

Part Two

Planning and Nation.

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Senate Room and main stairways. Mears took until February 13th 1929 to complete new plans which he felt confident would meet every point which had been raised. In another month, on 13th March, he was able to send the Rosenbloom Trustees the last of the detailed sections and elevations.

#### **4.13 Final Dismissal**

The final blow fell in May 1929, when Mears received a formal letter from the University's lawyer, Mr. Horowitz, informing him that the Board of Trustees had decided not to avail themselves any further of the services of Geddes, Mears and Chaikin in connection with the design of the Rosenbloom Memorial Building. Mr. Horowitz's letter blamed the architects for repeated delays and claimed that their design had finally been judged "not acceptable". The Rosenbloom Trustees felt that "no useful purpose would be served by any attempt to modify or improve the existing design" (122, 123).

Mears wrote to Dr. Magnes that he was quite at a loss to understand the statement that the design had been found unacceptable. He had kept very closely to the plan approved by the Principal and Mrs. Rosenbloom

and taken great care to incorporate the suggestions of the University staff. Any delays had arisen out of repeated alterations to specifications initiated by the University's promoters themselves. He argued that:

"... if your Board, for some reason, has changed its ideas as to what is desirable, we should not be held guilty for conforming to what was earlier agreed on. The statement that no useful purpose would be served by any attempt to modify or improve the existing design is even more baffling.

You yourself have told me that you greatly appreciated my willingness to adapt myself to the difficult conditions in Jerusalem, and in this case I have had to meet a situation of extraordinary difficulty in which the conflict of opinion between those who were employing us was carried to extreme lengths.

... This adventure in Jerusalem has provided a great spiritual experience, and I have enjoyed working with you personally, indeed I felt that we had got into touch in a way rare between client and architect.

The strictly legal nature of the official letter therefore gave me an acute feeling of pain and indeed I cannot believe that one of your sensitive nature can have been responsible for it.

A lawyer's letter demands a similar reply and involves the removal of the matter on to another plane which may well lead us, however unwillingly, into a state of bitterness and even publicity.

If you really feel that you cannot work with me I would much rather that you tell me so personally. I have every confidence in your sense of fairness and for this reason I am withholding more than a bare acknowledgement of the official letter until I hear from you or better still have an opportunity of meeting you" (124).

He wrote more bitterly to his father-in-law:

"The Hebrews in Jerusalem are making another determined attempt to sack us. I have written a long personal letter to Magnes on the subject and if he does not respond properly we may have to fight them.

I have seen Eder and Dr. Kohn (125) in London, they are sympathetic but not very helpful.

I don't blame Magnes, but think that Grein, the engineer, is the source of the trouble. The fact is that Jews can't or won't work together. The proper plan for the University would be one with an infinite number of dispersed cells each with a rostrum on the top. They can't bear getting together" (126).

Geddes took the matter up with his old friend, Dr. Eder, writing that:

"There is no doubt in either of our minds that at the bottom the difficulty is that we are Gentiles! Gentlemen and scholar as Dr. Magnes is, and of irreproachable courtesy in his personal relations to Mears and myself alike, there can be no doubt that even he is not without this feeling subconscious perhaps even more than conscious.

... while he sees Mears' points, and has expressed appreciation of his plans when they are together and even since, he is too readily open to any and every hostile criticism, and we fear whether on planning or personal grounds alike.

We have reason to understand that those hostile criticisms and feelings are substantially

expressed by Mr. Grein, whose position, as placed in charge of buildings by the Jerusalem Committee, we frankly suggest is really at the bottom of these difficulties. Ten years' experience in India ... has brought me intimately to know the mismanagement ... of their leading Indian engineers when outside their immediate sphere, and when entrusted with responsibilities for town planning, architecture of housing as has too often happened. In fact of their methods and results I could give particulars, not only surprising to you, but to the Empire! Of these viewpoints and methods Mr. Grein appears to us only too representative, and we do not hesitate to warn you as to the results. We are convinced that these, and not simply his anti-Gentile feeling, are at the back of our present difficulty, not to speak of preceeding ones" (127).

However, in another letter to Dr. Stephen Wise, one of the Rosenbloom Trustees, the Professor wrote more tactfully:

"... with no disrespect to Mr. Grein's engineering abilities, we cannot but feel that, even had his criticisms and his influence been as helpful as could be desired, we have all, none the less,

suffered from the lack of more well defined relations - as (1). between your (or other) Trust concerned with given elements of the scheme, (2). the Governing Body of the University, and (3). outelves, as, so far, endeavouring to fulfil and to co-adjust, the requirements of each" (128).

Geddes thus offered three alternative, albeit inter-related explanations for their dismissal. The first arose from a widespread feeling amongst the Zionists that a project regarded as of central importance to the reinstatement of Jewish statehood and culture in Palestine should be in the hands of Jewish architects. The second reflected a deep-seated suspicion of the engineering profession which was shared by many architect planners at a time when a number of rival professions were still seeking to establish a proprietary interest in planning. Geddes in particular regarded engineers as generally unimaginative and utilitarian and given to producing unnecessarily destructive solutions to technical problems. The third suggested reason was the lack of a clearly defined relationship between client and consultants. This certainly was an unsatisfactory aspect of Geddes and Mears' dealings with the Zionists. It arose partly as a result of a complex and changing division of responsibility for various

aspects of the University project, but the situation was not improved by the rather vague and informal approach which the Scotsmen themselves adopted towards their professional relationships.

