialist Commentary*, also reported that a protest march of householders from the Arthur Street area was hastily organised the very day the article appeared. The protestors planned to process to the City Chambers and demand "immediate rehousing" as well as "certificates of disrepair" from the City Engineer in order that they could begin withholding rent (*Glasgow Herald,* 02/03/1961). While an editorial column in *The Scotsman*, agreeing with Mrs Conibear, stated that the march, magazine article and television programme had reminded "the country that Edinburgh still has appalling slums," but also lamented that such housing condition offered a propaganda opportunity to foreign Communists opposed to the "British way of life." Describing life, not just in Arthur Street but in slum neighbourhoods across the city, the *Scotsman* editor went onto dryly observe:

> No human beings could bring up a family properly under the conditions they have to suffer. Existence in these places is like a long illness – not a pleasure, but something to be endured…

Employing a similar sympathetic tone to *The Scotsman* editorial, the editor of *The Evening News* agreed that *Panorama* and the article had focused some much-needed attention on the "deplorable" living conditions of the residents in and around Arthur Street, whose plight "anyone with a sense of ordinary human sympathy and social justice…" could simply no longer ignore (*Edinburgh Evening News,* 02/03/1961).

The newspapers would be peppered in the days after the airing and publication with further reportage, opinion and letters on Edinburgh's housing situation. Councillor Morgan stood firm on his party's record of housing achievement and attempted to place Edinburgh's housing problems in a wider

context, claiming in mitigation, that far worse conditions were being endured by some Glasgow residents not forty miles away. He promised the Arthur Street area would be cleared within a year, with other areas tackled in a phased manner thereafter. An especially damning essay on Edinburgh housing by A.J. Arthur appeared in *The Scotsman* in early March, spread over two editions, following "long and searching investigations into the problem" by the author. In part one he described, almost voyeuristically, multiple examples of abject poverty, desperately lacking amenities and shocking levels of disrepair endured by residents in Edinburgh's most deprived areas. In part two he thoroughly lambasted the Housing Committee's "comforting assurances" that the matter was in hand. He challenged their targets, their definition of unfitness and ultimately their commitment to clearance. But he also judged many of those living in these neighbourhoods; criticising some for their prodigious procreative abilities, others their morality, "fecklessness" or "ignorance." He even censured a perceived inability from some to see a life beyond the communities within which they lived. But his overall message to *The Scotsman* readers was simple but effective, eradicate the slums and the city will erase a shameful stain that goes right to its core:

> The slums must be utterly rooted out and abolished. That means tearing the heart of Edinburgh because the slums run through it like a creeper-growth, hardly separated from the decent houses. The slums are hideous and rotten. The people in them can't live normally because every minute of their lives is a struggle against the hostility of what's round about (*The Scotsman* 04/03/1961 and 06/03/1961).

Even the letter pages became briefly punctuated with missives from indignant Edinburgh residents or expatriates shocked by what they had seen on television or read in print. Heartfelt pleas that the "City fathers should be made to put first things first" were welcome fillips to the local Labour Party who took the opportunity to launch another housing-inspired counter-offensive on the ruling administration.

The planned protest by Arthur Street residents and their neighbours, hastily arranged at an open-air meeting following airing of the *Panorama* programme, was called off after one of Rogan's ward colleagues, Labour councillor Baillie T.A.W.

MacPherson, met with its ringleaders and promised to take up the fight on their behalf (*Edinburgh Evening News* 02/03/1961). Rogan himself, who was up for re-election that year, built a campaign platform around the re-housing of residents of slum neighbourhoods in his ward. He doggedly pursued Morgan and his party over their "lackadaisical" approach to comprehensive clearance. He explained to an *Evening Despatch* journalist that only 25 per cent of the eligible electorate in his ward had turned out in the last electorate, but this time he believed it would be far higher because they had hope of a new home. Straw-polling by the journalist concurred with Rogan's prediction; local residents placed housing as their number one priority and appeared to highly value his efforts on their behalf in this regard (*Evening Despatch* 18/04/1961). Returned to the council once more, with what he believed was a clear mandate for the renewal of Edinburgh's slum neighbourhoods, Rogan carefully positioned himself to exploit the increasing divisions within the ruling Progressive faction. In 1962, taking advantage of a "political deadlock" (Glendinning, 2005: 160), he became the first ever Labour Convener of the Housing Committee and would set in motion a vastly accelerated programme of demolition and housebuilding that was unprecedented in Edinburgh's 20th century history.

Having begun the process of demolishing and rebuilding their town's most deprived and obsolete central neighbourhoods in the late 1920s, Edinburgh Corporation suspended this work for the duration of the war and the austere years thereafter. During this time the housing situation in many parts of the town continued to seriously deteriorate as landlords, often citing the government's rent control measures in extenuation, simply failed to keep abreast of necessary repairs and the upgrading of their properties. Caught up in the wave of post-war optimism that demanded a better future for all of humanity in the second half of the 20th century, Edinburgh's City Fathers developed a plan to renew the 'Athens of the North.' As the 1950s dawned, Edinburgh Corporation possessed a hugely influential triumvirate of bellwethers that forecast some radical ruptures in the city's urban ecology in the decades to come. An ambitious grand master plan envisioning

significant reconstruction of selected stigmatised neighbourhoods with a redrawn transport infrastructure to support specialised functional urban zoning; a Planning Committee and associated Department that would implement and build upon these core planning principles; and a Housing Committee possessing a growing determination to progressively clear the last of the capital's slums and build tens of thousands of new homes within the city limits.

Like elsewhere in Britain, in Edinburgh the "Councillors, backed by social groups, reformers and the local press, created policy within a distinct cultural context" (Shapely 2007:10). For much of their four and a half decades in control of the town the ruling "Progressive Association" owed a great deal of its success to a careful stewardship of the "machinery of politics" and the fortuitous circumstance that "the local press was generally sympathetic" to their "management of issues and to the successful prevention of controversy" (McCrone & Elliott, 1989a: 95). The ruling party believed a slow but steady approach to clearance and rebuild, as crystallised in the *1957 Development Plan*, was sufficient to address the city's slum housing. But, the hypothetical "*apolitisme*" that underscored their governing philosophy, a stance shared by many similar groups in local authorities across the country (Rhodes, 1987: 28), which had formerly guaranteed their popular appeal to many voters, was about to be severely tested.

The "Progressive Association's" laissez-faire approach to housing became a hostage to political fortune as it came under concerted political attack from the Labour Party, both locally and nationally. With a weather eye to Glasgow, where their Labour Party colleagues had used "the issue of the provision of low-cost housing" as a platform to "launch its bid to take political control of Glasgow's Corporation (Miller, 20003: 194), Edinburgh's Labour Party group, which traditionally had fewer 30% of their councillors "…on the important Housing and Town Planning or Treasurer's Committees of Edinburgh Corporation" (O'Carroll, 1996, 22) saw its opportunity for advancement. This coincided with increasingly

focused and voluble media attention airing the city's "dirty linen", articulating a profound public frustration at the pace of change in the closing years of the 1950s. Ultimately embarrassment and fear of electoral loss, rather than concern for their fellow citizens' wellbeing, would be the catalyst for the ruling party's dramatic acceleration of urban renewal activities in the years that followed. These undertakings will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Creating "a breathing space" – The politics of clearance in 1960s and early 1970s Edinburgh

> My main hope then, which was never realised, was that we could have been given a breathing space. I saw the removal of slum property and the creation of houses at that time on a fairly quick scale, merely as a temporary item. I didn't see it as permanent. I saw then perhaps if we had been given a breathing space of another six to ten years we could have set about developing the whole affair properly. But we had such an emergency on our hands, we had about twelve thousand people screaming out for housing and I saw that as a means of getting them housed quickly and then stop for five minutes and look around and see where we were going. But, as I say, unfortunately I didn't get the chance to realise that idea. (Transcribed from taped interview of Pat Rogan by Miles Glendinning)

The post-war decades witnessed a tacit, national cross-party political consensus that Britain's post-industrial towns and cities needed "renewed". Politicians from across the political spectrum agreed both that a massive housebuilding drive was necessary to address the "housing crisis" caused by a nationwide shortage of homes and that the last remaining slums needed to be cleared away. In successive general elections, both Labour and Conservatives would politically weaponise this issue in their manifestos; each attempting to outdo the other in promised house-building numbers and the planned rebuilding of Britain's cities. The Conservative Minister of Housing and Local Government in 1951, Harold Macmillan, was the most significant actor in propagating this contest when he committed his government to a target of building 300,000 houses per year, shortly before turning his attention to sweeping away the one to two million unfit houses estimated still to have existed across the country. Yelling relates a quote in a 1954 *Estates Gazette* in which MacMillan was recorded as being excited by the prospect of creating "a second scoreboard to run along side "houses built". It would be called "slum houses demolished"" (1995: 57).

Occasionally, dissenting opinions would bubble to the surface, usually at a local government level, most often over who should be financially responsible for building these new houses and what the appropriate pace of urban clearance should be, but rarely over the actual necessity to clear and build. Elected politicians

and civil servants alike envisioned that the emerging welfare state and National Health Service would heal the nation's sick and support its poorest and most deprived citizens, while a final burst of radical and extensive urban surgery would excise those last surviving slum neighbourhoods that had escaped pre-war clearance and Hitler's bombs. "During the first World War a political slogan had been "Houses fit for Heroes"; during the second it was "New Towns after the War" (Mogey 1955: 124). The cutting-edge, futuristic allure of clean, modern, urban living that underscored the ideals of the New Town movement were greedily grafted onto numerous planned municipal housing estates and projected redevelopments of obsolete urban neighbourhoods.

Plans were drafted for Town Clerks up and down the country utilising raw, functionally segregated, Modernist architectural principles to overhaul and update their various towns' most outmoded neighbourhoods. The idealistic concepts of architectural determinism were still in the ascendancy, with experts and politicians both convinced that domestic environments were responsible for the bulk of social, financial and health problems endured by the poorest of their citizens. The ruling elites, in central and local government, resolved themselves to fully separate the residential, commercial and industrial quarters in Britain's ancient towns and cities and, in so doing, erase any final surviving residues of Dickensian era poverty, grime and vice that clung on doggedly in their midst. "Britain was to be modernised" (Rhodes, 1984:29) and for advocates of wholesale clearance and non-traditional, mass-building technology, the decade that followed would become the literal boom times:

> Those were memorable years – everything went with a bang, and money was no object to a big-hearted government. (Pat Rogan quoted in Glendinning & Muthesius, 1994: 194)

Glendinning and Muthesius call this period the era of the "municipal crusade" or, in a certainly more evocative descriptor of its destructive legacy, "Scotland's Housing Blitzkrieg" (1994: 235, 220). Most noteworthy among Scotland's Housing Conveners of that time was Glasgow's David Gibson, a man for

whom "the arresting Modernity of high flats signalled the sharpest possible break from the squalor of the slums" (1994: 222). Taking maximum advantage of central government subsidies, Gibson would clear and rebuild huge swathes of Glasgow, utilising the newest, fastest, non-traditional building techniques, especially in multi-storey units, to re-house the cleared population. With single-minded determination he reshaped Scotland's largest city to re-home as many of its residents as possible, as quickly as possible, within the confines of its own boundaries and in so-doing became an inspiration to many of his contemporaries. "Crusading councillors" across the country would try to emulate Gibson's clearance and rebuilding activities, desperately attempting to remove the poverty and deprivation from their towns with the shunt of a bull-dozer and the swing of a wrecking-ball. As Councillor Rogan would later recall:

> It was a magnificent thing to watch, as I did many times, whole streets of slum tenements being demolished – all those decades of human misery and degradation just vanished into dust and rubble! (Quoted in Glendinning & Muthesius, 1994: 237)

(Figure 4 - Councillor Pat Rogan witnessing the destruction of the last remaining tenement on Arthur Street, 'Edinburgh Evening Dispatch', 24 April 1962)

To fully comprehend the housing situation in Edinburgh that its first Labour Housing Committee Convener inherited from Progressive Councillor Tom Morgan, it is worth examining the final annual report of Edinburgh's Housing Committee before Rogan assumed the chair in May 1962. It recounts details of their new three year plan in which the Housing Committee, in close consultation with the Planning Committee, envisaged building one thousand homes per year solely for the use of displaced families and the demolition of 2,306 unfit homes and 779 houses which were classified as fit, by the end of 1964. In defence of the destruction of so many perfectly sound homes, the report claims: "The removal of a proportion of houses which are not unfit is unavoidable when clearance is undertaken in central areas" (y/e 31/01/1962: 2). The neighbourhoods earmarked for destruction were spread right across the city; in Stockbridge, Leith, Newhaven, St. Leonards, St. James Square, Tollcross, the Southside, Canongate and elsewhere, and would require the displacement and resettlement of thousands of Edinburgh citizens. The land needed for the new homes would initially be found by the Housing Committee as they began the first assault later that year upon those locations that contained the 4,000 "Prefabs" that were built just after the war. The plan was to clear a few homes on each site to create a working space to facilitate the first housing blocks to be built, before moving onto adjacent plots. This, the Committee believed, would minimise disruption to the sitting tenants. The report also noted that the Committee had carried out its first ever "experiment" in rehabilitating a traditional Edinburgh tenement block. The Albany Street site in Leith originally possessing thirty-nine homes, closed under the Housing Acts for being unfit, was converted into "nineteen good houses" each finished "to modern standards." The experience was described as "expensive but not unrewarding" and the Committee was clear that it would influence their thinking on "such modernisations on a larger scale in other parts of the city" (p.3). Finally, the report also records that the Committee was forced to address noise baffling deficiencies reported by tenants of houses in the recently constructed council estates in Hyvots Bank and Drylaw Mains "which were erected

at a time when, to achieve production, low standard specifications were adopted by central departments" (p.3).

So, this significant report makes it very clear that by the time Rogan assumed the Housing Committee Chair, despite his party's very vocal claims to the contrary, Edinburgh had a functioning urban renewal programme, albeit in its early stages. It also acknowledged that demolition of unfit homes by comprehensive clearance would involve the destruction of significant numbers of perfectly sound homes. It proved, contrary to the dominant political orthodoxy, that the rehabilitation of amenity deficient domestic tenement property was indeed possible, if expensive in the short-term. And, finally, it highlighted the potential false-economy of cost-cutting simply to boost house-building numbers when building social housing. By the end of the decade each one of these issues would be central to the disintegration of the cross-party consensus on comprehensive urban renewal that had emerged and dominated national politics since the war. This chapter will examine how Edinburgh Corporation responded to these emerging complexities and how their actions would come to affect significant numbers of citizens of the city.

Upon taking up the role of convener, keeping true to his election pledge, Rogan set to work dramatically expanding both the housebuilding and the demolition activities of the Corporation. Two of this "crusading councillor's" fiercest champions, Glendinning and Muthesius, would later describe his tenure in glowing terms:

> Once in office, he found that the Progressive's financial cautiousness had left scope for the substantial rises in rate-fund contributions necessary to support a sudden acceleration in the housing drive. There was little land problem, as Edinburgh had the largest 'prefab' estates in the country: 3,616 bungalows were demolished and replaced by 9,272 permanent houses, many in high blocks, by 1967. (1994: 237)

In a very positive contemporary interview with the *Evening News* housing correspondent in January 1963, headlined "The breakthrough is here – record

housing year forecast," Rogan himself appeared in a somewhat self-congratulatory mood about his first nine months in post. The anonymous journalist acknowledged that Rogan had inherited "many projected schemes" but suggested that the new chair had prosecuted them with a vigour the likes of which had never been seen before. The progress in the redevelopment of the prefab neighbourhoods of Niddrie Marischal, South House, Muirhouse and Hyvots Bank was particularly singled out for praise, the clearance of which were "showing wonderful results" according to the Housing Convener. Sensitive to the growing criticism of new-build housing standards, such as that highlighted in the previous Housing Committee annual report, Rogan boldly asserted:

> The houses we are building now are very much superior to anything we have had in post-war years. Future tenants will, I am sure, be very happy to occupy them.

He described how the builders were taking more care over the general landscaping and nearby infrastructure than they had in previous schemes:

> …So that when the tenant comes along he finds not only a finished house. This we hope would do a great deal to alleviate the colossal vandalism which has taken place in new housing areas. Footpaths will be completed, gardens laid out, and fencing erected. Passageways into stairs will be completed in every detail. There is no reason why any new tenant should feel a loss of comfort in any way at all. (*Edinburgh Evening News*, 18/03/1963)

The *Evening News* journalist lists the many planned future redevelopment sites as well as Rogan's commitment to using non-traditional "factory-built houses." Rogan describes how these innovative new processes would "provide a useful supplement to normal housing productions" and deflecting criticism of projected loss of skilled jobs within the building sector states that, "This will certainly not happen for the next 50 years. There is far too much work to be done." To emphasise this point, Rogan then talks about the ongoing comprehensive slum clearance work happening in Leith and Dumbiedykes. He optimistically predicts that "Leithers will be very proud indeed" of the redevelopment of sites like the Kirkgate into a pedestrian precinct which "will provide an exciting scheme" and in Dumbiedykes "which is the primary stage of what has been called a 'second New Town.'" Indeed, Rogan

explains he was so pleased with clearance progress that he hoped to extend the central comprehensive development schemes as soon as possible, with multi-storied blocks of flats featuring heavily in his future plans. The relentlessly positive and upbeat piece records clearance and house production rates of between twelve and twenty houses per month in certain prefab sites, but significantly fails to dwell upon the "loss of comfort" and wellbeing experienced by the hundreds of prefab residents who were being evicted from their homes to facilitate this building work. In 1962-63, such a concern was apparently still of no consequence to a numbers-focused Rogan and a supportive press. In fact, Rogan could boast in his first official annual report as Housing Committee Convener, delivered at the end of January 1963, that he had signed off on the highest number of houses put into production in one year since 1952, adding, with a note of triumphalism, that in the newly cleared central area around Arthur Street "clearance of the worst of the properties has been carried out…and its neighbouring streets have ceased to exist" (p.2-3).

In April 1963, Rogan produced a "controversial" and radical "ten point plan for housing in Edinburgh" that he submitted to his Housing Committee colleagues, along with the Planning and Finance Committees (*Evening Dispatch*, 12/04/1963). Later that year, he also took Edinburgh Corporation, as a founder member, into the Scottish Local Authorities Special Housing Group, or SLASH for short, a name Rogan in a later interview with Miles Glendinning claimed to have come up with himself. He would sit on its hugely influential steering committee and according to Glendinning and Muthesius:

> SLASH was to be no architect-dominated 'consortium', but was to be dedicated to one ideal only: maximum production. The immediate aim was to use jointly-ordered prefabricated high flats to raise national housing output by 10%. (1994: 237)

Rogan might have claimed publicly that housing standards were important, but for members of SLASH maximising house production numbers were the single overriding priority. This required significant quantities of land. Consequently, clearance, demolition and closing orders across the city rapidly increased

throughout the year and discussions were entered into with the Planning Committee to re-evaluate the 1957 Town Development Plan. An extension to the scope and number of Comprehensive Development Schemes was mooted and the clearance and rebuilding of the prefab neighbourhoods was vastly accelerated. In a January 1964 interview with Hamish Coghill, one of the *Evening News's* two housing correspondents, Rogan could confidently forecast that "no fewer than 11,000 new homes will be in the pipeline within the next year to 18 months." Factory-built housing and the complete clearance of the prefab sites and central slum areas would be central to his promised housing revolution in Edinburgh. The prefab neighbourhoods of West Pilton, Colinton Mains, Saughton Mains, Southfield and Muirhouse and streets around St Leonard's were singled out for the coming onslaught. Multi-storey housing blocks were planned for spare plots of ground across the city and Rogan praised the results already seen in "industrial house-building" in areas such as Granton, claiming:

> The demand now being made for houses is such that unless industrialised housing is introduced on a large scale there can be little hope of coping with the problem.

He once again insisted that all new-builds would be "immensely superior to that being produced even five or six years ago" while asserting that:

> There is not nearly the demand there once was for gardens these days. We find that in the new housing areas where garden space is kept to a minimum and cared for by the Parks Department, the tenants are very happy with the arrangement.

He also lauded the use of "all-in" contracts with building firms who would take responsibility for entire estates and he set a collision course with the Conservative Secretary of State for Scotland over the acquisition of green-belt land on the fringes of the city:

> …With the building of houses at Alnwickhill and Wester Hailes, the Committee will have a much-needed breathing space in which to have a look at other sites available within the city boundary. (E.E.N. 14/01/1964: 6)

But not everyone was evidently supportive of the crusading housing convener's ambitious plans. In his next annual report on behalf of the Housing Committee a fortnight after the interview with Coghill Rogan inadvertently made readers aware that not all prefab tenants were simply passive evictees. He writes of those areas where clearance had so far taken place:

> Rebuilding has been undertaken at a considerable rate in spite of the complications of the relocation of existing families and communities in these areas…Some difficulty has been experienced in regard to personal problems of rehousing in the temporary housing areas which are causing delays in the rebuilding process. (y/e 31/01/1964: 2)

He confirmed this in an interview decades later with Miles Glendinning, describing how after crossing the first hurdle of actually securing Government permission for the redevelopment of these houses with some life left in them:

> Opposition from the prefab tenants was another matter. They were very happy in their homes, and if a brick skin could have been built around the exterior, then they could have stayed forever. But I refused to countenance any delay and set in motion a system whereby we appointed contractors to remove the prefabs, and design and build their replacements. (Glendinning 1997: 71)

In the early spring of 1964, the evident frustrations felt by both sides became clearer as the debate spilled over into the columns and letter pages of the *Edinburgh Evening News*.

On February 13th the *Evening News* ran a news story entitled "Lone prefab family are warned to leave their home," about the McGovern family of seven, occupying the last surviving prefab in the Greendykes area. The Corporation had ordered them to quit by the end of the month after sixteen years in their home, offering them a house elsewhere in the city, in either Burdiehouse or Gracemount. Jessie McGovern, however, was not for moving away, telling the reporter:

> I want to stay here. I am happy living here and I asked for a house in Niddrie Marischal or Greendykes.

(Figure 5 - Photo of final remaining prefab home in the "Greendykes Redevelopment Area" and its resident family, Jessie McGovern and her children. 'Edinburgh Evening News', 13 February 1964)

Both the gas and the electricity were cut off to the property, reducing the family to using a paraffin stove for cooking and heating, and the children were no longer allowed to play outside for fear of injury by the builders' traffic and activities. A housing official told the newspaper that the family were only considered "suitable for a re-let" older Corporation property and not one of the new houses on the nearest scheme, council officer doublespeak for a family that had been internally classified by officials as problem tenants. The journalist concluded the article with a report that the Housing Committee had asked the city Finance Committee to "get tough" with tenants in redevelopment areas, such as the McGoverns, "who refused to accept the accommodation offered to them."

The following month firebrand Labour Councillor Donald Renton, a veteran of the International Brigade which had fought Franco in the Spanish Civil War, wrote a stinging rebuke condemning the "selfishness" of those individuals who "are holding up the provision of new housing for other and more deserving tenants." In a letter to the editor printed under the headline "Prefab Tenants who hold up new housing" Renton explains:

> Twisting the arm of the Corporation has become a recognised sport to a small number of tenants in Edinburgh prefab clearance areas. To my knowledge one such tenant has now been

> offered her fourth house in a central district. Her acceptance of that is still in doubt as I write. (*Edinburgh Evening News*. 26/03/1964: 6)

Adding that their actions threatened not only simply the building of much needed new houses but the livelihoods of many building contractors who would be forced to let their workers go if they were prevented from starting construction immediately. Households that were resisting eviction and resettlement were castigated by the Labour councillor for "acting in a manner completely prejudicial to the community interest." The *Evening News* published the first of several responses the very next day in which the anonymous writer "Northfield" described how "worried and confused" the local prefab residents had become due to the Corporation's actions. The letter writer sought clarification on the legality of the evictions and an answer to the rumours that the "private builder" who owned the land the prefabs were built upon had a hand in their pending destruction. The *Evening News* editor was keen to point out in a footnote that, although the site was indeed privately owned, the owner was making half of the land available to the Corporation for housing. On March 31st a writer calling herself "Mother of Four" responded to Councillor Renton in the clearest possible terms:

> Why we prefab tenants are going to take a long time to make up our minds to pick the house we are allowed has many reasons. I don't know to which prefab tenants he was referring, but we in the Northfield prefabs will be sharing the same fate.
>
> My reasons are:
> 1) We don't want to leave our prefabs, but are being forced to do so.
> 2) Our rents are going to be higher, and many of us can hardly afford the higher rents.
> 3) When we move to newer homes, no doubt we will have to share the drying green, and we will have to wash on the day we are allotted whether we want to or not.
> 4) We have our own beautiful homes to ourselves, no one padding about over our heads.
>
> They talk about waste. Well I think this is a terrible waste of good homes, and can't see any reason why we can't be given the option of staying in our prefabs, or a new house, just as we wish. (*Edinburgh Evening News,* 31/03/1964: 4)

The following day "Prefab 1947", who claimed to have lived in her prefab since that date, recounted for the *Evening News* readers her family's numerous problems with the forced Corporation rehousing process. These included an allegedly phantom offer of an as yet unbuilt home, the offer of a medically unsuitable apartment in a

multi-storey block and the keys to “one of the dirtiest houses in the scheme.” Her letter concludes that “Corporation tenants all over Edinburgh are having their arms twisted to go into houses and districts which are most unsuitable.”

Sitting alongside “Prefab 1947’s” response, Councillor A.W. Hunt felt the need to comment upon “Northfield’s” previous insinuation that a private builder was benefiting from clearance of tenants, informing readers that the Northfield site was wholly owned by James Miller and Partners. Hunt added, “An agreement has been reached between this firm and the Housing Committee that the west end of the estate should be redeveloped by the erection of Corporation houses, and the east end by the erection of houses for sale to private persons.” The councillor disputed that the prefab residents were left unaware of this, claiming to have “personally made known these facts to a number of the tenants concerned.” On April 3rd, the same day that the newspaper published a further two letters from unhappy prefab evictees wishing to remain in their homes, the *Evening News* ran a half page byline-lacking news feature headlined “New homes for old,” with multiple enlarged photographs of the stark, modern, high and low-rise homes being erected at Hyvot’s Bank and elsewhere in Edinburgh. The accompanying text, describing the internal and external amenities of the houses reads more like an estate agent’s sales prospectus rather than an objective journalistic account. However, if the positive spread was intended as a counter to the evicted tenants’ concerns and complaints and perhaps allay their fears about moving, the results as evidenced by subsequent letters pages were mixed. “Restless” wrote to the editor the following week sympathising with the prefab dwellers being forced to move to a Corporation scheme against their will and pointed out that, given the opportunity, they would exchange their current home for a prefab “in a moment.” Though, in the spirit of “community interest” invoked by Councillor Renton, the anonymous letter-writer was forced to conclude “that it would seem a bit unfair to favour one prefab area now that so many others have been spoiled by terrible replacements,” and encouraged tenants to apply for single-storey houses as soon as possible (*Edinburgh*

Evening News, 06/04/1964). "Northfield" wrote back one more time on April 8th in a more conciliatory tone about the Corporation's previous record as landlord, lauding them for their previous upkeep of the prefab estates and the mutual efforts by tenants to reciprocate by maintaining the exteriors themselves. The battle over the prefabs would rumble on throughout 1964, and into the following year.

In early spring 1965, *The Edinburgh Evening News* ran another feature on the clearance of the prefab estates; this time headlined the "Proud record of the Edinburgh prefabs." It would in effect be a final eulogy marking "the end of the line" for the post-war domestic structures. Its author, Hamish Coghill, quoted another long-term prefab resident upset at being forced to leave their home before describing the significant local and national contribution to housing that the post-war prefab project had made. The housing correspondent duly acknowledged that the prefabs were loved by the majority of their residents in the nineteen locations they could be found across Edinburgh, and he also conceded that such homes were indeed being preserved and reconditioned elsewhere in the country, but after interviewing Rogan and other housing officials, he was quite unequivocal that their destruction and the eviction of their occupants was necessary for the greater good:

> Over the years as gardens were cultivated and community life in the schemes strengthened the prefabs were accepted as very much part of the scene. Many indeed protested when they heard of the Housing Committee's plans to clear away prefabs and use the valuable land which they occupied for developments of permanent houses with a larger population density. (*Edinburgh Evening News*., 17/03/1965: 8)

The housing journalist justified the residential evictions and upheaval with multiple examples of the "spectacular" progress being made in increasing house production. In Greendykes, where formerly 267 prefab homes had sat side by side within their individual plots of land, now stood 768 houses and five shops, in Hyvots Bank 664 homes would replace "about a third of this number of prefabs." Of the tenants themselves Coghill remarked that with their eviction notices they were offered the generous opportunity to purchase the fridges and cookers that had come with their prefabs to take to their new homes, but ominously warned:

> The reluctance of prefab dwellers to leave their homes of many years can be understood, but when they hold up the redevelopment plans then their case is less strong. At Northfield, for instance, where 298 houses will be erected on about half the land originally occupied by the prefabs, some difficulty is being experienced with tenants, dilly-dallying over the houses offered them by the Corporation House-Letting Department. (*Edinburgh Evening News*, 17/03/1965: 8)

Ultimately, neither complaint nor concession to Housing Committee demands by the 4,000 prefab tenants would stall nor prevent their evictions in the vast majority of cases. As Coghill unintentionally portentously concluded in March 1965:

> Within the next two years… the sites on which they stood will be obliterated under the welter of new building and they will pass into a city's history… (*Edinburgh Evening News*, 17/03/1965: 8)

But back to that spring of 1964, which became remarkable for another reason in Edinburgh's housing story. On March 21st the Leader of Her Majesty's Most Loyal Opposition, Harold Wilson MP, visited the city to give a keynote speech as part of a nationwide pre-election speaking tour to lay out "Labour's plan" for a "New Britain" ahead of a pending general election. A month earlier, he had delivered a speech in Leeds that focused solely on a future Labour's government's approach to housing and planning, committing Labour to improving the basic fitness standard of housing, devolving key housing decision-making away from central government, utilising non-traditional building techniques and boldly promising:

> Very old houses not worth improving up to the new standard will be listed for clearance and will be temporarily improved where they cannot be pulled down in five years. (Wilson 1964: 63)

On the morning before his Edinburgh speech Wilson was taken on a tour of some of the city's worst remaining slum neighbourhoods by Councillor Pat Rogan, Councillor Magnus Williamson, local journalist and Labour candidate for the Edinburgh Pentland seat at Westminster later that year, and Willie Ross MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland. The tour lingered in Jamaica Street, one of the New Town's most deprived quarters, and Freer Street in Fountainbridge where the visitors drew a large crowd of local residents, journalists and at least one press photographer

(See Figure 6). Wilson spent an hour chatting with residents, visiting their homes and wandering around the unkempt and unmaintained streets, before leaving to the sound of the “rousing cheers of the families who gathered to speak with him” (E.E.N. 21/03/1964:7). At a press conference held immediately afterwards he professed an evident dismay at the environment that had confronted him:

> I think all of us who saw these conditions were shocked by what they saw. Clearly the fact that so many people and so many children are having to live in conditions like this in 1964 is an intolerable affront to a so-called civilised society. (*Edinburgh Evening News*, 21/03/1964: 7)

(Figure 6 - Press images of crowds gathered to greet Harold Wilson, Pat Rogan and Magnus Williamson on their tour of Jamaica Street in March 1964. Scran)

That afternoon’s speech at the Usher Hall in front of an audience of around 2,500 was titled a “First Class Nation.” It was intended as a patriotic call-to-arms to end, what Wilson characterised as, the technological stagnation that had gripped the UK during thirteen years of Conservative government. He could point to other countries, former and recent enemies in some cases, who were forging ahead and even radically outpacing the UK in embracing modern industrial practices and innovations. From his famed “White heat of technology” speech until the election of October 1964, Wilson keenly portrayed a Britain on the brink of new industrial revolution that would either be nurtured or neglected depending upon the choice made by voters at the ballot box in a general election. *The Glasgow Herald* summed

up his meaning more succinctly, declaring he was occupied with the "short-comings of Toryism." Its reporter also noted that Willie Ross MP, who had introduced Wilson at the event, issued a strongly worded to challenge to the Conservative Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home:

> We saw conditions in this fair capital of Edinburgh where dignity is denied… We talk about slums in Glasgow. There are far greater slums in Edinburgh… I challenge him to come to Edinburgh and see the conditions for himself. (*The Glasgow Herald*, 23/03/1964:9)

In his Usher Hall speech, in front of an enthusiastic capacity crowd of 2,500 supporters, Wilson pummelled home the message that the Conservatives were out of touch with the lives lived by the majority of contemporary Britons. He agreed with Ross, that such sights as they witnessed that morning, could equally be seen in far too many declining industrial cities in both Scotland and England, describing the overcrowding, poor living conditions and overstretched waiting lists that he and his fellow MPs witnessed every day as "the great tragedy of our time" (Wilson, 1964: 56). He accused St Andrew's House of "tight-fisted" control of the Scottish housing budget and firmly fastened blame for the surviving slums to a Conservative "abdication of responsibility for the nation's economic well-being." The Tories, he claimed, would build office blocks, before replacing the decaying and obsolete slums, but not Labour, they would put the needs of the British people before "speculators and financiers" (Wilson, 1964: 49-50). He damned the Douglas-Home government for its social indifference and technological backwardness in an age when embracing modernity would solve the housing crisis:

> Here we are in 1964, in the middle of the great scientific revolution of world history, with science making more progress in the last fifteen years than it has in the last 1,500 years, and yet there are millions of people who have got no bath in their home, no inside lavatory, no internal hot-water system. We saw some of these homes this morning. (Wilson, 1964: 56)

Following his speech, Wilson had a private meeting with around 65 laymen and members of the clergy from various Scottish religious denominations before completing a busy day in Scotland's capital by offering the principal toast at the annual dinner of the Edinburgh Press Club. The media coverage of his visit the Monday after was generally positive, with columns and photographs highlighting his

concerns for the "intolerable affront" of the Edinburgh slums. However, an editorial in the *Glasgow Herald* struck a slightly discordant note. It claimed Wilson was correct to highlight the unacceptable housing conditions, but admonished him for only concentrating upon the failings of private landlords and ignoring those beginning to be regularly associated with municipal council housing. It suggested neighbourhoods in Glasgow he ought to visit, cautioning:

> Glasgow could show him a terrible example of one kind of Socialism in practice, with appalling slum conditions perpetuated at a time when private enterprise in building is all but stifled and a large part of the civic housing effort goes to providing for people who could provide for themselves. Many Glaswegians would relish a speech from Mr Wilson on social justice and social responsibility in housing: but perhaps the Labour Party in Glasgow would not. (*The Glasgow Herald*, 23/03/1964: 8)

The *Herald* editorial certainly hints at an emerging divergence of political and ideological opinion on how the housing shortage and problem of amenity-deficient homes should best be tackled, but for the most part such criticism remained nascent. In Edinburgh, both ends of the political spectrum were still agreed on the basic premise that wholesale slum clearance and high house-production numbers were still absolutely necessary, and both sides now claimed to be responsible for developments thus far made in both activities. In response to Wilson's criticism, the leader of the right-leaning Progressive Association in the Council, James W. McKay, told *The Edinburgh Evening News* that "Every member of Edinburgh Town Council is enthusiastic about slum clearance." A former Housing Convener himself, he claimed that all progress in clearing the slums and the Prefabs and the building of new houses was down to the prudent financial management of his administration and Rogan's predecessor in the post of Housing Convener, Councillor Tom Morgan. The only threat to increased production he foresaw was a "go-slow" by the Labour controlled building unions (*Edinburgh Evening News*, 23/03/1964). Meanwhile, the Labour MP for Central Edinburgh, Tom Oswald, attacked the Progressives at a public meeting about housing the day after Wilson's visit. Oswald echoed his party leader's claim that the right were more interested in building office blocks than homes, evidenced by the delays in rebuilding on the increasing number of central

gap sites emerging as tenement blocks were being demolished. The *Evening News* reported that he told the meeting:

> …That one of the reasons our slums were still such a crying disgrace was because there were so many landlords serving on the Town Council. 'Surely the people of Edinburgh will realise at some stage that the only way is to take matters out of the hands of private landlords and elect a Labour Town Council,' (*Edinburgh Evening News,* 23/03/1964:7)

Later that same week Pat Rogan went on the offensive once again, blaming the Conservative Government run Scottish Development Department at the Scottish Office for delays of up to six months after a building scheme had been agreed by the Planning and Housing Committees and submitted for their approval. He also assured readers that the rebuilding of the Arthur Street area would begin within the year "provided there were no difficulties from the Royal Fine Art Commission of Scotland or the Ministry of Works" (*Edinburgh Evening News*, 26/03/1964: 8). With national and local elections on the horizon neither the Labour nor the Progressive Association candidates wished to be portrayed as being on the wrong side of this debate and face misfortune at the polls. Consequently, substantive slum-clearance and house-building remained firmly on the political agenda, but the voices of dissent were growing ever louder.

In the summer of 1964, due to the weight of objections against the proposal, a public inquiry was held to assess the Housing and Planning Committees' plans to build homes in the Edinburgh green belt on 500 acres of land at Alnwickhill and Wester Hailes. Rogan left the inquiry in no doubt that refusal would be catastrophic to the progress the Corporation had made in addressing the city's housing waiting list which had reached 11,000 by 1963. According to a report of the proceedings in *The Scotsman*, "Rogan admitted that he felt too much weight was laid at times on amenities in Edinburgh, to the loss of housing." He attempted to reassure objectors and the amenity societies that multi-storey blocks would not be built on either site; that tenements of three and four storeys were planned instead, again hinting at the delays caused by the concerns of the Royal Fine Art Commission and Ministry of Works. When cross-examined by the advocate representing the Edinburgh

Architectural, Cockburn and Liberton Associations he was forced to admit further development in other green spaces around the city may be warranted, confessing, "We will develop where we can. Where we are likely to invade the green belt again, then we must." Harold Leslie QC, representing the Corporation, after describing in minute detail the overcrowded conditions and scale of housing shortage in the capital, appealed to the objectors' sense of public spiritedness: "The citizens of Edinburgh must regard this situation as distressing and formidable" (*Scotsman*, 28/07/1963: 5). Pat Rogan recollected the controversy over the two sites a quarter of a century later in an unpublished interview with Miles Glendinning:

> Wester Hailes, it was covered with small holdings, and that in itself didn't present a great deal of difficulty in persuading these people to move out. It presented a little difficulty, but not a great deal and at the end of the day there was not many problems attached to it, but Alnwickhill presented a different set of circumstances entirely… (Transcribed from taped interview of Pat Rogan by Miles Glendinning from Glendinning's private collection)

Rogan recounted how the new Labour Secretary of State for Scotland was eventually forced, under the sheer weight of negative publicity and pressure from "preservationists" and others lobbyists, to rule against the Corporation building public housing at Alnwickhill, but granted permission for Wester Hailes. Via his deputy, J. Dickson Mabon MP, the Secretary of State assured Rogan that this decision was not final and may be reconsidered in the future. "Which, of course, was utterly untrue," recalled Rogan, as Ross subsequently granted permission for private house-builders to build on Alnwickhill a year later. While it is notable that the Corporation Housing Convener could still enforce his plans upon the small-holders of Wester Hailes his defeat over Alnwickhill by an organised, funded and prepared middle-class resistance was an early harbinger of things to come later in the decade. As Damer and Hague explain:

> Such proposals were often bitterly contested by the existing middle class suburbanites, who were well enough educated to learn rapidly the rhetoric of planning – land use zoning, density standard, and the quality of environmental design… Planning proposals throughout the 1950s and 60s were affecting a more random selection of sectors than had been the case previously, when the main effect had been felt in inner-city slum districts. Consequently, larger numbers of articulate social groups were being affected and they protested vigorously (1971: 221-222).