Geddes believed that the decision to terminate their engagement had been taken arbitrarily by Dr. Magnes and the Rosenbloom Trustees and hoped to be able to appeal to the General Body of the University which had originally appointed them (129). However, although Geddes' Zionist friends in Europe and America were sympathetic, they were unable to be of much practical assistance since virtually all responsibility for the University had by then been transferred to Jerusalem. The Professor did not feel able to involve Dr. Weizmann directly, as the Zionist leader was ill at the time. Mears lamented in a letter to his father-in-law that "all the fine spirits" whom they had met in the early days in Jerusalem had been replaced by an "unworthy and ... unscrupulous leadership" (130).

Mr. Horowitz's letter of 14th May 1929 had offered a final settlement of £1,275, less any sums paid on account. Mears did not regard this as a fair offer as it was based on the final set of plans only and took no account of the repeated alterations he had been required to make. He pointed out that he had

received no fees whatever for the work done for the Rosenbloom Memorial Building since May 1927, all payments since that time having been swallowed up in meeting expenses and the salaries of staff in Jerusalem (131).

In July 1930, the firm of Geddes, Mears and Chaikin submitted an account to the Rosenbloom Trustees for professional services between the spring of 1926 and summer 1929 totalling £3,154 1s. 9d. In an accompanying memorandum, Geddes stressed the moderation of their claim. He pointed out that the fees for architectural drawings had been charged at the minimum rate laid down by the Royal Institute of British Architects and that he had not charged for any of his own planning of the University since 1919. Even when paid the full amount, they would still have made no small sacrifice. Mears' architectural practice in Edinburgh had been "almost ruined by his absences in Jerusalem and his absorption so much by its work at home" (132).

In early 1931, Mears received a letter from the Rosenbloom Trust's New York lawyers, Guggenhammer, Untemeyer and Marshall, offering a settlement of £761 13/- plus interest which he and his partners again rejected as inadequate (133).

They enlisted the assistance of the Chairman of the University Development Committee, Professor Selig Brodetsky, who prevailed upon Dr. Magnes to agree that an authoritative British architect should be asked to arbitrate between the disputing parties. However, this undertaking was not adhered to (134).

All hope that the University buildings would be completed in the foreseeable future was abandoned in late 1931 when Mrs. Rosenbloom announced that the economic depression compelled her to postpone the building of the Rosenbloom Institute of Hebrew Studies for the time being. She would not, at present, sanction the purchase of the site from the funds of the Rosenbloom Foundation. On hearing this, Dr. Weizmann wrote to a Zionist colleague in New York:

"I have received a letter from Mrs. Rosenbloom dated December 14th and I am aghast at its contents. It is the coolest proposition I have ever read. Of course, I know nothing about the legal position. Was the money to come from a bequest or is it a trust fund? Who are the trustees and so on, and so on. At present we are, I am afraid, to face a difficult situation. But a very considerable expenditure has been made. Wise and Mack (135) have been dragging on with

the plans; Geddes and Mears are claiming some money. I don't know with what justification; and Mrs. Rosenbloom, who has received all the honours in advance, and who has also joined the Board of the University - I suppose as a special decoration of it - is simply clearing out of the whole business. I haven't written to her, as I really fail to see how one can answer such a letter in anything like adequate terms. But I would be grateful to you if you would let me know your view on the whole matter. I have tried to find out something about the position and have written to Dr. Leo Kohn who has been in charge of University affairs here and is at present in Dublin" (136).

On 8th March 1932, Professor Brodetsky wrote to Geddes wishing him a full recovery from the ill health which he had been suffering during the winter. He added that:

"I am going to Palestine next week, and I shall no doubt see Magnes. I am not very sanguine about being able to do anything with him, but I shall do my best" (137).

Just over a month later, Geddes was dead. No satisfactory settlement was ever received from any of the University authorities.

Ashbee had written in 1923 that:

"Geddes' chief work out here has been the plans, en ebauche, for the Zionist University, a magnificent scheme and a wonderful report. But it has cleft Jewry in twain. The orthodox and the ritualists have no use for a Universitas in the real sense of the word, such as he desires, nor have the political propagandists for the scholar and the man of science.

Will it be a university or only a Zionist university? Geddes has thrown down the glove to Jewry. It is another challenge to the theocratic state and the old devil of sectarianism who stands between us and our search for truth. Will the challenge be taken up? ... But when all's said and done, Pat is right. His prophecy is likely to sound the farthest. You can have no sectarian university" (138).