In late 1964, the Planning Committee recorded the evolving and increasingly dominant role they were playing in the redevelopment of the city. Formerly heavily committed simply to their primary function of creating grand master plans, as defined in the 1947 *Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act,* Committee Chair Provost Weatherstone noted with a degree of satisfaction:

> More and more, however, are the Committee becoming involved in the more positive side of planning, namely that of initiating comprehensive redevelopment of areas of obsolescence, constriction or congestion, and this has been the main emphasis of the year's working, particularly in relation to areas in Leith, St James' Square and Tollcross. This work is extremely complex and most expensive in terms of finance, time and effort and one of the objects of the Committee in tackling the problem is to try to ensure that the Corporation obtain an adequate return, both financially and in the improvement of social conditions, from their investment in the redevelopment of such areas. (APPC 1964-65: 1)

And the assault upon these "areas of obsolescence" had been proceeding steadily under the Committee's sanction. Working closely with the Housing Committee, hundreds of clearance, demolition, closing and compulsory purchase orders had been issued since the beginning of the decade right across the city, with hundreds more voluntary undertakings sought by Corporation sanitary inspectors from landlords that they would agree to close their properties to further tenants (see Appendix 4). These were over and above the existing Comprehensive Development Areas then underway, approved or seeking approval in parts of St Leonards, Central Leith, St James Square and Newhaven. By 1965, the Provost claimed "The Planning Committee's function can be stated in two words – control and renewal." He remained unfazed by central government's increasing scepticism about the value of comprehensive development to the local and national economy. He and his Committee determined to keep pushing ahead with CDA plans elsewhere in the city. (APPC, 1965-66: 1-9). After several years' delay, the Planning Committee presented that year a new *Development Plan* for the city that would lay out their vision for the next stage in Edinburgh's urban story.

Despite its utilising the same dry, dull, official format as its 1957 precursor, which had possessed none of the colour, drama and vitality of Abercrombie and Plumstead's 1948 plan, the *Development Plan* of 1965 still packed plenty of punch.

Under its "major purposes" it listed its primary concerns as "Housing", "Employment" and "Redevelopment." First among these was "the elimination of unfit housing and overcrowding and the erection of new houses to meet essential needs;" second, the provision of new sources of employment and third "to redevelop comprehensively areas of obsolete development and bad layout". Improvement of existing housing stock came next and then assisting with private developments, in last place. "Transport and environment," primarily improving the road network, was listed as the next major concern, followed by redeveloping Edinburgh's "Central Area", addressing its "Educational and Leisure" needs, "Townscape and Landscape" policies, general needs and finally its integration into wider "Regional Planning" frameworks. (*Development Plan* 1965: 6). The plan confidently predicted Edinburgh's population trends and housing needs for the coming decade, declaring that the Local Authority was required to provide more than 30,000 homes "as quickly as practicable."

> The Corporation intend that these needs be met as follows:-

By new houses in clearance areas and present and future areas of comprehensive development	10,700 houses
By redevelopment of temporary housing sites	5,500 houses
By new houses on new and expanded local authority housing sites zoned in development plan	7,700 houses
By new houses on sites to be determined	9,600 houses
Total	33,500 houses

(*Development Plan, Written Statement* 1965: 7)

The report predicted that from a total base of 157,850 houses in the City at the end of June 1965, some 27,800 would be lost "due to local authority action and other redevelopment" over the subsequent two decades, but a combined total of 38,800 new houses would be built with public and private funds to replace them (1965: 8).

After declaring that the CDA begun in Dumbiedykes under the 1957 *Plan* was successfully completed in 1963, the Plan also sought to radically increase the number of CDAs in Edinburgh from those listed above to include further "Action Areas" in and around the University/Nicholson Street, Tollcross, South London

Road, Portobello, High Street and Juniper Green neighbourhoods. These further Comprehensive Development Areas would however "be conditioned by financial considerations, bearing in mind the extensive and costly redevelopment occasioned by the construction of the inner ring road" (1965: 14). This inner ring road proposal, intended to cut huge swathes through the city to facilitate more efficient transport links for the envisioned massive growth in personal car ownership, would quickly become the most controversial aspect of the plan. By the summer of 1966, when the Planning Committee finally formally delivered the plan to the Secretary of State for Scotland for his consideration and sanction, one hundred and thirty-five formal objections to it had been submitted, the overwhelming majority of which were about the road rather than the proposed clearance areas. The Secretary of State was forced to set a public inquiry for January 1967, giving the Corporation some time to work with objectors and manage their objections, ideally persuading their withdrawal before the inquiry officially sat.

Though determined to push ahead with six more large-scale comprehensive clearance areas, the chair of the Planning Committee did acknowledge in his Annual Report that there was growing concern over the redevelopment of some of their existing schemes. Lack of progress at the St Leonard's site, which had now lain empty for several years, was blamed on "difficulties in agreeing the form of layout appropriate to the site," a matter he hoped would soon be solved by the Housing Committee. Delays in the redevelopment of Newhaven village were blamed on the numerous objections to the scheme received by the Secretary of State. Some of these were overcome through a combination of buying and clearing various properties "under Housing Act Procedures," while the remaining objections were examined by the Planning Committee over the course of the previous year to see how their varied "planning powers" could be utilised to counter them.

Of the proposed new "action areas," Tollcross was probably the most ambitious, with major changes to traffic and pedestrian flow, housing and shopping

arrangements planned, with private developers expected to take a significant role here and elsewhere as the city cleared its obsolete neighbourhoods. This increasingly formal role taken by private enterprise in public civic works was most easily discernible in the University comprehensive redevelopment scheme where the Planning Committee were "represented in a tripartite committee consisting of representatives of the Corporation, the University and the commercial developer." The Planning Committee also introduced a pilot scheme to offer limited financial assistance to help restore "a very restricted part of the New Town" (PC AR 1966-67: 2-4). Such concessions to appease the growing preservationist lobby would have undoubtedly irritated the most vocal of local advocates of clearance and modern municipal housing Pat Rogan but he had lost the position of chair of the Housing Committee in early 1965 to Progressive councillor G.A. Theurer. His ability to influence Edinburgh's housing development was not limited to his one term as chair however. Glendinning and Muthesius record a later interview with Harry Cross, a former Deputy City Architect in charge of housing, who recalled fondly that "we had a wonderful book of contracts when Pat left the chair!" They also claim that Theurer "proved to be anxious, against uncertain support from his colleagues, to sustain momentum and enlist Rogan's advice" on housing and clearance issues [Glendinning & Muthesius 1994: 237-239). But the small-c conservative opposition to destructive urban renewal practices that Theurer was experiencing would become ever more voluble in the latter half of the decade.

Few single volume works offer greater insights into the intellectual perspectives of the Edinburgh ruling class in the mid-sixties than *The City of Edinburgh – Third Statistical Account of Scotland* published in 1966. An eclectic and varied collection of short essays, statistical observations and personal accounts gathered from a wide variety of Edinburgh worthies running to over a thousand pages, the tome drew criticism from the time of its publication for its top-down observations of the city. Writing in *The Guardian* one critic was particularly scathing of the editor David Keir's choice of contributors who "simply do not know what is

happening" in the town, accusing them of being completely insulated from the lives of most of the townsfolk upon whom they comment:

> …Because they are known to approve of Edinburgh and to lead in their various fields, their views become dogma… Because these men are part of an Edinburgh that matters only to them, they can note the slums, teenage drinking, the horrifying deserts of the housing estates and pass the port… Mr Keir has accepted too many pompous, hollow assurances from the City Fathers that all, in fact is well. Criticism is hidden as disloyal and the tenor of other people's lives escapes completely. (*The Guardian* 9/12/1966: 9)

The critic reproached Keir's literary elitism as a "lost opportunity" to examine a full cross-section of contemporary social and cultural life in Edinburgh, but for a researcher wishing to better comprehend the attitudes and ethos of the town's ruling elite during this period it is in fact a rich resource; especially when examining their evolving views on the capital's housing and clearance activities.

A town riven by stark contrasts is the dominant tone set early on in the work with some powerful olfactory observations describing the many distinct "smells of Edinburgh":

> …roasting coffee at a George Street corner, the hot buttery smell of baking shortbread, the drowsy warmth of flowers in the parks and the sharp muskiness of mayflower blossom in the gardens of the New Town. There are also more noisome smells to remind us of the other face of Edinburgh – fumes from a rubber factory, and the sour odour of decay in the city's slums, now rapidly diminishing (1966: 6).

This notion of internal urban division is further emphasised in a later chapter assessing "The Public Weal" as the city is further neatly segregated into "four Edinburghs" – "The Old Town, Georgian Edinburgh, Victorian Edinburgh and suburban Edinburgh (1966: 370)" It quickly becomes evident that a great deal of the Victorian built legacy in central Edinburgh is the least valued to many of the writers, though the sprawling, monotonous, uniform expanses of municipal inter-war suburban housing schemes come up for repeated criticism as well. Several contributors comment upon the flight of the slum-cleared working classes from the centre to the fringe estates, begun between the wars and re-started in recent years. Some remain relatively indifferent to the demographic trend, often simply

observing neutrally that where once the social classes lived cheek by jowl, they were now separated into discrete social enclaves. Other writers are more vocal in there growing condemnation of the Corporation's continued adherence to the Abercrombie approach to urban renewal – comprehensive, entire neighbourhood clearance followed by rebuilding on Functionalist principles. Lesley Scott-Moncrieff, recorded that much of the city felt like it was in "dry dock at the moment, awaiting refitting as administrative and commercial offices, community centres and museums." She lamented the clearance-caused erosion of distinctive social ecosystems in the remaining central working class neighbourhoods, she warned the Corporation that it was in danger of "pickling the heart of the city," entreating it to:

> Let judges rub shoulders with bookies when taking a short-cut through a close, and lawyers rescue little boys from communal dustbins. There is no particular reason why the Sheriff Court should stand among other buildings of a mausoleum type, or why town councillors should be divorced from the sort of teeming crowd they represent. (1966: 48)

After listing many of the trials faced by the ageing population left behind in the stigmatised neighbourhoods by the first waves of clearance and the lack of facilities in the areas to which the cleared are often relocated, Scott-Moncrieff also broke with conventional wisdom that the outward move was universally welcomed:

> But it is certainly not true that everyone wants to get out of the centre of the city. When people are asked if they want to get out, the answer is usually "yes" because the new houses with the amenities they want are all on the outskirts. Once out and asked if they would like to return to the centre, they again answer "yes," because they long to get back to their old intimate life, and for many there are financial reasons as well. (1966: 57)

The unsettling image of struggling, lonely, elderly citizens being left behind by the Corporation clearances is vividly painted in John Ross Junor's account of Leith in which he describes how the changes have made the "heart of Leith" virtually unrecognisable:

> There is a striking absence of children. Vast cleared spaces meet the eye where formerly stood crowded tenements; elsewhere, only the aged linger on in quiet streets that once resounded to the noise and bustle of active community life. (1966: 64)

Such anxious, personal insights about the nature and pace of change to the social ecology of capital were fairly rare though, with the majority of local worthies who contributed to the *Third Statistical Account* remaining relatively content with the overarching general principles of clearance and rebuilding still being utilised by the Corporation.

In an entertaining and revealing insight into the general mentalité of Edinburgh's ruling elite, in a chapter entirely given over to a verbatim transcript of a society dinner party held in Sir Compton Mackenzie's home, the participants found much to criticise in Edinburgh's urban renewal but, on the whole, more to praise when the town's experience was compared with that of other large cities. This was a common theme. In another chapter, introducing the "The Problems of Planning" in the Capital, Keir even went so far as dismissing the growing clamour from those who failed to balance a desire to preserve the city with contemporary tastes and, more importantly, the absolute necessities of modern life:

> Clearly, no matter how old and picturesque their squalor, certain old slum areas have had to be or must be cleared in the interest of public health and cleanliness. (1966: 390)

Note he does not say improve, he says 'clear'. In this Keir was following the well-established narrative path trodden by most upper and middle-class commentators since the Victorian era who "othered" these much maligned neighbourhoods, setting them apart from the acceptable urban environment, simply dismissing them as irredeemable. Likening these areas, and by association their inhabitants, to an infection that could and must be ruthlessly cut out of the urban body to make it wholesome and healthy once again. Passively, or sometimes actively, encouraging the social segregation of their cities under cover of legitimate acts of public health intervention, presented as the actions of a wise and munificent city government.

Elsewhere in the volume, intimate descriptions of life lived in the remaining slums of Edinburgh, the perceived vices, deprivations and behaviours exhibited and endured by their inhabitants are laid bare by passionate, and sometimes

sympathetic, observers. But they too echo the commonly held view that such complex social, psychological and cultural problems will be and are being “resolved by the clearance of the slums” and the “building of the housing estates which have taken their place” (1966: 473). The renowned architect William Kinninmonth introduces readers to some of the few planning decisions that actually did raise a discordant note within polite Edinburgh society, comprehensive slum clearance was not among them. Criticism of urban renewal activities was restricted to the partial destruction of George Square by the University and the planned removal of gardens in Randolph Crescent, both singled out as two of the most rancorous actions allowed in recent times by the Corporation. On the current hot topic of an Inner Ring Road for the city, contrary to contemporary expectation, Kinninmonth made a pitch firmly in favour of the ambitious proposal. It is noticeable that he did not attempt to address the likely dislocation and disruption constructing this road would wreak upon the residents of the South Side and beyond, instead he concentrated upon the road’s promised benefits as the only “alternative and practicable way of saving Princes Street and the New Town” from ever-increasing traffic numbers (1964: 396). This prioritisation of life and wellbeing in much of the New Town ahead of many other central Edinburgh neighbourhoods would become the predominant feature of Edinburgh’s renewal activities in the years that followed.

By early 1968, central government’s unequivocal support for destructive comprehensive clearance had reached its high watermark. The Secretary of State for Scotland held a public inquiry from January to May 1968 to deliberate on the many objections his office had received to the latest *Development Plan*. As a result of the inquiry’s preliminary findings and claims of increasing financial constraints forced upon it by central government subsidy cuts the Corporation began to trim back its plans. It reduced the number of “action areas” it had planned to redevelop and began the process of scaling back its long talked of inner and outer ring roads proposals. Although evidently frustrated by these reversals of long-held policies, the

Planning Committee Chairman defiantly noted in his annual report that their proposal for the comprehensive renewal of the Tollcross area would still be going ahead. He also proudly observed that clearance and rebuild work in St Leonards and Leith was still running ahead of the ten years the Committee had originally allocated to complete the work in those areas and that the St James Square and Newhaven clearance schemes were advancing satisfactorily (APPC, 1967-68: 2-3). In his annual report the following year he informed readers that a further public inquiry was held in July 1969 by the Secretary of State to examine the subsequent public objections to the Secretary's initial findings on the *1965 Development Plan*. While awaiting Willie Ross's final adjudication, the Planning Committee had in the meantime still further reduced their clearance plans and commissioned Colin Buchanan & Partners and Freeman, Fox, Wilbur Smith & Associates to jointly produce a "Central Area Planning and Transport Study" (APPC, 1968-69: 1-6). The radical traffic proposals garnered support from the council's Highways and Road Planning Committee who reported at the end of the year that an "Eastern Link Road" would soon be under construction to relieve some of the congestion in the city centre (APHRC 1968-69: 5). Central government was prepared to fund half of the estimated cost of the £298,800 required for the Buchanan traffic flow study, but their interest in and financial support for comprehensive clearance approaches to urban planning was rapidly diminishing.

The new Housing Committee Chair, Councillor Clive Murphy, reported in early 1970 that although his Committee was still pursuing with some vigour the application of slum clearance procedures against individual properties using demolition and unfitness orders, Whitehall and St Andrew's House policymakers were making the Committee's continued assault on slum neighbourhoods more difficult:

> With the passing of the Housing (Scotland) Act, 1969, a new tolerable standard of housing has been substituted for the former standard of unfitness for human habitation. This tolerable standard is comparatively low and, apart from the fact that the clearance area procedure is no longer available to the local authority, may bring difficulty in continuing to remove slum houses. (APHC, 1969-70: 1)

The new act replaced Comprehensive Development Areas with Housing Treatment Areas (HTAs), which required local authorities to invest much more resources into the rehabilitation of obsolete buildings rather than wholesale block clearance and demolition. The Housing Committee Chair was not yet ready to concede defeat on this issue, concluding that there was still wiggle room in the new act for the Corporation to "continue a programme where the removal or clearance of slum houses will still be the objective," though now it would necessarily be done house by house rather than whole blocks at a time (APHC, 1969-70: 1).

Despite the strenuous opposition of the pro-demolition housing crusaders, support for the rehabilitation of the obsolete and amenity-deficient housing of the working classes, rather than its destruction, had grown steadily throughout the 1960s. At the beginning of the decade it was still the niche preserve of a few academic housing experts and impassioned conservationists. Lonely, some might say eccentric, voices like Moultrie Kelsall and Stuart Harris cried out in a stark Modernist wilderness against the actions of those "Scotsmen-on-the-make" for whom "the fact that a building was traditional in design, and of a respectable age, were twin reasons why it should be destroyed" (Kelsall and Harris, 1961: 3). Their cynical analysis was confirmed the following year when the Ministries of Local Government and Transport jointly published *Town Centres – Approach to Renewal*. The slim manual advised local government officials how best to oversee the complete and comprehensive clearance and redevelopment of the slum neighbourhoods in their towns, utilising the Comprehensive Development Area procedure. The emphasis throughout was that the newer the building the better, that contemporary fashion and requirements meant that the majority of pre-1900 structures ought to be swept away without delay. In 1963, Wilfred Burns, Chief Planning Officer at Newcastle Council and soon to be Chief Planner at the Ministry of Housing Local Government, published the Bible of British urban clearance - *New Towns for Old – The Technique of Urban Renewal.* Having cut his teeth as a planner in the redevelopment of blitzed Coventry, Burns was a firm proponent of the total

neighbourhood clearance approach to city renewal. He felt no sentimental attachment to the townscapes that had evolved during Britain's industrial revolution, blithely declaring that "Town centres and living areas built in early and mid-Victorian times are now ripe for rebuilding" (1963: 22). *New Towns for Old* provided councillors and council officials with a clear, concise and detailed textbook instructing them on the most efficient ways to clear, re-plan and re-build their towns and cities while reducing bureaucracy and red-tape to a minimum. And as for the many thousands of residents directly affected, like many of his generation, Burns was remarkably untroubled by the potential social or psychological consequences for those who would be cleared:

> One result of slum clearance is that a considerable movement of people takes place over long distances, with devastating effect on the social groupings built up over the years. But, one might argue, this is a good thing when we are dealing with people who have no initiative or civic pride. The task, surely, is to break up such groupings even though the people seem to be easily satisfied with their miserable environment and seem to enjoy an extrovert social life in their own locality. (1963: 93-94)

But by the time Burns took up his Whitehall appointment at the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in 1968, he would find that support among his fellow civil servants for comprehensive clearance was dwindling due to the rising costs attached to such procedures and the ever increasing numbers of obsolete houses which still had to be addressed.

In 1965, the Scottish Development Department, the fledgling Scottish Office body tasked with overseeing housing and planning in Scotland, produced *Scottish Housing in 1965*, authored by the increasingly influential young housing and planning academic J.B. Cullingworth. Sampling 3,000 Scottish homes in April and May of that year, Cullingworth extrapolated his data to draw conclusions about the state of the national housing stock. He was immediately struck during his survey that his "English experience was found to be an inadequate guide" in assessing property due to the substantially different residential and domestic arrangements in much of Scotland's working class households (1965: 1). This made objective, UK-

wide standardised evaluation of required amenities academically problematic. Despite this initial concern, Cullingworth eventually estimated that Scottish Local Authorities would need to demolish circa 30,000 homes per year up to 1970, just to keep pace with the rate of obsolescence. This was double the then current national rate of demolitions. Cullingworth also made a series of observations on why householders moved house, high household mobility rates he believed resulted from "a dynamic economy" (1965: 31). His interviews revealed that reasons varied from upsizing to changing jobs, but "Involuntary moves" due to slum clearance or condemned or demolished homes accounted for approximately ten per cent of house flittings in Scotland in the first five years of the 1960s (1965:37).

Once he had established the scale of the remaining amenity deficient households, Cullingworth turned to solutions. He noted that fewer than fifty per cent of owner-occupiers interviewed were aware that there were public grants available to address lacking "standard amenities. Of those that were aware of the grants, only seven per cent were actually considering applying for one (1965: 54). He discovered that much of the opposition to applying for grants stemmed from a misunderstanding of the clearance procedures, with many households aware of a demolition order, but not realising that the local authority did not plan to demolish in some cases for as many as 15 to 29 years. Many householders also said they were "too old to be bothered with improvements" or could not afford their share even with a grant. Awareness of housing rights amongst tenants was found to be equally lacking, with over a third unaware if their tenancies were protected by rent control and sixteen per cent unaware even of the name of their landlord (1965: 55-56). Two years later Cullingworth co-authored a report for the Ministry of Housing and Local Government called *Our Older Homes – A Call for Action.* This report sought to redefine minimum tolerable fitness standards for *all* housing, to set objective parameters for the clearance of those buildings that could not be modernised and establish more effective means to compel landlords and house-owners to maintain or refurbish their properties to the newly agreed standard in those that could be

modernised. The authors of this extensive report explicitly acknowledged that the sheer scale of obsolescent residential property was now so great that repair and renovation was the only practical way forward to ensure the majority of Britons were housed in adequate accommodation as quickly as possible.

That same year Edinburgh Corporation Housing Committee received its own comprehensive survey of the town's housing stock. It was called *Amenity-Deficient Houses in Edinburgh, 1967*, and it was collated and compiled by Dr Ronald Jones of the University's Geography Department, and commissioned directly by the committee chair G.A. Theurer. As an academic, Jones attempted to employ a rigorously objective schema of criteria to assess household amenity. To declare it deficient the house would have to lack one or more of the following:

(i) Hot water (including the method of heating, if any)
(ii) Ventilated larder
(iii) Through ventilation
(iv) Exclusive use of a kitchen Sink
(v) Exclusive use of a wash-hand basin
(vi) Exclusive use of a bath or shower
(vii) Exclusive use of a lavatory

Though, if the lack of ventilated larder was the only deficiency, Jones and his small team of inspectors would not fail the property. In the course of their survey the University team worked their way across the entire city, logging building type, number of apartments and occupants, their ages and relationship to one another and whether or not the head of house had applied for a Corporation home. The data was then programmed onto punch cards and ward-by-ward tables were produced and detailed maps drawn up. Some 28,470 amenity-deficient homes, containing 65,483 people, were identified. Significantly, only 2,111 homes contained "known applicants for Corporation houses." Meaning just 7.4% of the residents of amenity-deficient houses appear to have sought a council house as a route of escape from their "slum" homes. This proved to be political dynamite in the City Chambers. An insight into this frayed consensus across the political spectrum can be found in the margins of the original copy of the survey held in an

unindexed file in the *Edinburgh Council City Archive*. A scribbled note next to the author's acknowledgement of the Housing Committee chair as the originator of the survey project that simply reads: "Not once was I thanked by the Left – GA Theurer".

In 1969 the Scottish Development Department produced *Slum Clearance and Improvements – The New Scottish Handbook*, a ninety page primer for Local Authority officials about the freshly minted *Housing (Scotland Act)* of that year. This instructive text explained the new Housing Treatment Area (HTA) procedures, provided objective survey checklists for sanitary and housing inspectors on the new tolerable environmental standards, information on grant funding for rehabilitation of property and numerous detailed examples of schemes to improve and modernise the many traditional Scottish tenement types found across the country. Where the inter-war and subsequent housing acts had incentivised clearance by offering cash bounties to local authorities to build houses for every resident cleared from a slum, the 1969 act incentivised, with clearly defined subsidies, the improvement and restoration of these twilight areas and individual obsolescent buildings, rather than the demolition and obliteration of whole neighbourhoods. To those elected politicians and the many housing, planning and sanitary officials in central and local government departments who had been in post since before the war or who had learnt from those who had been, this would require a colossal paradigm shift in mindset, behaviour and approach to urban renewal.

Michael J. Miller describes, in his study of post-war housing in the Gorbals in Glasgow, that even the very "…concept of assisting private owners to improve their homes was an anathema to Labour Party orthodoxy" in the early to mid-20th century (2003: 199). The former Labour MP Dr J. Dickson Mabon, who became the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland with responsibility for housing in 1964, later recalled in an interview the prevailing attitude when he took over his new department: "One thing we did decide very quickly was that there was no question

of diverting significant resources to rehabilitate old houses." Mabon also acknowledged a cross-party consensus on this matter, claiming to have been heavily influenced by discussions with veteran political "colleagues" such as former Unionist Secretary of State for Scotland Walter Elliot, who in the 1930s had been a powerful advocate of state-provision of social housing. Elliot had emphatically warned him when the two had talked of the possibility of rehabilitating Scottish tenements that "There is nothing you can do, Mabon, with these castles of misery!" When the Labour MP countered with details of recent successful architectural conversion schemes, Elliot simply retorted, "No, no, tear them down!" (Quoted in Glendinning 1997: 57). In his unpublished autobiography, former Labour councillor Jack Kane, who served on the Town Council from 1939 to 1975 latterly as Lord Provost, described how canvassing in "Edinburgh's slumland" had profoundly shaped his own views and that of his colleagues on how best to tackle redevelopment of such areas. He named the above mentioned Magnus Williamson as a socialist convert "…who had been won over to Labour while canvassing for the Tory Party in the reeking slums of central Edinburgh" (undated: 234). The experience of wandering in these "fearsome places" was still a vivid one for Kane many decades later:

> The labyrinthine corridors had no lighting of any kind and were as black as pitch; when venturing into them in search of voters we had to feel our way forward step by step with hands outstretched before us. Sometimes we found ourselves knocking at a door that turned out to be the entrance to the common lavatory; sometimes we opened the door of what we thought was the lavatory and found ourselves in the middle of a family living room. It was not uncommon to find six or more people huddled in these single-ends, and it never ceased to surprise me how, living in such appalling conditions, most of the housewives yet managed to keep their dark dens so fresh and clean. (Undated: 140)

Kane, like Eliot, Rogan and so many other politicians saw demolition as the only response to unfitness in the vast majority of circumstances, a view shared by many of the most senior civil servants and council officers too.

This was a matter discussed by several of the interviewees in the 1990s short film *Pull it doon! The Changing face of Edinburgh's Southside*, produced by the

South Side Association to document post-war demolition and clearance in Edinburgh's South Side (https://tinyurl.com/yclzqplc). One participant, local resident and long-time chair of Edinburgh's best-known amenity society the *Cockburn Association,* Oliver Barratt, scathingly recounted witnessing a conversation between two of the most senior Corporation officials about what should be done with sub-standard property:

> I remember the Town Clerk, Mr Glendinning, asking the Environmental Health Officer why the houses had to come down and he said:
> "Because they are unfit."
> "Why are they unfit?"
> "Because they have not got exclusive use of a W.C."
> "What is the normal treatment for a house that has not got exclusive use of a W.C.?"
> "Ya pull it doon!"
> And that was the sort of level of thinking carried out by Edinburgh Corporation in the 1960s.

In a chapter of an excoriating volume of accounts protesting and recording recent slum clearance activity in the same district of Edinburgh described in the film, Ian Raitt singles out for criticism, in a similar manner to Barratt, two local council officers, T.T. Hewitson, the Town Planning Officer, and John Bertram, a senior sanitary inspector. Raitt reports an occasion when Bertram appeared at an official public local inquiry in 1972 concerning a proposed demolition order to demolish 49 houses and evict the 89 residents in West Nicholson Street. *The South Side Association* opposed the order, claiming that the properties Bertram's team had condemned could instead be improved but the sanitary inspector apparently responded that "demolition was 'the best treatment'" and offered no evidence to back up his claim. The Town Planning Officer was of a similar mind to his colleague when he refused the *Association's* request to place a preservation order on the buildings, informing them that the late 18th century vernacular buildings were not of "…sufficient interest to justify the Corporation approving the serving of Building Preservation notices" (Peacock, c.1974: 31). On this occasion, given the evidence and support of the officials, the Secretary of State confirmed the CPO for demolition.

Similar negative attitudes by Edinburgh council officers towards pre-20th century buildings were also described by Pat Rogan, whose own negative, deterministic view of traditional architecture was amply expressed in numerous interviews during and after his time in office. He recalled a housing official from the Edinburgh Corporation Health Department, a James Robertson, who was very sympathetic to his crusade to clear the town of much of its aged streets and buildings. He claimed Robertson possessed a “tremendous knowledge of Edinburgh’s slums” having previously “supervised” the town’s inter-war slum clearances and recollected that the housing inspector could be persuaded to frequently bend the incredibly subjective housing rules when the situation warranted:

> …He proved himself useful in other directions, especially when measuring houses where valuable points could be gained by the occupants for overcrowding. Where he felt the need was urgent, and a family should be rehoused as soon as possible, his measuring tape would shrink, and the dimensions he submitted would ensure the early removal of a suffering family, I called on his help regularly when severe cases of overcrowding were brought to my attention, and he responded magnificently.

Like Eliot’s influence on Mabon, Rogan noted that this Robertson’s definition of what constituted a slum had been entirely shaped by one of his predecessors at the Corporation who would designate an area as such if it simply contained: “Darkness, Dampness and Dilapidation.” To this highly subjective canon of slum indicators, Rogan himself added a fourth metric, that of “Despair” (Quoted by Glendinning, 1997: 69). As Miller notes of similar activities by housing officials and crusaders in Glasgow around the same time, such approaches “…echo hygienist preoccupations and, as such, differ little from nineteenth century discourses on the slum” (2003: 213). By the end of the 1960s central government sent a strong message to local authorities that it required far more objective, *twentieth* century solutions to the problem of unfit housing stock. The 1969 *Housing (Scotland) Act* indicated to every council employee and crusading politician alike that Westminster and St Andrew’s House wanted any darkness, dampness and dilapidation that still clung on in neglected corners of Scottish cities to be addressed by electricians, builders,

plumbers and decorators rather than jack-hammers, wrecking balls and bulldozers – despair would have to wait.

Edinburgh Corporation's reaction to this new code of practice on housing procedures was profoundly hostile. The Housing Convener's annual published report, in January 1970, described how council officers had continued throughout much of the previous year "removing houses regarded as unfit for human habitation by closing or demolition order and by clearance area procedures" much as they had done for most of the previous two decades. But Councillor Murphy predicted trouble ahead as the protocols enshrined in the new *Housing (Scotland) Act*, particularly the new "tolerable standard of housing", had the potential to bring his officers' traditional approach to comprehensive clearance to a shuddering halt:

> A new procedure relating to so-called treatment areas has been provided in the Act and, as at the date of this report, the Committee are reviewing the position in the light of the new provisions in the Act and, as a matter of policy, are likely to agree a programme where the removal or clearance of slum houses will still be the objective. (APHC, 31/01/1970: 1)

R.A.W. Rhodes notes that across the United Kingdom at this time, "Modernisation intensified conflict between national and sub-central units of government" as "Central intervention provoked confrontations in the fields of education and housing" (1987: 30). Between Edinburgh officials and politicians and their colleagues in central government, this deteriorating working relationship is well illustrated by several thick, formerly confidential, government files held in the National Archives, each containing internal and external correspondence between, from and to civil servants in St Andrew's House.

Among these papers is a minute of a meeting of the Corporation's "Special Sub-Committee on Housing Policy" from February 1970 whose attendees included the previous three Housing Conveners, Councillors Ford, Theurer and Rogan, as well as the new Convener (NRS, DD6/1995/1). The main source of discussion was the new *Housing (Scotland) Act* 1969 and its "tolerable standard" and the subsequent correspondence received about it from the Secretary of State. The Town Clerk

explained that it was not just the "comparatively low" standard that vexed him but also the possibility that in:

> …areas where clearance might be proposed as distinct from individual closing or demolition orders there might be difficulty, in public enquiries for example, in dealing with objections which suggested the retention and patching of houses to a tolerable standard as an alternative to clearance…

As a consequence, he asked the assembled meeting to therefore ponder the council's long-held strategy to deal with amenity-deficient property, asking them:

> …whether the Corporation were still of the view that, for Edinburgh's purposes, the removal of houses which did not meet the tolerable standard was preferable to patching and maintaining such houses.

The Chief Sanitary Inspector informed the meeting that there were approximately 11,000 houses in the town that fell below the tolerable standard, suggesting that they could be "dealt with" within six years by a combination of the new HTA procedure and the older technique of individual closing and demolition orders "and that it was unlikely that the Corporation would require to undertake a patching programme." Assured that they could continue pretty much as before, the assembled council members decided to ignore the Secretary of State's new housing directive and continue working to their previous standard, the minute recording:

> The Sub-Committee resolved to recommend approval in principle of the continuation of the Corporation's policy of removing from occupation by clearance, demolition or closing, of the houses in the city which did not meet the current standard…

The very next order of business revealed however that talk was cheap but the reality of ignoring policy directives from central government would be expensive. The Depute City Architect had been working on a housing renewal project in the Gorgie area containing 381 houses that he hoped to rehabilitate. Following an inspection by the Chief Sanitary Inspector of 342 of these households it was discovered that only 69 failed the new "tolerable standard." The Town Clerk informed the Sub-Committee that the spirit and tenor of the new act was to encourage, as much as possible, the owners of the properties to carry out repairs

and improvements themselves and “that compulsory acquisition of houses to secure improvement should only be used as a last resort.” The Town Clerk made clear that the Finance Committee were therefore very concerned that they would not receive central funding for the project and have to pay for it out of the town’s coffers. Having only minutes before agreed to maintain their long-standing comprehensive clearance approach in the renewal of their city, when faced with a loss of subsidy for such activities, the Sub-Committee decided instead to suspend the Gorgie project for the time-being. Instead, it was thought politic to consider other approaches including “whether they should undertake a programme of publicity on the availability of improvement grants and of encouragement to private owners to make use of these grants”.

For the next few years, leading up to the regional reorganisation of local government in 1975, the Department of Health for Scotland files record a difficult and often fractious relationship between the Corporation and St Andrew’s House. In February 1971 a deputation of councillors and Corporation officers met with representatives of the Department to express their continuing dissatisfaction with the 1969 Act. Minutes of the meeting record that their position was much as it had been the previous year:

> The Corporation were reluctant to see houses “patched up” to what they saw as the very low standard of the 1969 Act and they thought there could be great legal difficulty in obtaining houses for proper rehabilitation as distinct from demolition. (NRS, DD6/1992/3)

A month later, a follow-up meeting was held in St Andrew’s House without any elected councillors present. The official minutes recount a frank exchange between the civil servants assessing Edinburgh’s approach to urban renewal (NRS, DD6/1992/3). The senior Corporation officers explained that “certain political factions” were now at odds in the council over how best to proceed, with one side favouring rehabilitation over demolition. The Edinburgh officials, who included the Depute Town Clerk, the Chief Sanitary Inspector and the City Architect explained that they were not in favour of “patching-up” unfit houses as:

> …it was usually technically simpler to demolish and build anew as distinct from devising improvement schemes. With improvements, care had to be taken at the outset that houses were worth improving, and in addition it could be difficult to encourage property owners to do the necessary work. Indeed, if an owner occupier agreed to improve his house, by statute his house need only be brought up to the tolerable standard and not a higher standard which the Corporation might consider to be necessary for the general good of the area.

The Department's civil servants were unimpressed and unmoved, responding:

> The Department stated that the internal politics of the Corporation was Edinburgh's own affair and the Secretary of State had no locus to interfere in the democratic privilege of any local authority to formulate local policy within the national framework laid down by Parliament. It was agreed that the designation of a housing treatment area for improvement could entail a major public relations exercise, but there was as yet no evidence to suggest that the public at large would be averse to improving their property if the relative advantages were explained to them.

The Department files labelled "Slum Clearance in Edinburgh 1971-1975" are from then on filled with newspaper cuttings and correspondence about or from politicians and members of the public concerned with various incidents of clearance in the capital over these years. Internal memoranda between senior government civil servants reveal their growing contempt for housing and planning decisions being made by Edinburgh Corporation officials and councillors. The lengthy indecision and dithering of the Corporation in 1972 over the future of a tenement in Northcote Street in Haymarket, leaving its owner in limbo both unable to repair or sell the property, led R.E. Smith to write to a colleague:

> I am still not clear, having read the papers, what enactments Edinburgh Corporation are working under; I wonder if the Corporation are clear themselves on this… Perhaps you would wish now to write to Edinburgh Corporation to see if they can give a rational explanation of what has so far happened in this case? (NRS, DD6/1992/22)

The following year, Jack Kane, the new Labour Lord Provost appealed directly to George Younger, the Secretary of State for Scotland, making a final case against the provisions of the 1969 Act on behalf of his Corporation officials and asking for a face-to-face meeting to discuss it. Younger received a briefing note from a T. Spence before the meeting which contained a detailed history of the urban renewal activities in Edinburgh since the war. Adopting a tone of undisguised exasperation,

directed at the Corporation's officials' stubborn reluctance to embrace rehabilitation activities, Spence also took the opportunity to lambast the council's procedural standing orders which could see significant housing policies reversed on a monthly basis depending upon which political faction was present in sufficient numbers in the chamber at the time a vote took place. He illustrated this by describing the 1970 central government requested policy of selling council houses to sitting tenants which was implemented, reversed, implemented again and then reversed once more all in the space of seven months, as political factions of the left and right took diametrically opposed positions on the action of selling these homes (NRS, DD6/1994/41). Further internal communications in subsequent years about Corporation indecisiveness over demolition or rehabilitation of buildings on Nicholson Street, Buccleuch Street and elsewhere were even more overtly scathing. R.D. Cramond decried Edinburgh's "muddled committee system which prevented their putting constructive proposals forward…" (NRS, DDG/2061/1023/09/1974) and S.C. Aldridge derided the Corporation's activities as utter "ineptitude" into which the Secretary of State reluctantly found it necessary for the government department to now intervene (NRS, DD6/2061/21).

Outside the confines of local and central government officialdom, opposition to the traditional comprehensive clearance model, favoured by Rogan and others, had been growing steadily since the mid-sixties. The *Civic Amenities Act,* 1967, that actively encouraged the preservation of significant historic buildings and enshrined the concept of 'conservation areas' in law along with events such as the "Two Hundred Summers in the City" exhibition at the Edinburgh College of Art in 1967 and the internationally significant "Conservation of Georgian Edinburgh" conference attended by Sir John Betjeman in the summer of 1970 ensured that the issue of the conservation and preservation of Edinburgh's Georgian built heritage started to move outside the rarefied salons belonging to just a few members of the local chattering classes.

> Helped by such events, gradually public opinion became convinced that Georgian houses were not the slums condemned as 'unfit for human habitation' according to the health legislation, but part of a valuable amenity. (Jenkins & Holder, 2005: 195)

Such was the growing influence and power of the so-called "Preservationists" in the city that Jenkins and Holder concur with Miles Glendinning's assessment that "The 1970s were the first and perhaps, only decade in which the central driving force in Scottish architecture was not new buildings of any kind, but preserved old ones" (2005: 197). This view is supported by the increasing influence through the 1960s and early 1970s of the *Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland* whose report on their activities in the years 1972 to 1975 noted with satisfaction that:

> In place of public apathy there is now an ever increasing awareness of the importance of conserving the fabric of our urban structure so as to maintain scale, character and beauty: and to provide a continuing sense of personal and of communal identity-both matters of vital social consequence. (1976: 9)

Resident pressure groups were not restricted to the confines of the New Town either.

The South Side Association came about as a countermeasure to the University's doggedly determined attempts to establish a CDA encompassing a huge swathe of the city from the Meadows to St Leonards. An exhibition in September 1972 called "Forgotten Southside" held within a condemned 18th century tenement in West Nicholson Street highlighting the plight of the host building and several others earmarked for destruction, held the attention of several influential figures. A series of memos between government officials about it in response to serious concerns raised by Michael Clarke Hutchison, the local Tory MP, shifted blame from the Corporation to the University. Senior government administrator Ronnie Cramond wrote that he was "incensed by the persistent misinformed sniping" of the organisers and "the bias in the exhibition against the Corporation and the Government and in favour of the university, who are in my view the biggest vandals on the south side of Edinburgh (NRS DD6/1992/35). In addition to help and support from active middle-class New Town preservationists, the early efforts of the *South*

Side Association were also ably assisted by socially conscious students from the University and rising stars in the Labour Party like Gordon Brown, Robin Cook and George Foulkes. Cook would later recall in an interview about this time:

> The politics of the Southside in those days was dominated by plans for redevelopment. Redevelopment which involved clearing the houses, replacing them with roads, university buildings, museums, in fact, just about anything but housing, and the big fight that we had during that period, oh I guess from about 1970 through to 1975, was to try and turn round that whole approach to the centre of Edinburgh and to the South Side, from being one of clearing it out as a residential area and preserving it as a residential area. And those early years in seventies were tremendously important in that they did represent a turning point. (Transcript from *Pull it Doon, The Changing Face of Edinburgh's Southside,* https://tinyurl.com/yclzqplc)

He failed to acknowledge that this "turning point" was in fact only possible because his own party had finally reversed their long-held support for comprehensive clearance, partly in response to a changing political mood "…characterized by the people's demands for more participation in the formulation of polices which are going to affect them" (Damer & Hague 1971: 219). But in an essay he wrote as an MP for a polemical booklet about the depopulation of the central districts of the capital, called *The Unmaking of Edinburgh,* Cook did describe one unnamed senior former colleague's incredulity at the public's changing tastes in housing:

> This colossal process of decanting rested on the explicit views that the central area had no future as a residential area. I vividly remember one former Housing Chairman lamenting that now everyone seemed to want houses located in the city centre and industrial estates placed on the outskirts, whereas all his life he had worked for the ideal of his youth that everyone should have a house in a suburban estate and work in a city centre to which the noise and pollution of industry had been confined. (c.1975: 40)

Cook was of the opinion that subjective "assumptions" such as this had shaped post-war development in the city and "underlay a series of extraordinary planning decisions in the early sixties" (c.1975: 40) that his generation of politicians were forced to address and eventually actively oppose in the decade that followed. The eventual publication in 1972 of "The Buchanan Plan", as it was most commonly known, with its controversial recommendations for a massive road-building programme across the city was once such issue.

(Figure 7 – Photograph of the large pull-out plan provided by Buchanan & Partners and Freeman, Fox & Associates (1972) illustrating their radical recommendations for significant new road construction (coloured red on the map) that was intended to solve Edinburgh's existing traffic-flow issues and prepare the city for a predicted growth in vehicle ownership in the future)

Intended to solve a hotly contested dispute that had been bubbling away since the publication of the post-war *Abercrombie Plan* in 1949, the Buchanan Plan only further crystallised opposition in the city to the continued top-down imposition of idealistic planning visions. Exactly how completely its authors had failed to take cognisance of this changing public attitude is revealed by their appeal directly to those who stood likely to lose the most, pleading with them to think of the bigger picture and the "great gains" to be made for the city by diverting heavy traffic out its historic centre:

> Of course, it is very difficult for people who stand personally to lose their homes to take an objective view of the matter and to balance up gains and losses for the community as a whole but experience suggests that not a little of their anxiety is connected with fears of inadequate compensation and unsatisfactory resettlement, and if these fears could be removed, more dispassionate attitudes might prevail (Buchanan & Partners, et al, 1972: Paragraph 654).

Buchanan and his co-authors would have done well to read Damer and Hague's robust critique of public participation in planning, published the previous year. It could have warned them that the era of the professional planner being the sole arbiter of what was best for a town was coming to a close as protest groups became more articulate and organised and it could have alerted them to the likely absurdity that any citizen would willingly "…participate in a programme which at the end of the day is going to clear him out of his house whether he wills it or not" (1971: 226).

By the mid-1970s, the housing crusade against the slums and in support of numbers-driven house-building looked similarly anachronistic and out of step. Opposition to comprehensive clearance and mass-produced system-built housing had grown ever more vocal and was receiving a more sympathetic airing in the press. A significant reason behind this was the increasingly better organised resistance to clearance up and down the country. A young professional class of planners, architects and sociologists, energised and inspired by the activities of American urbanists like Gans and Jacobs, were enthusiastically abandoning the rigid top-down implementation dogma of the previous generation of housing experts and officials. They sought to increase meaningful public participation in planning issues and actively assisted resident and amenity groups with their protest actions and clearance resistance strategies (see Damer & Hague, 1971). Other factors played their part in changing public perceptions too. Ever escalating maintenance costs to local authorities associated with new building technologies that would still fail to quash the dramatic growth in tenants' dissatisfaction with their often shoddily constructed homes (Miller 2003, Falender 2013). The growing, persistently nagging, feeling that rather than address social inequality, "…the slum-clearance estates have replaced the very slums whose problems they were meant to eradicate" (Damer, 1974: 226) becoming instead "…huge engines for generating and perpetuating poverty" (Begg, 1996:159). The now infamous Ronan Point disaster, that claimed the lives of four residents and injured seventeen more when the

poorly constructed tower block partially collapsed after a gas explosion just months after opening (Shapely 2007: 42, Grindrod 2013: 333). “The Great Glasgow Storm” or “Hurricane Low Q” of January 1968 that raged across central Scotland damaging around 250,000 homes, leaving 2000 people homeless and killing at least twenty as it struck and a further thirty during the clean-up and repair work that followed (Tranter & Galvin, 2018). New notions of the varied requirements of different types of householders, “…such as specific designs for special needs, notably the handicapped and the elderly” (Rodger, 1989: 5). The upset caused by the demolition of cherished local historic buildings and landmarks in clearance schemes across the county, whose former sites often remained empty for years exacerbating the feelings of loss and becoming even more totemic in the process, such as the famous “Parker’s Triangle” in Edinburgh (Rowan, c.1975). All of these issues and more contributed considerably in discrediting and shifting public opinion against Modernist constructions and destructive comprehensive urban renewal practices and increasing support for the wholesale rehabilitation and repair of the country’s older building stocks.

Politicians from across the political spectrum, especially those facing election in affected communities, were heavily influenced by the wider context described above to abandon the long-favoured comprehensive clearance and planning philosophies of previous decades. Civil servants and council officials likewise were forced to adopt new approaches to urban renewal, especially following the radical shake-up of Scottish local government ushered in by the *Local Government Reform (Scotland) Act, 1973*. This would statutorily divide responsibility for associated urban renewal activities between district and regional councils and forced “planning authorities to undertake increased consultation with the public…” building into the planning system a “conflict of interest” (Begg , 1989: 170-71) that would assist in reining in the most radical visions for the regeneration of a town or city. This reorganisation of local government was a significant factor in bringing to an end the time when plans affecting whole towns could be hatched by a few senior officials,

behind closed doors, operating in a "…climate of municipal secrecy…" (Rosie 2004: 239). A working practice that had previously underpinned the operations of city administrations unchallenged for centuries, in Scotland and elsewhere. In his autobiography, addressing his time as Lord Provost from 1973-1975, Jack Kane described how his term in office coincided with a series of personnel changes within the Corporation as these new administrative changes were being implemented. Several of the most senior city officers, thought by Kane "to be right-wing, straitlaced and not noted for audacity of thought," retired from their long-held posts. They were replaced by "a team of younger, more broadminded men… readier to adapt to our policies than their predecessors might have been" (Undated: 318). Writing in the twilight of his own life and viewing these events through a favourable auto-biographic prism, we must presume that by "our policies" Kane was describing those of the new generation of Labour politicians, like his new Housing Convener, Councillor Robin Cook, soon to become a Westminster MP. He was certainly not referring to his older "housing crusade" focused councillor colleagues, for whom the double loss of an old guard of amenable council officers along with the support of their Labour colleagues brought to an end the days when they could jubilantly celebrate the "magnificent" sight of "whole streets of slum tenements being demolished." Speaking in 1976, the Labour Secretary of State for the Environment, Anthony Crosland, explained his party's and his government's new position on urban renewal:

> …many of our present difficulties undoubtedly stem from the mistake we made in the 1950s and 1960s of believing that we could bulldoze our housing problems out of the way by demolition and new building alone. Much slum-clearance was urgently needed. But, looking back, we mounted too brutal an assault on our towns and cities. Many thousands of saveable homes were destroyed. This era has now come to an end…" (quoted in *Building Societies' Gazette* 108, February 1976 p118)

This was both a collective *mea culpa*, begging electoral forgiveness for holding onto the naïve belief that wholesale destructive clearance was the answer to complex, structural poverty far longer than other political parties, and it was a firm acknowledgement that the age of comprehensive clearance was over.

Chapter 4: "Ye've got tae make mistakes afore ye can learn." – Putting Clearance Procedures into Practice in Edinburgh 1950-75.

In 1956, in a booklet called *Moving from the Slums*, the *Ministry of Housing and Local Government* blithely informed local authorities that "…The occupants of slums will be required to move whether they wish to or not" (1956: 2). The slim publication was intended to assist councils in the implementation of slum clearance projects as this activity was once again revived as an urgent national priority in the latter half of the 1950s. Taking evidence from a variety of local authorities, organisations and individuals, the authors outlined in some detail a series of measures which were hoped to mitigate many of the problems likely to be encountered during clearance procedures. Councils were cautioned that "…the job of uprooting numbers of families and then resettling them, perhaps at a distance from their previous home, will be made easier and pleasanter for all," if the local authorities chose to be honest with those they intended to clear from the very beginning of the process:

> In its essence this is a matter of public relations, by that we mean giving the people who are involved the fullest information about what is to be done, why it is to be done, and when it is to be done. (1956: 2).

After hearing from fifteen local authorities and over two dozen individuals and organisations, the committee who published *Moving from the Slums* outlined a broad spectrum of the difficulties experienced by both the displaced and the displacers in pre-war clearance drives. Readers were offered, inter alia, advice on managing the expectations and finances of those they planned to clear, on how to assist in aspects of their social welfare and hygiene and how to train their staff to better prepare them in the tasks ahead, that they may "…approach slum clearance with a better understanding of the human as well as the physical problems involved" (1956: 18). Strategic responses were suggested to deal with two of the most likely sources of resistance to clearance, owner-occupiers and the elderly, neither of which were identified as likely to welcome being compelled to move.

Finally, the report's authors beseeched the elected councillors of each local authority to follow their foregoing advice, support their trained council officers and to act as a bridge between the local council and the public, especially those who were displaced, sympathetically explaining and supporting the slum clearance programme to secure its successful implementation. This circular would be the first of several pieces of literature to emerge over the following two decades, from government departmental circulars to general publications, each offering practical recommendations to civil servants, officials and elected representatives engaged in renewing their towns and cities during the height of British post-war urban clearance activities.

Wilfred Burns's 1963 *New Towns for Old*, described as "a textbook written to show the most backward local authorities and planning students how an expert should go about the task of urban renewal in the 1960s" (Goodman 1972: 28), drew heavily on its author's extensive experience as the Town Planning Officer in Newcastle. Burns agreed with the central advice in *Moving from the Slums* that good lines of communication with those that were about to be cleared were vital to the successful implementation of clearance procedures, insisting that "the main task is surely to see that the family feels cared for, and this will be accomplished through good public relations" (1963: 102). This continuing prioritisation of a public relations exercise aimed at managing public perceptions of clearance activities ahead of efforts to provide practical solutions to mitigate the increasingly apparent negative impacts of clearance offers a small insight into the dominant mindset of this generation of housing professionals. Burns, like the majority of his peers, was unyielding in his conviction that a radical modernisation and revitalisation of British cities could only be achieved at the expense of their "slum" districts. As discussed in the previous chapter, he readily conceded that forced removal from their homes and familiar environment could have negative psychological and social consequences for those cleared but vigorously argued that this was a price worth paying if it reformed the character of the average slum dweller and installed in

them a new sense of “civic pride” (1963:93-94). Burns was of the opinion that it was a “fairly common observation” that slum-dwellers were “almost a separate race of people, with different values, aspirations and ways of living.” He suggested any anguish and “mental torture” experienced by those forced from their homes could be easily managed so long as local authorities remained cognisant that they were dealing “…with people whose level of comprehension may not be the highest” (1963: 102 & 181).

In 1965, the everyday practicalities of how this administrative exercise in social and emotional manipulation could best be achieved were further expanded upon in another advice manual for urban administrators, called simply *Housing Management.* Its authors included in their chapter “Practical Aspects of Slum Clearance and Rehousing” helpful recommendations for local authority housing officials on “minimising coercion” and how best to overcome the highly problematic “human factor” that could trouble the clean bureaucratic process of legal clearance (Macey & Baker 1965: 175-196). It was suggested maximum clearance with the minimum of fuss could be achieved by augmenting any existing positive public relation strategy with an absolutely rigorous implementation of the quasi-judicial procedures and legal minutiae associated with clearance activities. The most desired outcome would be the barest minimum participation in the clearance process of those individuals directly in the path of the bulldozers.

In 1976, a comprehensive evaluation of the approach taken to clearance by local authorities in England and Wales during the preceding two decades was damning in its assessment of the “power relationship” that had developed between the clearers and the cleared. Having interviewed hundreds of dislocated residents and investigated multiple examples of state-sponsored displacement, authors English, Madigan and Norman posited that:

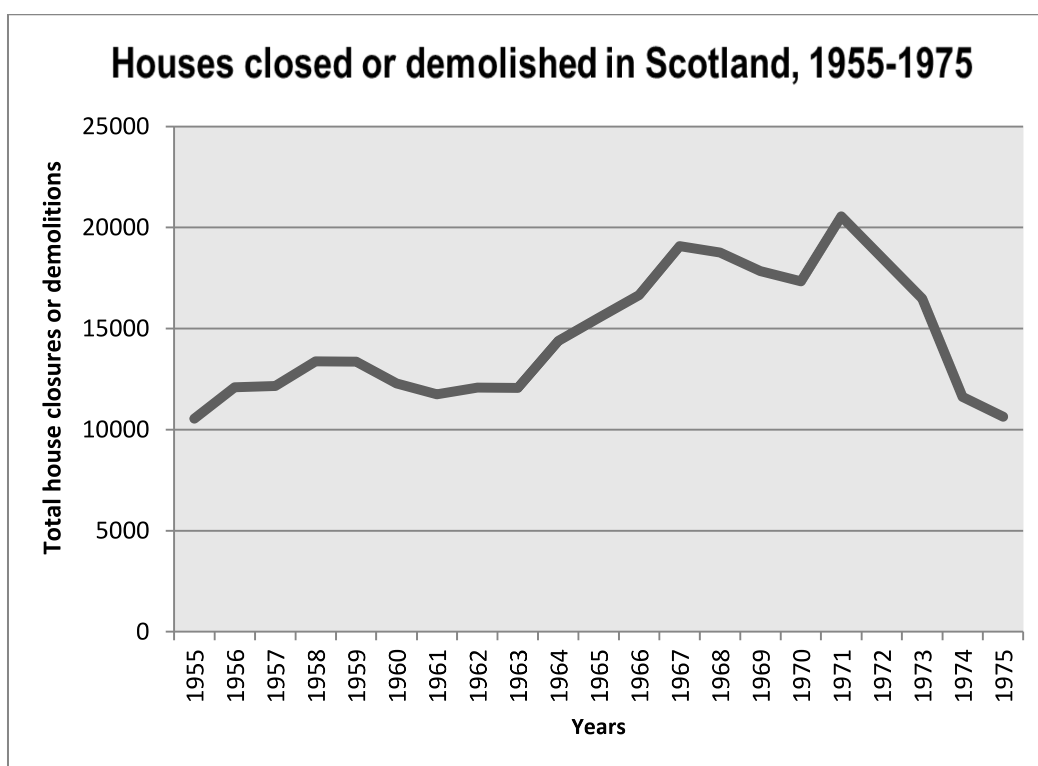
> The relationship is basically one of extreme dependence on the part of the residents so that councils have considerable scope to manipulate them through control of information and resources. (1976: 189)

They came to this conclusion after observing the absolute dominance local authorities had assumed over the citizens being cleared during every stage of the clearance procedure. From the initial visit of a sanitary inspector, through the compulsory purchase of their home, the occasional local public inquiry, the compensation process and even the eventual rehousing procedure, when "the resident is a supplicant for acceptable alternative accommodation" (1989: 189). Those being cleared were systematically denied the ability to influence the circumstances in which they found themselves as the state interfered in virtually every stratum of Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs*. As discussed in chapter one, this post-war state-imposed social and psychological trauma has been extensively analysed elsewhere across the globe, most particularly in the United States, but its possible manifestation in Edinburgh has never been investigated. In this chapter I shall explore both the quantitative evidence that reveals the full extent of the state sponsored clearance that took place in the town when such activities were at their apex, then the contemporary qualitative experiences of those that experienced these forces, in order that I can better examine the legacy of clearance in the next chapter.

Edinburgh Clearances – A Quantitative Investigation

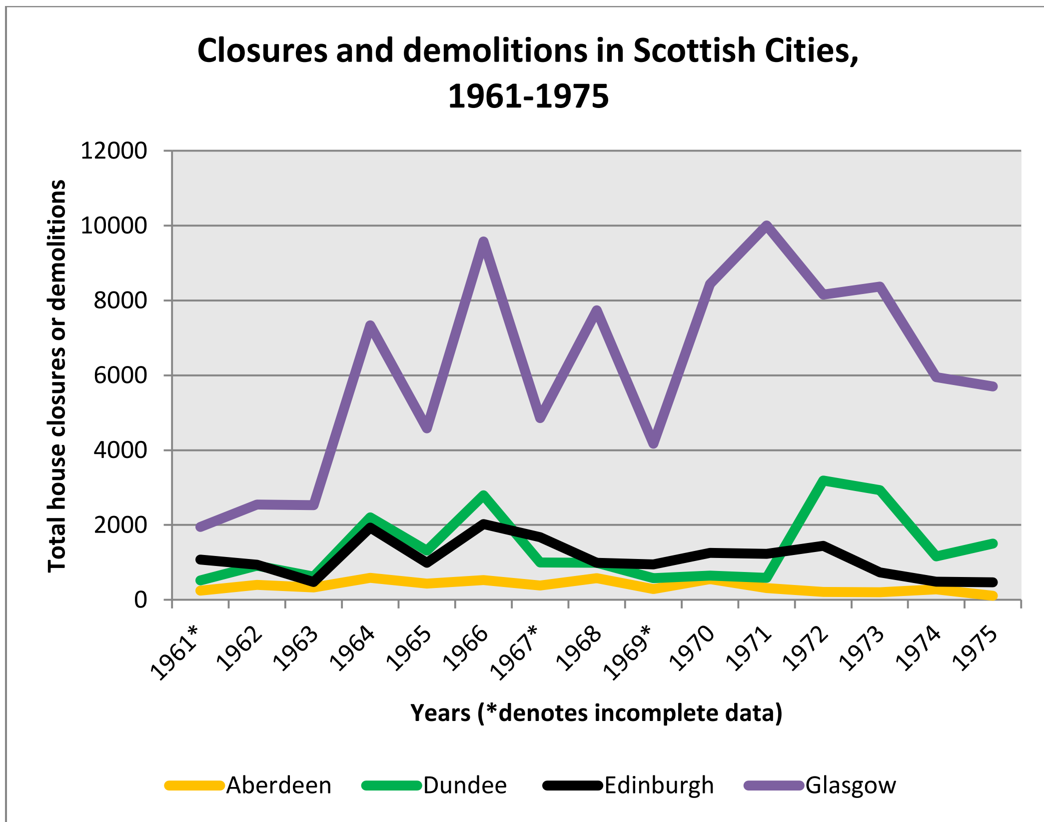
With a background in the research of late-medieval and early-modern Scotland, much of which was spent rooting around for retained documents of interest in the often haphazardly retained charter collections of various Scottish families, I had naively presumed an examination of late 20th century central and local-government activities in Edinburgh would be a much more straightforward exercise. As it turned out, establishing the annual and overall total post-war figures for individuals moved from their homes and houses demolished in Edinburgh as a result of state-sponsored clearance actions proved to be much more difficult than I

had anticipated. Secondary accounts of Edinburgh in this period are silent on the specifics of clearance data, so I sought out the available primary sources. In the Edinburgh Council City Archives I was advised by Richard Hunter, the then City Archivist, that much of the relevant material connected with housing and the Sanitary Department was disposed of in 1975 at the time of regional reorganisation. If a comprehensive list of streets and houses demolished and householders evicted by the Corporation had ever been compiled it was now no longer available. In the National Archives of Scotland I discovered that not all of the relevant published quantitative data had been transferred into their keeping from the Scottish Development Department, and the archivists there could only offer similarly limited assistance. In both archives it became clear that gaps in the data would have to be filled, where possible, by a time-consuming sifting of the unindexed surviving intra-departmental materials, containing their internal memos, external correspondence, reports and other materials. Eventually, a fuller picture of the actual extent of Edinburgh's clearance activities began to emerge.

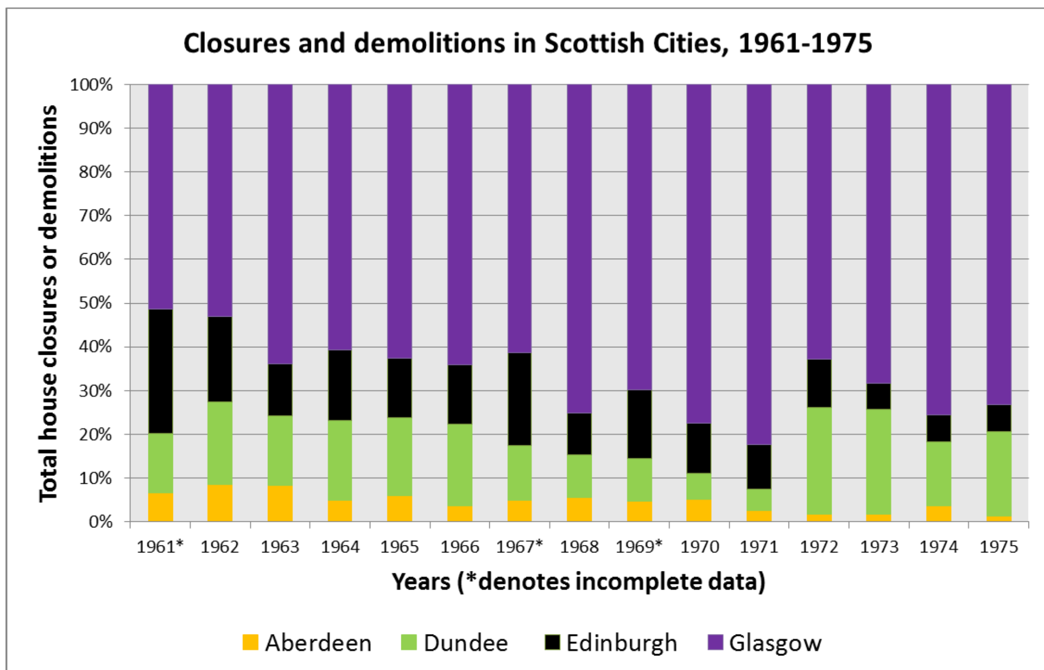


(Figure 8– Houses closed or demolished in Scotland by statutory or voluntary action, 1955-75. Scottish Development Department statistics - see Appendix 3 for full details)

By examining the “Housing Return for Scotland” pamphlets collated and published quarterly by the Scottish Department for Health and the Scottish Development Department that were still retained in the National Archives (DD33/1/1-63) it was possible to establish the reported annual national figures for house closures and demolitions in Scotland between 1955 and 1975 (See Appendix 3 and Figure 8). Rising to an annual peak rate of 20,554 cleared homes in 1971, house closures and demolitions never dipped below 10,000 per year in Scotland over the two decades, with a total of 307,157 closed or demolished houses recorded over the entire period. From 1961, these quarterly returns also provided data about individual local authorities, allowing a useful comparison of clearance activities in the four Scottish cities - Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow (see Appendix 3 and Figures 9 and 10). Evidently Glasgow’s clearance activities massively outpaced those of the other three cities, as might be expected in the biggest Scottish city, but the city’s clearance activities also seem to exhibit more volatility between 1963 and 1970 than any of the others. Annual closures and demolitions in Glasgow eventually peaked at just over ten thousand recorded in 1971 with a cumulative total of 103,674 houses closed or demolished over the twenty years. Dundee’s council-sponsored residential clearances reached their highest in a single year in 1972 with 3,186 houses closed and demolished that year, with some 24,593 homes cleared overall by 1975. Aberdeen’s clearance activity peaked in 1964 with a total of 590 houses cleared that year and 8,480 houses reported as closed or demolished over the two decades. While Edinburgh Corporation’s busiest closure and demolition year was 1966 when 2,021 houses were “dealt with” using a variety of planning and housing procedures, with some 18,076 slum homes reported by central government as cleared in the city during the whole twenty years. Several of the pamphlets retained by the National Archives were the pre-publication proofing copies containing the final scrawled edits of various civil servants and the “housing return” for the fourth quarter of 1966, marked “Confidential” and for the attention of “Mr McCann” on the front, was the most heavily amended of all of them. Significantly, the words “Slum Clearance”



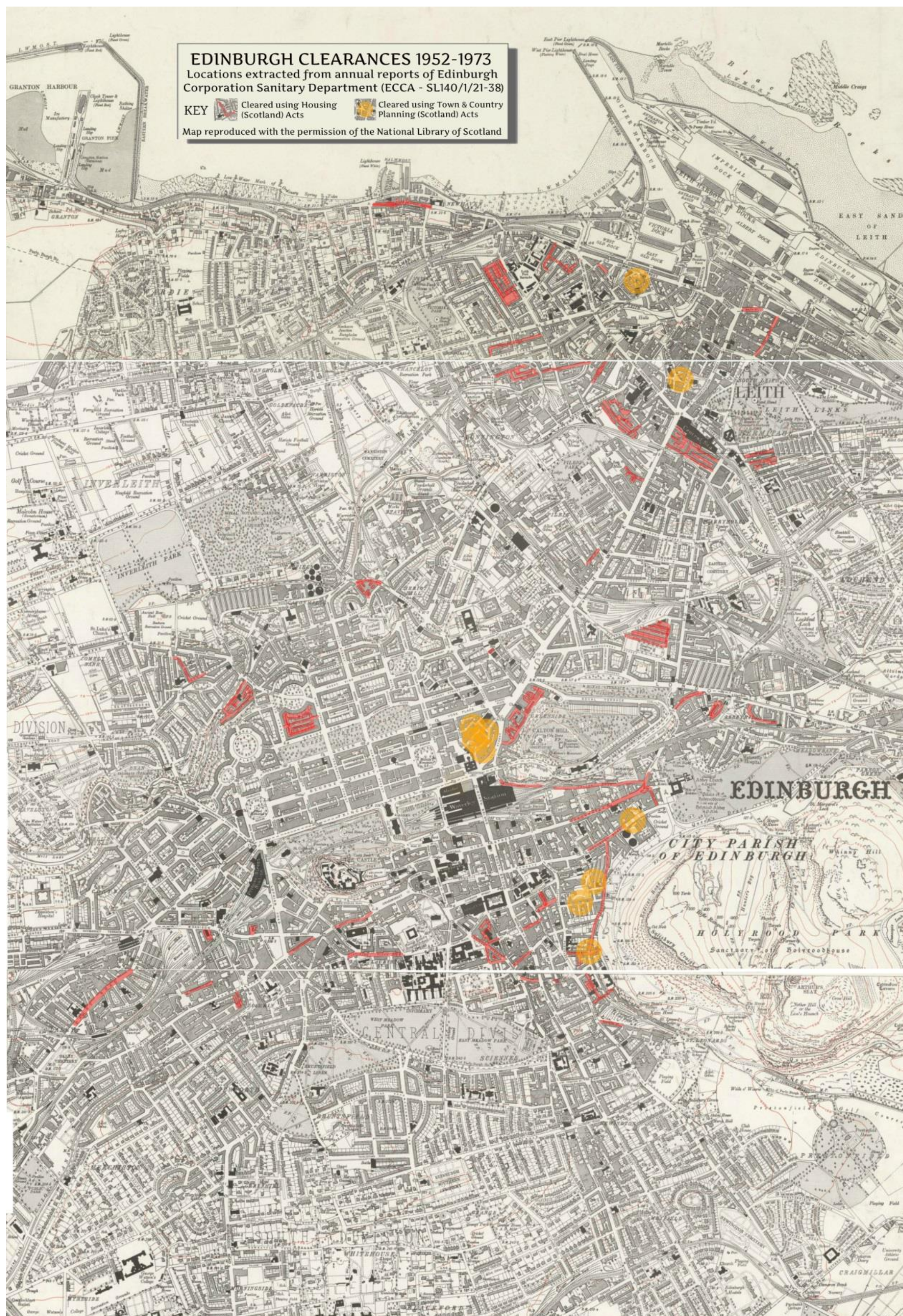
(Figure 9 – Statutory closures and demolitions in the four Scottish cities, 1961-1975. Scottish Development Department statistics - see Appendix 3 for full details)



(Figure 10 – Statutory closures and demolitions in the four Scottish cities, 1961-1975, presented as a proportion of Scottish total. Scottish Development Department statistics - see Appendix 3 for full details)

were scored out, presumably by Mr McCann, before the document was sent for publication. The house closure and demolition statistics had been titled in this way for over a decade but these words would never appear again in future published returns. It was a subtle omission, but a revealing one. It coincided neatly with the central governmental policy shift away from supporting comprehensive, large-scale destructive clearance undertakings towards rehabilitation and smaller-scale urban demolitions as discussed in the previous chapter. Despite some gaps in the available data, between 1955 and 1961 and from 1967 and 1969, the national statistics are valuable nonetheless in placing Edinburgh's clearance activities within their national context. However, they lacked population displacement numbers as well as any details relating to the individual local clearance activities within cities, for these I was forced to delve deeper into the surviving collections of the Edinburgh Council City Archives.

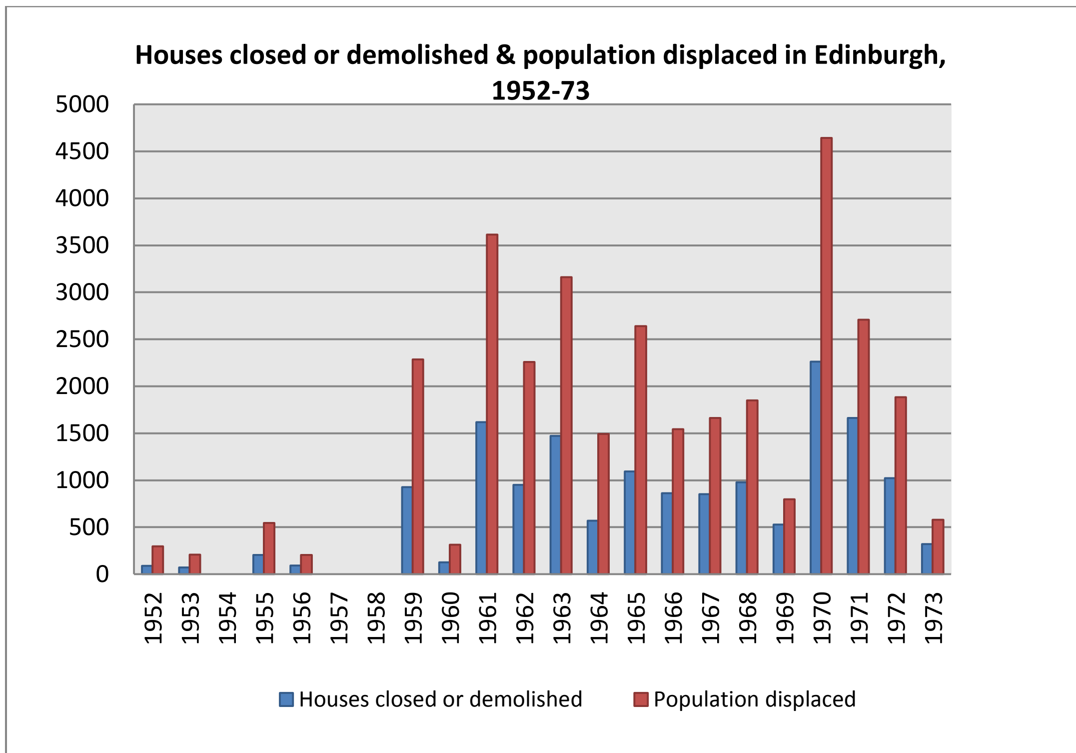
Following the then City Archivist's advice, I carefully sifted through the minutes of the Housing and the Planning Committees and any retained documentation that issued from and to both committees. It proved to be a protracted task, eventually allowing me to construct a partial list of cleared streets to work with as I sought potential interviewees and contemporary clearance accounts; but it rarely provided the numbers of occupants directly affected or other similarly significant local detail. It was not until I interviewed John Stirling, a retired Edinburgh Corporation sanitary inspector, that I was able to begin to address this frustrating gap in the data. He very generously gave me, from his own personal collection, a copy of the 1973 Annual Report of his former department which listed their recent clearance activities, the legislation utilised and the numbers of displaced residents. Sadly, searches for earlier copies of these reports at the City Council Archive proved fruitless until a recent return visit in 2017 when a new team of archivists, employed since my last visit, unearthed the 1950-1973 reports.



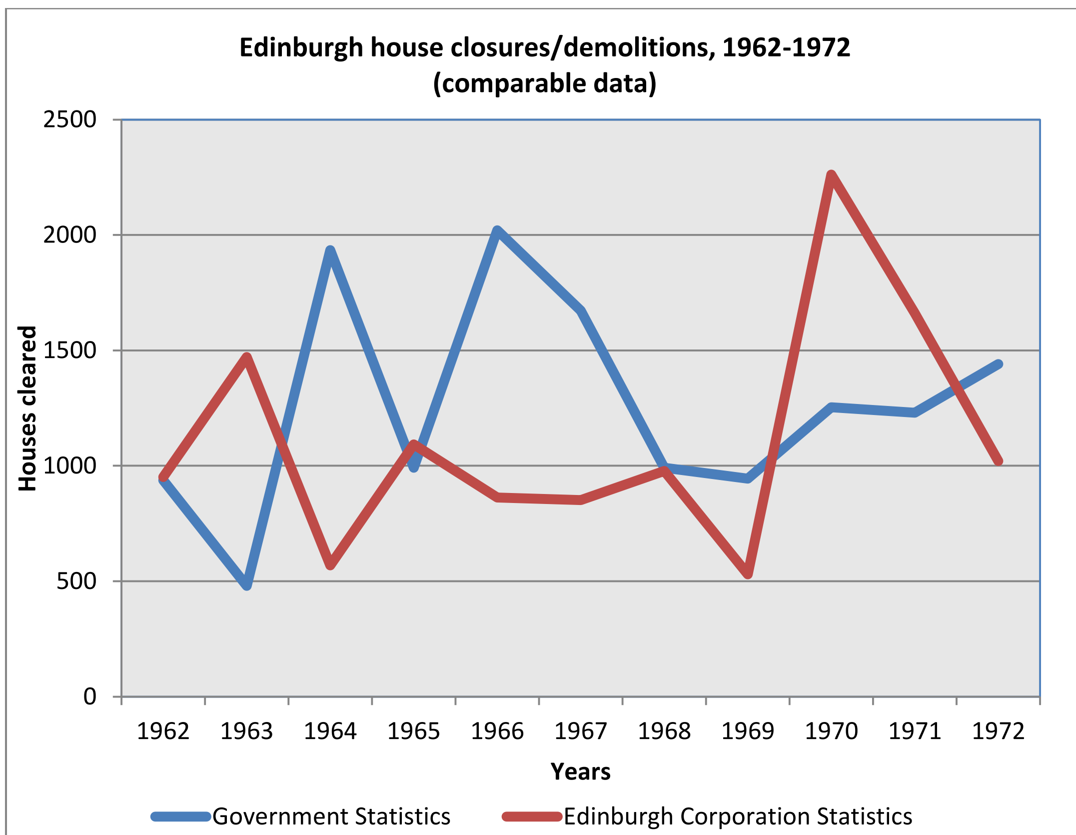
(Figure 11 – Modified streetplan of Edinburgh showing the locations listed in the Corporation Sanitary Department's Annual Reports of statutory clearance activity in Edinburgh carried out as a consequence of procedures associated with either Housing Act (red) or Planning Act (orange) legislative instruments between 1952 and 1953. Map reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland).

As well as offering useful insights into the paternalistic mentality of the city's successive Chief Sanitary Inspectors and detailed accounts of their staff's activities over the course of a year, these booklets also carefully listed Corporation clearance activities from 1923-1973. The streets, houses and numbers of people cleared utilising statutory instruments contained in housing or planning legislation were all recorded and published along with a cumulative record of non-location specific mandatory or voluntary undertakings to close individual houses (see Figure 11 and Appendix 4). There are though some unfortunate gaps within this data-set, for example the reports for the still very active clearance years of 1974-75 are missing, if indeed they were ever published at all, and the figures for individual closures and demolitions up to 1958 are compressed and lacking annual definition. The available sanitary reports also fail to include the many clearance activities that fell outside its departmental remit, such as central government enacted clearance measures like the land cleared to extend the national museum in Chambers Street or the closure, eviction and demolition of nearly 4,000 "prefab" households by the Corporation in the early 1960s which counted as temporary accommodation despite several examples surviving to this day. The extensive numbers of commercial and industrial premises acquired and cleared during local authority clearance works are also similarly excluded, unless they contained residential property. But despite these shortcomings, just as with the national data retained in the National Archives, from the available figures I was able to extract enough information to provide, for the first time, some significant quantitative observations about post-war clearance activities in Edinburgh (see Figure 12 and Appendix 4).