After the event, and from a very different standpoint, the staunch Zionist, Dr. David Eder, came to a very similar judgement. He wrote:

"That this magnificent conception has not yet been realised is due, not to Geddes, nor to the architects who worked with him and under his directions - Frank Mears of Edinburgh and Chaikin of Jerusalem. It was not wholly due to want of money, for Geddes was an economical builder and planner ... I do not want to be drawn into any harsh judgements. Suffice it to say that there are few who could rise to the lofty heights of Geddes' imagination or of his practical knowledge. Petty minds have endeavoured to bespoil what Geddes and his two assistants had conceived on noble and enduring lines" (139).

Dr. Weizmann, the great Zionist Leader whose vision transcended all sectarianism, later wrote in his memoirs that:

"The ideal of the Hebrew University was for many of us the noblest expression of our Zionist humanism. On it were concentrated the dreams of our youth and the endeavours of our manhood. A Hebrew University in Palestine would mean release from the pariah status which was the lot of Jewish youth in so many of the Universities of Eastern and even Central Europe. It would provide a focus for the free development of the Jewish

spirit. It would give scientific guidance and moral inspiration to the builders of the New Zion. It would pave the way for a synthesis between the spiritual heritage of our people and the intellectual movements and aspirations of our age. ... I still hope before I die to see the great assembly hall which Geddes designed rising on the slopes of Scopus" (140).

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135. Mr. Mack was another of the Rosenbloom Trustees.
136. "The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann", Vol. XV, October 1930 - June 1933, I.U.P. Transaction, No. 238.
137. BRODETSKY, S., 8th March 1932, Letter to Patrick Geddes, MS. 10573, f.216, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.
138. ASHBEE, C.R. (1923), "A Palestine Notebook: 1918-23", op.cit.
139. EDER, M.D. (1932), "Patrick Geddes in Palestine", The Sociological Review, Vol. XXIV, No. 3, October 1932, pp.376-378.
140. WEIZMANN, C. (1949), "Trial and Error", op.cit., p.391.

From the time of the first meeting to the present  
the committee has been active in promoting  
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In the year 1907 a committee was appointed  
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### Chapter Five

#### Civic Improvement in Edinburgh.

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## 5.1 Restoring Culture to the Old Town

From the time of his recruitment to the Edinburgh Survey in 1908, Mears maintained an active interest in the promotion of planning and high standards of civic design in the city, and was involved in numerous projects in both a planning and an architectural capacity.

In December 1909, as part of a publicity drive to promote the work of the Outlook Tower's Open Spaces Committee which was then active in developing children's gardens in the Old Town, Mears gave a public lecture on the historical development of the Scottish capital (1), the content of which was to provide the basis of many future lectures and articles on the subject. He concluded by making reference to the efforts being made to restore what remained of the city's historic core and especially "the beautifying of neglected spaces". There were, he estimated, some ten acres available in the Old Town, not counting many other spaces in use as brewers' and builders' yards. He looked forward to "a reorganised High Street, with repaired historic houses, slums removed or improved, and something of culture brought back to the Old Town of Edinburgh" (2).

In 1910, Mears worked with the architect, Ramsay Traquair on the design of the First Church of Christ Scientist for a spacious riverside site at Inverleith Terrace. In the same year, the death of King Edward I and VII precipitated a lively debate over the provision of a suitable memorial in the Scottish capital. A proposal was made to the Town Council that the opportunity should be taken to restore Holyrood Palace for occasional use as a royal residence (3). This was a task of some magnitude, involving extensive repairs, alterations and additions to the Palace itself and improvement of the local road network. In addition, the surrounding area of breweries and slum property required considerable environmental improvement to provide a fitting outlook for a modern monarch. A number of alternative memorial schemes were put forward, and one of these prepared by Frank Mears, Ramsay Traquair and James F. Ferrier was displayed at the "Cities Exhibition" in 1911 (4). A final scheme, modified in the light of comments by Lord Provost William Brown, was completed in 1912.

The three architects proposed to construct an ornamental archway of Medieval design on the site of the Abbey Gate house. On the side facing the Canongate, there was to be a life-sized statue of the

late King in a niche flanked by panels bearing the Arms of Great Britain, Scotland and the City of Edinburgh. The reverse side would bear a large Achievement of the Royal Arms flanked by the Coats of Arms of the Burghs which subscribed to the monument. The cost of the memorial was estimated at £10,000 (5).

Among the associated environmental improvements included in the scheme were the restoration of the Palace Gardens and the replacement of the "Girth Cross" at the foot of the Canongate. It was also proposed to remodel the area of the Watergate, Abbey Strand and Horse Wynd under a scheme of restoration and selective demolition. Steps linking Regent Road and the Watergate were to be constructed and new cottages and a communal hall were to be provided under an endowment.

In 1912, a magazine called "The Blue Blanket" was launched to promote the Geddesian concept of "Civics" within the capital. The title was a reference to the banner of the city's Medieval craftsmen. In an article published in the first issue, Mears and Traquair called for a more carefully considered and, at the same time, imaginative approach to the siting of public monuments in the city (6). In the world

of the modern commercial city their preoccupation with this issue seems strangely archaic, but in the period before the Great War, in an age still inspired by the extravagant symbolism of Empire, it must have seemed a matter of far more central importance.