For the years in which comparable full year data is available (1962-1972), it became abundantly clear that there are some notable discrepancies between the statistics for Edinburgh house closures and demolitions published by the Scottish Development Department and those published by the Corporation (see Appendix 4). The SDD puts the total figure of closed and demolished houses during this period at 13,896 while the Corporation acknowledges the clearing of 12,253. This



(Figure 12 – Houses closed or demolished and population displaced in Edinburgh 1952-1973 according to Edinburgh Corporation – See Appendix 4 for full data)



(Figure 13 – Comparison of Scottish Development Department and Edinburgh Corporation's published statistics showing house closures or demolitions in Edinburgh 1962-1972)

difference might be explained by the exclusion from the Corporation figures of any Edinburgh sites cleared by central government-initiated clearance activities, such as the museum site mentioned above. If this was the case, it would suggest that the Scottish Development Department figure should always be higher than the Corporation's but, as Figure 13 clearly shows, this is not always the case. The Corporation reported a higher rate of clearance in the town than the governmental department on several occasions, but significantly higher rates in 1963 and 1970. Further research beyond the scope of this current project will be necessary to discover if the differences can be accounted for in transcription error, non-reportage of clearance activity, divergent recording techniques between the local and central governmental offices, or if some other reason was responsible. For the purposes of this study, despite all of the preceding caveats and problems, whether we use the SDD statistic of 18,076 houses closed or demolished between 1955 and 1975 or the Corporation's figures for 1950-73 of 16,556 houses with their resident population of 35,237 people, both numbers readily illustrate that a not insignificant displacement of Edinburgh residents and disruption to large chunks of the city took place in the third quarter of the 20th century.

Clearance Procedure Implementation – The Qualitative Experience

By the second half of the 20th century, Scottish local authorities were able to draw upon a small battery of housing, financial, planning and health and public safety statutes, some dating back to the 19th century, to radically reshape their towns and cities (see Appendix 1). If a city administration possessed the political will, it could utilise numerous quasi-judicial measures contained within multiple pieces of legislation to compel the repair, closure or demolition of properties, the eviction of their owners or tenants and the building work necessary to replace and rebuild their decaying neighbourhoods. This legislative arsenal was considerably reinforced by three pieces of post-war planning and housing legislation which succeeded in resuscitating the more destructive activities of urban renewal that had

been dormant since the inter-war years. First, the *Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1947* which placed a statutory burden on local authorities to strategically survey and masterplan their towns and cities, strengthened their compulsory purchase powers and defined the materially devastating concept of "Comprehensive Development Areas" (CDAs). Second, the *Housing (Scotland) Act 1950* which strengthened the authority of local sanitary and health officials to enter and inspect individual properties and issue mandatory repair, closure or demolition orders and also further empowered each local authority to declare whole neighbourhood clearance areas in any large urban district where they considered that:

> The houses in that area or the greater part of those houses are by reason of disrepair or sanitary defects unfit for human habitation, or are by reason of their bad arrangement or the narrowness or bad arrangement of the streets, injurious or dangerous to the health of the inhabitants of the area and the most satisfactory method of dealing with the foresaid conditions is the demolition of all the buildings in the area. (Part III, Section 25 (1), subsections (i) and (ii))

And third, the *Housing (Repairs and Rents) (Scotland) Act 1954* which legally obliged every local authority to submit a structured programme to the Secretary of State for Scotland detailing how they intended to address any unfit and insanitary houses or neighbourhoods that still existed in their towns or cities. The first annual report of the newly formed Scottish Development Department recorded with undisguised satisfaction that the introduction of the last of these statutes "might be regarded as marking the beginning of the post-war drive to clear the slums," with 91,479 houses closed or demolished in Scotland by December 1962 as a direct result of the programmes initiated on the back of that Act alone (1963: 32-33). Edinburgh Corporation had initially submitted that only 6,750 houses out of a total 141,354 in the city required to be demolished, claiming a further 39,108 could be rendered fit by the efforts of their owners, but as outlined in the previous two chapters, this conservative approach to clearance by the town's Progressive politicians was soon eclipsed by the clearance crusade led by the Labour councillor Pat Rogan and his allies. This was the era of the political "numbers game" when it came to house

clearances and new building and it required the full attention of local authority housing, planning and sanitary officials to fully maximise the demolition and production figures.

Immediately following the introduction of the *Housing (Repairs and Rents) Act 1954* Whitehall civil servants produced an internal circular which outlined official slum clearance procedures for local authorities in England and Wales. Their Scottish civil service colleagues were given just two days' notice before the circular's publication in which time they were instructed by a senior civil servant in St Andrew's House to "consider whether there is anything for us to do in Scotland" to prepare for the Scottish version of the act. Indeed, the Scottish Office mandarins were so rushed that some of their proposals were literally scrawled on the back of an old used envelope and then stapled to the original circular, to be preserved for posterity in another folder from the Scottish Department of Health (NRS DD6/1181). Officially closed until 1989, this thick file contains the hastily drafted responses to this and several subsequent fragments of the complicated legislative minutiae that underpinned slum clearance processes across the jurisdictions of the United Kingdom. Multiple anonymous hands can be seen among the scribbled marginalia and technical advice that would eventually be sent out to Scottish politicians and local authorities advising them on the enforcement of the legal procedures that would ultimately come to shape the lives of tens of thousands of Scottish citizens in the years that followed. Their early urban renewal guidance was, as might be expected from a mid-20th century civil service bureaucratic machine, dry, perfunctory and prosaic in tone. While it ably covered many of the technical and financial aspects of the procedures for comprehensively clearing entire neighbourhoods, from the initial decision to declare a clearance area to the eventual eviction and reparation of property-owners for loss of property, the early advice never acknowledged the human or social costs that clearance procedures would wreak upon those most affected. It also left significant room for manoeuvre

in the local application of certain important elements such as matters of compensation, financial assistance and housing provision following clearance.

By the mid-1960s, growing concerns in central government about the implementation of urban renewal activities in Scottish cities would persuade the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee to establish a Sub-Committee on Unfit Housing in 1965 “to examine the present statutory provisions relating to the determination of unfitness for human habitation and to make recommendations for amendments” (Scottish Housing Advisory Committee 1967a: 7). The Sub-Committee was chaired by the housing and planning expert J.B. Cullingworth, who had authored *Housing Needs and Planning Policy* in 1960, a damning critique of post-war urban renewal policy and strategy in England and Wales. It took evidence from Scottish city, county and burgh councils as well as several professional organisations with an interest in residential property in Scotland. Its extensive report, *Scotland’s Older Houses*, following a recap of activities to date, made a series of significant observations and recommendations on the contemporary state of Scotland’s sub-standard housing and how these homes should be tackled going forward. Its authors were highly critical of a number of the existing approaches to urban renewal being utilised by local authorities across the country which failed to embrace many of available powers contained in the *Housing Act* of 1964. These criticisms included the low uptake of Exchequer improvement grants and the generally negative attitude towards even the concept of rehabilitation shown by most local councils (1967a: 49-50), the numbers of fit houses being wastefully closed and demolished as part of larger development schemes (23), the poor enforcement of legal strictures that could have compelled property owners to address matters of structural disrepair or failures in environmental cleanliness (35-38) and the complete absence of a single uniform property “fitness” standard that could be objectively applied by all sanitary officials on a national basis (29-34). Ultimately the Sub-Committee hoped to stimulate a complete behavioural shift in how politicians and planning and housing professionals approached urban renewal,

boldly confirming in their report that they wished "to get away from the idea of a *clearance* area" (36). Their efforts were welcomed by central government keen to address the ever present housing crisis, and new legislation that built upon their recommendations quickly followed, the purpose of which was explained in *The Older Houses in Scotland – A Plan for Action* (1968).

In 1969, the Scottish Development Department issued *The New Scottish Housing Handbook: Slum Clearance and Improvements* to assist local authorities with the implementation of these new housing and financial statutes as they came into force. This textbook explained the new national urban renewal expectations in far more meticulous detail than had ever been published and circulated before. *Clearance Development Areas* (CDAs) were to be officially replaced by *Housing Treatment Areas* (HTAs). The replacement of "clearance" with "treatment" was quite deliberate and indicated the substantially different skillset and attitude to urban renewal that would be required from local housing and planning officials moving forward. Technical advice was therefore offered on new improvement techniques for areas and individual buildings, on the available financial assistance for these projects and the different building assessment criteria. The *Housing Handbook* also provided pro-forma documentation to be used by the Town Clerks' officials in their duties and a series of model blueprints for the rehabilitation of various types of traditional Scottish residential buildings for the use of city architects and engineers. For the first time, local sanitary officers across Scotland were also expected to work to a single, well-defined, objective standard as they assessed the fitness of individual properties. The government intended that the days of the local housing officials deciding the fates of whole streets with their magically-shrinking measuring tapes were to be forever consigned to history.

Three significant Command Papers from the office of the Secretary of State for Scotland followed in quick succession in the early 1970s, *Development and Compensation – Putting People First*, *Homes for People: Scottish Housing Policy in*

the 1970s and *Towards Better Homes – Proposals for Dealing with Scotland's Older Housing*. These focused on improving the financial compensation and enhancing the statutory rights of both property owners and tenants who were subject to compulsory purchase orders or evicted from their homes during urban renewal activities. There was also a marked increase in the acknowledgement of the desire of urban-dwellers to remain in the city centre and the social benefits that the preservation of such communities could have. These reports, closely followed by the re-organisation of local government in Scotland, which brought with it a new generation of officials and local politicians and the establishment of an "Urban Renewal Unit" at the Scottish Development Department, signalled the final death throes of the large-scale destructive municipal activities of the past. By 1975, the central government appetite for the wholesale comprehensive clearances of sub-standard neighbourhoods, that had been so voracious just a quarter of a century before, was fully satiated. But as discussed in the previous chapter, certain members of Edinburgh Corporation attempted to hold-fast against this shifting legislative landscape far longer than other Scottish local authorities, sending deputations of elected members and council officers to the Scottish Office to plead for a separate urban renewal deal for the Scottish capital. To better understand how the town's housing authorities had come to this decision it is necessary to investigate how they interpreted and implemented the urban renewal powers and procedures granted by central government throughout the third quarter of the 20th century. We can do this by examining the related surviving primary documentation held in the City Archive and by exploring the contemporary and later first-hand accounts of those that witnessed, experienced or participated in these clearance activities personally.

For many residents of amenity-deficient houses or neighbourhoods, the first tentative indication that the Corporation had taken an interest in the redevelopment of their home would be the visit of planning officials with measuring tapes and theodolites surveying the street outside their homes or, more likely, from

a knock at their door by a sanitary inspector or a medical officer of health enforcing their mandatory right to enter and inspect the living conditions and the inhabitants within:

> The housing visitor is the first person a bewildered tenant can speak to about "when my house is coming down," and is one of the few corporation officials he meets face-to-face (Damer & Madigan, 1974: 227).

In a 1974 article in *New Society* magazine, sociologists Sean Damer and Ruth Madigan relate their observations of the "frankly offensive" attitudes and "controlled aggressiveness" often exhibited by many of the council officials involved in the rehousing process in Glasgow that they witnessed during the summer of 1971. They suggest that such behaviour was common practice at the time, speculating:

> Neither the principle of grading tenants, nor the arbitrary and subjective way in which it is done is unique to Glasgow (1974: 227).

During an interview in 2013, I asked retired Edinburgh Corporation sanitary inspector John Stirling (JS) about his memories of these inspections in the Scottish capital.

Stirling clearly recollected that prior to his department seeking a closing order or aiding another department in a joint initiative to clear a street or neighbourhood, every house in a tenement block or in an entire street would be inspected and the householder notified in advance and sometimes visited on at least two occasions:

JS: Oh yes, I mean you had to revisit, speak to them and everything like that and we were always there if they wanted to ask questions and so on. And there would be about four of us in the area carrying out. We always went in pairs, carried out the inspections and everything and speak to them.

DJ: Just the aspect of that inspection, how would it go? You would, would they know in advance you were coming?

JS: Yes, you wrote. You didn't just turn up on the doorstep, you wrote saying that you would be coming between certain hours. It was the only way we could ensure if people couldn't be in, they could leave the key with somebody or else if they contacted us, we would make allowances and go back. What you would maybe do sometimes is go round them and then

> keep one day at the end of the week to go and pick up on all the ones where people couldn't be in. We even went back at night if that was what they wanted. That was the way before people started thinking about working out-with hours, because you wanted to make sure you were getting all the information.

Stirling, who began working in the Edinburgh Corporation Sanitary Department as a trainee inspector in 1965, learned his craft under a generation of inspectors who had cut their teeth during the Edinburgh slum clearances of the inter-war years. His memories of the numerous city-wide inspections in which he was involved that led to formal requests for clearance and closing order confirmations from the Corporation Housing Committee were vivid. He recalled one occasion not long after he had begun his training when he was sent on his own by a senior sanitary inspector to assess a tenement block in Freer Street, Leith:

> …that was just me doing an inspection and I walked into the house and right away - it was always said that you could smell a smell of almonds in the house - and right away I could smell this and then when you looked at the walls, the painting like that on the walls, it was actually stuck to the walls with bed-bug eggs and everything, sort of nests. And because this woman was, you know, her stuff just was finished. It was terrible.
>
> And I went back out and said to the inspector: "I found bed-bugs" and he said "No, no! You boys are all the same!" And he went in and it was! It was terrible. Now sometimes you would get neighbours who would call you in but none of the neighbours had complained about this… And what happened was that she actually was moved down to Tron Square off the High Street, and they got her down there and everything, got her cleaned up, into a house down there and, blow me, they had an outbreak of bed-bugs a couple of months later. And what had happened was, she had got out of Tron Square, made her way back up to Freer Street and had managed to break into the house and re-infected herself. So they then decided that she was unable to look after herself and at that point she was taken to the City Hospital, or at least Greenlee old folks home, which was next to the City Hospital. And again, she'd been cleaned up and then they had a bed-bug infestation up there as well. And it was, I mean it was pretty bad. They were very bad.

He recalled in some detail the watershed transformation in working practices that the 1969 *Housing (Scotland) Act* had upon his department when the newly introduced national "Tolerable Standards" replaced the fairly idiosyncratic assessments that he and his colleagues had previously been accustomed to when they inspected a property:

JS: …Once the '69 Act came in, the actual inspections were really greatly reduced. Because disrepair didn't come into it, you know, you had to meet the 'tolerable standard' and that was, you know, had to have a toilet and everything like that. Prior to then, when we did a

Housing Inspection and everything like that, you took a note of whether or not the plaster was what we called 'off the hard', it was bulged and everything, it had come away from the lathe and everything. You looked at the windows, the astragals of the windows, the parting beads, all these sort of things and it took you quite a while to do a survey of one property.

DJ: How long could you spend in a property?

JS: Well it would depend how many rooms but once the 'tolerable standard' came in, you didn't do that, you didn't have to. You could actually do a Housing Action Area quite quickly. You know, do the inspections and everything like that. If it was one tenement, and you'd two people, and there was sixteen people in the tenement, you could do eight inspections in the morning and eight in the afternoon.

I asked him if these visits were always welcomed and at different points during the interview he offered conflicting responses. He insisted, "We never tried to push people out, unless it was for their own good," but also admitted that when he began his job in 1965, the words "Sanitary Inspector" were "the last thing people wanted to hear" when someone was knocking at their door. But he could also remember numerous invites into tenements at the instigation of householders to condemn property in the hope it might advance their opportunity of getting the keys to a Corporation home. He acknowledged that most householders were probably resigned to the fact that resistance was ultimately futile because he had the legal authority to enter their homes, but he had made peace with their loss of human agency because he felt he possessed an almost filial obligation to improve their personal circumstances, whether they accepted this to be true or not:

DJ: Did people refuse you entry? Did anybody ever refuse you entry? Did they say you couldn't come in to their house?

JS: I can't think of anything, no.

DJ: So even individuals who didn't want to move like that, they're just all quite happy?

JS: Well they knew fine that they had to carry out inspections because I mean we would have had to have forced it but there was never that need. I had a very simple attitude all the way through my life in the office. It was, if I wouldn't want something to happen to my mother and father, why should it have to happen to somebody else's?

But a desire to improve the general wellbeing of house-holders in line with the manner he wished for his own family was not the only imperative that guided his activities on behalf of Edinburgh Corporation Sanitary Department. He also acknowledged that existing Corporation renewal plans for the neighbourhood played their role too:

> …If we didn't get people out the house, we would never get the house empty so that it could either be rehabilitated or demolished. I mean people would just keep on going on like that. So that was why you would go down and carry out an inspection. You'd go through the whole tenement making sure that everybody was out and if everybody was out the tenement, then you could send in the builders who could brick it up, and that would be fine. But you got squatters in and everything.

Political influence to keep a house open and the owner in possession could also be brought to bear, on occasion, as he explained in a story about a tenement in Drummond Street in Edinburgh's South Side. The building contained twelve flats, only three of which he classified as fit, so he originally intended to close the entire building until a Councillor Kidd "fought on behalf of the three people to leave them as they are and just close the other houses." Stirling felt his original decision was vindicated however when,

> …two or three years down the line, these people are complaining because they're in this tenement and they've got all the odds and sods coming in and dossing down and everything like that and want something done about it.

He recalled he was then challenged in a telephone call by Edward Glendinning, the then Town Clerk, as to why the three flats had not been closed, Stirling responded:

> It's quite simple," I said, "The local Councillor actually objected to us closing these houses and that's why they were left, but if somebody's now saying we should be looking at them again and closing them, then we'll look at them." We heard no more from the Councillor about it…

When I queried if he also scrutinised the people themselves while he was inspecting their homes, he responded that he would "go and assess the people before they moved to their Council house." When pushed to elaborate on the metrics used by him and his colleagues to judge each individual or family he described a subjective process that examined both cleanliness and projected income intended to aid the House Letting Department in their social 'filtering' of Corporation housing:

> …it would stretch back to the old days when you were looking to make sure that people weren't infested, there wasn't a case of bed-bugs and taking them to the new place, and just sort of look at it. I mean, I could take you to places where people actually rented a house from Edinburgh Council when they built the likes of Swanston village or the houses down at Cramond and they were all done at affordable rents or economic rents they were called. And people would go in there and couldn't keep up the rent payments in them, so people

> obviously hadn't assessed them properly. They had signed up for it and been given a house and then they had to evict them. But I would think, what happened was that when we had to assess them you looked at the house and then you put them down for whether they were to get a new house or a re-let house.

I questioned several interviewees about what they could recall of this initial contact with Corporation at the onset of the clearance procedures, but few could remember it at all. Brian McDonald, whose family lived in an amenity deficient tenement block in Leith until his late teens, asked his mother before our interview if she had any recollection of the initial site inspection:

> She doesn't remember anybody visiting. She doesn't remember anybody. She doesn't remember a letter, although she presumes there must have been.

McDonald, like so many others recalling life in the early days of a clearance process, could only remember a general feeling that his family and neighbours simply 'knew' they were living in a condemned neighbourhood:

> …It was just word of mouth, people saying… There was no dates. There was no sort of: "You have to be out by a certain time!" Or things like that. There just seemed to be: "These buildings will be going."
>
> …It wasn't hanging over us, but you always kind of knew that we had to leave (Personal Discussion, 2013).

Cathy Lighterness, whose family was cleared from an amenity deficient house in Newhaven in the mid-1960s, was adamant to the point of exasperation when I interviewed her in 2012 that no inspector had ever visited, claiming all interaction was by written communication alone. When probed on the matter further, she audibly snorted, before insisting:

CL: The inspectors didnie come. I mean, that's the point. They just came and said "We're buying!" Ye know? They sent ye a letter, they're purchasing yer house and that's it!
DJ: So that's the first you knew? You didn't have visit from someone?
CL: No, you don't get a visit. They had NO INTENTION… NO!
DJ: The implication they always give you when you read any book about this period is that somebody comes and says…
CL: Oh no! That never happened!
(Personal Discussion, 2012)

She could recall no personal contact with council officials at any stage in the process to evict from the home her family had lived in for decades, first her mother and then later her sister, after her mother had died before the clearance procedure was ultimately enforced. Her lasting recollection was only of the legal documentation informing residents of their pending dispossession and the sheer futility of attempting to fight the decision:

> Ye were given this letter saying they were coming tae buy yer house an' ye had no comeback and I know the people that fought it ended up, some o' them, getting' a pound for their house.

Writing in 2016 on the Edinburgh reminiscence website www.*edinphoto.org.uk* about being his experience of being "slum-cleared to Oxgangs in the winter of 1962/63" with his family from a tenement in Heriot Mount that they had lived in for a decade, John Munro could definitely clearly recall the "re-housing process" that would come to separate him from his long-term neighbours and friends as the Corporation set about clearing his street:

> A couple of officials came to the street and went through a pretty standard routine. First they asked local shops about a family's credit worthiness, then they had a chat to your neighbours to see what you were like. Finally they inspected your flat to judge the general state of repair and cleanliness. If you passed these tests as 'respectable', you were then offered a flat in a desirable 'scheme'. In those days that meant Oxgangs, Clermiston or The Inch. If you didn't get the stamp of approval, you'd be offered a less desirable area such as Craigmillar. By this kind of housing apartheid Edinburgh was storing up problems for the future (https://tinyurl.com/yb9gcew9).

When these initial surveys and inspections were complete, reports would be compiled by the relevant heads of department for the attention of the appropriate council committees. For the more complicated CDA procedures carried out under planning legislation, precise maps and condition surveys of the area would need to be submitted by the Town Planning Officer and his team to the Planning Committee along with very detailed written statements that outlined the clearly phased proposals for the "decanting" of the resident population, the re-siting of businesses, the total demolition of all property and the redevelopment of the entire site. For the much more straightforward slum clearance procedures, carried out under housing

legislation, there were two treatment methods available to health and sanitary officials until 1969. The first, an individual order to repair, close or demolish a single building would be achieved by seeking the Housing Committee's approval, the result of which was legally binding upon the property owner. The second, the "Clearance Area" procedure, would require the Corporation's Chief Medical Officer of Health to compile a structured legal document for the Housing Committee with the assistance of the Chief Sanitary Officer which clearly satisfied the criteria for demolition and clearance described earlier. This report would contain a very brief description of each tenement block, a note of the overall number occupants and a tally of numbers of fit and unfit properties. Until the late 1960s, a declaration of unfitness could hinge on as little as a house not possessing adequate ventilation in its pantry. A brief extract of the Chief Medical Officer of Health's report describing the condition of Jamaica Street delivered for the Committee's consideration in August 1964 gives an indication of the fairly basic information his inspectors actually gathered during their site visits and which, in his opinion, justified the clearance and demolition of the entire street from end to end. The majority of the comments were simply copied and repeated for every household and on this scant evidence the Housing Committee would base their decision on whether or not to support a clearance initiative:

> 8, 10 & 12 Jamaica Street, four storey and basement tenement containing 19 houses (1 vacant) 8 of one apartment, 10 of two apartments and 1 of four apartments; disrepair of internal and external structure; the majority of houses are of the back to back type and have insufficient water closet accommodation; sub-division of houses, dark common lobbies; the houses have no fixed bath or shower, no wash hand basin, the majority have no hot water supply and the facilities for the storage and preparation are inadequate; no back space. No. 8 Children's Play Centre, No.12 Public House. (ECCA: HO/S244/Pt1)

The "fitness for human habitation" classification held extra significance beyond the obvious social stigma unfitness could bestow upon a house or neighbourhood. A fit property would attract full market value in the event it being compulsory purchased, but the owner of a property classified as unfit would receive only its site clearance value, which could often be as little as a token £1 or in some cases absolutely nothing at all.

Once the appropriate committee had made its decision to go ahead with the clearance activity they were mandatorily bound to perform three actions before submitting the paperwork to the Secretary of State for Scotland for his approval. They had to advertise their intentions in a local newspaper, they had to make publicly available a copy of the proposed order and a map of the area concerned and they had to:

> Serve on every owner, lessee and occupier (except tenants for a month or a period less than a month) of an any building which the order applies a notice in the prescribed form stating the effect of the order and that it is about to be submitted to the Secretary of State for confirmation, and specifying the time within and the manner in which objections can be made (*Housing (Scotland) Act 1950*, Section 26, Paragraph 4b).

In the early days of the Edinburgh post-war clearance activities these were dense hand-typed foolscap letters issued by the Town Clerk's office. By the mid-1960s, as the city's clearance programme accelerated considerably, the Town Clerk was forced to move on to externally bulk-printed documentation with perhaps one or two hand-typed accompanying covering letters. With this initial notification householders would receive a threatening demand for information about who owned the property and who the feudal superior was, under pain of a £5 fine if a response was not received within fourteen days (ECCA, HO/S352/003). If no formal objections were received within the allotted time period then the Secretary of State could simply grant the order as it was requested or with modifications as suggested by his own inspectors. Alternatively, if a property-owner did decide to submit an objection within the agreed timeframe then the Secretary of State would authorise a Public Local Inquiry (PLI) adjudicated by a local legal expert to listen to opposing arguments. Once complete, the Secretary of State would review the evidence given and contact objectors that had attended in person with his decision, giving them a further fourteen days to respond. Once the final decision was made the Local Authority was only obliged to place another advertisement in a newspaper stating the clearance order's confirmation and where the plans may be viewed, further letters would only be sent to those individuals who had objected. The only recourse

for those who disagreed with the decision at this stage was to raise a case at the Court of Session within thirty days of the publication of the confirmation notice; a prohibitively costly affair, which only the wealthiest of individuals or groups would most likely have considered. There were no legal grounds for formal objections to a clearance order or CDA to be heard by the Secretary of State or the courts outwith the agreed time constraints.

Following confirmation of the clearance order the local authority then had a maximum of six months to decide if it wished to make private arrangements with the property owners or arrange for the forced state-acquisition of all of the properties in the designated area by Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). Given the wide variety of tenurial and property-owning arrangements that could be found in a typical Scottish tenemental street, Edinburgh, like most Scottish local authorities, always sought the CPO option but also continued to negotiate voluntary purchases while the orders were being considered. The CPO process required the Corporation to repeat exactly the same three legal procedures they had gone through when seeking the original clearance order. As before, only timeously submitted objections would prevent the official authorisation of the CPO. Numerous examples exist within the Housing Committee files of internal communication from St Andrews House instructing Corporation officials to contact any objectors in advance of the planned PLI and strenuously persuade them by any means possible to withdraw their opposition, thus negating the need to hold the inquiry at all. Council officers found it particularly valuable in these negotiations to point out to objectors that a complaint about the amount of financial compensation being offered was legally unacceptable as grounds for an objection. If their property was deemed as unfit, resulting in token compensation, they were told they should have objected when the clearance order was confirmed. If the amount offered was claimed as too low the property-owner was reminded that this was entirely a matter between them and the District Valuer, whose independence and probity on this matter was always lauded.

It is most likely that it was a CPO notification sent at this stage in the procedure that Cathy Lighterness could so vividly and negatively recall. A surviving, complete example of one such communication sent in May 1966 to an Ann Wilson at 108 Main Street Newhaven, but returned undelivered and unopened to the Town Clerk, was retained in a file at the City Archives (HO/5249/1). It contains a covering letter from the Depute Town Clerk, a confirmation of the order from an Assistant Secretary to the Secretary of State and a lengthy eleven page, printed pamphlet describing the extent of the order and its legal grounds, referencing no less than nine separate statutes, and a list of every individual and property affected. The following introductory *single sentence* from the Scottish Office official gives an excellent example of the impenetrable legal jargon the householder was confronted with when opening the envelope:

> The Secretary of State in exercise of the power conferred on him by subsection (1) of section 22 of the Housing and Town Development (Scotland) Act, 1957, hereby provides that there shall be included in the foregoing Edinburgh Main Street, etc., Newhaven Clearance Area L Compulsory Purchase Order, 1965, a direction that the provisions of the Sixth Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act, 1945, (as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act, 1947, and set out in the Eleventh Schedule thereto) shall apply to the Order: and in the exercise of the powers conferred on him by paragraph 5 of the Third Schedule to the Housing (Scotland) Act, 1950, and of all other powers enabling him in that behalf hereby confirms the foregoing Compulsory Purchase Order including the said direction.

In 1972, the BBC current affairs television programme *Current Account* ran a sensational expose of contemporary clearance practices being enacted in Glasgow and Edinburgh (https://youtu.be/PLH9jw0RAN4). The section on the Scottish capital focused entirely on the statutory clearance order paperwork that had recently been delivered to the remaining residents in the former mining village and now Edinburgh suburb of Newcraighall. It featured investigative journalist Raeburn Mackie interviewing the new head of the Housing Committee, Progressive councillor Cornelius Waugh, along with the Craigmillar and Newcraighall Labour councillor, David Brown, and several other Newcraighall residents who along with Brown had each recently been served with the formal notices. One of the elderly residents, Celia Rochford, revealed to Mackie just how upset she became when she received

the communication from the Corporation:

> Oh, when I got the letters in I had tae sit in a chair something tae drink a water for ah had an idea whit it was. Just turned wur stomach upsides down. Oh thon's terrible, it put us in thon state, an then the nerves would start an Da would tell me: "Whit's the good in worryin? They'll no put ye out in the street." Oh no, I couldnie go through if ony mair o' they letters come. Just a nuisance wastin money on all thon letters!

When challenged by Mackie about the "stiff, statutory, legal document," the new Housing Committee Convener was prepared to concede that perhaps for some recipients "the language in these forms is very difficult for them to understand," promising that the new head of the recently established Corporation Housing Department would look into the matter further and seek a solution. But this was not the first time that this particular problem had been drawn to the Housing Committee's attention. Among the Housing Committee files are several examples of lawyers writing on behalf of their clients or property-owners themselves that indicate that the full implication and significance of these clearance related documents had been misunderstood by many due to the opaque and legalistic language used, the recipients educational attainments and the undoubtedly emotional circumstances at the time of their delivery.

The poor grasp of English exhibited in a letter sent in response to a statutory clearance communications by a P. Szaszkiwicz helps illustrate the inherent difficulties that were built into the statutory clearance procedure for Edinburgh's immigrant population. The letter-writer had received one of these mandatory notices requiring him to supply information about his property in Carnegie Street, it is clear he struggled both with the language and the significance of the request that had been made of him:

> P. Szaszkiwicz
> 42 Jamaika St
> Edinburgh 3
>
> I'm practically can't understand from Your notice what I must furnish in my return above that property.

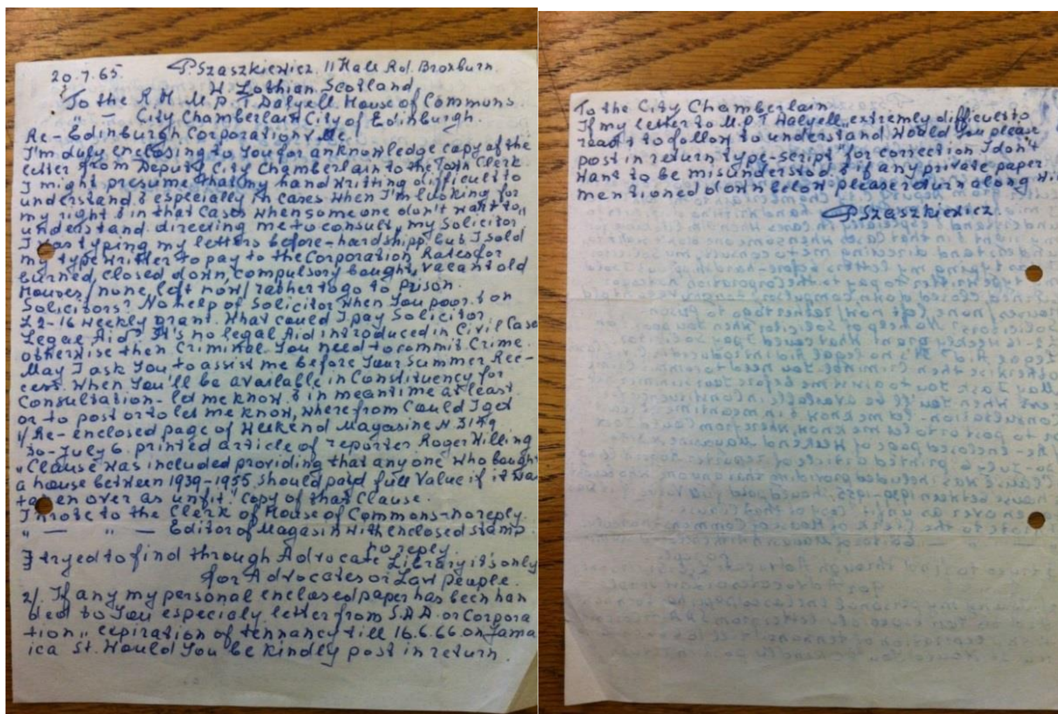
> Proprietors name. P. Szaszkiewicz.
> Name of the Holders of the Ground I don't know, because I'm paying few duty diference House factors & W.S.
>
> Property has been furnished and has beeing let as furnished if You requered the value of the furniture let me know and I'm going to give You value.
>
> Property has been insured.
>
> I'm your faithfully,
>
> P. Szaszkiewicz. (ECCA, HO/S216/003)

In 1965, another letter from Szaskiewicz appears in a Corporation file, this time relating to clearance activities in Jamaica Street (see Figure 14). Since the CPO the previous year, Szaskiewicz had moved to Broxburn and had been in contact with Corporation Officials about his financial settlement. Dissatisfied with their response to date, which appears to have been to tell him to get a lawyer, he turned for help to his new MP, Tam Dalyell, writing a rambling, barely-legible joint letter to him and the City Chamberlain. Evidently lacking a community or party political network that he could turn to for support, nor sufficient income to pay for legal advice, the letter was more an expression of his frustration than anything else:

> I might presume that my handwriting difficult to understand & especially in cases when I'm looking for my right & in that cases when someone don't want to understand directing me to consult "my solicitor." I was typing my letters before-hardship. But I sold my typewritter to pay to the Corporation Rates for burned, closed down, compulsory bought, vacant old houses./ none left now/ rather to go to Prison. Solicitors? No help of solicitors when you poor & on £2-16 weekly grant. What could I pay Solicitor. Legal Aid? It's no legal Aid introduced in Civil Cases otherwise then criminal. You need to commit Crime. (ECCA, HO/S244)

He explained that he had discovered a newspaper article that suggested anyone who had bought their home between 1939 and 1955 was still entitled to full market value in the event of it being declared unfit. He had subsequently contacted the Clerk of the House of Commons and the Advocates Library to find out if this was accurate or not, but had been rebuffed. After asking the MP to forward on any correspondence Dalyell might have had about his business, Szaskiewicz concluded his long letter by asking the City Chamberlain to arrange for it to be typed up and returned to him for comment if anything was unclear. Given that entire epistle was one long articulation of exasperation, with no specific complaint or query required

be addressed, the City Chamberlain simply sent it along to the Town Clerk's office, from where it was ultimately deposited in the Housing Committee files with no further response retained in the folder. Later in the same file a copy of the official "consent to borrow" sent to the Scottish Development Department, requesting permission to raise funds to pay the compensation to property owners in Jamaica Street, records Mr Szaskiewicz received for his former home at number 42 and two other properties at numbers 40 and 3 Jamaica Street a grand total of £3 for all three. Other correspondence in these files also reveals that even those individuals with sufficient resources to employ a solicitor to look after their interests and navigate the clearance process fared little better when they came up against Edinburgh Corporation's insuperable bureaucratic apparatus.



20.7.65. P. Szaszkiewicz 11 Hall Rd. Broxburn
W. Lothian Scotland
To the R.H. M.P. T. Dalyell House of Commons
" — City Chamberlain City of Edinburgh.
Re- Edinburgh Corporation & etc.
I'm duly enclosing to You for acknowledge copy of the letter from Deputy City Chamberlain to the Town Clerk
I might presume that my handwriting difficult to understand & especially in cases when I'm looking for my right & in that cases when someone don't want to understand directing me to consult my Solicitor
I was typing my letters before - hardshipp but I sold my typewritter to pay to the Corporation Rates for burned, closed down, compulsory bought, vecant old houses / none left now / rather to go to prison
Solicitors? No help of Solicitor when You poor & on £2-16 weekly grant. What could I pay Solicitor
Legal Aid? It's no legal Aid introduced in Civil Case otherwise then Criminal. You need to commit Crime.
May I ask You to assist me before Your Summer Recess. When You'll be available in Constituency for consultation - let me know. & in meantime at least or to post or to let me know, where from could I get
1/ Re- enclosed page of Weekend Magazine N 3149
30-July 6 printed article of reporter Roger Willing
"Clause was included providing that anyone who bought a house between 1939-1955 should paid full Value if it was taken over as unfit." Copy of that Clause.
I wrote to the Clerk of House of Commons - no reply.
" — " — Editor of Magasin with enclosed stamp no reply.
I tryed to find through Advocate Library it's only for Advocates or Law people.
2/. If any my personal enclosed paper has been handled to You especialy letter from S.A.D. or Corporation "expiration of tennancy till 16.6.66 on Jamaica St. Would You be kindly post in return.

To the City Chamberlain
If my letter to M.P. T. Dalyell "extremely difficult to read & to follow to understand Would You please post in return type-script" for correction I don't want to be misunderstood. & if any private paper mentioned down below please return along with
P. Szaszkiewicz.

(Figure 14 – Letter from P. Szaskiewicz to Tam Dalyell MP and the Edinburgh City Chamberlain venting his frustrations at his treatment during the clearance process – ECCA, HO/S244)

In October 1966, the solicitor's firm of *Cuthbert, Marchbank, Paterson and Salmon* wrote to the District Valuer expressing their detailed and serious concerns about the clearance process being executed by the Corporation against their client W. Pajak who lived at 4 Jamaica Street.

> Our client, probably along with very many others, did not understand the long complicated duplicated Form which was sent to him and could not realise that it was a notification that his house was being classed as "unfit for human habitation", and that he could appeal. Having seen the Form we can well understand how it would convey nothing to him, except perhaps the general fact that the Corporation proposed to take over Jamaica Street.
>
> Representations have been made to the Secretary of State, to avoid a very obvious injustice, that Mr Pajak and any others in a similar position should be given an opportunity of lodging Objections to the classification. This however, has not been granted. We presume that our client, under protest, must accept the derisory compensation figure offered to him and no doubt you will report to the Town Clerk accordingly.

The lawyers also added a list of suggestions that they felt would radically improve the experience of those individuals who were subjected to statutory clearance procedures:

> We presume that District Valuers periodically report to higher authority how the Acts under which they operate are working in actual practice. We would suggest to you that you consider incorporating in any such report the fact that it has been represented to you that the Notice sent out to proprietors in Compulsory Purchase and similar cases is not clear in its terms, and that the form or Notice should be amended so as to state in ordinary simple language (a) that the house concerned has been classed as "unfit for human habitation"; (b) that this classification will entail a very low compensation figure; (c) that aggrieved proprietors can appeal against the classification by lodging a letter of appeal against this classification at such and such a place, not later than such and such a date, and (d) that the Notice is an important one, and if the recipient does not understand it they should immediately contact their own Solicitor, Town Councillor or other adviser, on the Local Authority. (ECCA, HO/S244)

An internal Corporation departmental memo sent to Mr Coyle, one of the Depute Town Clerks, from the Estates Surveyor, who had been forwarded the letter by the District Valuer's office, voiced his "considerable sympathy with the views expressed" by the lawyers, noting:

> From the experience of the staff of this office it is quite clear that in a fair proportion of the cases the claimants have failed to understand the notices sent to them and that this, apart from lengthening the negotiations does a great deal to tarnish the reputation of the Corporation. (ECCA, HO/S244)

Coyle robustly disagreed and apparently had no sympathy for Pajak or the view of his lawyers. He claimed that the statutory procedures had been followed to the letter and that having personally overseen a "great many clearance area compulsory purchase orders" on behalf of the Corporation he had no "experience of this type of

complaint ever having arisen before.” He believed that the central issue was really about the £33 that Mr Pajak was being offered for his home, suggesting that:

> …It seems strange to me that the lawyers’ client should only choose to consult him when he knew the amount of compensation to be paid rather than at the beginning of the procedure when he allegedly could not understand the implications of the statutory notice.

He also reminded his Estates Surveyor that if Pajak was suggesting via his lawyers that he would have contested the unfitness label that had condemned his home it was worth noting that:

> Of all the orders made by the Corporation no objection to the Medical Officer of Health’s classification of a property has ever been upheld by the Secretary of State. (ECCA, HO/S244)

When one of the town councillors, Baillie Craig Richards, also complained about Pajak’s treatment, after being contacted by his lawyers, Coyle softened his stance slightly, but still insisted that if Pajak could not understand the original documents he should have taken legal advice earlier or telephoned the Town Clerk’s office for clarification. He advised Councillor Richards that:

> …Following service of such notices, it is quite common for members of my staff to receive calls from recipients who are unsure of the import of the notices, and a very full explanation is given, including a warning that all property classified as unfit is unlikely to attract very much in the way of compensation. If Mr Pajak had called at this office when he received his notice, the position would have been explained fully to him.

The Depute Town Clerk also dismissed the lawyers’ suggestion that the statutory communications should be made less opaque and more transparent:

> I cannot agree with the suggestion in the second page of the letter that the Corporation should issue a covering letter indicating that compensation for unfit houses is likely to be very low and telling the recipient how to appeal against the classification of his property. These are matters on which the owners of property included in clearance areas can take legal advice, and it would appear unnecessary if not, indeed, incompetent for the Corporation to take action on the lines suggested. (ECCA, HO/S244)

Given that he that he freely admitted to the councillor that that his staff were commonly fielding calls about the lack of clarity in their clearance communications, Coyle’s claim about having no experience of this issue was patently nonsense. One

year earlier, in October 1965, he had personally responded to another solicitor acting on behalf of a client who had similarly failed to comprehend the significance of not objecting when notified of the clearance order affecting his two properties. The firm informed Coyle that their client, a Mr Thomas, had "spent a considerable amount on his houses and had rendered them as convenient and attractive as was possible in their situation" and should, at the very least have been considered for a 'Well-Maintained Payment' as stipulated in the pertinent housing legislation. Coyle's response was unequivocal:

> The question of compensation for your client's houses is entirely between the District Valuer and Mr Thomas and the Corporation cannot intervene in the matter. Whilst appreciating the position in which Mr Thomas finds himself so far as compensation is concerned, I would point out that he had ample opportunity of lodging objections to the compulsory purchase order on the grounds that the classification of his houses was wrong. He did not choose to do so, and, as you know, the orders were confirmed by the Secretary of State for Scotland.
>
> I would further point out for your information that, while it was open to him to do so, the Secretary of State did not make any direction that a payment under Section 40 of the Housing (Scotland) Act, 1950, should be made by the Corporation in respect of either of the houses owned by Mr Thomas. (ECCA, HO/S244)

As late as 1970, Coyle was still unflinching in this regard. In February of that year the Town Clerk's office received a communication from the firm of solicitors *Fairbairn, Lightbody and Cownie* acting on behalf of their client Mary Mein, owner-occupier of a first-floor flat at 47 Bristo Street (ECCA, HO/S262). As in the other quoted cases, the firm robustly disagreed with the unfitness assessment:

> The property has been classified as "Unfit", but from our knowledge of other house properties dealt with in acquisitions, we consider that classification appears to be unduly severe. The Secretary of State for Scotland has informed us that he has no further function in this matter regarding re-classification of the property and we therefore take the matter up with you and request that the house be reclassified as falling within the category that it is not so far defective in one or more of the said standards of fitness and that it is reasonably suitable for occupation in its present condition.
>
> We are aware that Official Notices were issued to Miss Mein but our Client was not aware from her reading of the Notices that her property was "Unfit" for habitation and therefore had not appealed against the present decision.
>
> We shall be glad to learn that you are prepared to re-examine the circumstances regarding this property.

As in the other cases, Coyle refused to back down, secure in the knowledge that the correct legal procedure had been followed, even if there was now a clear and established pattern of misunderstood communication by those most directly affected by the Corporation's actions:

> I would advise you that the Compulsory Purchase Orders for the area have now been confirmed by the Secretary of State for Scotland and that the further procedure towards the demolition of the properties in the area is now well advanced. In confirming the order, of course, the Secretary of State has confirmed the classification of your client's house as being unfit for human habitation and, accordingly, there is no question of the position being re-examined with a view to re-classification of Miss Mein's house. (ECCA, HO/S262)

Evidently Coyle felt that helping those Edinburgh citizens being dispossessed of their homes comprehend their rights more clearly or secure greater compensation for their property was not a priority of the Town Clerk's office. English, Madigan and Norman had observed similar behaviour from local bureaucrats during their extensive study of clearance procedures in England and Wales. They suggest that this was because such officials felt that their "first priority" was always "to protect the legal interest of their council" and somewhat paradoxically not the individual rights of the citizens of their town. They offer as further mitigation:

> It is not the fault of the local authority if prescribed forms are designed to be understood primarily by lawyers and appear both peremptory and obscure to the general public (1976: 69-71).

This overwhelming desire to "protect" the Corporation at the personal social, psychological and financial expense of a substantial minority of the city's residents can be readily identified in other aspects of the clearance procedures as well.

The question of compensation for compulsorily acquired property was undoubtedly one of the most contentious issues of all and it repeatedly appears in surviving clearance related correspondence, both in the City Archives and in the Nationals Archives. Many property-owners had simply not appreciated that a declaration of unfitness would render their homes or property portfolio virtually valueless and many more owners and tenants were also clearly unaware unless

they contacted lawyers that they were entitled to a "Well-Maintained Payment" if their amenity-deficient property was still in an acceptable state of repair. The Payment was offered at two rates, either three and three-fifth or seven and one-fifth times the annual rateable value of the property. Not a huge sum, but still the Secretary of State was still forced to intervene on a number of occasions to ensure the Corporation offered it to those that they were clearing. Corporation officials then insisted that the householder provided five years of receipts as evidence of work done on the property within two weeks of receiving notification, otherwise it would be assumed that they did not wish to make a claim. Often the responses to these letters would narrate that the receipts had been lost through the normal passage of time. On some occasions it had to be explained to the council officials that the eviction, flitting and demolition had already taken place, so why would anyone have thought to keep invoices for work done on a house that no-longer even existed (ECCA, HO/S212/003)? There was absolutely no provision to add these conditions to providing these payments in the associated legislation and it appears simply to have been no more than a tactic to deter residents from even applying for these small supplementary compensatory payments for the loss of their well-maintained homes.

In 1967, a Mrs Jessie Dods was evicted from her home at 18 Charles Street as a consequence of a compulsory purchase order and in 1969 the Secretary of State had instructed that the Corporation should pay her a "Well-Maintained Payment." The Corporation demanded she provide receipts related to work previously done and Mrs Dods immediately complied. A full seven years later she had still not been paid. It took a series of increasingly exasperated missives throughout 1976 from her lawyer to provoke action from the Corporation officials who eventually sanctioned a payment of £108 to be split between the elderly Mrs Dods and her former landlord, the University of Edinburgh. The latter instructed the Corporation to give the entire amount to Mrs Dods because they had come to an agreement with the Corporation not to accept any compensation for their

compulsorily purchased properties in return for the firm commitment "that the University would acquire the site for the cost of acquisition and demolition." Mrs Dods's feelings of due deference to the Council were so great, that, even after being kept waiting for seven years, when she received her initial cheque for £54 she immediately penned council officials a letter of thanks (ECCA, HO/S 262). In the eventual settlement for the compulsory purchase of the previously mentioned Mary Mein's house, whose family had owned the property since 1904 and in which she had lived since 1936, the total compensation eventually offered in May 1971 came to paltry £61.35. Having accepted on behalf of her client, who had been rehomed in a Corporation house, her lawyers were still chasing complete payment in January 1973.

Even the much-vaunted neutrality of the compensation-setting government civil servant, whose objective probity was alluded to in numerous pieces of Corporation clearance-related correspondence dating back to the 1950s, can also be questioned. In November 1965, District Valuer John Gilbert wrote to the Town Clerk asking how he would like the negotiations on a ground floor property owned by a Ghulam Hassan at 35 Jamaica Street to proceed. The unusual nature of the case was outlined in an appended letter from Mr Hassan's lawyers. He had sold the property to a couple in 1963 for £700 on a payable by instalment basis. At the point of compulsory purchase the couple had abandoned the property having only paid £96 of the total sale price and Mr Hassan was looking to recoup the remaining £604 as compensation for the CPO. Mr Keppie, another Depute Town Clerk, wrote back:

> After consideration I am of the opinion that the best approach at this time would be for you to report the compensation as nil." (ECCA, HO/S244/035)

It is reasonable to expect Corporation officials to keep in close contact with the District Valuer during the complicated clearance process they were involved in, but it is also equally reasonable to expect that the Corporation should not be instructing this supposedly independent arbiter as to the level of compensation he should set for any property they were compulsorily purchasing. This treatment of Mr Hassan

and the earlier mentioned Mr Pajak also hints at another underlying problem faced by many citizens cleared by Edinburgh Corporation during this period that has not been previously exposed, that of racial discrimination.

As a consequence of its famous visit by Harold Wilson in 1964 as an example of one of Scotland's worst slums, I asked many of my interviewees what they could recall of Jamaica Street. Several recalled its negative reputation, but long-term Grassmarket resident Frank Black asked me "was it not all coloured people that lived there?" Adding that he believed it was known as "Little India" in the mid-20th century (Personal Discussion, 2015). The surviving compensation lists for the street certainly include surnames such as Mohammed, Majid, Ali, Aziz, Sattar and Khan which appear to show that Jamaica Street possessed a relatively higher immigrant population than I noticed on similar lists from elsewhere in the town. But when my research began, I had presumed, from a read-through of the relevant legislation that enabled these clearance procedures to take place, that Edinburgh's immigrant residents would have been afforded the same protections as any other of its citizens subjected to state-sponsored clearance. For example, prior to the passing of a "clearance resolution" the *Housing (Scotland) Act 1950* was exceedingly clear that the local authority must:

> …satisfy themselves that accommodation available for the persons who will be displaced by the demolition of buildings in the area exists, or can be provided in advance of the displacements which will from time to time become necessary as the demolition proceeds (Part III, Section 25, (1)(b))

Similarly, the powers offered in the *Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1947* carried with them the following obligation:

> Where the carrying out of redevelopment on any such land…will involve the displacement of persons residing in premises thereon, it shall be the duty of the authority, in so far as there is not other residential accommodation suitable to the reasonable requirements of those persons available on reasonable terms, to secure the provision of such accommodation in advance of the displacements from time to time becoming necessary as the redevelopment proceeds. (Section 29, Paragraph 1)

But, while scratching below the surface of the surviving records relating to clearance, it soon became apparent that Edinburgh Corporation decided that these seemingly straightforward edicts did not apply to non-naturalised citizens and their families who were resident in those Edinburgh neighbourhoods they intended to clear.

In September 1964 the *Evening News and Dispatch* ran the headline "Mother Claims Houses 'Refused to Indians'" referring to the claim made by a Mrs Elizabeth Pandit that she was being refused a Corporation house for her and her young family following their clearance from their home at 9 Salisbury Street because her bus-driver husband Ramesh was Indian. Mrs Pandit had attended an interview with the house-letting department and was told by the official that, "The Corporation do not allocate houses to Pakistanis or Indians" and that "he was only carrying out Corporation policy." The newspaper reports that the case had been taken up by the Labour MP for Central Edinburgh, Tom Oswald, who had discovered that the council officer was interpreting a minute of the Finance Committee from the previous year when two Pakistanis in similar circumstances were refused Corporation homes, apparently setting a precedent for the official to follow. Oswald was so disturbed by the case that he had written to the Home Secretary to clarify the housing rights of Commonwealth citizens and his Labour Councillor colleague Owen Hand intended to table a motion in the council to raise the plight of the Pandit family. When asked by the *News and Dispatch* if the refusal of a house was because of her husband's nationality, senior Progressive Councillor James McKay responded, "It would not be for that reason" (*Evening News and Dispatch,* 21/09/1964). A search for the printed minutes of the meeting of the relevant Properties Sub-Committee of the Corporation Finance Committee that the House-Letting official alluded to, held on the 18th November 1963, revealed that it was in fact three Pakistani families, owner-occupiers of property in the Wilkie Place clearance area, who were refused the offer of a council home that would normally have been made to any other Edinburgh family in similar circumstances. The minute records:

> The house-letting regulations did not allow houses to be let to non-naturalised British subjects but the practice in clearance areas was to rehouse all occupiers and these families would be advised to exchange with private tenants who would be given Corporation houses. In view of the size of the families and resistance of house factors it would be most unlikely that any of these applicants could be accommodated in this way.
>
> The Sub-Committee resolved to recommend that the families in question be left to provide their own accommodation out of the compensation payable to them. (*Finance Committee Minutes*, 1965: 183)

Councillor James McKay was also Convener of this Sub-Committee and was present at that meeting, so he would most certainly have been aware that the decision not to assist these three families had been taken because of their nationality and that

(Figure 15 – Mrs Elizabeth Pandit and her four children photographed outside their family home in Salisbury Street, Edinburgh. 'The Evening News and Dispatch', 21/09/1964)

the example set by his Sub-Committee would have influenced any future decisions of the Corporation house-letting official. I soon discovered elsewhere in the surviving clearance-related documentation in the City Archives that the Pandits were not alone in being discriminated against in this manner.

On the 12 March 1959, a very worried and very pregnant Mrs Jane Salvador wrote to the Town Clerk and Secretary of State for Scotland expressing her horror following her discovery that she would only receive £7 compensation for her house at 7 Dalrymple Place that she had originally paid £60 for and that due to her husband's non-naturalised status, the couple and their four Edinburgh-born children would not be offered a Corporation house. Mrs Salvador's unenviable situation was rendered all the more unpleasant because she had, in fact, been a partial agent in her own circumstance when, presumably unaware of the likely compensation offer and residency status conditions, she had signed a provocative petition almost two years previously that had demanded that this very clearance action be taken by the Corporation. A petition which was heavily championed at the time by opposition Labour politicians, including local councillor Pat Rogan who actually presented it to the Housing Committee and would most likely have played a key role in its creation and strong wording. As Mrs Salvador's official objection to the clearance order was received at the Scottish Office Department of Health in time following the declaration of the CPO, the Corporation were urged to quickly settle the matter to avoid the need for a PLI. Responding to the government civil servants and Mrs Salvador, Depute Town Clerk Mr Coyle explained that despite it being Corporation policy not to "provide for the housing of persons who are not British subjects" alternative accommodation would on this occasion be found for the family either "in a Corporation house or otherwise." Before withdrawing her objection, Mrs Salvador had the foresight to demand further assurance that the promised home would be suitable for a family of seven, which Coyle readily provided to ensure the clearance scheme could continue without further difficulty (ECCA, HO/S352/003).

In an effort to follow-up on what happened to the Pandit family, I issued an appeal on the *Lost Edinburgh Group* community Facebook page with the photograph featured in Figure 15 to see if I could track them down or find anyone who remembered them. I eventually managed to make contact with Elizabeth Pandit's eldest daughter, Elspeth, who told me that she and her siblings were too young to recall the affair or their life in Salisbury Street and that her parents never discussed it growing up. Her family moved, she thought, initially into a flat in Wauchope Road or Terrace in Niddrie before moving to a ground floor flat in Craigmillar. When she questioned her very elderly father Ramesh about the incident, he became agitated and made it very clear to her that he did not wish to talk about it any further. One of her sisters had a vague recollection of the involvement of the Race Relations Board in a subsequent council house move, but that was as much as any of them could recall (Personal Communication, 2017). It was clear that even after the passage of half a century the sensitivities of this issue had not diminished, so I thanked Elspeth for the information she had very kindly provided and ceased to follow this line of investigation any further, but the wider topic of racial discrimination in post-War Edinburgh is clearly one that deserves much further investigation beyond the scope of the present study.

Another social demographic that found itself barred from acquiring a Corporation home following clearance, due to the Corporation's local regulations, was that of single men. To satisfy the legislative pre-condition of clearance, that sufficient accommodation was available for those being cleared, if they were unable to offer council houses to a displaced resident Corporation housing officials would provide lists of suitable alternative private accommodation. Having absolutely failed to do this in the case of the three Pakistani families mentioned above, single British men would most likely have been offered hostel places, like those found in the Grassmarket, or traditional 'room and kitchens' or 'single ends' that had not yet been cleared or 'bedsits' that had been sufficiently upgraded to survive clearance

measures. In November 1965, John Dobbie wrote to the Town Clerk to register his displeasure at this process as he was in the middle of being cleared from his home in Jamaica Street:

> I am writing to you in regard to my position as far as Re-housing is concerned. The fact is I have been given Names & Addresses to go to but in each case I have been turned down by the landlord because I am a Single Man, and it seems they are all of the same mind. I cannot afford to go running all over town every day, and I would be grateful if you could do something about this situation. I pointed out to the District Valuator that the Compensation offered would be acceptable only if I received Alternative Accommodation, and I stand by that. Hoping you can arrange something (ECCA, H0/S244).

Mr Coyle, who would have been fully aware of the Corporation rules, wrote back to say that all he could do was pass Dobbie's note back to the House Letting Department, thus shifting the responsibility on to another department. Coyle responded to similar concerns raised the following year by lawyers of James Sangster, a widower living with his son in James Street, Newhaven. During the inspection of his property the officials had told Mr Sangster that "he would not be given alternative accommodation" to which his lawyers reminded the Depute Town Clerk of the Corporation's legal responsibilities under the terms of the associated legislation. Sangster's status as a single parent made no difference to Coyle who insisted Corporation houses were unavailable for single men, but he would ensure "alternative accommodation" was sourced "by way of a filtration" (ECCA, HO/S212/004).

George Hackland, one of my clearance interviewees, experienced a similar problem in the early 1970s when the Corporation sought to purchase for redevelopment the Newhaven tenement in which he owned a flat and shared with his mother, but he managed to secure an altogether different outcome. As a woman, his mother was offered the opportunity to move to one of the nearby new-build Corporation homes in Newhaven and George was allowed to move in with her. However as a single man he would not be allowed to inherit the tenancy in the event of her death, and would be forced out of the house, a legitimate concern for George at the time as his mother was then 89 years old. He elaborated further:

> …a house couldnie go tae a son. It could go tae a daughter, if a daughter wis stayin' wi' a mother the daughter got the house, accordin' tae the rules o' the council. But a bachelor son stayin' wi' the mother had tae go to a lodgin' house or somehin'.
>
> Ah says, "You're not on!" Ah says, "No, ah won't agree tae sell ye the house."
>
> So, they agreed. They had a council meetin', that somethin' would need tae be done about this. Cause the law hadnae been changed yet, but they agreed that the three people, although it only affected me, ah wis the only son involved, the rest o' it wis daughters they hud, that we got this house it would be in my name, not ma mother's. Ah would be the landlord o' it, the tenant, not ma mother. Ah says "Well that's fine." (Personal Discussion, 2012)

George's experience of being able to manipulate the Corporation re-housing policy in his favour as he was in the process of being cleared was something new and unseen in the clearance process before this time and may well be a reflection of the desired post-1969 watershed in the administration of urban renewal, I shall return to this topic in the next chapter.

This control of access to a new home in Edinburgh following clearance is the final part of the process I shall discuss in this chapter and it was perhaps the most significant prop that underpinned the "power relationship" identified by English, Madigan and Norman. Among the many responses to mandatory clearance missives that survive in the Corporation Housing Committee files, by far the most powerful evidence to support the notion of the cleared citizen becoming a "supplicant" of the Corporation is found among the numerous plaintive requests to be housed by the very organisation that was evicting the letter-writer and demolishing their home. The response sent by Mr Duncan, another Depute Town Clerk, to a J. Brown in Newhaven in August 1966 encouraging him withdraw his objection to being cleared from his home is a typical example of the council officers' approach to this matter. Brown had explained in a previous communication that he and his wife looked after their adult invalid daughter who lived in a house near their current home and would not consider moving further afield. Over four paragraphs Duncan made it clear that the Corporation's intention to redevelop Newhaven was unstoppable but that it was not unsympathetic to the Browns' circumstances. While the official could not "give

an unqualified undertaking regarding the rehousing arrangements" on behalf of the Corporation, he was "instructed to say" that when the time came to consider the Brown's new home "every effort would be made" to meet their wish to be locally rehoused. He then immediately concluded his letter by asking:

> Perhaps you would let me know in view of the foregoing if you wish to maintain your objection to the proposal. (ECCA: TO/002N/001)

The subtle juxtaposition of linking the withdrawal of the objection to the offer of a home, without actually guaranteeing anything, was a commonly used device in many such communications. In this case, Mr Brown accepted "the assurance" and formally withdrew his objection.

From the moment a Comprehensive Development Area or Clearance Area was accepted in principle by the Corporation, the lives of every person dwelling in that street or neighbourhood were no longer fully their own. Trapped in a designated development area and informed that it might be many years before they were cleared, residents could neither sell their properties to a third party nor improve the amenity-deficiency that had condemned their home as they would be throwing money at a property that could be demolished at any time. Desperately sad letters like the series sent by Isobel Cairns of 5 St Andrew's Square, Newhaven frantically pleading with officers for information on the clearance, updates on her compensation award and seeking the offer of a "small rented flatlet" in which she could quietly live "debt-free" and "alone for the rest of time," are commonplace in the Planning and Housing Committee files (Edinburgh City Archive, HO/S212/001). This exasperated initial communication from May Galbraith, who lived at 12 Auchinleck Brae, to the Town Clerk's office in February 1963 offers a powerful articulation of the bureaucratic vice held her and her family firmly in its grip:

> Dear Sir
>
> Would you please be good enough to tell me the position of the above property, as we had a joiner ordered to put in new windows, when your Sanitary people came six to eight weeks

> ago and told us to do nothing until the Medical Officer came the next week, when he would be able to tell us the approximate time we would be in the house, and as usual we are still waiting and as yet he has not called.
>
> Twice we have had a buyer for the house and twice you have stopped us selling owing to this one to five year plan, which to my knowledge has now lasted eight years, we cannot sell it, nor are the sanitary eager for repairs to be done once again owing to the redevelopment.
>
> The first buyer was four years ago, and if you had allowed the sale, the people would have had this house paid up years ago and we would have used the money to buy a bigger house, as it is now we can't sell it and the Corporation will not tell us what is happening or when.
>
> My son is almost five years old and needs a bedroom, my husband being a Corporation bus driver living room sleeping is not a very suitable arrangement if we should have to stop sleeping in the bedroom in favour of my son.
>
> The house we were after the second time was at Redbraes, right next to my husband's Garage (Anandale St) the district (Bellevue or Pilrig) which we were after and as I said before the people were stopped from buying it all seems rather unfair to me, and very unsettling to me, so if you can tell us anything we would be most grateful.
>
> Hoping to hear from you soon and thanking you in anticipation.
> (Edinburgh City Archive, HO/S212/001)

A Depute Town Clerk responded, blaming the architects who were drafting the redevelopment for delays and suggested that possible future objections to this plan could cause even further setbacks. Secure in the knowledge that the Corporation was the only possible buyer, the council officer then helpfully offered to send round the District Valuer to begin negotiations with Mrs Galbraith for the purchase of her house. Even when she agreed, months would pass and repeated letters would be sent before she secured eventually secured a visit from District Valuer who just happened to be passing her door. Throughout the process, which would eventually see her offered £27 for her property after the District Valuer had once again consulted with the Town Clerk's office, she continued to respectfully plead with the officials responsible for her predicament to be rehoused in a Corporation home in Leith Park or the Fort. Eventually some residents became wise to the meaningless platitudes being offered to them.

In April 1966, a Mrs H. Rutherford wrote to the Town Clerk's office, almost three years after her husband had agreed to sell the Corporation their fit property at 9 James Street, Newhaven on condition that they were rehoused in the village after.

With demolition pending, Mrs Rutherford must have been conscious that this had been a verbal agreement so asked of the Town Clerk:

> I should like to have confirmation in writing stating that you will HONOUR this arrangement, and GUARANTEE us a HOUSE in the VILLAGE (ECCA, HO/S212/002)

In an internal departmental memorandum about her request, kept on file next to Mrs Rutherford's letter, the City Chamberlain summed up his interpretation of the Corporation's responsibility to any of its citizens that it was in the process of clearing from their homes:

> Whereas every endeavour is made to rehouse persons from the development areas in the district of their choice, it is not the policy of the Corporation to guarantee housing in a particular district.

The City Chamberlain's view on this was also shared by certain elected members. In July 1970, while approving a closure order report from the Chief Sanitary Officer on twenty-five houses in Newhaven, the Committee was asked to consider the rehousing options for eight householders whose homes had not been condemned as unfit because they exceeded the new "tolerable standard." Corporation Officers reported that:

> In order that some progress can be made in the negotiations and in the light of the housing accommodation shortly to be available in the area, the Committee is requested to consider the possibility of re-housing the occupiers of these houses in the immediate locality (ECCA, HO/S212/005).

It was reported to the full meeting that the Housing Committee's Property Sub-Committee had debated this matter and voted to allow the offer to be made after stiff opposition from Councillor Pat Rogan who was adamant that the "rehousing priority should not be granted," but was outvoted by five ballots to two. The full Committee accepted their officials' recommendation on this occasion and allowed offers to be made to the eight home-owners.

That same summer a Mary Munro, who was being cleared from her home in

29 Bristo Street, found to her chagrin that the council official she met with in the House-Letting Department was far less helpful. Following her clearance she was offered the keys to a Corporation home in Peffermill Road, but when she visited the property she discovered recent rewiring work had left it “in a terrible state with lime from end to end” across the floors and the walls needing re-decorated. She explained to the official she was content to take the home, but that it would take at least six weeks of working there at night after she had finished her day job to make the house habitable and in anticipation of this she had even purchased sixteen rolls of wallpaper. In a letter to Depute Town Clerk Keppie describing the official’s reaction she explained, “He told me I could either take it or leave it.” Shocked at being asked effectively to pay for a property she could not move into for a month and a half she declined. Out of pocket for the wallpaper and the loss of earnings to attend the meeting, Mrs Munro was understandably aggrieved, but having had time to consider her predicament of living in a condemned tenement block whose occupants were rapidly decanting she added, “I am extremely worried in case I will be left in this stair myself…” She therefore asked Keppie to intercede and prevent the house being given to someone else. He responded a few days later to tell her she was too late, the property had already been given to another tenant (ECCA, HO/S 262). The general detachment and air of insouciance expressed by Corporation housing officials, such as Mrs Munro evidently experienced, was powerfully explained to me by Cathy Lighterness during our interview:

> It’s a terrible feeling when ye have tae deal wi’ people like that. They’re not workin’ for you an’ they’re not even workin’ for the Town, I mean be quite honest, they’re just… It’s their own petty wee things that they’re doin’ (Personal Discussion, 2012).

The BBC journalist Raeburn Mackie, ended his 1972 report on *Current Account* following a final word with a clearly exasperated Newcraighall resident Celia Rochford, who demanded to be allowed to stay on in Newcraighall before explaining with a glint in her eye what she would like to do with a the Local Authority officials that were trying to evict her:

> Oh no, let us stay here. For a' the years we huv tae go through now, whit good is it turnin' us a' upsides doon fir that? Corporation? Ah'd shoot them, so ah wid!

The clearly sympathetic Mackie then concluded with a powerful rebuke of the Edinburgh and Glasgow's approach to urban renewal:

> Of course it doesn't have to be done this way. Frustration, anger uncertainty, no participation, no consultation, virtually no information, just the big push from the powers that be. Old ladies in tears, communities shattered and scattered, it sounds more like the Highland Clearances a hundred and fifty years ago than Slum Clearance in Scotland today.
>
> Of course, being forced to move home is going to be a painful experience, no matter how it is handled, so surely for that very reason it's a time for sensitivity from the authorities, other towns and cities can send out explanations, call meetings, consult and communicate, why not Edinburgh and Glasgow? Slum Clearance? It's high-time they put their own houses in order, it's surely time they learned to treat other people as people?

His comments signposted another watershed moment for post-war Scottish slum clearances. A once supportive print and broadcast media, that had previously shown little patience for those householders who attempted to stay on in their obsolete homes and consequently slowed-up demolition work, was now increasingly sympathetic to their plight and voicing its opposition to traditional clearance practices. A new generation of local politicians and council officers was emerging that showed more outward consideration to the human rights of the individual and the importance of community in an urban context and resistance to clearance finally got organised and was much more successful in its efforts. These themes and more will be explored in the next chapter as I analyse the post-War clearances in Edinburgh through the lens of contemporary recollections of the period; when I shall endeavour to determine how many others agree with George Hackland's stoical assessment of the Corporation's urban renewal activities that "ye've got tae make mistakes afore ye can learn" (Personal Discussion, 2012).

Chapter 5: "Tapping the rich local idioms of vanished places" - Recollections of Slum Clearance in Edinburgh, c.1950-1975

When I embarked upon this research project I set myself a challenge to expose the "inside" story of state-sponsored clearance and dislocation in post-War Edinburgh by "tapping the rich local idioms of vanished places" (Mayne & Murray, 2001: 1-2). Like Wendy Ugolini, in her study of immigrant Italian citizens in war-time Edinburgh, I "set out to recover and reconstruct the narratives of those whose experiences were absent from the historical record" (2005: 7). With virtually every recent 'biography' of Edinburgh either ignoring the topic of post-war clearance altogether or simply dismissing it as an irrelevance to the Scottish capital, I determined to seek out the oral testimony that could shed new light on the forced displacement of tens of thousands of the city's residents. I sought to locate the personal recollections that have the ability "...to redefine what local history can be about" (Samuel, 1976: 201) and to "recover narratives from living witnesses" that might "…contribute to the understanding of this complicated period of history and provide raw material for research and study" (Vanderstoep 2010: 30).

In their essential handbook for oral historians wishing to obtain a greater comprehension of more recent historic urban contexts Herbert and Rodger neatly encapsulate the incalculable value of such first-hand recollections:

> Oral testimonies not only offer an alternative perspective or fill in the gaps in our knowledge left by traditional histories; they can go beyond this and have the potential to actually challenge the categories and assumptions of official history. (2007: 7)

By drawing out these long-silenced voices and contextualising them with historic data derived from a wider multi-disciplinary framework, oral historians have re-written numerous previously accepted historic narratives. Johnston and McIvor, in their study exposing the subverted experience of those individuals who had contracted asbestos-related diseases in the course of their working lives in 20th

century industrial Clydeside, offer both a word of justification and a note of caution for historians who are considering adopting this methodology:

> The historian's job is to analyse and interpret surviving sources and in this respect people's memories are invaluable fragments of evidence. Such material, though, needs to be treated carefully, using the normal conventions of cross-verification and corroboration. Whilst accepting that memory can no longer be regarded as 'innocent empirical evidence', we still believe that such evidence has much substance and that, if used sensitively, it can illuminate many obscure areas of human experience (2001: 60).

In an article exploring the processes whereby certain urban neighbourhoods come to be stigmatised and defamed by the inhabitants of elsewhere in a town or city E.V. Walter lucidly explains how “Urban ethnographers can explore spaces forgotten or given up for lost, replacing illusions with maps of social reality.” He contends:

> By rediscovering the lives of people in those spaces, by replacing stereotypes about them with descriptions that convey their vitality, dignity and humanity, ethnographers may restore some lost relationships in urban milieux… (1977: 151)

So I endeavoured to reach out and begin to recover some of the personal testimonies that might begin a long-overdue analysis of Edinburgh’s post-war clearance experience.

With an academic background in archaeology and history that focused primarily on artefacts and documents that do not ‘answer back’ I found myself navigating unfamiliar territory as I entered the discipline of oral history. As a publican, when I had broached the topic of personal social history matters with my many patrons the informality of the situation had, for the most part, ensured an easy free-flow of information. As an ‘apprentice’ ethnographer, with notebook and recording device in hand, the relationship and dynamics of the conversation had entirely changed. It had become a formal interview and an unspoken barrier often appeared between me and the person I was speaking to. I recall multiple instances when interviewees would simply stop themselves mid-sentence, look at the recorder then change tack entirely as they strayed into a sensitive issue that they did not wish to commit to ‘tape’. As mentioned in my introduction, on one occasion,

the day after a friendly and collaborative two hour interview with an individual whose family had lived in two soon-to-be cleared Edinburgh localities, the interviewee telephoned me and asked to withdraw from the project and for the redaction of his name and any identifying material as he felt he had revealed far too much about his early life growing up in some of Edinburgh's most stigmatised streets and communities. It was a steep learning curve, and I certainly made some mistakes along the way, but eventually, like Varlet in her study of inter-War Paris, through a series of long dialogues with a wide variety of current and former Edinburgh residents, I slowly began to reconstruct:

> …the memory of ordinary places, of practices in these ordinary places, the memory of the daily rhythms, patterns and geographies that themselves were part of city living, differentiated according to occupations, familial and social status (Varlet, 2007: 139).

I located interviewees using personal connections made during over a decade working in various Edinburgh public houses, from posts on local nostalgia focused social media sites and often just simple good fortune. I always asked interviewees if they could recommend anyone else that they thought I should interview, in the hope of making use of the so-called "snowball sampling" that Yow (1994: 45) and other oral historians clearly make good use of, found that this only proved of limited success. Once identified, I would explain in advance of the interview the purpose of my project and establish that the individual was content for our conversation to be digitally recorded and that this recording would be deposited in the School of Scottish Studies archive at the University of Edinburgh for future researchers to access. Not all requests for interviews were successful. One elderly gentleman I was very keen to chat with about his thoughts on the physical and social changes he had witnessed while running his family's city centre business for many decades swiftly declined when I approached him in person, at the instigation and presence of his son, contending that I should "read a book" if I wanted to find out about the history of the town. Such is the sensitive and stigmatising nature of the topic of "slum clearance" that other individuals that I also approached made it similarly apparent that they simply did not wish to recall this

period of their lives, seeing no value in raking over long-passed history. Others, however, were much more keen to chat about their recollections of mid-century Edinburgh and the Corporation's clearance activities. The increased numbers of Edinburgh nostalgia Facebook sites such as *Lost Edinburgh*, *Edinburgh South Side in the 50s, 60s and 70s* or *Edinburgh Past and Present* were particularly bountiful in providing a rich seam of shared anecdotes and willing narrators. Already actively engaged in publicly sharing their local recollections with other members of these social media groups, the individuals I reached out to on these pages, after identifying myself and describing my project, were often very willing to talk openly and candidly about their experiences; both overtly on the public forum or privately by direct message and sometimes even in person.

In advance of each recorded interview I would prepare a number of specific questions to ask each interviewee related to what little I knew of their professional or personal lives in Edinburgh or the locality in which they had once resided. I also brought along two folders of A4 photographs of various streets, buildings and landmarks across the town that had been cleared away or radically altered during Edinburgh's post-war urban renewal activities. I began each interview by checking once again that each interviewee was comfortable being recorded and for this to be deposited in University archives, before providing a further explanation of my project and my motivation for embarking upon it. I then tried to follow Studs Terkel's excellent recommendation for anyone wishing to get the most out of an interview:

> There aren't any rules. You do it your own way. You experiment. You try this, you try that. With one person one way's the best, with another person another. Stay loose, stay flexible… Don't push them, don't rush them, don't chase them or harass them with getting on to the next question. Take your time. Or no, let's put it the right way: let them take their time (Terkel & Parker 1997: 147-148)

The pre-prepared open questions often quickly became superfluous, only required in those moments when conversation between two strangers might on occasion naturally stall. I was determined, as much as possible, to keep the two-way

conversation flowing and maintain “a dialogue not a monologue” (Barber, 2005: 69). The visual prompts, in particular, proved extremely useful in this regard as they often stimulated latent memories of neighbourhoods or events that we had not actually intended to talk about at the start of the interview. I also tried to follow Dana Jack’s advice to trainee oral historians, to stop focusing on finding the “right questions” and on “information gathering” and pay more attention “…to interaction, where focus is on process, on the dynamic unfolding of the subject’s viewpoint” (Anderson & Jack 1991: 190). So I maintained a fluid, semi-structured approach to interviews that was responsive both to the emotional demeanour of the narrator as well as the actual content of each conversation as it naturally developed. Valerie Vow sums up exactly how vital such an approach is to ensure a successful and productive outcome to each interview in her seminal oral history handbook:

> The interaction of interviewer and narrator is a special characteristic of this research method. This is a shared work. This is a collaboration. The possibility of discovering something not previously known to the researcher is pursued. The understanding of the multiplicity of experiences in a total life context is the objective (1994: 24).

During my earliest interviews, as I followed Dana Jack’s directive to focus on the interaction between me and my interviewee, I also made a concerted and conscious effort to keep my own opinions and value judgements to myself, lest the interviewee try to shape their responses to what they thought I wanted to hear. I fear that this desire to appear outwardly neutral sometimes gave my initial interviewees the impression that I was at times somewhat naïve or possibly even being disingenuous, neither being a particularly desirable trait in establishing a useful and collaborative dialogue. But as I recalled Jane De Hart’s observation that every participant in a conversation “…brings social, psychological, and cultural biases, perceptions, and codes” and that “Those elements, conscious or unconscious, may do as much to shape the information forthcoming as the question asked” (1993: 590) I learned to become more relaxed about my own role within the share authority of the discussion. As my interview technique developed I became more confident in my role as collector of memories. Like Zrnić, I came to realise

that:

> These stories are not simply information on society and culture in general, they are testimonies of particular lives lived inside them. Although individual and personal, they also make up a 'social' in urban history, conveying what is in common in the events, situations and lives described, and in the senses or feelings expressed. Moreover those testimonies reveal the meaningful structures within which people conceptualize their urban experience, assess their situation and conceive and contemplate about the city." (2007: 104)

The resulting conversations meandered through their natural course and often, before I was aware of the passage of time, two hours would pass by as we explored many events in the lives of my interviewees. There were, on very rare occasions, moments of concern when conversations wandered into territory that could have had the potential to make either myself or the narrator feel uncomfortable. But over two decades experience in the customer-facing service industry and an albeit brief political career have equipped me with excellent interpersonal skills, ideal for dealing with all manner of difficult situations that occasionally occur during a personal dialogue. I have spent years developing an exceedingly intuitive sense of empathy that is acutely attuned to verbal and non-verbal cues that indicate signs of personal discomfort, anxiety or anger during a conversation. In an interview situation, I did as instructed by Vow and relied upon my "gut feeling" (2015: 165) to detect:

> …silences, sudden changes in topic, even humor (which can mask unease or embarrassment). Body movements, such as restless hands shuffling feet, and facial expressions [which] can be indications of painful feelings (2015: 171).