The article was a plea for the restoration of the civic status of the Old Town and contained a strong element of romantic nationalism. Mears and Traquair argued that, in moving to the classical suburb of the New Town, the modern Athenians of the 1820s "had left behind their history". Thus the promoters of Edinburgh's recently-erected monuments had restricted themselves to prominent New Town sites which usually had no connection with the people or events they sought to commemorate. In particular, they had seized upon the bare Calton Hill as a modern acropolis because:

"Here were no troublesome associations with a past national history, and all would be arranged to suit the prevailing taste. Here, then, they commenced a national monument to Scotland's modern heroes, a pseudo-classic building in a foreign style, ignoring the existence of that living memorial of Scottish history, the Castle, from which was born the town itself. Thus did they

desert their mother to run after a foreign goddess. The Calton Hill was not originally a part of Edinburgh. It belongs to the New Town alone, and historic associations it has none" (7).

According to Mears and Traquair, "great men should be commemorated in or near the places with which they are most closely associated", and for the majority of Edinburgh's most worthy patrons and former citizens this meant the Old Town. Historic, patriotic and military monuments should be erected in the Castle and its precincts while royal monuments should be located at Holyrood. The area of Parliament Square and the Municipal Buildings should be reserved for memorials to lawyers, politicians and civic dignitaries and the upper part of the Mound should be devoted to leading churchmen. Distinguished academics might look to be similarly immortalized in the environs of the University.

However, the two men did concede that "The Calton Hill, in time, will become historical, and we may make it truly so by raising there monuments to modern men, and by using it for modern functions"; a conclusion which subsequent events have rendered ironic. They themselves prepared a scheme for the completion of the

National Monument which was exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy later in the year (8).

In 1913, Professor Geddes was commissioned to lay out the new Zoological Park at Corstorphine. Much of the design work and site supervision was carried out by Frank Mears and Geddes' daughter, Norah, and, until the late twenties, Mears was periodically involved with subsequent developments at the zoo (see Chapter 1).

The establishment by the Scottish Secretary, Robert Munro, of a Committee to consider the question of a Scottish National War Memorial provided Mears with another chance to give practical expression to his ideas about public monuments. In 1919 he suggested an ambitious scheme for a "Via Sacra" running along the line of Johnstone Terrace and culminating in a "Shrine of Ideals" below the Castle (9), and perspective drawings of his proposals were exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy (10). However, the quiet vernacular dignity of Sir Robert Lorimer's now famous design was eventually chosen, and Mears was generous enough to praise this in later years (11).

Thomas Whitson, the accountant who was closely involved with both the Outlook Tower and the Scottish