I became adept at recognising any signs of reticence from an interviewee to speak about a topic (Layman, 2009) and when it was appropriate to move onto another subject, probe further or simply to return to the issue again later in the interview, perhaps from a different direction.

By the end of my research, I had enjoyed detailed discussions about post-war life in various neighbourhoods across Edinburgh and urban renewal activities in the city with over forty individuals and recovered the personal testimony of several

more (see Appendix 6). Using a foot pedal and its associated software, I then carefully transcribed my oral interviews into a "play-script" format and kept written copies of all online discussions in a similar form. In the transcripts I attempt to reproduce all aspects of each individual's speech as fully as possible, the word count of these documents eventually running to close to three hundred thousand words. Once fully transcribed, I then set to the task of listening once again to each conversation while reading them over and noting down common themes as they emerged.

"Slum" stigma

The histories of housing and urban-renewal are rife with emotive words and euphemisms that both intentionally and unintentionally convey or disguise their underlying significance and implication. From the outset of this project I have inwardly struggled with highly emotive term "slum" as a word laden with complex and highly subjective meanings and imagery. Growing up, my perception of a slum was a sea of corrugated iron huts and shelters, forming a 'shanty town' in a developing country that might occasionally feature on television in the news or a charity appeal. I think Pat Rogan and his generation of "crusading" politicians would have applauded this view as he clearly felt that the term had been devalued and lost its meaning as he and his generation understood it. He told Miles Glendinning during an interview in 1990:

> What they call slums now, with their vandals and dampness and so forth, is not the same as what we thought of as slums then: tenements literally falling to pieces, places with no toilet, no water even, full of rats, with the roof falling off! (Glendinning & Muthesius. 1994: 319)

We can presume Rogan was referring to individuals such those described in Michael J. Miller's 2003 account of the experience of residents of modern high-rise flats in the Gorbals district of Glasgow in the 1960s to 1980s, after they had moved into these blocks when their nearby homes had been demolished during the city's post-war comprehensive clearances. Conditions in the houses were so poor residents

nicknamed one notorious block “the Dampies” and Miller’s case-study narrates their collective struggle to have the local authority recognise and ameliorate their plight. Using contemporary descriptions in local newspapers, archival material and interviews Miller charts the process wherein “…the new housing increasingly came to be perceived as slums” by its tenants. Perhaps of more concern to a generation of ‘crusading’ politicians who had built their careers on re-housing the working-classes of their towns, Miller also narrates exactly how the local authority stopped being viewed by these tenants as a “miracle-worker” and became instead “…an uncaring ‘slum landlord’” (2003: 273). Conversely, my own grandparents lived in Ruchazie in the north-east of Glasgow in the 1970s and 1980s, a similarly run-down and neglected neighbourhood that exhibited all of the negative characteristics described in Miller’s account of the Gorbals, but yet I do not recall hearing anyone within my own family ever referring to it as a slum, either then or now. Significant portions of the Gorbals and Ruchazie, like many comparable local authority housing schemes in Edinburgh, have since been razed to the ground often for similar reasons to those that brought down many of their residents’ previous homes during the peak years of comprehensive clearance activities. Miller noted that this had made many residents “particularly bitter” as:

> They not only felt resentment at the degradation of the physical environment of the new flats but also at having been ‘cheated’ of the positive aspects of life in the old Gorbals (2003: 287)

So, as my own conception of the subjective term was tested, I became interested to learn more about how the label “slum” was utilised by the witnesses *to* and the former residents *of* the now-vanished streets in my study of Edinburgh and if its application was further influenced by the storyteller’s lived experience during the intervening years.

Ronnie Lehany spent his childhood in Prospect Place, a working-class street of mainly 19th century tenement blocks and small businesses that was just off of Arthur Street and very near Holyrood Park. He moved out with his family in the late

1950s to the large and growing inter-war local authority housing estate in Craigmillar just as Edinburgh Corporation began its comprehensive clearance activities in earnest. He was initially conflicted as he described the neighbourhood of his youth to me:

> They were slums they hooses really. We didnie think it wis a slum, but obviously they were slums, ye know? (Personal Discussion, 2012)

When I asked him why they were slums he provided an evocative recollection to justify its classification as such:

> People used tae, if they got wallpaper they put it up wi, there wisnae any wallpaper paste, they put it up wi' flour. Ye know? So, there's bugs in flour that come oot when there's a… obviously the hoose is warm, and they came oot the wallpaper, these bugs, they were a' over the place, ye know? Mice were a' over the place. We had two cats, and I was sittin' eatin' ma tea, I dinnie want tae sicken ye, it didnie sicken me, because they would play wi' the mice an' then they would eat them, and you were eatin' yer tea, ken? Ye wernie watchin' the telly, there wis nothin' tae do, ye were sick watchin' the fire. But that wis nothin', ye thought nothin' o' it, ye know?
>
> And the hooses, well they couldnie keep them clean because they were just… they were slums. I mean, there were drains open at the back. We had a bit at the back o' us… At the bottom o' the stair we used tae watch them, there wis always a deid rat or somethin' lyin' aboot, and ye watched it in different states o' decay. That wis a bit o' entertainment for ye, ken?
>
> … honestly it wis shit, a the back greens, deid cats, deid dugs, I'm no kiddin' ye.

For John Stirling, the former Edinburgh Corporation sanitary inspector, lack of amenity and general cleanliness defined a slum property or neighbourhood and he was keen to point out that slums could be found in unexpected places in Edinburgh. He said it would surprise people that Edinburgh slums were not restricted solely to the declining neighbourhoods that housed the city's industrial population, like Gorgie, Dalry, Leith and Fountainbridge. "Nobody thought about slums in George Street" he recalled as he described the incredulous response of a senior councillor to his attempts to close a tenement there in the course of his duties (Personal Discussion, 2013). Cathy Lighterness (CL), in describing the Corporation's first forays into redeveloping her village of Newhaven in the late 1950s, was clear in her belief that it was simply a technical term:

CL: I've got tae admit some o' the houses were slummy.
DJ: What do you mean by that?
CL: Because they didnie have facilities inside and they didnie have running water. There wis a lot o' them had shared sinks. In the old Main Street there wis a sink at the top o' the stairs in the houses shares sink as well as sharin' the toilet. We didn't have a shared toilet, we had one of our own!
DJ: So, you used the word slummy is that..?
CL: I meant the buildings were… slummy. Ye know? The people in them wernie! (Personal Discussion, 2012)

Despite being reserved for the use of her family alone, their toilet was an outdoor one, which gave the sanitary officials the power to condemn the property as unfit, something Cathy made plain she clearly did not agree with as the interview developed. She also intimated a family belief that the slum classification was a pretext used by officials as they improved the infrastructure along the Forth coast:

CL: That's what Newhaven was, a "Slum Clearance." But we wernie supposed to be that. We were supposed to be getting cleared for the roads.
DJ: For the roads..?
CL: Oh yes. That's what we were told. Our's wasnie slummy, but… See, ma dad, as I say died in 1947, but he always said the houses in Newhaven were slummy. But then he said the people wernie.

Another interviewee shared a recollection which illustrated just how easily this stigma of "slumminess" transferred from bricks and mortar to human beings.

Mary Mackay (MM), whose family had been among the very first people to move into the brand new tenement blocks in Harewood Drive in the new Corporation estate in Craigmillar in 1930, recalled an episode about her mother after some new neighbours had moved into her block in the late 1950s:

MM: For a while, when the Danskins moved out, a family moved in from the Pleasance, and I remember my mother going out into the back green and shouting up to this woman in the window "Don't bring your slummy habits here!" Because the woman was throwing potato peelings and things out the window into the back green…
DJ: And it's the common back green?
MM: The common back green! And my mother was: "You come from the slums, well don't bring your slummy habits here!" (Personal Discussion, 2012)

Evidently for Mary's mother, the 'slums' had the ability to move with the people

being cleared, despite the fact that she and her family had themselves only moved to Craigmillar as part of the inter-war Corporation slum clearance of St Leonard's. Retired architect Adam Johnston (AJ) recalled occasions during his architecture and town planning tutorials at the Edinburgh College of Art in the mid to late 1950s when this 'slum state of mind' would come up for discussion:

> I remember one time we were talking about housing and how the slums… now, he was a Rome scholar, a very intelligent chap, an' he said, I always remember this, "It took three generations to get rid o' that social attitude toward slums."

He explained that it was firmly believed by his tutors and peers that only the third generation of a family after the act of clearance would be free of the habits and lifestyle of the slums known by their grandparents and before (Personal Discussion, 2012).

The stigma associated with living in a slum was expressed in another key way by several interviewees. Many keenly recounted the cleanliness and well-maintained nature of their homes or those belonging to their families, the inference often being that others may have been dirty and unkempt, but their home most definitely was not. Ian Smith (IS), for example discussing with his friend John 'Jock' Robb (JR) his family home in Newhaven:

> IS: They were beautifully kept these streets. Ma mother used tae scrub the pavement! They were all painted. There was a guy who used to paint them, mebbe every second year, Ecky Jamieson…
> JR: Ecky Jamieson, the painter, aye.
> IS: One end tae the other.
> JR: Every one, right along the row.
> IS: I wouldnie say much about ma mother but ma mother used tae scrub the pavement, ah know that. On her hands an' knees! (Personal Discussion, 2012)

Or George Hackland (GH), responding to me asking if he agreed with a council official who labelled Newhaven a slum in 1953:

> Well, it wis in a slum in as much as the houses needed modernisation, but the houses that were there, single ends or not, were spotlessly clean. Doorsteps a' whitened or done wi' fancy pink… ye know the stone slabs or..? Toilets bleached tae… ye know they must ha'

> bought an awful lot o' bleach in the village. But everything was spotless. (Personal Discussion, 2012)

And that word "spotless" came up on other occasions. During an interview with Frank Glancy and his friend Frank Black, the former slightly admonished the latter for saying that some of the Edinburgh neighbourhoods he had worked in as a plumber in the 1960s "resembled slums" reminding him that "They were full of hard working people and the houses were spotless". Later in the same interview Black recalled some recent conversations he had about clearances in Edinburgh:

> And there are still people who will say to me, "Och it was just a bit slum." And I say to them, "Woa, woa!" I says, "It was full of decent, hard-working people." I says, "They brought their families up right. That's what you should have been looking at and saying 'We want to build on this, not destroy it.'" (Personal Discussion, 2015).

I also identified an element of social separation that existed in the memories of several interviewees for whom these slums were fixed localities in the city. They might not be too familiar with life within, but were nonetheless clear in their understanding of what they were and why they were labelled as slums. When I asked a former resident of Dublin Street in the New Town, Aubrey Manning (AM), about why he believed the Corporation had cleared and demolished nearby Jamaica Street, after reflecting on its likely lack of amenities and tatty exteriors he described it as "a slummy area with poor people living in it." He was unsure if he had ever walked down the street, so I questioned if this was because he felt unsafe there:

> Well maybe, maybe. I can't say what I felt. A slight sense of embarrassment I suppose. I mean, I think it… I never like… I do feel somewhat embarrassed being an obviously, you know, prosperous middle-class person walking through a slummy area. I don't like the feeling of it. I mean, if I were a doctor going to see a patient I could cope with it, but I hate to think that people may feel that we are just looking at you. You know? (Personal Discussion, 2013)

Similarly, Winifred Sillito, who lived in George Square throughout the 1950s and was a founder member of the Georgian Society, was quick to respond to my question about the University expansion plans suggested that "They could have knocked down the slums instead of George Square" (Personal Discussion, 2012).

She was referring to the nearby South Side streets that led away from George Square, many of which would eventually fall to the wrecking ball in subsequent years, but the clear feeling of expendability she felt towards these "slum" neighbourhoods, containing hundreds of families compared with her own street, was striking.

During numerous discussions, recalled notions of crime and disorder were intimately associated with several of the cleared slum neighbourhoods, with Leith Street and Picardy Place singled out by several interviewees. Retired *Evening News* journalist Hamish Coghill recalled the lively atmosphere that emerged there every weekend night:

> Well the Imperial Hotel wasn't exactly a five star hotel. You also had Fairlie's Dancehall on Leith Street, which was a very lively place, and the American airmen from Kirknewton, they all came in, and the rammies in there, and every Friday night, Saturday night there were great fights here. (Personal Discussion, 2017)

In addition to the *Imperial Hotel* another nearby hostelry of ill-repute was also oft-mentioned; *Moir's Bar*, which once sat near to where the *John Lewis* store stands today, featured in several recollections. David Brown recalled the majority of its patrons hailed from the neighbouring street which was apparently mainly populated by "a' the cows an' the brothels" (Personal Discussion, 2013) and Frank Ferri agreed:

> FF: ...That was quite a wild place.
> DJ: So I've been told.
> FF: The first gay bar in town unofficially.
> DJ: Oh, really? I didn't know that.
> FF: Oh you got all sorts in there. You got prostitutes and God knows what. (Personal Discussion, 2012)

And Ronnie Lehany described being advised to steer well clear of its charms when visiting Leith to watch *Hibernian Football Club* playing at their home ground:

> I don't think I was ever in that because I was well warned aboot it, ken? My faither used to go "Dinnae go in that pub!" I never went there. (Personal Discussion, 2012)

Anne Henderson, who grew up in a tenement building in Smith's Place, a cul-de-sac near the bottom of Leith Walk, recalled similar familial advice to avoid the whole area:

> That's the theatre, that's it there [pointing on photograph at the burnt out shell of the former Theatre Royal next to St. Mary's Cathedral]. And as you crossed over to go, to continue down towards Elm Row, that's where all the prostitutes hung out. And there were gents toilets in the middle and I can remember as teenagers we were always told "Go on the other side of the road when you're going down Leith Walk", as you were walking home from Princes Street […] It was the whole quarter from […] about there down to Elm Row, or roughly where you go down to Gayfield Square now, that was just, you know, a bad area. We were told as kids […] I mean you were told, you know, not to, not to walk down, especially that side. The other side didn't seem to be so bad, for some reason or another. I don't know why, you know? (Personal Discussion, 2013)

Hamish Coghill also recalled the criminal element within a slum neighbourhood as helping make it all-too conspicuous from its neighbouring streets. When discussing Jamaica Street and why it was singled out by local Labour politicians for a much-publicised visit from the future Prime Minister Harold Wilson in 1964, Coghill noted:

> It was one of the worst of the slum streets. And then of course Jamaica Street as you know, you've got Heriot Row, one of the plushest of the New Town streets on the one side of it the Royal Circus the other, India Place, sorry India Street… which is the home of many of Edinburgh's advocates, runs down the other bank beside it, and Howe Street is the other end of it. And you've got this, what was originally built as a market and street, a bit like Cumberland Street that's further down, and it had fallen into a terrible state of affairs and there were lots of hooks, crooks and comic singers in there…

This led me to recall that a Sheriff had once described the street as one of the most crime-ridden in the entire country, to which Coghill retorted:

> Yeah, that would be right, that would be right, because there was at least one murder there. Cheap drink of course, drink-related problems as you'll find in any poorer community, as you know, whatever, and all sorts of problems in there. But again, good folk! I mean not everybody's tarred with the same brush, a lot of good folk there and then when they cleared it out they put up some appalling houses, when you look at that row of houses, absolutely characterless, terrible. (Personal Discussion, 2017)

Accounts such as these help researchers navigate the "moral topography of modern cities" (Walter, 1977: 154). Traditionally unrecorded, these whispered

rumours and sniggered innuendo formally communicate to urban scholars the full extent of the social stigma that adhered to the vast majority of these much-maligned 'slum' neighbourhoods. On a basic level, they reveal exactly how much these 'othered' localities had become indissolubly linked to violence, crime, dirt, poverty, sexual deviancy and other anti-social behaviours. In this reading, they can offer useful insights into the mindsets and attitudes of both the members of the civic elite and other townsfolk that simply looked in upon these "dreadful enclosures" from the outside, which helps explain the ultimate fate of these districts at the hands of the demolition crews. But, in recovering these recollections from those individuals who actually lived within these neighbourhoods, when interpreted within their wider historic context, these memories can also assist in the construction of an "ethnography of place" that "…is alert to a doubly-nuanced stratigraphy: layers of things, and layers of meanings" (Mayne & Lawrence, 1998: 104-105). A vital asset for those urban historians who now wish to strip back the mask of the monolithic, overly-simplified "slum myth" caricature that has previously distorted or entirely obscured the subtle complexities of the lives of the inhabitants of such localities.

Vanished Communities

Another word laden with meaning, but usually with fewer negative connotations than 'slum,' is 'community.' In my forty-three years, I have lived in several villages, cities and towns across Scotland, each one possessing its own outward manifestations of what could be called a community or indeed multiple communities. Because I have personally never felt like I truly belonged in or to any of these communities those interviewees, offering recollections of the warm embrace of the communities they once knew before the Corporation's sanitary inspectors arrived with their clipboards and magic measuring tapes, held an extra special interest for me.

For some of my respondents, I detected that a real sense of ‘community’ was felt primarily at a time in their lives when they were closely acquainted with the vast majority of their neighbours and enjoyed the privileged insight of knowing the names, occupations and personal back stories of almost everyone around them. The loss of this familiarity, as neighbourhoods were broken up and their inhabitants scattered or replaced by strangers, could be taken quite hard even decades later, as George Hackland, who lived in Newhaven both before and after repeated waves of clearance and rebuilding, recalled unhappily:

> We’ve lost the whole community spirit altogether, like ah’m lucky if ah know six families in this whole village now. Where ah knew everybody, frae the oldest tae the youngest, we knew everybody in the village.

For Ronnie Lehany, despite his many detailed memories of the dirt and squalor that he witnessed and endured, he still recalled his former home in Prospect Place with enormous fondness. For him, community was found in the equality that came from the grinding poverty shared by all, ameliorated slightly by the tight-knit social network found within his tenement and street:

> When I stayed there, you were poor. I mean everywhere round about there was poor, but you never realised you were poor because everybody was the same, you know?
>
> Well, we had one room. They called it a room and kitchen, that’s what they were. I think every room was the same, I don’t think there was anything bigger that that, you know? But, when I left there, I was nine, but I can remember hundreds of people. It’s amazing, I look at my grandson now and wonder if he can remember the people round about him, but I don’t think that people communicate like they did then, because you knew everybody, you know?
>
> A lot of the people then… If your neighbour needed something, everybody got paid on different pay days, well somebody would give ye whatever ye needed, milk or sugar an’ that, an’ it was no uncommon for people just tae knock on yer door. Well you done the same wi’ them. An’ nobody thought anything o’ it. But I mean if you did that now, they’d think “Is that no..?”
>
> I cannie look back at my childhood and ever think I wis unhappy, I was always happy, ken? (Personal Discussion, 2012)

Cathy Lighterness also saw shared poverty as a force that bound her Newhaven community together in common adversity. She believed that the clearance activities came at time when growing internal wealth had altered the character of the place:

> …before that we were a very strong community and by the time this was happening I think there was something lost in the community. We had got a little bit more affluent (Personal Discussion , 2012).

Anne Henderson's conception of community was heavily influenced by the relationship she had growing up Leith with the adults that inhabited buildings around her family home. In a recollection that brought to mind Jane Jacobs's famous observation of the importance to a vigorous and healthy neighbourhood of "eyes upon the street" (1962: 35), Henderson recalled the feeling of always being looked after within an informal arrangement of collective parenting:

> AH: If you were out playing in the street there was always a parent to keep an eye on you, open the windows and just check that, you know, everything was ok. So your parents knew…
>
> DJ: So you couldn't get into trouble without your parents knowing, I would imagine.
>
> AH: Oh you didn't dare because you had the local bobby and the police box was in Smiths Place (Personal Discussion, 2013).

This was also a situation Cathy Lighterness identified with in Newhaven:

> Everyone knew who you were, what you were. How much money you had in the bank meant absolutely nothing. But ye could, as a child, I could go an' play in any o' the streets an a' the people there knew who ah was an' if anything was going wrong they would of looked after me. That's a community. Ye know who people are. Ye can say where so-an-so lives in that street an' in that stair there's such an' such. Ye know?
>
> … I used tae go tae one o' ma pals an' there was these two old men an' they would sit at her mother's window lookin' out an ye walked in and the first thing they wanted to know was: "Who d'ye belong tae?" It was "Wha's aucht you?" Wis what they said… "Wha's aucht you?" Who do you belong to? And you had to stand there and give… I had to say who I was, my name was Catherine Linton, I was Gavin Linton's daughter and I wisnie a Plowtae. There wis another Linton family whose byname was Plowtae. And I had tae stand an' say that or they wouldnie who a was. But they knew who I was!

Her account of these "natural proprietors of the street" (Jacobs 1962: 35) went even further as she described how men and women in the village of Newhaven would occupy their own specific territories within their neighbourhood at specific points of the day or the week:

CL: My mother's Friday night entertainment was standing… we had a – what we called the Pend – it was… they went up in our street was a cul-de-sac and they'd stand down the foot o' the Pend in the Main Street and they would stand and blether and wait for the pubs comin' oot an' have a good laugh. They would stand and laugh and ye know, that was their meeting place. They didnie have coffee places, they couldnie afford to go anyhow. There was nowhere else they could meet so they did use to congregate just sort o' there, just for an hour or something, an' meet. And that kept them goin', most o' them had hard lives!

DJ: Was this women and men or just women?

CL: Just the women. The men stood further along. At the top of the square. St Andrew's Square. I'm saying St Andrew's Square, they've changed it… Fishmarket Square. They'd stand there and they would… there would be men there and at the other end of the school there was… I'm trying to think what you would call it now… there was a horse trough, but the men stood, where the opening comes to come into the Main Street, but it was all along and they used to stand there, cause that was the end ae the houses. The end ae the school. There wis nothing beyond the other side. (Personal Discussion, 2012)

And each street, even within a relatively small neighbourhood, could operate as a distinct and separate community with its own boundaries and set of rules. Winifred Sillito recalled little interaction between the inhabitants of neighbouring streets around the University as she raised her family on George Square during the 1950s:

WS: The sad thing was that it was the only the George Square and Buccleuch Place children who played in the [George Square] Gardens.

DJ: So the children from Crichton..?

WS: Well I don't think they'd have ever come near. They wouldn't have thought of it even.

DJ: Did you… Did the adults mix perhaps from the other… from the side streets?

WS: I don't think so. Why would they after all?

DJ: What about just when you were at the shops perhaps or...?

WS: Well, I suppose if you went to pub maybe, but we didn't. The nearest we got to knowing about pubs was Lady Whitaker, who came from Bushmills, she was a native of Bushmills. She was doing a survey about drunkenness in Edinburgh and she was in Crichton Street one day and she was watching the people who were going into the pub there and a man came out and he clapped her on the shoulder and he said "Just go inside and find them dear!" She loved that story!

DJ: Did she go inside?

WS: No

(Personal Discussion, 2012)

Similarly Anne Henderson, growing up in Leith, had a clear sense of individualised street identity:

…your school friends, you would visit them, you'd have tea maybe at their house, but you didn't go back there. Although we played on Smith Place, Lawrence Street was just up the road and sometimes if there was a Club in the Church Hall you would go to the Club but you

> still didn't play in the street with those children. They had their square, they played in that and we had ours and then the children further down played in their stretch. Probably because we were told by the parents – “You don't move from there!” (Personal Discussion, 2013)

Brian McDonald, also from Leith, explained how the neighbourhood he grew up in provided a complete social, psychological and economic ecosystem, providing for all his family’s needs:

> We always used the corner shop, or the Co-op, and stuff like that, and everybody knew everybody’s routine, you know? It was just clichés again, but that was another reason probably why we didn’t go up to Edinburgh that often because everything you needed was at your doorstep. You know? You didn’t have to go anywhere. Even Leith Hospital was there as well, so you know? You didn’t have to go for a hospital…you didn’t have to leave. You really didn’t have to leave. As, when I think of all my previous generations in Leith and Newhaven, because that’s where they were, you know? And because of the big families too, I suppose. Maybe that’s what… the big families, a lot of cousins, a lot of aunties, they could always kind of rely on each other and things like that for stuff when times were hard. They would go see another sister and things like that, you know? To get over the hump of having no money, or something, or a loaf of bread or something, you know? So I think you’ve got the community that way too. You’ve got your family round about you. They were always there, they know where you live, sort of routine. So… that’s another reason you were kinda, when you were a bairn, you were kinda… you watched what you were doing and stuff, for that, you know? Because everybody knew you! (Personal Discussion, 2013)

Elspeth Wills, who moved into her home in the Grassmarket neighbourhood in the mid-1970s, believed that community identity was also heavily tied to the length of residency in an area. Despite her and her husband getting heavily involved with a local resident group collectively intent on resisting further clearance activities in the area and rehabilitating existing residential properties for the use of current and former residents, immediately on moving into the area, she recalled:

> I remember being told that it took twenty years before you were accepted as local. However, a friend who moved in at about the same time and was told the same thing, we both reckoned it was about sixteen years! (Personal Discussion, 2015)

When I asked Frank Ferri, a former resident of Leith and later a community housing activist in Newhaven, to give me his insight on the former communities that existed in cleared neighbourhoods he suggested their loss was an unintended by-product of urban renewal:

FF: The rationale was "they're getting more rooms to meet their family requirements, they've got hot and cold running water, they've got a bath, they've got a sink, they've got a separate place to prepare their food and eat in the kitchen" sort of thing "So, what more can we do for them?" Well, to hell with the community aspect of it and the fact that you don't meet your neighbours any longer because you are living in a thirteen storey high building. That was of no interest to them.

DJ: Why do you think that is? […] Why do you think that the councillors and the official didn't recognise that community element?

FF: Well they were tunnel-visioned, blinkered into thinking "Well, we've got a housing problem here, let's build these houses as quick as we can, as economically as we can, and get these people into these houses because they are living in horrendous conditions." They probably never gave too deep a thought into the community aspect of it, you know? (Personal Discussion, 2012)

Cathy Lighterness was of a different opinion. She remained convinced that the existence of a strong community spirit contributed to the decision to clear, explaining:

> My sister, many years ago, was told that we had been such a strong community, Edinburgh didnie really like that […] They dinnie like strong communities, cause they fight back.

And this was not just restricted to the village of Newhaven, when I questioned why she thought the Corporation had demolished the Kirkgate in Leith she responded, "It wis too strong a place." For her it was clear, strong cohesive working-class communities were a challenge to the established political authority and therefore had to be broken-up. Having lived for many years in a brand new multi-storey block at Leith Fort before she was able to arrange a return to Newhaven she remained utterly unconvinced that the buildings and schemes constructed to house those cleared and replace demolished neighbourhoods were ever capable of fostering new communities to grow:

> …They're only buildin' houses, they're not buildin' lives, they're not buildin' communities. A community is somewhere where you go to work, a' go tae work, a' in the same place. You decide ye need tae live here. So, it's grown. It's no' made. Like, a' these fishermen, a' these years ago came an' lived there because it wis easy for the fishin' an' things like that. So ye became a community. Ye can't make – I'm no… I'm sayin' they havnie made – ye can't make a community (Personal Discussion, 2012).

“You decide ye need tae live here,” is a singularly powerful acknowledgement that personal agency is absolutely fundamental to an individual’s acceptance or rejection of any community that they might find themselves in, that the decision taken to live and work in a neighbourhood was theirs and theirs alone to make and never one that can be forced upon them by an external power.

Alternatives to Clearance

I asked most interviewees if they believed that the Corporation could or should have adopted a different approach to renewing those areas of the city that were cleared. Some were adamant that the Local Authority was left with no choice while others had clear alternatives they believed the council should have adopted.

In 1972, after four years spent documenting some of the most appalling living conditions still experienced by residents in pre-clearance neighbourhoods in the north of England for the housing charity *Shelter*, photo-journalist Nick Hedges was sent by the organisation to photograph some of the remaining slum housing in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The pictures he took in and around Edinburgh’s Waddell Place and Tennant Street provide a stark and unvarnished personal insight into the lives lived in these Leith neighbourhoods. One of his Leith photos, of a poorly dressed, apparently distressed child holding a suitcase at the entry to his tenement close, was so evocative that it was chosen to be part of a nationwide *Shelter* campaign highlighting the plight of UK citizens still forced to live in slums in the 1970s. His other pictures were no less grim in their depictions of children playing amidst the detritus of the street, dilapidated buildings and interiors, and often very unhappy looking house-holders. Hedges left me in no doubt that while he felt it was regrettable councils “didn’t really consider properly the communities that were dispatched to the outer reaches of the cities” he still believed that most local authorities were left with no other choice but the wholesale demolition of entire neighbourhoods:

> I think the difficulty, and it's one that I encountered in other cities, was that some of the original tenements in Glasgow and Edinburgh were actually really well built and they were quite good accommodation. It's just that they'd been left in such disrepair I think almost as an act of desperation, councillors decided to clear properties wholescale rather than refurbish and re-invent the housing in a much better condition, and in doing so, of course, they broke up communities. (Personal discussion, 2017)

Retired sanitary inspector John Stirling also believed Councillors were under tremendous pressure to rehouse their constituents from unsuitable homes:

> There was an awful lot of people who would want out. I mean there was people who, you know, they were house ridden because they were in a wheel-chair, sometimes amputations and things like that, didn't get out. Bristo Street was a case in point and she said, "I'd give anything to be on the ground floor and get out." She said, "My husband can't get me down the stairs." (Personal discussion, 2013)

Retired local Labour councillor David Brown also concurred with the notion that Edinburgh councillors were simply overwhelmed both by the numbers of obsolete houses that they were confronted with and "the desperation of folk needin' houses." He described how "the pressures were on in terms of there were masses an' masses o' slums" adding that "the sheer scale just was unmanageable" requiring drastic and radical solutions. Brown recalled several conversations with fellow party colleague Councillor Pat Rogan in which the former Housing Convener explained to his junior colleague that he and his confederates were left with no alternative but comprehensive clearance procedures and that rehabilitation of properties was rarely a viable option:

> You know, Pat says… "People tend tae forget, despite, you know… Council houses were well built, you know, you look even at the structures an' what was spent, the illness an' death an' early children dying, an' the conditions that lived in these slums" he says, ye know? "Ye couldnie sit back." He says "At the time we needed housing. Folk didnie have toilets…" ye know? He says, "an' ye look at the infant mortality an' the health an' the disease." He says, "They had to come down!" He says. Where later on in life, I think a lot o' them could have, you know if, in terms of, later on modernising a lot o' the flats an' whatnot, but the flats could only be made… ye know, modernised, they couldnie be made intae what they wernie! (Personal Discussion, 2013)

Peter Gordon Smith, who had himself been subject to a clearance order from his home in the Canongate in 1969, agreed with the general decision to clear other areas:

> Well, it was seriously overcrowded, I mean the point is, the flats were over-populated, they were over-broken-up. There were too many families behind the stair doors. You know? If they'd thinned the population out, by re-housing some of them, they didn't have to move the entire population out. (Personal Discussion, 2014)

Although he was unclear how this 'thinning-out' of the population could be done amicably and fairly, other interviewees had clear ideas how this might have been achieved. Many still expressed a belief that the clearance of amenity-deficient property was inevitable but seriously questioned the Corporation's methodology.

There was a consensus among many of my Newhaven interviewees that the vast majority of the demolished housing stock should have been rehabilitated rather than demolished. The belief was oft-repeated that local residents should have been offered temporary accommodation nearby until the work was completed and they could then return to their homes. For any houses that were truly beyond salvation in this way it was generally believed that residents should have had first refusal of the nearest new-build property. No-one that I talked to appeared to be aware that this had in fact been the original intention of Basil Spence when he had produced his original master-plan for the renewal of the village, but that the Corporation's internal re-housing policies had prevented this from being fully implemented. Without knowing it, Cathy Lighterness effectively described Spence's actual unrealised plans for his award-winning housing in *Great Michael Rise*:

> Ye see before they actually pulled down the rest of Newhaven they built the houses in what's Great Michael Rise which was Fisherman's Park which was clear space and they built the houses. If they had wanted they could have done street by street in Newhaven and taken the people out and put them in there and then built newer houses and maybe put them back or put other people… Didn't do that!

So convinced was she of the injustice done to Newhaveners in this regard she returned to it again later in the interview:

CL: Because at Great Michael Rise, oh well, people were needing houses so you wernie getting put back in there. There were enough to do. To take the people street by street.

DJ: Were there enough?

CL: Yes! There were. For the amount of houses they've built in Great Michael Rise there wis enough to take a street, once they were ready, put that… an' ye still would ha' got people from Leith. Which would have… joined in, or melded in, to the community. Then ye would have… I mean it wis… that could ha' happened, street by street. (Personal Discussion, 2012)

Several interviewees offered very specific proposals as to how individual buildings should have been restored and upgraded. George Hackland's was a typical example:

> Along the street a little bit, gettin' along towards the school, these houses where ye had the outside stairs up, there were two house up there, they could ha' made one house up there an' the two below could ha' been made intae one house, quite easily. But they were just knocked doon.

Like several other Newhaveners I interviewed, he was of the opinion that "The village needed to be modernised one way or another," but he believed temporary local accommodation should have been provided for original residents while work was underway, as he believed this was done elsewhere in Edinburgh during another clearance scheme:

> Oh it was inevitable. It had to be modernised. But the method was a bit ruthless, o' just puttin' the auld folk out. If they'd started wi' modernisin' these other houses where two could be made intae one, if these people had been put out intae… as they did in latter years wi' this caravan scheme, an' got back in, we'd ha' still had a community. Caring for the auld folk! (Personal Discussion, 2012)

Frank Ferri was similarly fatalistic about the inevitability of the statutory clearance of large tracts of obsolete housing but less inclined to believe that residents could have been temporarily housed and allowed to return to their original homes or neighbourhoods:

FF: Oh, there was no option. No option. Anyway, it was a difficult thing to do to decant x-thousand people outside the city. I'm saying, an ideal situation was if they could have temporary decant, modernise, then put them back into the houses again.

DJ: And was that ever an option?

FF: No, it was… practically… from a practical point of view I don't think it would have worked. Where would you have temporary decant? Because it's not the case of just picking up a piece of wood or an inanimate object and moving it until such time as you've got space to put it back again. These are lives. These are kids who are going to school, you take them out the geography and put them somewhere else and they've got to be educated, so they go to a school in that area. They make friends in that area, they start shopping there. Then, by the time they, by the time they would have redeveloped Leith and moved these houses these kids are grown up and made friends, they might be reluctant to move back in sort of thing, you know? You've got to look at the big picture. So… it was bittersweet (Personal Discussion, 2012).

The significant issue of whether the majority of properties ought to have been rehabilitated rather than demolished was present in several interviews. Ronnie Lehany compared the streets in and around his childhood home to those that survive to this day following their restoration in the Grassmarket which he recalled was also "a slum" when he was a child, positing:

> They could have done the same wi' Arthur Street. I mean the buildings were solid, ken, they were built o' stone…

Despite the statutory availability of financial assistance towards the upgrading of amenities in residential properties since the earliest post-war Housing Acts, grants that gradually increased with successive pieces of legislation, it was evident the question of who should have fought most robustly for the rehabilitation of buildings was a complex one for several of my interviewees. Retired architect Adam Johnston, who had worked with the building firm *Crudens* in the 1960s, assisting in the design and construction of their multi-storey blocks across the country, laid the blame for this firmly on the shoulders of central government:

> I think… the slums were so bad - really - that the government made it easier to demolish and build new. This was what was wrong, instead of renovating. Of course later they decided that renovating was quite a good idea […] It was a case of: you were going to demolish everything and rebuild […] You see, I'm sure, I may be wrong, if these houses had been taken over - like they did in Glasgow - and renovated them, brought them up, knocked two into one if necessary to make bigger houses, people would have moved into them. But the whole financial government system, the Scottish Development Department, didn't encourage that. The principle was, knock them down and build new houses (Personal Discussion, 2013).

Johnston also had some sympathy for the private landlords who failed to maintain or upgrade their properties:

> Well, they were private landlords who, because of the taxation system, really I don't think got enough money to do repairs and they just… I am sure at one time they were treated, I may be wrong, as unearned income. And the tax on unearned income was higher than normal income, and it just became impossible for people to build houses and rent them (Personal Discussion, 2013).

Likewise, when I asked former Housing Correspondent for the *Evening News*, Hamish Coghill, if property owners might not be held more responsible for the conditions of their houses and the failure to seek grants to improve their internal amenities he suggested that they too were victims of the urban renewal process:

> The landlords wouldn't spend money on the property because what was the point anyway? They probably knew they were going to be knocked down anyway in due course […] Once solid houses have just been allowed to get the state where folks say "well it's just easier to demolish and build new houses" (Personal Discussion, 2017).

I asked George Hackland, who owned a fit house situated within a tenement containing other unfit properties, if any council officials or elected members had ever discussed the option with owner-occupiers like him of modernising and upgrading such buildings to contemporary standards. It was clear that none of the statutory improvement grants then available to home-owners were ever mentioned to him:

> Where would they have got the money from? Money was… Tight, ye know? Where would ye get the money from? Plus o' gettin' money, ye'd tae get plannin' permission. Which had tae go through the council (Personal Discussion, 2012)

Hamish Coghill, when I questioned whether any part of Edinburgh was needlessly demolished pointed to the destruction of the St James Square and the neighbouring streets leading down to Picardy Place which had experienced two decades of uncertainty and disinvestment by the time the Corporation got around to comprehensively clearing it by statutory powers in the late 1960s. Coghill was clear that the neighbourhood could have been saved had the political will been present:

> All of these houses could have been restored, physically, if there'd been an intent to do it, but they wanted to sweep them away for this big shopping centre at the east end of Princes Street as I said before, and the Scottish Office wanted to build a new St Andrews House (Personal Discussion, 2017).

But political voices of opposition to the scheme were apparently lacking and the district's destruction was assured. In the event of the clearance of the St James Square and Leith Street areas, resistance mainly came from the affected retailers who wished to secure a confirmed place in the new shopping centre. The emergence of resistance to clearance elsewhere was another theme that was touched upon in several interviews.

The politics of resistance to clearance

When Elspeth Wills arrived in the Grassmarket in the mid-1970s she was struck by just how much "The community was totally unafraid of councillors, but were really scared of officers." She recalled how locals would be on:

> First name terms with the councillors, tell them what they thought of them, but as soon as an official came on, it was a bit like a consultant, you know this hostility built up, but a reluctance to be confrontational.

So I asked her what she thought local people were afraid of:

> I think it was because they were an unknown quantity. I think, as we were saying, councillors… I think people were aware that councillors needed their support and there was this whole issue of patronage and "I'll see you right, with a council house!" (Personal Discussion, 2015)

This imbalance of power was one of the driving forces for Wills and her husband becoming founding members of a local housing association run by Grassmarket residents that would go onto purchase and rehabilitate multiple local properties and seek to provide homes specifically for those former local residents who had been forced to move to peripheral estates and other neighbourhoods in previous years.