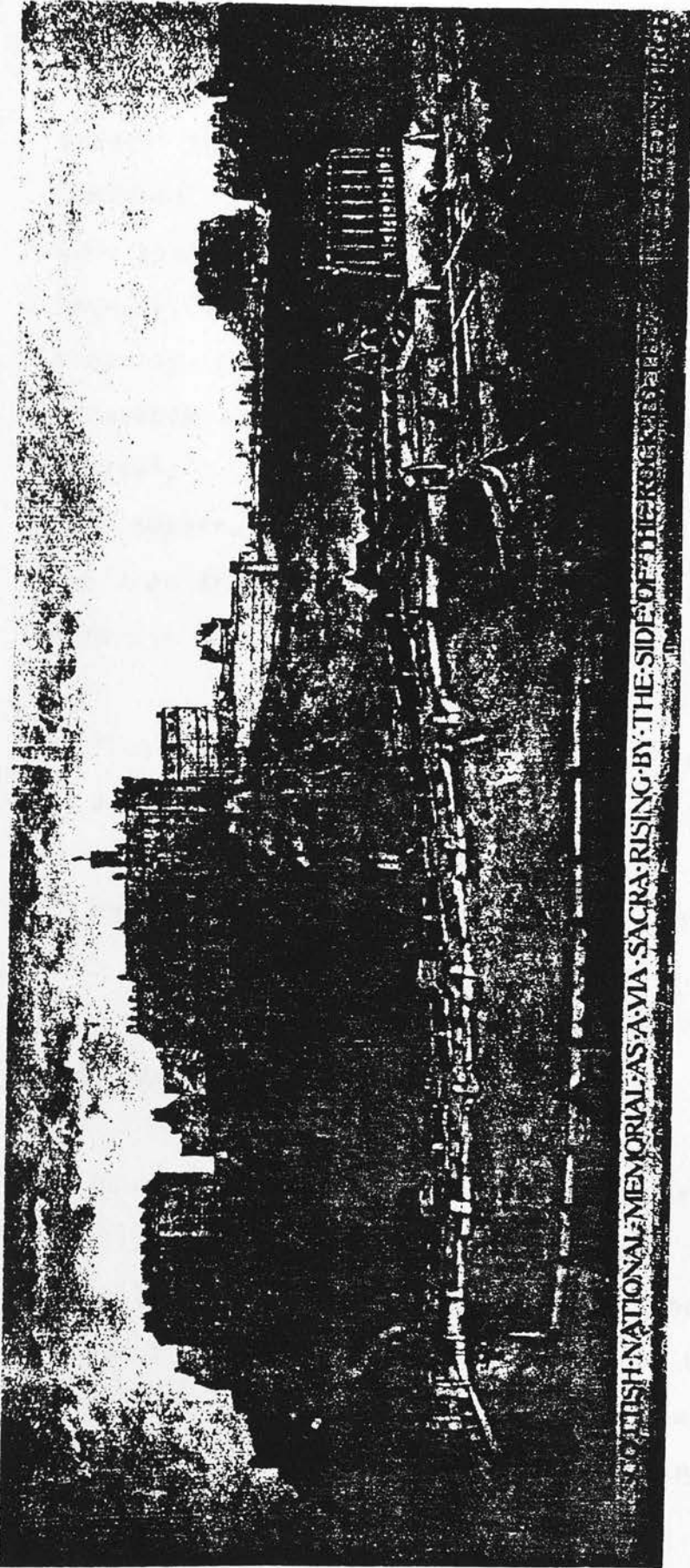


Fig. 5.1. Mears' scheme for a "Via Socia" to commemorate the fallen of the Great War, 1919.

Zoological Park, had been elected to the Town Council in 1916. In March 1920, Mears was able to inform Geddes in India that Whitson had been appointed Convener of the Council's Old Town Reconstruction Committee (12). Although Mears feared that the Town Council were still "far from wanting the thing properly tackled", he thought that Whitson would "probably be able to keep them from doing too much damage". However, by August he was reporting much more cheerfully that many of the pre-War proposals of the Open Spaces Committee were at last being put into effect:

"... our old "vacant lots" map has come true - all are covered with allotments and bits of parks as well, and the City is hard at work doing up old houses under Whitson's Committee" (13).

## **5.2 Post-War Housing**

On his return from the Great War, Mears set about establishing an architectural practice in Edinburgh. However, work was hard to come by as house building had come to a virtual standstill. In the Report of a Special Committee on Edinburgh's Building Trade published in 1918, the Merchant Company attributed

the lack of activity to inflated building costs, but Hague has suggested that the feuing practices of landowners lay at the root of the problem (14). With the demand for "homes fit for heroes", there was strong political pressure for a solution: Edinburgh's labour movement was calling for 10,000 new houses as a matter of urgency (15). The Corporation had already purchased some fifty acres of land at Gorgie on which to build council houses but, because of the heavy feu burden, was reluctant to develop at the relatively low densities provided for in the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1919 (16).

Feuing considerations did not figure prominently in Mears' analysis of Edinburgh's housing problem. Like the Merchant Company, he looked to means of reducing building costs. In some of the housing projects with which he was involved in Ireland, shortages of bricks and cement had led to experimentation with unconventional building materials and novel low-cost construction techniques. Drawing on his Irish experience, he submitted a design for a low-cost house to Edinburgh Town Council's Housing Committee. However, the Committee was slow to take up the idea, and, writing in exasperation to Geddes, he compared the situation in Edinburgh unfavourably with Ireland, where:

"... they won't look at more than 4 houses to the acre - instead of 14 as here in Edinburgh - where also they haven't yet succeeded in giving me instructions to build that small cheap house ... too much Housing Committee - Burgh Engineer - Board of Health red tape and low efficiency" (17).

Bureaucratic inefficiency was one of Mears' perennial grouses, yet he did not consider that it was the sole cause of Edinburgh's lack of progress. He believed that some of the difficulties in initiating new house building projects might be removed by the introduction of new methods of labour organization. In December, he wrote to Geddes that:

"I am going to take steps to get in touch with "Labour" here, and see what can be done about starting a "Guild" as they call it for house building by the men themselves. Glasgow Corporation have by unanimous vote agreed to hand over a large number of houses to such a group! and our friends want to start one in Dublin, or some of them do" (18).

It is not clear whether he ever carried out his intention to contact Edinburgh's Labour movement, but

on 9th May 1921 it was reported to the Council's Housing and Town Planning Committee that the Board of Health had finally approved the acceptance of a tender to erect two of Mears' demonstration bungalows at a cost of £870 each. The Committee agreed to recommend that the construction of these houses be proceeded with on a site at Riverside Road, Gorgie (19).

Since the 1890s, Geddes had been promoting the development of a Garden Suburb at Roseburn on the west of the city, but the project had been subject to repeated delays and interruptions due largely, it seems, to the Professor's precarious financial arrangements (20). Geddes appears still to have been pursuing this matter in 1920, for in his letter of August 10th Mears wrote that:

"I saw Henderson about Roseburn and gave him your letter and papers. He is as strong as ever against trying to build. It will be many years before house building bears any semblance to an investment" (21).

It is clear that Mears, at least, had an eye to a financial return on private initiatives in town planning.

He went on to suggest that perhaps time had caught up with the project as the Garden Suburb ideal had now become the established fashion. Referring to the major public sector housing schemes then being prepared by the Town Council under the Housing and Town Planning Acts, he pointed out that:

"... garden planning is quite normal here, and the City is doing hundreds of acres on modern lines (3 room houses costing £1,000 and £1,200 all told)" (22).

### **5.3 Raising Civic Consciousness**

During this period, Mears continued his research into the historical development of the capital, and on 25th November 1920, in a lecture entitled "Edinburgh Before Flodden", he presented the Old Edinburgh Club with new evidence that the 13th Century burgh had extended on the South as far as the line of the modern Chambers' Street and that the subsequent construction of the "King's Wall", on a line half-way between the High Street and the Cowgate, represented a retrenchment of the town during a period of English occupation (23, 24). In 1923, he presented the Town Council with a set of measured elevations of the

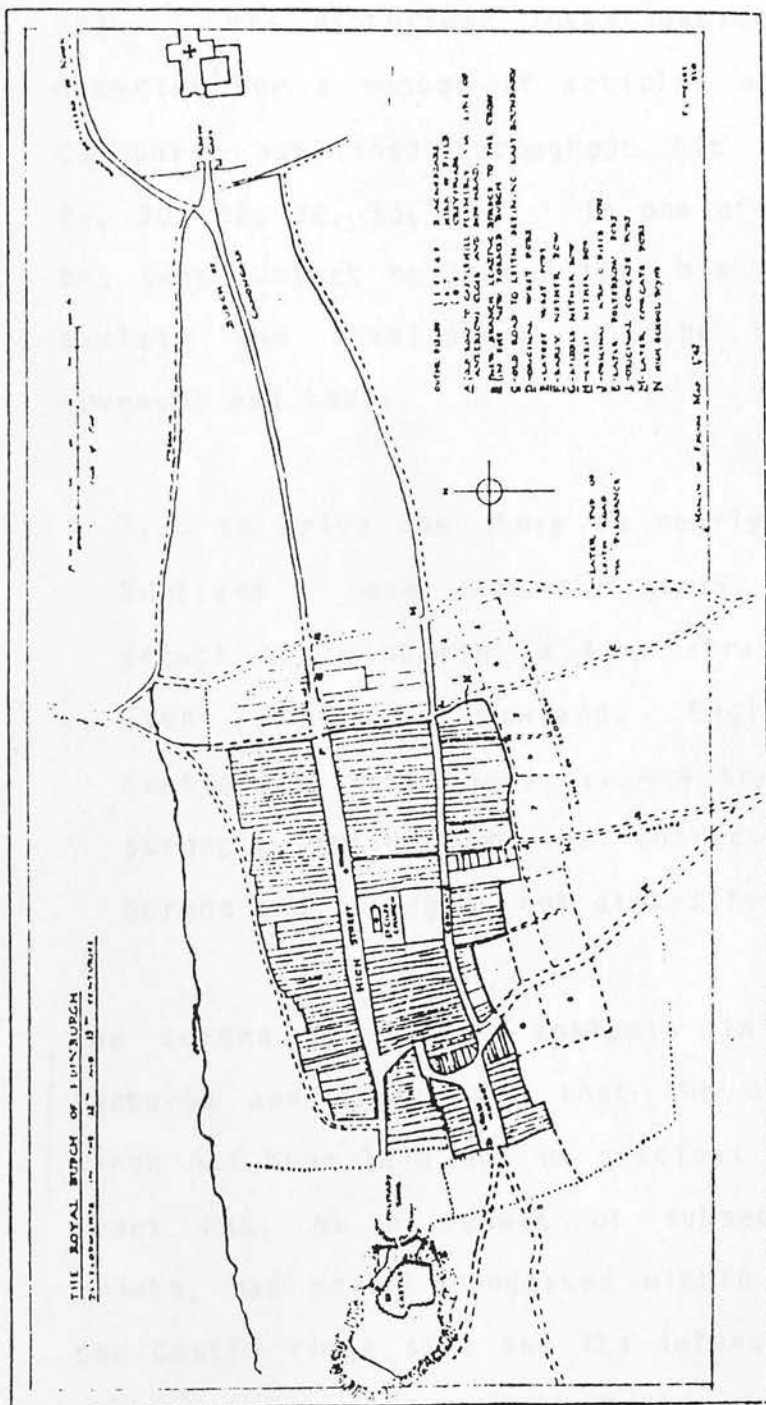


Fig. 5.2. The Burgh of Edinburgh in the 12th and 13th Centuries. F.C. Mears, 1920, Source: MEARS, F.C. (1928), "The Growth of Edinburgh", Journal of the Town Planning Institute Vol. XV, No. 1, November 1928, p.7.

former frontages on the Castlehill, Lawnmarket and West Bow which he had prepared from drawings made by Thomas Hamilton in the early nineteenth century (25, 26). His historical investigations provided the material for a number of articles on the growth of Edinburgh published throughout his career (27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34). In one of his lectures on the same subject he stated that his objective was to explain the development of the modern planning movement and that:

"... to bring the story as nearly as possible to Scotland I have made the story hinge round the growth of Edinburgh, a town strangely compounded with Highland, Lowland, English and even Continental influences ... - a town too which has strongly influenced the character of Scottish burghs and villages, not always for good" (35).