When I asked Ian MacKay, whose family were cleared from their tenement home in Dumbiedykes Road in 1968, despite it still being classified as fit for habitation, if he recalled them being offered the opportunity to object, he responded, "Working class people would never have thought it was their place to object. We were just told." He added:

> My mum was unknown to the Corporation when she went for a council house when we were told of the demolition so she was offered really horrible places until she accepted Clerrie (Personal Communication, 2017).

Cathy Lighterness offered a similar observation on the dominant power-relationship that had been established by Edinburgh Corporation over the citizens it was in the process of clearing:

> In those days ye didnie fight city hall. I mean to be quite honest, we should have, cause I think we could have all still been there.

She implicitly acknowledged the emerging power relationship that clearance created that turned a cleared citizen into a local authority supplicant, ever-determined not to cause upset to the Corporation lest they be punished with less or no compensation and a poor or no offer of alternative accommodation:

> Ye were better off if ye didn't make any fuss. Cause if you made a fuss, they put ye at the back o' beyond […] When somebody from the Council tells ye ye can't have this an' ye can't have that, ye tend not tae fight because ye're told ye can't (Personal Discussion, 2012).

I asked her if she thought anyone received preferential treatment, perhaps if they were ever a member of a particular political party or organisation. She said she did not believe so, but other interviewees had recollections that offered a different perspective.

During an interview with long-term Grassmarket residents Frank Glancy and Frank Black the latter touched upon the "corruption" connected with the allocation of Corporation houses in the 1960s and 1970s to which his friend retorted "People

quite openly talked about it, you know? It wasn't even as if it was a secret." Glancy elaborated further:

> Well, if you knew sumbdy who know sumbdy who knew sumbdy, then you would get a house. But I wasnie in a position tae use anybody. But Councillors especially could get their friends, who'd voted a Councillor, a house. And some of them were living in the best of the houses, you know? (Personal discussion, 2015)

While another interviewee, Peter Gordon Smith, was reminded during the course of our interview by his daughter Justine that the family's political connections had helped secure a Corporation tenancy in a newly restored home in the Canongate Horse Close following the Corporation's CPO of the family's home further up the Royal Mile in 1969.

> JGS: Dad, I'm sorry to correct you, but I have some vague recollection that Mum went down and lobbied… Robin Cook and that's how we got the house in White Horse Close
>
> PGS: Your mum was heavily involved… Yes, that helped, that definitely helped. Oh that got us the house we got, that got us the house we got. Oh yes, Stuart Reeks [the council officer handling their case] would have happily moved us to Swanston Village.

Peter Gordon Smith then explained how heavily he and his family became involved in housing and party politics in the centre of Edinburgh.

> PGS: The thing was that suddenly now we were card-carrying members of the Labour Party, you see?
>
> DJ: And, did that help?
>
> PGS: Yes, well, it helped get him [Robin Cook] involved. I mean we were running up and down the Canongate stuffing leaflets through letterboxes for him. You know?

Emboldened by his new-found political connections Smith would shortly thereafter go on to help hundreds of Corporation tenants receive a significant reduction in their "cost-rents" for their older rehabilitated council "luxury dwellings." He recalled how he went about it:

> It was just after that we got involved and Robin Cook got pulled in again but we formed the White Horse Tenants and Residents Association. And we informed… encouraged the people in Abbey Hill and Abbey Hill Crescent to do the same. Then we amalgamated them. Robin went around persuading all the other cost-rent tenants in Swanston, Dean Village, etcetera,

> etcetera, Chessell's Court, Canongate, to all form their own associations. Then we merged the whole bloody lot of them! Then I was stuck up on a podium in the Council Chamber and I addressed the Edinburgh Council for about half an hour. And then they took a vote and handed the whole shooting match over to the Housing Department. (Personal Discussion, 2014)

Elsewhere in Edinburgh George Hackland reflected upon his own "luck" in not only securing a tenancy of a council house in his own name, which was against the existing rules on renting to single males, but also being compensated with the not inconsiderable sum of £1200 for his former home when many of his neighbours in nearby streets had received token amounts. He wondered aloud whether it might have been connected to his active participation in local politics:

> …Ah wis involved wi' the Progressive Association, ah wis goin' tae say politically, but we were a non-political association, ah knew more ae the ins an outs o' the political life than most people around me did, cause ma mother had been on the [Association] Committee before me, we'd been brought up bein' involved in local things, ye know? (Personal Discussion, 2012)

Edinburgh's Progressive Association of 'independent', conservative-leaning councillors ran the city affairs from the City Chambers for much of the first three-quarters of the 20th century, and he told me that he had even been asked on occasion to stand for elected office himself. So when the Corporation had sought possession of his tenement Hackland had naturally assumed the role of intermediary between his immediate neighbours and the Local Authority in the negotiations that followed:

> Well they people that were above me, the other houses with a bathroom that hae got tae move out, ah wis the go-between between them an' the council. Ah did a' the negotiatin' for them, tae make sure they got houses. (Personal Discussion, 2012)

When I asked if he was empowered to do this by his long-established connections with the Progressive Association he responded, "Well, ah don't know, it might ha' been," but equally he felt it may have been simply because he had "always been interested in community." He recognised that there was real opposition from his fellow villagers to being subjected to clearance procedures by the Corporation, but he condemned the apparent lack of structured resistance, a theme he wearily

recognised among his neighbours to the present day:

GH: Aye, there was a real fight. A lot o' people resisted bein' put out, an' the modernisation, although they didnie have bathrooms or their own toilets in the house an' a' that, they just didnie like the idea o' an outsider comin' an' tellin' them what to do. That's about the size o' it.
DJ: What sort of form did the resistance take? Was it…
GH: Well there was nothing organised about it. There wasnie any marches an' organised things ye see nowadays. An' unfortunately even today there's not enough people take an interest in what's goin' on locally, politics or parliament. A lot o' moanin', it takes them a' their time tae go an' vote! (Personal Discussion, 2012)

Frank Ferri, who was confronted in 1974 by a Corporation CPO placed upon his amenity-deficient tenement home in Annfield Street on the edge of Newhaven, did in fact organise considerable community opposition to the council's clearance procedures. Having been offered what he considered a "pittance of a value" on his home, Ferri described in some detail to me what followed:

> I had three children at the time, three young children, and I thought "Well, I don't want to be decanted or thrown to the four winds." You know? "…"To end up sent to Corstorphine or any of these places. I like this community and I have lived in Leith all my days, or within a striking distance of Leith." So I thought "what can we do about it?" So, using my admin and organisational skills, I decided to try and address the people in some way. So I managed to… There was a lot of people in my street. It was only the north side of the street that was coming down, the south side was staying up. And a lot of these, most of these people were indigenous Newhaveners and they were very apprehensive about being scattered to the four winds. So I said "Let's try to organise a committee of sorts."
>
> So, I held a meeting in the Fisherman's Hall. Well, prior to this, the locals, Newhaveners, held a meeting, but all it did was to air their grievances amongst themselves and concur that they were not happy, but nothing happened. So, I says "Let's have another meeting." So I says "Right. We've got to organise ourselves with some kind of protest and let the council know our disdain." So, they listened to me and because I worked in the council at the time I had access to photocopier machines and I had some skill at drawing up papers and what have you and posters and drafting letters, I came up with the name NAG, *Newhaven Action Group*. So we formed the committee, about ten of us, and I sent letters to the council. I lobbied Harold Wilson who was attending a meeting in Leith Town Hall, behind Leith library. I never saw him, but I left a letter there for him at the time, whether he got it or not I don't really know. And I wrote numerous letters to the Evening News […] And I got in touch with STV and the BBC, and they came down and I done a wee thing, down by the harbour.
>
> Then I really thought I hyped it up a bit by saying "Save our Village!" So I played on the history. I got a copy of the blue books, which I loaned to a councillor, and the bugger never gave me it back. It was a history of Newhaven. So I made myself familiar with the history of Newhaven so I could speak about it with some authority, you know? And I was milking the history of the village in that last… with sincerity, so eventually everybody that was being moved out their houses got a letter asking for their choice of accommodation. So I advised at a meeting, I says "Well I've been advised by people that 'don't relent!' You're given three

> choices, so I advise you all to put Newhaven as your first choice, second choice and third choice, and stick to your guns." Anyway, to cut a long story short, we said there that the council our brief. A) That they preserve those properties in Newhaven that could be preserved. B) That they build facsimiles of the Flemish design, that of those ones that are going to be knocked down, or partially knocked down. And C) That priority one is given to those who are… to occupy the new houses to take their place. We didn't deviate from that. And happy, as I say, we won all three points within two years…

But Ferri's advocacy did not extend to those former residents who "panicked and relented" and moved away from the village during earlier phases of comprehensive clearance in the preceding decade. He described how they "moaned like hell" at him looking for his help in securing tenancies in the new local housing being built. He was forced to tell them, "I can only deal with the people I'm dealing with, you know?" Reproaching them still further:

> Well I says to them: "Well look, nobody organised themselves in the sixties. This is why what's happened in the seventies. This is why we've accomplished what we have." I says: "You surrendered, yous went away, you cannie expect to come back. There's not enough houses!"

I questioned where his drive came from to lead such a public resistance movement:

> I was the kind of person who'd get up and do something about something. Rather than meekly surrendering. So I was in a very fortunate position, totally, largely due to myself self-educating myself and the trade union movement and being able to evolved through an administration and financial job over the years and learning all the time you glean a lot about how to organise things and write, you know, I like writing, I love writing, you know?

Given this second use of the word "surrender" I sought further clarification and asked him if he thought this was a fair assessment of those who had capitulated to the Corporation clearance orders since the war. He backtracked a little, but essentially still condemned their inability to work in concert to defeat the Corporation, before tacitly acknowledging that he might have had some advantages that those cleared in the 1950s and 1960s did not possess:

> Well surrender's maybe a bit strong. […] In these days moreso, if the councillor says something you never thought of fighting with it. No! The pen was written. They were all powerful. You didn't question them. Few people questioned them. You just said: "Well that's life, that's happened. The law has… the politicians have decided this is going to happen. I'm only a Pleb, what am I goanie to do about it?" They didn't realise that unitin' with a group o' people can make them quite strong. They only think they're an individual.

> Of course, to be fair, I had the ability to use the councillors' equipment sometimes […] As an individual I doubt if I'd a been able to make much impact, impression in what I did. I was able to use the council's photocopy machine, you know, this stuff. Their typewriters, their typists and what have you, and they'd draft letters for me and copy them and send them out. You know? (Personal Discussion, 2012)

I received by far the most detailed explanation of how political connections and experience could influence the clearance process from former Labour councillor David Brown in an interview in 2013. Brown's anti-clearance efforts on behalf of himself and his Newcraighall neighbours had been featured heavily in the 1972 BBC television programme *Current Account* mentioned in the previous chapter and I tracked him down still living in the same house whose address had been inadvertently revealed during the broadcast. He explained to me how he had initially been actively involved with the local tenants' association before he eventually stood for public office in 1969 on a platform that included the rebuilding of Newcraighall as an absolute priority. He described the scene he encountered within the Edinburgh Labour Party around that time:

> …a lot ae what happened as well, you see, during that period, was the Gordon Browns, the George Foulkeses, the Robin Cooks and whatnot, they came intae local government, right virtually from university, and cleared out a' the traditional local councillors… the working class, they just cleared them out, you see, they went along an' they knew how to organise a branch meetin'.

Despite socially identifying more closely with those older working-class councillors like Jack Kane and Pat Rogan, he disagreed with their approach to urban renewal when it came to his neighbourhood. Instead, Brown agreed with the emerging rehabilitation consensus being championed by his younger university-educated colleagues and most especially by the new Convener of Housing Robin Cook. His continuing challenge however was to direct their attention away from the renewal of the city-centre to the fringes of the town and support the spending of Corporation funds restoring and rebuilding projects elsewhere. He recounted how he secured allies within the council group and brought external pressure to bear to

persuade Cook to divert funds towards Newcraighall and maintain the right of the existing community to reside there after rehabilitation:

> One o' his early meetings, I think it'd be probably one of his first or second meetings was in the chair. Ah've… Ah was a member o' the housing committee at that time, you see. Anyway, wee Sandy Ross, who went on to become managing director of STV, Sandy, anyway Sandy was a wee rebel, he's on the committee. So, ah got folk up from Newcraighall, a deputation. We're goin' to catch the Labour group, not at the first or the early meetings o' the housin'… the Labour, we're goin to meet the Labour group, you see? So, Cook's getting' through it all, the agenda, the business whatnot an' Newcraighall has still not surfacing'. Oh, it's five tae two. The meetin' starts at two, ye see, so wee Sandy: "Fucking get intae him Sandy!" Sandy gets… an' we got a decision out ae Cook that we would actually proceed to get Newcraighall rebuilt at that Labour… just within two, three minutes before the meetin' is ready tae start! Right at the crucial time. An' the group put the handcuffs on him to do that an' it was from that we got things started, ye know, the process through the council to get Newcraighall underway.
>
> […] Well, what happens you see, is that process takes a while, you get it through, you get reports an' you'll probably get reports sayin', you know, tellin' the chairman there are other priorities. Anyway, we got that under way an' Jack Kane, who was one o' the local councillors as well, supported it, you see, which was good. Anyway, so that process, we got it underway. I'm tryin' to think o' the timescale. We got the problems o' how do we decant folk an' whatnot? Do we knock it all down in a oner? Clear them a' out? Well, ah was aware if you get intae the business o' sayin' "yes, we'll do this an' that, we'll knock the whole thing, but you'll a' have to be put out the now for the next two years…" Right away I said, "no danger!" If you do that, that allows them two years down the road, there could be another administration comes in, there'll be nothin' happenin' that'll be cancelled. So we insisted, whatever is goin' to be done, it's gotta be done in a phase. Half the village, new houses built, they come back, next crowd go out, you build, you see? So, that was the… I was fly enough in the early days to that. There was a lot o' that "Aye right, we'll knock it doon an'…"

Brown augmented the support of his colleagues with well-attended public meetings in the local social club that galvanised his public support base and by cultivating strong personal relationships with the key council officers in each Corporation department that held responsibilities for the redevelopment of the town. I asked him how he went about this latter action:

> DB: Oh aye, I used to go right to the department. I used to cultivate them as well. Ah run the Miner's Welfare as well, an' during that time, it had all been done up, an' had a' these big shows an' ah used tae invite some ae them down, their wives an' whatnot, tae… ye know…

DJ: Would they be wise to what you were doing or would they..?
DB: No, they'd think I was a naïve, inarticulate young man, ah'd just play the daftie.
DJ: And it worked?
DB: Oh it worked, dinnie worry (Personal Discussion, 2013).

By establishing an intimate personal relationship with council officials Brown got advance notice of the Corporation intention to clear Newcraighall in 1972 and was able to alert an ever-more sympathetic media and mobilise local opposition to the evictions. Such informal patronage networks were seen by many interviewees as harmless and simply typical of the times, but many others saw them as symptomatic of a wider undercurrent of venality that debased civic society in the capital in the mid-20th century.

Recollections of corruption and dishonesty in civic Edinburgh

In a newspaper account of the 1961 election race for the Holyrood Council Ward the Communist Party candidate Jack Ashton, who was fighting Pat Rogan for the seat, was quoted as describing Edinburgh Corporation's "housing record as lamentable" before claiming, "It is like Chicago in the old days - everything is parcelled out to their friends" (*Evening Dispatch,* 18/04/1961). Similar explicit statements or sometimes implicit insinuations about corruption and duplicitous self-interest were peppered throughout my interviews and have become a common trope among the comments from contributors to Edinburgh reminiscence social media sites such as *Lost Edinburgh*.

Like a great many other elderly Edinburgh residents I have spoken to over many years, as both a publican and researcher, George Hackland looked-back fondly on the days when the local Progressives Association held a controlling share of councillors in the City Chambers. He was convinced that they alone kept the "politics out o' local council work" in the capital claiming:

> In the days when it wis run by the Progressives […] It wis run for the good o' the community. Where now it seems tae be just either for their own political prestige or the party, an' once

> ye get involved wi’ a political party as a candidate, you’ve got tae toe the line cause they’re payin’ a’ yer expenses.

When I raised the rumours of serious conflicts of interest in the dealings of leading Progressive councillor, one-time Provost and house-building magnate Sir James Miller, asking him if believed Miller was driven by idealism or business interest or both, he was fairly matter-of-fact in his reply:

> It was started mebbe as idealism, but it wis purely business afterwards […] I think when they get intae politics ye cannie beat the system so ye become corrupt. Ye can be the best Christian in the world, an go intae politics an’ yer way o’ life is corrupted cause ye cannie beat the system (Personal Discussion, 2012).

But he would not condemn Miller or any other business-person for seeking a reasonable return on any investments made, so long as any profits were not too excessive. When I questioned how the wider electorate might feel about that he explained his general philosophy that “ye get in life what ye deserve” adding if the public did not like it they could always make their displeasure known at the ballot box.

Adam Johnston had likewise experienced the wistful longing of several of his contemporaries for the neutral governance of the Progressives:

> I was speaking with friends the other night and they were talking about, saying we need to get the Council back to the old days where men did it for the good of the city and everything, when we had Sir James Miller. And I went, “Hold it!” I said I can remember there was a problem with some flats which he had built, because they had been jerry-built, they were only for the Council. And he got the contract, he's got most of the contracts that were going. So I said they were in it for something. They maybe didn't get the expenses they get now but they had different things going their way. They had fingers in the pie, so if they were in business, it came round their way.

Working for Crudens, whose core business was house-building projects for local authorities right across the UK, left Johnston under no illusions as to how contracts were secured in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

> The Scottish housing architects in Scottish local authorities were being pushed to get all these things done and of course the best thing to do then was to get “friendly”, shall we

> say, at the Arts Club in Brunton Square, with the City Architect and maybe some o' the councillors.

He recounted in some detail the naked corruption he witnessed in towns like Dundee and Newcastle, describing the northern English town as "the most corrupt place I have ever come across in all my life" due to the nefarious activities of the local worthy T. Dan Smith who would set the gold standard for municipal kleptocracy in Britain in the mid to late 20th century. Johnston recalled "poorly paid" local councillors being taken onto the Crudens pay roll in various cities and the lengths his colleagues would go to in order to win those all-important contracts:

> One chap we had, he was an ex-journalist, an absolute rogue. He was the public relations guy. He used to meet the councillors in the bar and he would come into the office and he'd [shout]: "Bloody Hell! I was through at Whitburn and bloody Wimpey, they've given that guy a car an' I only had a gold watch to give him!" It was open! It was as open as that.

"Public Relations" became the euphemism of choice for open bribery. Business competitors' tender bids could be discovered in advance of an architectural competition closing date for the price of a few racing pigeons and a settled bar bill and Johnston was often left shocked by the conspicuous and flagrant immorality he witnessed:

> I mean I've been to council meetings where I just had to sit tight, I'm an honest sort of Christian chap, but my boss used to say to me: "You shut up Adam! If they ask a technical question answer it, let me do the PR, you do the architect an' I'll do the PR." You were faced wi' these nine councillors who were miners and pigeon-fanciers an' all they were wanting was to get away to the pub (Personal Discussion, 2013).

When I asked retired local journalist Hamish Coghill for his recollections on this aspect Edinburgh politics, he immediately recalled the Edinburgh councillor that Crudens employed "that represented their interests" in the City Chambers. While he was convinced that many councillors were above reproach, such as Pat Rogan, who he regarded as "very straight" and a "true socialist," he could also point to several other councillors with particular business interests in quantity surveying, demolition or the building trade who never let the morality of a conflict of interest stand in the way of securing a Corporation contract. As the *Evening News* housing

correspondent, Coghill told me how he often found himself invited along on site visits with groups of councillors and council officials to view various building firms' latest system-built, mass production houses. These occasions mixed business with pleasure:

> Quite often there was a lot of entertaining, a lot of drink floating around. If you went on the housing visit, whenever you stopped off, you went into a new house and there just happened to be a bar in the corner of the room sort of thing, and then you went back on the bus and went to the next one and then there was a bar in the corner of a wee room! (Personal Discussion, 2017)

At the end of such visits the members of the Housing Committee would choose a building system or firm to undertake the construction of homes in a new estate or a building project in a cleared neighbourhood and the invited journalists would write-up a positive review of their favourite show-home in their newspapers. A cynic might suggest that the cumulative effects of excessive entertainment might unduly sway either group into making the wrong assessment and the episode certainly illustrates how rumours of corrupt practices could spread.

Retired councillor David Brown also unintentionally offered me further examples of how people might get the impression of wrong-doing in the activities of his former colleagues or organisations with a stake in the redevelopment of Edinburgh. He recounted the story of how Pat Rogan had secured a job for fellow councillor Donald Renton with Sir James Miller's building firm where Rogan had also once been briefly employed himself in his early days after being elected. Brown described how both men came under fire as a result, but was convinced there was nothing untoward in the appointment, colourfully describing how "Donald wouldn't tolerate any fuckin' corruption, ah ken. He wouldn't have it!" This defence would perhaps be more convincing if Renton had not so publicly lambasted those tenants living in prefabs built on Miller's land who were resisting the redevelopment of their homes by Corporation and Miller's firm in the early 1960s (see page 94). Brown also mentioned, when viewing my photographs of the demolished St James Square and Leith Street neighbourhood, the significant financial benefit the Coal Board Pension

Fund had made from this area's destruction:

> DB: We made a lot ae money out o' that. Lewis's an a' that, an' the Scottish Office, we, the owners, were the Coal Board Pension Fund, made a fortune. Cause that was a' built an' the council got a revenue.
> DJ: So, how did the Coal Board Pension Fund get…
> DB: Well they put the dough up to do the development an' it would make money as well.
> DJ: So they go into partnership with the commercial…
> DB: Aye, whoever it was, that's right, an' we were the landowners an' we got money for years an' years out ae that (Personal Discussion, 2013)

The intimate involvement of a trade union pension fund in a commercial enterprise that extensively benefited from the destruction of an urban community and the eviction of its resident population evidently gave no cause for moral concern to Brown, but to others it must assuredly raise exactly the same uneasiness felt by critics of any builder-councillor who benefited from the same process.

Clearance in Edinburgh in retrospect

When asked if the clearance of the neighbourhoods and communities they had known so intimately during their earlier lives had brought an overall positive or negative benefit to their families a significant number of my interviewees gave answers indicating the former. Many of those I spoke to had been raising young families in the 1960s and the massive Corporation house-building drive on fringes of the city presented an unmissable opportunity to escape cramped and often dilapidated properties. Willie Flucker explained:

> There was a lot of it to do with in, most of our cases, children, and having more room for children. So ye had tae move. Well, ye couldnie a' move intae a But 'n' Ben. So ye had tae get somewhere wi' a couple o' bedrooms, or mebbe three bedrooms an move in (Personal Discussion, 2012).

Kate Blackburn, received a compulsory purchase order on her Leith flat in 1975, she described how the "loss of the community feeling" was a concern to her but on balance:

> We were quite happy to move as we had two very young children and were moving to a lovely three bedroom centrally heated council house in a nice part of Wester Hailes. Our little flat in Spey Terrace was only one bedroom, a toilet and a small living room/kitchen which was all we could afford at the time […] It was a cosy wee street, but quite cramped conditions to live in. We were happy there but never regretted moving. (Personal Communication, 2017).

The extra space and additional amenities provided by their new houses seemed to provide many of my informants with all the justification they needed to satisfy any residual discontent about breaking their long-term association with their former neighbourhoods. Jock Robb's animated account of his parents' voluntarily inter-War move from their long-held family home in Newhaven to a new house in Wardieburn, containing two bedrooms, a separate kitchen and living room and, for the first time in their lives, an indoor plumbed-in bath was typical of many stories I heard (Personal Discussion, 2012). Similarly, Bill Prentice, whose family had also moved in before the Second World War, described his family's elation on arriving at their new home in Niddrie:

> We suddenly had this wonderful house. We had a bathroom. We had a bathroom! And we had, we didnie call it a kitchen, we had a scullery. My God, oh, this was marvellous, electric light, everything! (Personal Discussion, 2012)

These tales of dry, warm, bright new homes stacked with modern conveniences were then shared with siblings, wider family members and friends who were still resident in the old neighbourhoods and who would keenly embrace the opportunity of a similar home when the offer came during the post-war clearances, as recalled by Ronnie Lehany when he described his family's desire to move from their cramped tenement home in Prospect Bank in the 1950s:

> Oh, they all wanted tae move oot. They all wanted modern hooses. As I say, I'm a kid, so it didnie bother tae me, I wis happy. An' as ye got older ye obviously wernie happy. You seen… you went tae work an' the person at yer work had electric lights, that disnae sound… that sounds silly talkin' like that. An' they could run hot water an' have a bath, ye couldnae do that there. I mean the only bath ye could have wis a tin bath it wis in the middle o' the livin' room. Everybody sort ae went in the bath, an' ye couldnae heat a' the water up so everbody, the whole lot o' ye got washed in the one bath. That's true. Ken, it wis a zinc bath (Personal Discussion, 2012).

I asked Hamish Coghill what was the general feeling he picked up as a journalist covering Edinburgh Corporation's housing activities throughout this period, I wondered if he thought that the majority of people subjected to clearance orders were happy to be moved:

> I think most folk accepted that they were going to go to a better house, they were going to go to a house with a proper bathroom, hot water, all that sort of thing. But it meant a major upheaval, because apart from anything else if you worked locally and you were suddenly decanted to Gracemount or something, and you've got all those problems as well […] You'd always find people who didn't want to go but equally other folk were quite happy to move (Personal Discussion, 2017)

Coghill recognised that the clearance came with the negative baggage of social and geographic dislocation but, like many other interviewees, when he weighed this against the improved living conditions, it felt like a pragmatic and acceptable compromise.

But despite the stated satisfaction with this trade-off that I heard reiterated time and again by so many individuals I did detect an underlying sense of unease in several discussions about those, particularly elderly, family members and neighbours who were left behind to fend for themselves as the bulldozers crept ever closer and re-housing options became increasingly limited. Kate Blackburn observed the place-attachment felt by many of her older neighbours in Spey Street:

> Probably as a young family we didn`t feel the loss as much as some of the older folks, but at the time the move was perfect for us, giving us a new start with every modern convenience (Personal Communication, 2017)

While Ian Smith described a commonly-held view that the eldest Newhaveners forcefully displaced from their familiar surroundings did not long survive:

> They died off very quick when they were moved in their late life, ye know? Away from an environment… where they were put in that – as they ca'd it – "The Ponderosa." It wasnie a very… that was a concrete jungle (Personal Discussion, 2012).

Bill Ferguson, whose family had moved out in 1962 from the Buccleuch Street tenement block his grandfather had purchased in 1931 leaving his grandmother behind in her own flat, recalled her unhappiness and trauma when the block was compulsory purchased in 1966, she too did not long survive her removal:

> No, I'm sorry I canny give you anymore detail of how the Corporation went about informing folks, but I can tell you my Gran was not best pleased not only with the offer, but she was not offered any alternate accommodation. Now at 81, how do you think she felt? She was lost, bewildered by it all, she was very upset to lose her family home where she had brought up her family, 3 boys and a girl. It held many memories, my Gran had great pride, and even although there was no inside bath, she did have an inside loo. She ended up living with her middle son, my Uncle Archie down in Pilton. She died at 84 (Personal Communication, 2017).

Anne Henderson, whose mother had continued to live on in the Leith tenement flat in which she had raised her family long into her widowhood despite its lack of basic amenities, recalled during the course of our discussion that:

> They were going to rehouse Mum, but she died just before. In fact she'd been, she was told there was a house for her in, down at Craigentinny. So they were going to be starting to move another load of people out and presumably would sell off the property, make them into one house […] But she didn't want to move latterly. No, latterly she wanted, I think because she was just, actually she was only my age when she died when I think about it. It seemed a lot older then. I think she just felt secure where she was. And at that time she knew the lady next door so, but then she'd actually bought her house. Mum wouldn't buy it. I mean my sister I think offered to buy it but she said "No, it's too late now." She was just happy to continue the way she had, but she didn't want to move at that stage (Personal Discussion, 2013).

But not all of those that I interviewed had made their peace with Edinburgh Corporation's post-war clearance activities. For Cathy Lighterness, whose testimony I have liberally quoted above, the intervening decades had clearly not dimmed her ire as she became visibly angered while relaying the story of Newhaven's clearance to me in 2012. More than anyone else I met during my research, she presented a defiant case that private household living arrangements, entered into voluntarily, were nobody's affair but the householders themselves. If the occupants of a house decided that small children could share a bed or accepted the inconvenience of a tin bath or an outside toilet then that was their civil right to do so and the state should have had no jurisdiction in the matter. For other respondents the question of

insufficient compensation, particularly if their former home was still standing after being rehabilitated, still vexed them many years later. Like Duncan McKendrick, whose family had always intended to frame the letter telling them of the £1 they were given in 1965 as compensation for their compulsory purchased home in West Arthur Street (Personal Communication, 2017). Or Chris Roxburgh, whose family home in Drummond Street was compulsory purchased in 1971, who described how he “grew up with the consequences” of the “slap in the face” compensation offer which “barely cleared the mortgage” and would affect his parents’ living arrangements for the rest of their lives:

> My parents had previously rented a small flat nearby in the Dumbiedykes. Most of their families lived in the area. When the Dumbiedykes were demolished their family was growing and they had been saving for a deposit to purchase, so they bought the flat at Roxburgh terrace. The CPO was a blow to my parents. The offer was low, so they never purchased another home at the time, instead opting to move into council housing. The manner in which their property was taken from them dissuaded them from ever purchasing a house again (Personal Communication, 2017).

And this residual legacy of clearance that affected the later behaviour of family members or former neighbours would likewise feature in numerous accounts. Like Heather Thomson’s, whose family of five lived in two rooms with an outside toilet in Nicholson Street when they were issued with a clearance notice in 1966 or 1967. She recounted how they had refused to “move until threatened that they would be responsible for demolition costs.” Despite the “inside loo, bathroom, separate kitchen and front and back garden” in their new home, her “Mum was never truly happy with the move” because she “missed the old place, the Southside and the people… her people.” Her mother’s grief for her lost home was further exacerbated by the fact it lay empty for around thirty years after she was forced out of it before the inside was demolished and a new interior was fitted to the external façade. Something she was forced to see every single day as she passed by on the bus taking her to and from her workplace (Personal Communication, 2017). A similar tale of folks pining for the lost familiarity of their old neighbourhoods was relayed to me by Peter Gordon Smith:

> It came to my notice, just by going up and down the street. Every Saturday you would find small clumps of people standing chatting, you know, from, you know, round about Niddrie Street, Blackfriars Street right down to the top of the Canongate. These were all people who had travelled in to the High Street, the Canongate to do their shopping on a Saturday just so they could see a friendly face. Some of them were from Niddrie, some of them from Craighall, some of them from, from you know, what-do-you call it, Niddrie… some of them were from Pilton and West Granton and places like that, you know, but they all came from the outer schemes, from Wester Hailes, they'd been scattered to the four winds, to various… they were coming back to their old stamping ground just so they could run into a friendly face.

This last recollection also brought to mind an episode relayed in the booklet *Forgotten South Side,* in which local resident David Black recounted the "poignant" memory "…of a group of some half dozen of old people standing together in a derelict Charles Street" and described "…the helpless and unbelieving expressions on their faces as they contemplated the destruction of their homes…" (c.1974: 24). Like Peter Gordon Smith recalling the returning nostalgic residents "to their old stamping grounds" in the Canongate it is not difficult to speculate that the unhappy vision evocatively described by Black would have been long retained by anyone who witnessed it.

Enforced word limits dictate that this chapter could only ever provide a narrow representative sample of the numerous lengthy conversations I had with many diverse individuals about life and clearance in Edinburgh's "slum" neighbourhoods in the latter half of the 20th century. I found the extraction and collation of these illustrative snippets to be one of the most challenging aspects of this entire research project, agonising for many hours over what material to include and, just as significantly, exclude. With every disregarded recollection I was plagued with the unhappy feeling that I was doing a terrible disservice to many of my interviewees who had so generously shared these personal stories. This is not a sensation I had ever experienced in previous research projects as I happily dismissed screeds of superfluous historic research notes drawn from more traditional documentary sources. I had made friends with the providers of these oral sources, sharing and trading with them personal episodes that provoked an array of emotional responses from laughter and joy, to anger to sadness. Jane Nadel-Klein, in

her ethnographic examination of the fishing villages of north east Scotland, says of her informants' choice of which memories they selected to share with her that:

> These bits and pieces are not randomly chosen, but provide evidence of a strategy of negotiation in the face of long-term social stigma and economic struggle (2003, 2).

I certainly found this to be the case with several of my interviewees who were evidently still navigating a challenging mental pathway through a sometimes difficult and sensitive period in their lives. Each and every anecdote had provided me with a unique insight that furthered my personal understanding of the era and the subject matter, but the vast bulk of scenes from each individual's life would ultimately end up on my academic 'cutting room floor.' Even those episodes that I eventually selected to challenge traditional secondary written accounts of Edinburgh and draw "attention to the complexity of urban life" (Rodger and Herbert, 2007: 7) in its so-called slum districts, proved to be problematic. I at last understood what J.S. De Hart meant when she cautioned researchers seeking to use oral testimony to rewrite near contemporary history:

> As we piece together bits of evidence into a coherent and meaningful history, our experience as oral historians can make us more self-conscious about our own act of historical construction (De Hart,1993: 595).

As I transcribed the many hours of interviews I had collected, in preparation for their eventual deposit in the School of Scottish Studies Archive along with the recordings themselves, and read over the transcripts of the online conversations I had with individuals now living as far away as Australia, it became apparent that many of my interviewees were the actual model intended beneficiaries of post-war urban renewal activities. They were the very people whose housing needs had actually inspired Pat Rogan and his colleagues to pursue such radical slum clearance plans from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s; individuals who had young families, or were children themselves, when they were cleared. Or people who had not long moved into a clearance area and had yet to develop any lasting ties to their neighbourhood when the statutory notices arrived and the opportunity arose to

move into a Corporation home. I had also spoken to many individuals who had possessed sufficient political connections or awareness of the statutory processes to secure positive outcomes for themselves, both in compensation and eventual rehoming, and some who had even played an active role in promoting the clearances. All had provided me with vitally important auto-biographical testimony that narrated the always remarkable lived experience of dozens of Edinburgh citizens, many of whom had simply attempted to create better opportunities for themselves and their loved ones or for their fellow Edinburgh citizens. But, with very few exceptions, I had failed to make contact with the individuals my primary documentary research had revealed were the most vocal opponents of the clearance procedures. The elderly residents, like Mrs M. Pringle who had written two melancholic letters to the Edinburgh Town Clerk in June and October of 1967 begging for further information about her “compulsory removal” and politely asking “Why must I vacate the house against my will..?” (Edinburgh City Archives, HO/249/001). Or Edinburgh’s ethnic minority residents, like the Pandit family or Mr Szaszkiwicz discussed in Chapter 4, whose lack of British citizenship denied them a tenancy of a Corporation home that their neighbours could access. Or indeed the many, many cleared business owners, like the Crolla family who operated an ice cream parlour and general store in Newhaven for two generations whose long and valiant campaign to stay in their premises is charted over several thick files in the City Archive. The passage of years has ensured that many of the very people I needed to talk to the most were simply no longer around, which left me with a large quantity of testimony either weighted in favour of, or indifferent to, the act of clearance. An undoubted challenge to all ethnographers who have no desire to contradict or denigrate the individual perspectives offered by the living sources with whom they have often struck up a friendly relationship. But oral memories, although “invaluable fragments of evidence,” still require of us as historians to follow “the normal conventions of cross-verification and corroboration” (Johnston & McIvor, 2001: 60). Or as De Hart put it, it is our duty to apply the same standards

of critical interrogation to both written *and* oral sources, to "privilege" neither and, where necessary, check "one against the other" (1994: 594).

But treating written and oral sources the same is no easy task. I still shudder at my spectacular naivety when, not long after I joined the *School of Scottish Studies* at Edinburgh University, I asked historian Wendy Ugolini, just after an oral history workshop about her ethnographic research on Edinburgh's Italian community's wartime experience, why she had not simply asked her elderly interviewees outright whether they had ever been Fascists. Finally faced by a similar circumstance myself, I at last understood exactly why oral historians often struggle to robustly interrogate their living sources with the same objective rigour that a documentary historian will cross-examine a material or literary artefact. Simple human empathy and compassion prevented me from ever asking several individuals if they believed that their personal political connections offered them unfair advantages during the clearance processes that were unavailable to their neighbours or if they would like to consider recent academic research that suggests intense stress can indeed kill, and that abandoning an elderly relative to deal with the emotional upheaval of clearance may well have contributed to their early deaths. Like Kathryn Anderson, my approach to interviewing an elderly stranger was quite naturally "…bound to some extent by the conventions of social discourse" (Anderson & Jack, 1991: 181). I was troubled enough when one interviewee had called me back to ask not to be included in the project after revealing too much when we spoke the day before. I am certainly not equipped with the skills of a psycho-therapist that might be required to resolve any retained historic emotional issues and had absolutely no desire to be the cause of new ones. Whenever possible, I would find a way to ask the "hard questions that may cause discomfort" as Shopes suggests (2002: 597) but during many interview situations, I opted to leave certain matters alone and allow the interviewee to maintain their own truth about these events without being unfairly taxed by a complete stranger's novel academic theories or archival discoveries.

In a not entirely dissimilar experience to oral historian Ann Day, who had initially embarked upon an oral history project she believed would recover memories of dislocation among islanders who had been forced to leave their homes in Tristan da Cunha in 1961 but instead encountered resistance to share recollections and community narratives that were "constructed along a generational continuum" (2008), I too had encountered a powerful example of a "collective memory" that would be difficult, if not impossible, to deconstruct in an interview situation. First identified by French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in the 1920s (1992), this functionalist conceptualisation of group memory retention has drawn renewed interest from social historians since the 1970s (Apfelbaum, 2010) as they increasingly focused "…upon the ways in which individual recollections fit (often unconscious) cultural scripts" (Green, 2004: 36). In my own research, it was clear from my fieldwork that a large proportion of my informants appear rarely, if at all, to have questioned the collective narrative on slum clearance activity in Edinburgh, mostly accepting an agreed account that clearance, while regrettable to a point, was unavoidable and that in comparison with other cities, Edinburgh had not suffered too greatly. In my final chapter I shall discuss this continuing act of civic amnesia as I endeavour to offer some final conclusions about the varied written and oral sources I have recovered and evaluate what fresh insights they offer about the social legacy of post-war urban renewal in the capital.