The burden of Mears' analysis in his historical lectures and essays was that the original Medieval burgh had been laid out on gracious "garden village" lines but, as a result of subsequent population growth, had become congested within the confines of the Castle ridge site and its defensive walls. The construction of the North Bridge in the eighteenth century had ushered in a new era of dignified urban

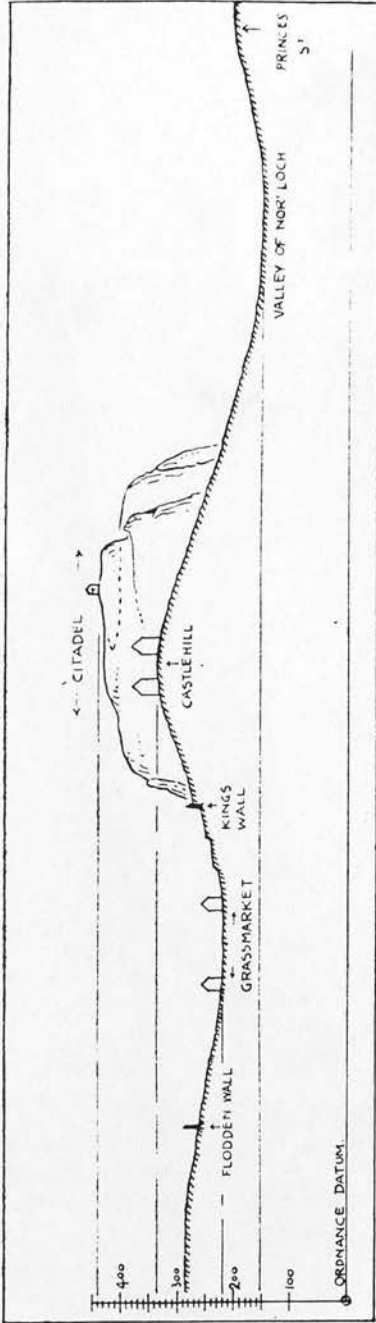


FIG. 4.—Cross section through Grassmarket and Castlehill looking west. The "King's Wall" represents a shrinkage of the town for military reasons. Had this wall followed the original burgh boundary it would have been overlooked from the high ground to the south. Even the Flodden Wall of later times suffered in part from this disadvantage.

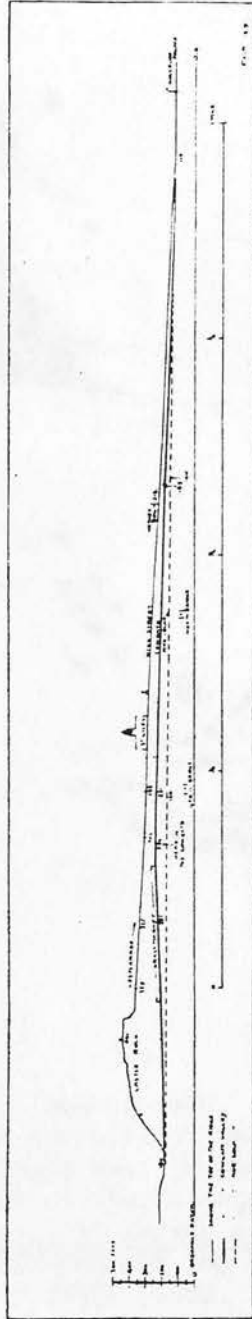


FIG. 5.—Diagram showing relative levels of the Old Town ridge, the Cowgate valley, and the valley of the "Nor' Loch."

FIG. 5.3. Diagrams illustrating the topography of the Old Town. F.C. Mears, 1919. Source: MEARS, F.C. (1919), "Primitive Edinburgh", Scottish Geographical Magazine, p.304.



Fig. 5.4. Medieval Edinburgh. F.C. Mears, 1910. An illustration prepared for the "Cities Exhibition" showing Mears' impression of the burgh within the King's Wall in about 1450, with Holyrood Abbey and the beginnings of the Canongate. Source: GEDDES, P. & MEARS, F.C. (1911), "The Civic Survey of Edinburgh", Transactions of the Town Planning Conference of the Royal Institute of British Architects, 10-15th October 1910, p.552.



EARLY TYPE OF HOUSE IN EDINBURGH.

F.C.M.  
1910

Fig. 5.5. Early type of Edinburgh House with arcaded and galleried front, F.C. Mears, 1910. Source: GEDDES, P. & MEARS, F.C. (1910), "The Survey of Edinburgh at the Town Planning Exhibition", The Builder, 5th November, 1910, p.554.

Fig. 5.5. The Black Lion Inn, an early Edinburgh tenement.  
Source: GEDDES, P. & MEARS, F.C. (1910), "The Survey of Edinburgh at the Town Planning Exhibition", The Builder, 5th November, 1910, p.554.