Chapter 6 – Concluding reflections on clearance, domicide and civic amnesia in Edinburgh

> Oh! they're pullin' doon the buildin' next tae oors,
> An they're sendin us tae green belts trees an' flooers
> But we do not want tae go, an' we daily tell them so,
> While they're pullin' doon the buildin' next tae oors…

A version of this evocative and lively chorus is repeated in the middle of a continually looping film that greets visitors to an exhibit about Scottish urban renewal in the latter 20th century on the sixth floor of the *Museum of Scotland* in Edinburgh's Chambers Street. It is taken from Scottish musician Adam McNaughton's clearance protest song *They're Pullin' Doon the Buildin' Next Tae Oors*, about a family's efforts to resist being evicted from their Glasgow tenement after the local "mansion-dwellin' Corporation bums" order them "tae quit" and move out to a housing scheme on the rural fringe of the city where all is "new an' neat" (McNaughton: 2000). The song plays after a brief synopsis of the hard life endured by the residents of Scotland's urban slums, where a disembodied voice describes how "no one had much but it was all polished and neat and tidy" but "'Up oor close' everyone knew one another, it was friendly it was safe" to accompany archive footage of insanitary, overcrowded and filthy living condition. The narrator applauds the notion of resistance and determination to hold onto the past but warns viewers not to "get too sentimental" before offering snippets of recorded testimony from similarly disembodied contemporary voices decrying the conditions they were being forced to live in and their determination to move. The film swiftly moves on to cover the Modernist planners' and architects' idealised visions for life in high rise developments, with further stock footage, before concluding with additional testimony illustrating the ultimate failings of these optimistic schemes. Departing visitors from the *Scotland: A Changing Nation* gallery would be forgiven for believing that Scottish urban renewal activities barely left their mark outside Glasgow, where viewers are informed 750,000 residents were relocated from the city centre to its fringes and beyond. No clue whatsoever is offered that might lead

even the most attentive viewer to suspect that such activities had troubled the Scottish capital. Or that the very building in which they now stood watching this film was built upon a site cleared during this period of its many inhabitants, their homes, shops and other businesses, and left abandoned as an empty and problematic gap site for decades due to a lack of monetary and political capital to secure the construction of a museum extension. Unintentionally, the film has become a potent symbol of the Scottish capital's civic amnesia about its own clearance and domicidal activities.

I will readily admit that with a personal background immersed in the tales and material legacy of the Highland Clearances, like Porteous and Smith, my instinctive "bias is for the victims of domicide" (2001: 22). I was regularly shocked during my early desk-based research by the de-humanising euphemisms that leapt from the pages of both primary and secondary literature intended to disguise and soften the impact of the forced dislocation of hundreds of thousands of individuals and the destruction of their homes. It seemed astounding to me that there was so little personal testimony available that specifically addressed the qualitative experience of those who had been subjected to statutory state-sponsored clearance and the long-term outcomes of their eviction and rehousing in their own voices. So, when I began my search for former residents of Edinburgh's cleared neighbourhoods to interview I have no doubt that I hoped I would locate some individuals who might express a similar righteous fury to that of Newcraighall denizen Jean Easton when she spoke to Raeburn Mackie for his 1972 report on urban clearance procedures on BBC television's *Current Account* programme. She certainly did not mince her words as she responded on camera to the arrival of the statutory clearance notices from the Corporation that signalled her imminent eviction:

> We'll just stay here until we get bunged oot! They'll hae tae come wi the wha de ye ca them? The bulldozers an shift us! Ah think it's a shame, there as many old folk lived here a' their days an they're gonna shift them, they ken a' the folks that's aboot here an it's a shame tae shift them fae it! If the Corporation wis anxious, they're wantin tae build hooses,

> they're lookin for land, well there's plenty up there (points to right), they could get a block built, put folk in it an' then knock another yin doon. This is solid enough grund. They're a' goin on aboot their boring, a lot o' damned nonsense! For tae put folk off. They must think we're mugs! No, no, let us stay where we are! (Jean Easton, 1972: https://youtu.be/PLH9jw0RAN4).

But, in fact, only a small minority of my interviewees proved to harbour such passionate opposition to clearance several decades after the last urban renewal related CPO was issued, with the vast majority instead articulating an almost fatalistic acceptance of the whole process that they had either witnessed or experienced. A general feeling that "it had to be done" and it was all for the "greater good" of the city permeates many interviews. George Hackland's bittersweet reflection that the processes of urban renewal had provided "Better houses but there's no Community" sums up the feelings of several interviewees who shared their stories with me (Personal discussion, 2012). While the wry observation of Winifred Sillito, who once lived on the south side of George Square and had played a considerable role in the early conservation efforts to save the square from demolition by the University in the late-1950s before witnessing its partial destruction (see Figure 16) and the eventual loss of her own, by then, former home, was very typical of a stoic attitude that I encountered time and again:

> You don't go forward, you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs, if you're going to change things then other things get broken (Winifred Sillito, Personal Discussion, 2012)

So why does the now confirmed compulsory domicide of over sixteen thousand homes, a large proportion of which were deemed "fit", and the eviction and dispersal of over thirty five thousand of their fellow citizens fail to provoke more outrage? The answer lies partly in the selective amnesia about this topic that the city has developed and still actively propagates to this day. As outlined in Chapter 1, clearance activities have received scant attention in the secondary literature relating to Edinburgh in the third quarter of the 20th century. Readers will search in vain for an in-depth account of post-war urban renewal in the city, that provides an accurate list of cleared streets, estimates of the cleared inhabitants or

(*Figure 16 – Photograph taken by Winifred Sillito during the demolition of the houses on the south-east corner of George Square from a window in her home on the south side of the square - http://www.sillittopages.co.uk/geosqdown4.jpg)*

an analysis of the effects this domicide and dislocation had upon them. This has had an inevitable effect upon the portrayal of this era by the town's major civic institutions , who have effectively disregard these events as well. Edinburgh City Council's Planning Department recently co-curated with the *Royal Town Planning Institute* an exhibition recounting the last "100 years of planning in the city" that

toured various prominent public venues around the city for almost year (a press release can be found here: https://tinyurl.com/y7qoswrn)**.** A single sentence in a narrative box explaining “Transport” planning in the city referenced the implementation in the 1960s of the “post-war planning visions” which resulted in “…demolition and the removal to peripheral estates” of an unspecified number of the town’s population and “blighted swathes of the city and destroyed communities.” Another box covering the topic of “Housing” made passing reference to various slum clearance schemes that took place across the town in the 1950s and 1960s. There was no hint given in either brief account as to the actual numbers cleared or of any negative outcomes experienced beyond the physical loss of these individual neighbourhoods. So, like the permanent exhibit on Scottish urban renewal on the sixth floor of the *Museum of Scotland*, visitors could be forgiven for leaving this touring exhibition thinking that no great rupture to the city’s fabric occurred over the century in question. Similarly, the University of Edinburgh recently produced a slim booklet in conjunction with *Edinburgh World Heritage* called *The University of Edinburgh Heritage Trail* (digital edition can be found here: https://tinyurl.com/y8qfnh86)**.** While guiding visitors around the best architectural heritage sites still standing in the University’s central precincts, absolutely no acknowledgement is given within its pages of the extensive demolitions of 18th and 19th century buildings that were perpetrated by the University in George Square and its adjacent streets to facilitate its post-war expansion plans. Destructive activities that created extensive gap sites after these tenements and businesses were torn down which, in many cases, lay empty and unadorned by replacement buildings for decades afterwards, as the University’s ambitious building plans fell through in the financial crises of the 1970s.

When I viewed both of these acts of commemoration by two of Edinburgh’s most significant civic institutions the gloomy warning offered to me by the City Archivist at the very beginning of my research, that it was in no-one’s interest to recall the urban clearances of the mid-20th century, came rushing to my mind. As

Cutcher, Dale and Tyler persuasively argue, the act of commemoration itself is an integral component of the "politics of recognition" that "…is embedded within power relations and struggles" (2017: 2). While I would not go so far as to suggest that deliberate attempts are being made to 'murder' the memory of these vanished places, an action defined as "memoricide" by Porteous and Smith (2001: 198-200), it is fair to say that, until comparatively recently, there has been little or no determined effort made to keep the memory of these specific streets and buildings alive either. The dominant message to Edinburgh residents, repeatedly reinforced since the 1960s by commentators, authors, civic institutions and even the local conservation and amenity societies, is that Edinburgh's 'suffering' with regards to urban clearance was minimal in comparison to elsewhere, that the properties cleared were simply beyond redemption and that their destruction, however temporarily painful, was fully justified both in the long-term benefits to the city and to the evicted residents themselves. It has been an effective and powerful piece of subjective propaganda that has denied those mainly working-class Edinburgh citizens subjected to clearance the space and opportunity to grieve for their lost homes or neighbourhoods. It follows the long-established pattern of self-image manipulation in the town, recently explored by Madgin and Rodger, that firmly favours "…the historic and picturesque" within which context "…the myth of Edinburgh as a non-industrial city was invented and nurtured" (2013: 512).

Negative and contradictory opinions have been muted as a consequence of repeated comparison with other towns and cities that endured far greater losses to urban renewal or the long-voiced opinions of academics and politicians insisting with unwavering certainty that your former home or neighbourhood could not have been or simply was not worth the effort of being restored. Voicing opposition to these dominant views could be interpreted as historic myopia or an act of self-indulgence and could make a story-teller appear uneducated or uninformed. The established grand narrative on clearance also undoubtedly offers relief to anyone who may still harbour any residual feelings of guilt about leaving behind elderly

friends or relatives to fend for themselves as they took up the Corporation offer of a new home for them and their family out in the "green belt" surrounded by "trees an' flooers." Such feelings as these were very likely contributing factors to the stoicism or dissonance that I encountered during many of my interviews with witnesses of Edinburgh's clearance activities and are perfectly understandable in the circumstances. As Anna Green observed: "Composing a past we can live with, and that gives us a sense of coherent identity, involves actively managing the memories of traumatic or painful experiences" (2004: 40). These are, of course, perfectly understandable human responses, often indicating a 'stigma management' strategy intended to "evade responsibility" (Meisenbach, 2010) that carefully curates consensually shared memories "…for fear of disclosure or exposure" (Carnegie, 2006: 73). But they do present an obvious ongoing challenge to any social historian hoping to recover subverted witness testimony to the trauma that we know often accompanies dislocation and domicide from the works of Fried (1966), Gans (1959, 1962), Fulliove (1996, 2001, 2004), Porteous and Smith (2001) and many others. There are however positive indications that new discussion spaces are gradually becoming available that may assist more individuals coming forward to offer their competing versions of Edinburgh's urban renewal activities.

In 2006, Alistair Thomson heralded the "digital revolution" as one of four "paradigm transformations" that would revolutionise oral history methodology and praxes and forever change "…the ways in which people remember and narrate their lives" (2006: 70) and so it has come to pass. Oral historians such as Steven High have embraced "digital storytelling on the internet" (2010: 105) to push testimony collected by oral historians over many decades out of archives, with traditionally limited access, to an infinitely wider online audience. My own department, *The School of Scottish Studies*, has, with its intimate involvement in the *Tobar an Dualchais* project (http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk) and embracing of other technological developments, been enabled to:

> …return songs, stories, and ways of being to communities from which they came and, indeed, to make them accessible to emigrants from these communities in every part of the world (MacAulay, 2012: 185)

But for my research purposes, I am more interested in the non-professional digital "sites of memory" where visitors have chosen to gather and share their recollections, rather than the sites where the memories are selected and disseminated by professional oral historians. The website www.edinphoto.org.uk is an early example of such a site. Launched in 2001 by its creator Peter Stubbs as a forum for sharing collections and photographs of changing Edinburgh and a means by which current and former residents could get in touch and exchange memories, by January 2017 the site had grown to over 27,000 pages containing information covering a wide variety of topics related to aspects of material culture, geographic location and human society relating to Edinburgh's long history. Stubbs himself has performed both as the collector and disseminator of these memories and as a digital mediator between those who wish to participate in dialogue about their shared past in the city, from nearby and much further afield. But with the massive growth of social media in the last decade, edinphoto.org.uk has been superseded by multiple other forums, on the *Facebook* platform in particular. On these sites individuals can post new material or comment in real time, with no need for a facilitator, beyond the light touch of an occasional intervention from a page administrator, on all manner of nostalgia relating to individual Edinburgh neighbourhoods or the town as a whole. Of these sites, *Lost Edinburgh* has proven to be the most prolific, having grown from its launch in 2011, to a following of close to 160,000 people eight years later.

Stating its objective as being: "Dedicated to sharing old photos showcasing the ever-changing face of Edinburgh, its history and its community throughout the centuries" *Lost Edinburgh's* regular posts about vanished streets and buildings, mostly lost in the 20th century clearances, regularly attract hundreds of comments in the threads below each one. While these can often very quickly meander into the territory of defamation, as councillors, the University, urban planners and

government departments become the regular target of criticism, it is very clear that the historic fear of “city hall” exhibited by her contemporaries and recalled by Cathy Lighterness in an interview in 2012 no longer holds sway today. David McLean, one of the founding members of *Lost Edinburgh,* now writes a regular column in the *Edinburgh Evening News* featuring well-researched stories that have often emerged following a post on his Facebook page or one of its many offshoots. The site has even had some success in influencing contemporary planning or conservation issues, which until very recently was the traditional territory occupied by Edinburgh’s much more middle-class and staid amenity and conservation societies alone.

By using these social media sites of memory I was latterly able to access a seam of recollections that offered an entirely different perspective than that held by many of my earliest interviewees. This may suggest that such spaces could provide storytellers with the freedom to discuss the legacy of Edinburgh’s state-sponsored clearances freed from the constraints of traditional narrative, but this will require much further investigation as participation in these sites increases. But it raises interesting questions about the use of emerging digital technologies and multi-media platforms to initiate further discussion and address the collective amnesia in Edinburgh. Steven High has become a powerful advocate for the creation of so-called “memoryscapes” by artists, cultural geographers and social historians, among others, that make creative use of innovative technologies to contextualise collected oral testimony in geographic settings more appropriate to their content (2010, 2011). Unsurprisingly, he notes “…a sense of loss has motivated a great deal of memory work in this field” (2010: 109). Toby Butler, who has created several memoryscapes exploring the history and geography of locations around London, explains further:

> …The use of located sound and located memory can engender deep feelings of rootendness, or being in place, and the geographical setting seems to encourage understanding and a feeling of inclusiveness, even with listeners that do not know the area that they are experiencing (Butler, 2007: 370)

As technology advances, the potential for future memoryscape projects are limitless. Given the opportunity, in the future I would like to explore the possibility of a project to use mobile augmented reality that will enable visitors to a site to use their smartphones or tablet devices to digitally overlay images of lost buildings on the live view presented to their cameras (cf. Noh, Sunar & Pan, 2009) while listening, at the same time, to the voices of those that once inhabited these demolished streets and buildings. This might prove a useful counterbalance to the civic amnesia that underpins the exhibitions and architectural guide described above and provoke useful new conversations about what has been lost to the town.

My study has left me in little doubt that a reappraisal of Edinburgh's post-war clearance activities was long overdue. Initial enquiries made at the two main archival repositories for local primary documentary material, the *Edinburgh Room* in the Central Library and the *City Archives* deep within the City Chambers, left me none the wiser about the numbers of people involved and the locations of these activities. While the secondary literature on this specific aspect of the city's fairly recent history is embarrassingly thin and open to challenge. Only months of patient research has finally revealed that the accepted narrative that Edinburgh's urban renewal activities were simply a paler, more watered-down version of similar activities elsewhere, ill-deserving of further investigation or attention, has done a terrible disservice to the city and to the 35,237 individuals that the Corporation confirms it compelled to leave their 16,556 homes before they were closed or demolished between 1950 and 1973. This selective amnesia has contributed in silencing many, preventing them from articulating the discomfort and stress detected following similar acts of state-sponsored clearance elsewhere and from benefitting from the catharsis such disclosures and subsequent public acknowledgement might provide.

The discovery of Dr Ronald Jones's dusty and overlooked report from 1967, surveying the town's entire stock of amenity deficient homes, is also hugely

significant. Its revelation that only the occupants of 2,111 of these 28,470 houses had applied or were on the Corporation waiting list for a house has dispensed, at last, with the long-held belief that “everyone” wanted to move from their condemned homes and neighbourhoods. While I have no reason to doubt Pat Rogan’s later recollections of regular queues at his door and bulging sacks of mail from folks demanding a new house, the simple fact that just 7.4% of residents in the very worst houses in the capital were actively looking for a Corporation house during the height of the clearance activities suggests his experience should no longer be taken as representative of the entirety of the situation. My own short political career informed me that the opinions and outlooks of the tiny minority of members of the public who come to political meetings or stop a politician in the street to harangue, advise or demand are rarely representative of wider-held opinions and outlooks. I am left with little doubt, that for many of the key players in this urban drama, their continued advocacy of comprehensive clearance was always motivated by the best of intentions, while the motives of other individuals and institutions will remain open to question. But I remain resolutely unconvinced however that doing the wrong thing for the right reasons is a justifiable defence.

Nothing I have learned or witnessed over the last few years has persuaded me that the comprehensive clearance of large swathes of Edinburgh was the correct decision in the best interest of the people or the town. There is adequate evidence available to suggest that the poor conditions of properties were often exaggerated and that landlords were not sufficiently pursued by the appropriate authorities to maintain their properties to acceptable standards. While rent control offers some degree of mitigation for their inaction there were still grants available to local authorities, private landlords and homeowners to recondition properties and make them fit from the earliest post-war Housing Acts, and the skillset to successfully convert traditional Scottish tenement property was certainly available, only the personal and political will was lacking. Sufficient time has passed for historians to begin to properly re-assess this act of poor political decision-making as they would

any other political action that adversely affected the lives of tens of thousands of people. Perhaps for those individuals who truly meant well by their actions I can suggest the lesser charge of "culpable domicide" when their day of historic judgement comes?

In the final analysis, my research will hopefully provide a new embarkation point for a refreshed discussion of urban renewal in Edinburgh. It has produced, for the first time, as far as I can ascertain, some serious quantitative and qualitative historic data about the clearance processes in Edinburgh, not least of which is the first comprehensive list of cleared and demolished streets that will better equip future researchers at the beginning of their investigations. The oral testimony and transcripts that I shall deposit in the *School of Scottish Studies Archive* will provide the nidus to grow this collection as new safe spaces open up that facilitate and encourage further constructive and positive dialogue with witnesses to and participants in clearance. I have no doubt there is much useful work ahead as we seek to advance our understanding of clearance in the Scottish capital and beyond.

APPENDIX 1

List of legislative statutes with passing or singular relevance to housing (in particular subsidy and rent levels, provision rights, eviction, clearance, compulsory purchase, closure, repair or compensation) in Scotland, enacted 1890-1975 (Taken from Cramond 1966: 122, Rodger 1989: 238-242 and www.legislation.gov.uk).

Housing of the Working Classes Act 1890
Burgh Police (Scotland) Act 1892
Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1893
Small Dwellings Acquisition Act 1899
Housing, Town Planning, etc. (Scotland) Act 1909
House Letting and Rating (Scotland) Act 1911
Rent and Mortgage Interest (War Restrictions) Act 1915
Housing, Town Planning, etc. (Scotland) Act 1919
Housing (Additional Powers) Act 1919
Acquisition of Land (Assessment of Compensation) Act 1919
Increase of Rent and Mortgage Interest (War Restrictions) Act 1919
Housing (Scotland) Act 1920
Housing (Scotland) Act 1921
Housing (Scotland) Act 1923
Housing (Financial Provisions) Act 1924
Housing (Scotland) Act 1925
Housing (Rural Workers) Act 1926
Housing (Revision of Contributions) Act 1929
Housing (Scotland) Act 1930
Housing (Financial Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1933
Housing (Scotland) Act 1935
Housing (Agricultural Population) (Scotland) Act 1938
Housing (Financial Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1938
Housing (Emergency Powers) Act 1939
Housing (Agricultural Population) (Scotland) Act 1944
Housing (Temporary Accommodation) Act 1944
Housing (Scotland) Act 1944
Housing (Temporary Accommodation) Act 1945
Housing (Financial Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1946
Acquisition of Land (Authorisation Procedure) (Scotland) Act 1947
Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1947
Housing (Scotland) Act 1949
Housing (Scotland) Act 1950
Housing (Forms) (Scotland) Regulations 1951
Housing (Scotland) Act 1952
Housing (Repairs and Rents) (Scotland) Act 1954
Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1954
Requisitioned Houses and Housing (Amendment) Act 1955
Valuation and Rating (Scotland) Act 1956
Housing and Town Development (Scotland) Act 1957
Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1959
House Purchase and Housing Act 1959

Building (Scotland) Act 1959
Housing (Scotland) Act 1962
Land Compensation (Scotland) Act 1963
Housing Act 1964
Housing (Scotland) Act 1966
Housing Subsidies Act 1967
Housing (Financial Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1968
Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1969
Housing (Scotland) Act 1969
Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1972
Land Compensation (Scotland) Act 1973
Housing (Scotland) Act 1974

APPENDIX 2

Table showing numbers of houses demolished or closed by local authorities across Scotland from 1955-1975 utilising varied housing and planning legislation. Extracted from the quarterly housing returns (National Archives – DD33/1/1-63).

	Under specific statutory action*		By other action	By statutory and other action		
Year	**Unfit****	**Others**	**Unfit****	**Unfit****	**Others**	**Total**
1955	8912	192	0	1442	***	10546
1956	10409	245	0	1441	***	12095
1957	10488	237	0	1442	***	12167
1958	10955	983	0	1441	***	13379
1959	10688	1228	0	1442	***	13358
1960	9761	1083	0	1441	***	12285
1961	9175	1132	0	1442	***	11749
1962	9283	1114	1688	10971	1114	12085
1963	8577	1606	1875	10452	1606	12058
1964	10056	2395	1941	11997	2395	14392
1965	10399	2985	2150	12549	2985	15534
1966	10579	3884	2187	12766	3884	16650
1967	12890	4640	1557	14447	4640	19087
1968	14200	3289	1279	15479	3289	18768
1969	15745	1151	951	16696	1151	17847
1970	13758	2020	1567	15325	2020	17345
1971	17525	1735	1294	18819	1735	20554
1972	15186	2367	965	16151	2367	18518
1973	14087	1607	785	14872	1607	16479
1974	9555	1344	716	10271	1344	11615
1975	9208	690	748	9956	690	10646
TOTALS	**241436**	**35927**	**19703**	**200842**	**30827**	**307157**

* The figures represent the total number of houses demolished or closed during the period, less those previously recorded as closed and since demolished or made fit.
** This comprises action under the Housing Acts, Town and Country Planning Acts (both in and outwith comprehensive development areas) and under any other statutory powers.
*** A cumulative figure of 10,091 houses for this period was obtained in 1961 and an even rate of annual progress has been assumed.

APPENDIX 3

Table listing closed or demolished houses in the four Scottish cities 1955-1975. Extracted from published quarterly Housing returns provided by the Scottish Development Department (www.publicinformationonline.com and National Archives - DD33/1/1-63).

Closed or Demolished Houses in Scotland's four cities, 1955-1975

	Aberdeen	*Proportion of Scottish total*	Dundee	*Proportion of Scottish total*	Edinburgh	*Proportion of Scottish total*	Glasgow	*Proportion of Scottish total*	Four city total
Jan 1955-Mar 1961	3037	*15%*	3634	*18%*	1414	*7%*	11760	*59%*	19845
April-Dec 1961	246	*6%*	521	*14%*	1073	*28%*	1948	*51%*	3788
1962	403	*8%*	913	*19%*	937	*20%*	2544	*53%*	4797
1963	333	*8%*	624	*16%*	480	*12%*	2532	*64%*	3969
1964	590	*5%*	2208	*18%*	1934	*16%*	7338	*61%*	12070
1965	432	*6%*	1318	*18%*	992	*14%*	4584	*63%*	7326
1966	527	*4%*	2797	*19%*	2021	*14%*	9577	*64%*	14922
1967*	382	*5%*	996	*13%*	1672	*21%*	4853	*61%*	7903
1968	578	*6%*	991	*10%*	991	*10%*	7742	*75%*	10302
1969*	285	*5%*	579	*10%*	944	*16%*	4174	*70%*	5982
1970	550	*5%*	644	*6%*	1254	*12%*	8436	*78%*	10884
1971	317	*3%*	585	*5%*	1230	*10%*	10007	*82%*	12139
1972	215	*2%*	3186	*25%*	1441	*11%*	8158	*63%*	13000
1973	200	*2%*	2933	*24%*	735	*6%*	8372	*68%*	12240
1974	280	*4%*	1164	*15%*	488	*6%*	5950	*75%*	7882
1975	105	*1%*	1500	*19%*	470	*6%*	5699	*73%*	7774
Sub Totals	**8480**	***5%***	**24593**	***16%***	**18076**	***12%***	**103674**	***67%***	**154823**

*Figures for 1967 and 1969 in Aberdeen, Dundee and Glasgow are incomplete as the Housing Returns for the 4th quarter of 1967 and for 3rd and 4th quarters of 1969 were not transmitted to National Archives by Scottish Development Department and cannot now be traced. The figures for Edinburgh for these years were however discovered within internal departmental correspondence from the Department of Health for Scotland (DD6/1992).

APPENDIX 4

Details of Corporation sponsored clearance activities in Edinburgh from 1923-1973. Data extracted from the annual reports of the Corporation Sanitary Department (ECCA - SL140/1/21-38). No further reports could be located within archive after 1973.

		No of houses dealt with			
Scheme	**Date**	**Fit**	**Unfit**	**Total**	**Population**
Housing (Scotland) Acts, 1919-1925					
Cowgate-Grassmarket	1923			630	1429
Leith	1924			678	2444
Canongate-Corstorphine	1927			293	556
St Leonards (1st Section)	1927			752	2619
St Leonards (2nd Section)	1929-30			1544	5375
			Totals	**3897**	**12423**
Housing (Scotland) Act 1930					
Ann Terrace, etc	1934			87	301
Trafalgar Lane, Leith	1934			152	571
Maryfield, etc, Portobello	1935			78	253
New & Old Broughton, etc	1935			108	225
Couper Street, etc, Leith	1936			327	1186
Abbeyhill (1st & 2nd Section)	1936			57	192
Albert Cottages, etc	1936			41	200
Canongate (Duncan's Close, etc)	1936			37	121
Canongate (1st Section)	1937			152	323
Morrison Street, etc	1937			37	58
Meadowbank Cottages, etc	1937			77	352
Lauriston, High Riggs, etc	1938			178	538
Abbeyhill (3rd Section)	1938			25	92
Lapicide Place, etc, Leith	1938			91	248
			Totals	**1447**	**4660**
Housing (Scotland) Act 1950					
Burns Street, Leith	1952			88	297
Calton Road	1953			72	208
Spey Street	1956			93	204
Carnegie Street, etc	1959			419	1111

Greenside Row, etc	1959			256	571
Canonmills	1959			35	79
West Cromwell St, etc	1961			64	158
Broughton Court	1961			20	46
Dean Street	1962			10	20
Montrose Terrace	1962			20	55
Wilkie Place, etc	1962			363	915
West Nicholson Street, Etc	1962			58	117
Tennant Street. Etc	1963			166	354
India Place, etc	1963			484	1065
Baltic Street	1964			29	91
Jamaica Street	1964			275	577
Eastfield (Joppa), etc	1964			7	17
Holyrood Road	1964			28	71
Main Street, etc, (Newhaven)	1965			259	522
Freer Street, etc	1965			190	508
Bangor Road, etc	1965			35	102
Dr Begg's Buildings	1965			106	299
Bedford Street	1965			274	623
Newport Street	1966			60	91
Canongate, etc	1966			54	110
Dumbiedykes Road	1966			76	182
Bristo Street, etc	1966			191	270
Lauriston Place, etc	1966			61	90
Cannon Street, etc (Leith)	1967			163	263
East and West Adam Street, etc	1968			276	594
Dalry Road, etc	1968			79	93
Canon Street, etc	1968			53	72
Hill Place	1970			60	95
Horse Wynd	1970			4	10
Tennant Street, etc	1970			214	559
Parkside Street,etc	1970			19	40
Primrose Street, etc	1970			171	303
Ferrier Street, etc	1970			661	1517
West Port, etc	1970			125	184
Pleasance, etc	1970			34	78
Forbes Street, etc	1970			310	663
St David's Terrace (HTA)	1970			89	204
Brandfield Street (HTA)	1970			100	209
Bowling Green Street, etc (HTA)	1971			350	735
West Crosscauseway etc, (HTA)	1971			63	114

West Fountain Place, etc (HTA)	1971			121	251
West Nicolson Street (HTA)	1971			49	89
Argyle Street, etc (HTA)	1971			105	228
Springfield Street (HTA)	1972			104	251
Stanley Place (HTA)	1972			36	85
East Thomas Street, etc (HTA)	1972			215	469
Trafalgar Lane (HTA)	1972			14	22
Elbe Street (HTA)	1972			58	128
Fountainbridge (HTA)	1972			66	143
Tynecastle Place (HTA)	1973			20	40
		Total 1950-1973		**7352**	**16192**
Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act, 1947 - 1959					
Housing (Declaration of Unfitness) (Scotland) Regulations, 1948 and 1960					
St Leonards (Dumbiedykes) (CDA)	1955	55	151	206	546
St Leonards (Arthur St 1st Section) (CDA)	1961	113	653	766	1867
Citadel & Central Leith (Kirkgate 1st Section) (CDA)	1961	46	320	366	740
Citadel & Central Leith (Citadel, etc 1st Section) (CDA)	1961	66	133	199	350
St Leonard's (Heriot Mount) (CDA)	1962	111	75	186	461
St Leonard's (Holyrood Rd, etc) (CDA)	1962	63	15	78	179
Citadel & Central Leith (Kirkgate 1st Sec, Areas F & H) (CDA)	1962	13	41	54	151
St James Square (Leith Street, etc) (Areas A, B &C) (CDA)	1963	54	363	417	845
Citadel and Central Leith (Kirkgate 1st Sec) (Area J) (CDA)	1963	0	13	13	67
St James Square (Leith Street, etc) (Areas F, G, H & I) (CDA)	1963	17	161	178	427
Citadel and Central Leith (Kirkgate 1st Sec) (Area K) (CDA)	1964	23	21	44	115
St James Square (Leith Street, etc) (Areas K & L) (CDA)	1965	17	20	37	102
St James Square (Leith Street, etc) (Area M) (CDA)	1966	3	29	32	49
Citadel and Central Leith	1966	5	9	14	35

(Kirkgate 1st Sec) (Area L) (CDA)					
St James Square (Leith Street, etc) (Areas N, O & P) (CDA)	1969	U/K	U/K	145	107
	Totals	**586**	**2004**	**2735**	**6041**
Individual Unfit Houses					
Housing (Scotland) Acts 1919-25	1919-1930			272	979
Housing (Scotland) Act 1930	1930-1950			2053	6438
Housing (Scotland) Acts 1950-66	1950-58			503	1408
	1959			201	472
	1960			90	221
	1961			174	356
	1962			173	347
	1963			203	384
	1964			167	587
	1965			160	397
	1966			354	728
	1967			669	1354
	1968			566	1085
	1969			349	618
	1970			443	699
	1971			950	1212
	1972			511	752
	1973			293	528
		Total 1950-73		**5806**	**11148**
Voluntary Undertakings from owners	1919-58			349	1116
	1959			16	52
	1960			36	94
	1961			29	66
	1962			9	15
	1963			11	21
	1964			19	34
	1965			32	86
	1966			21	39
	1967			20	45
	1968			4	6
	1969			36	73
	1970			32	83

	1971			24	80
	1972			17	34
	1973			8	12
			Totals	**663**	**1856**
	Houses	**Population**			
Totals 1923-1950	**5334**	**17083**			
Totals 1950-1973	**16556**	**35237**			
Totals 1923-73	**21890**	**52320**			

APPENDIX 5

Edinburgh house closures/demolitions, 1962-1972. Comparable data extracted from published statistics of the Scottish Development Department and Edinburgh Corporation.

House closures and demolitions in Edinburgh, 1962-1972 (comparable data)						
	Edinburgh Corporation Statistics					SDD Statistics
	Housing Acts	Planning Acts	Compulsorily closed individual	Voluntarily closed individual	Edinburgh Totals	
1962	451	318	173	9	951	937
1963	650	608	203	11	1472	480
1964	339	44	167	19	569	1934
1965	864	37	160	32	1093	992
1966	442	46	354	21	863	2021
1967	163		669	20	852	1672
1968	408		566	4	978	991
1969		145	349	36	530	944
1970	1787		443	32	2262	1254
1971	688		950	24	1662	1230
1972	493		511	17	1021	1441
Totals	**6285**	**1198**	**4545**	**225**	**12253**	**13896**

APPENDIX 6 - Personal Recollections and Testimony

<u>Personal conversation with the author:</u>

Frank Black	Resident in Grassmarket during clearance period and plumber in many sites across Edinburgh that would be ultimately cleared.
Kate Blackburn	Former resident of Spey Terrace subjected to a clearance order
David Brown	Former Labour Councillor and Newcraighall resident, subjected to a clearance order in 1972.
Hamish Coghill	Former Housing Correspondent and journalist at the *Edinburgh Evening News* during clearance period.
Pat Corrie	Former resident of Duddingston temporary housing camp.
Edward Downie	Former Fort Place resident subjected to a clearance order.
Ronald Duff	Former Conservative and Unionist Councillor and member of the Planning Committee in Edinburgh, late 1960s to mid-1970s and New Town resident and active conservationist.
Bill Ferguson	Former Buccleuch Street resident whose family was subjected to a clearance order.
Frank Ferri	Resident of Leith and Newhaven, subjected to clearance order in 1974, founding member and chair of *Newhaven Action Group*,
Willie Flucker	Newhaven resident, witness to clearance period in 1960s and 1970s.
Peter Garland	Former Fountainbridge area resident subjected to a clearance order.
Derek Gilhooley	Former resident of Ingliston Street subjected to a clearance order.
Frank Glancy	Founder member of *Grassmarket Area Group* and *Grassmarket Area Housing Association*. resident in Grassmarket during clearance period.
Peter Gordon-Smith	Canongate resident, subjected to a clearance order in 1969 and resident there since.
Jim Gray	Former India Place resident subjected to a clearance order.
George Hackland	Newhaven resident subjected to a clearance order in mid 1960s and resident since.
Mark Harrison	Third-generation owner of family firm *Hewatts of Edinburgh* in Edinburgh South Side
Jim Haynes	Owner of *The Paperback* bookshop in Edinburgh's South Side 1959-1964 and former resident of the New Town.
Nick Hedges	Photo-journalist specialising in recording inner-city neighbourhoods and official *SHELTER* photographer assigned to record slum tenements in Leith in 1972.
Anne Henderson	Former resident of Leith and witness to the clearance period.
Janie Hunt	Former Jamaica Street resident subjected to a clearance order.
Adam Johnston	Edinburgh College of Art student in late 1950s, retired architect, who worked in Edinburgh and for Crudens.
Ronnie Lehany	Moved with family when a child from Prospect Bank in the St Leonards area to Niddrie Marshall housing estate.
Cathy Lighterness	Family cleared from Newhaven in mid 1960s, former resident of Leith Fort and current resident in Newhaven.

Aubrey Manning	Took up a post lecturing at Edinburgh University in the 1950s and moved into residence in the New Town.
Ian MacKay	Former resident of Dumbiedykes subjected to clearance order.
Mary MacKay	Youngest member of family moved from St Leonards in inter-war period slum clearances, among very first of families to move into new houses in Craigmillar housing estate.
Brian McDonald	Family moved in Leith clearances and childhood home demolished.
Duncan McKendrick	Family lived on Arthur Street when subjected to a clearance order.
Elspeth Pandit	Family lived on Salisbury Street, subjected to a clearance order and initially refused a Corporation home due to ethnicity of father.
John Petrie	Moved with family from Grassmarket tenement to over-crowded flat in Craigmillar in mid-50s.
Bill Prentice	Eldest surviving member of family moved from St Leonards in inter-war period slum clearances, among very first of families to move into new houses in Craigmillar housing estate.
John Robb	Long-term Newhaven resident and witness to clearance period in 1960s and 1970s.
Brendan Rogan	Son of prominent Edinburgh councillor and Housing Committee Convener Pat Rogan
Chris Roxburgh	Former resident of Drummond Street subjected to a clearance order.
Ian Smith	Long-term Newhaven resident and witness to clearance period in 1960s and 1970s
John Smith	Long-term Newhaven resident and witness to clearance period in 1960s and 1970s
John Stirling	Retired Edinburgh Corporation sanitary inspector who played a prominent role in a number of clearance procedures across the city from 1965-1974, including in Newcraighall, Newhaven and Leith
Heather Thompson	Former resident of Nicholson Street subjected to a clearance order.
Elspeth Wills	Grassmarket resident and housing activist threatened with clearance in mid-70s and became a founding member of the *Grassmarket Area Group* and *Grassmarket Area Housing Association*.
Ted Wilson	Former resident of Duddingston temporary housing camp
Archie Young	Former resident of Holyrood and then Moredun prefabs. Family cleared from Moredun.

<u>Recollections published online at http://edinphoto.org.uk/</u>

Kate Brock	Survivor of the “Penny Tenement” collapse of 1959
George Brodie	Former resident of the Northfield Grove prefabs.
Stuart Mayne	Family formerly lived on India Street.
Cathy McKinsley	Former resident of cleared Heriot Mount, Dumbiedykes.
John Munro	Former resident of cleared Heriot Mount, Dumbiedykes.
Eileen Wallace	Former resident of cleared West Bowling Street, Leith.

Identified individuals in broadcast interviews

David Brown	Labour councillor and Newcraighall resident Interviewed about Corporation clearance activities in the area on *BBC's Current Account* (1972, https://youtu.be/PLH9jw0RAN4)
Jean Easton	Newcraighall resident interviewed about Corporation clearance activities in the area on *BBC's Current Account* (1972, https://youtu.be/PLH9jw0RAN4)
Frank Ferri	Interviewed by STV correspondent about Corporation clearance activity in Newhaven and his formation of an opposition pressure group. (1974, National Library of Scotland , Scottish Screen Archive T0458)
Dennis MacKay	Newcraighall resident interviewed about Corporation clearance activities in the area on *BBC's Current Account* (1972, https://youtu.be/PLH9jw0RAN4)
Raeburn Mackie	Correspondent reporting on Maryhill and Newcraighall clearances on *BBC's Current Account* (1972, https://youtu.be/PLH9jw0RAN4)
Archie McArthur	Newcraighall resident interviewed about Corporation clearance activities in the area on *BBC's Current Account* (1972, https://youtu.be/PLH9jw0RAN4)
"Teeny" McArthur	Newcraighall resident interviewed about Corporation clearance activities in the area on *BBC's Current Account* (1972, https://youtu.be/PLH9jw0RAN4)
Tom Morgan	Progressive councillor and Edinburgh Corporation Housing Committee Chairman, interviewed on *Panorama* about housing crisis in Edinburgh (1961, BBC Archive)
Celia Rochford	Newcraighall resident interviewed about Corporation clearance activities in the area on *BBC's Current Account* (1972, https://youtu.be/PLH9jw0RAN4)
Pat Rogan	Labour councillor Interviewed on *Panorama* about housing crisis in Edinburgh (1961, BBC Archive)
Pat Rogan	Interviewed by Miles Glendinning about his time in office as an Edinburgh councillor (c.1990, Miles Glendinning's private collection)
Cornelius Waugh	Progressive councillor and Edinburgh Corporation Housing Committee Chairman, Interviewed about the Corporation's Newcraighall clearance activities on *BBC's Current Account* (1972, https://youtu.be/PLH9jw0RAN4)
H.R. Wilson	Newhaven resident interviewed by STV correspondent about Corporation clearance activity in the village (1974, National Library of Scotland – Scottish Screen Archive T0458)

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