Fig. 5.6. The Black Turnpike. An early Edinburgh tenement.  
Source: MEARS, F.C. (1929), "The Growth of Edinburgh", in "Edinburgh: 1329-1929", Edinburgh Corporation, Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh.

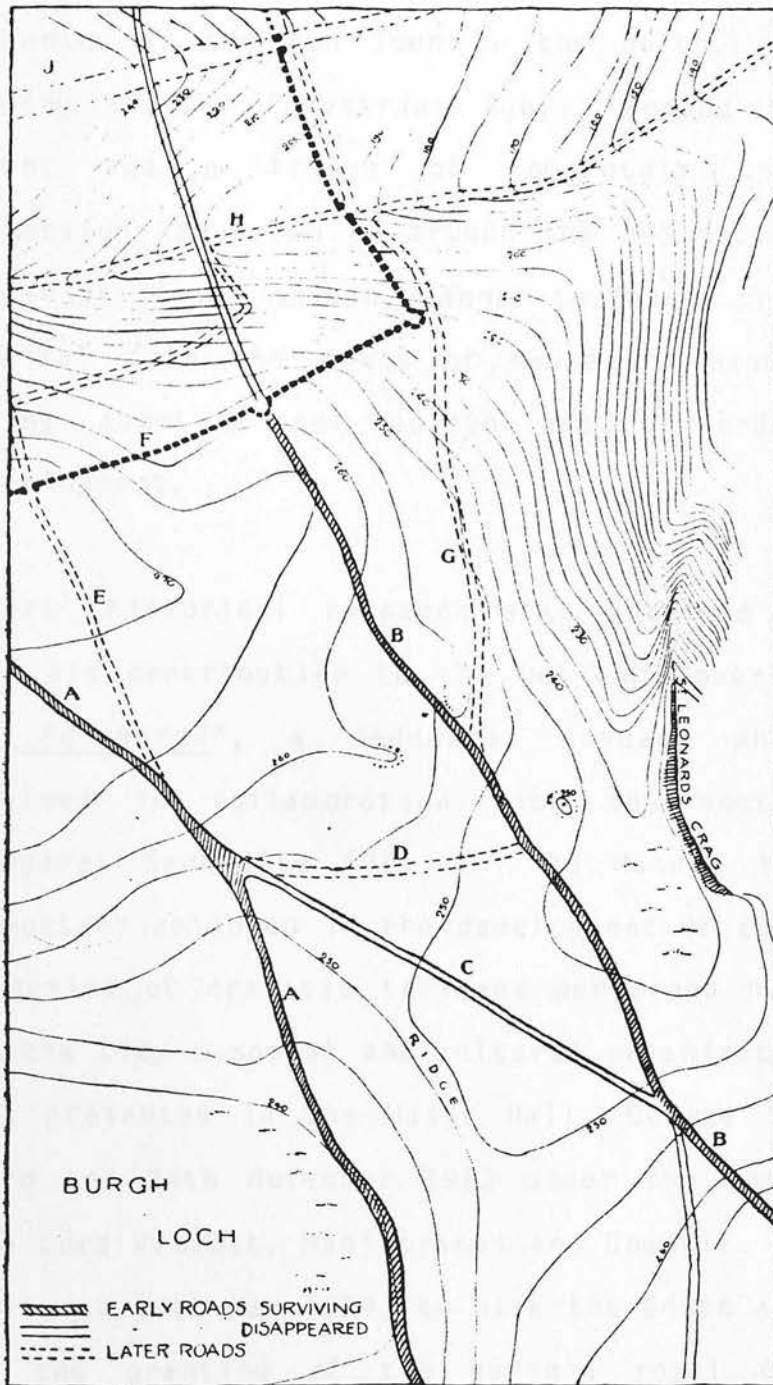


FIG. 6.—Diagram showing south-eastern approaches in relation to contours.

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| A Causewayside and Bristo Street leading to Candlemaker Row.  | D Later line of Crosscauseway. |
| B St. Leonard's Street and road to Leith, now Roxburgh Place. | F Line of Flodden Wall.        |
| C Probable original direct track to the Fort.                 | G Pleasance.                   |
| E Potter Row leading to Mercat Cross.                         | H Cowgate.                     |
| J High Street.  |                                |

Fig. 5.7. The Early Road System. Diagram showing the South-Eastern approaches to the Medieval Burghs, F.C. Mears, 1919. Source: MEARS, F.C. (1919), "Primitive Edinburgh", Scottish Geographical Magazine, p.307.

planning in the New Town to the north. With the coming of the Industrial Age, planning had broken down, and a fringe of completely uncontrolled expansion had grown up around the old city. It was the task of the modern planner to rescue the historic capital from the chaos of haphazard expansion and bring about a new golden age of ordered city development.

Mears' historical research also provided the basis for his contribution to the Outlook Tower's "Masque of Edinburgh", a Geddesian pageant which Mears devised in collaboration with the poetess, Lady Margaret Sackville (36). The Masque illustrated important episodes in the development of Edinburgh in a series of dramatic tableaux performed by a number of the city's social and cultural organizations. It was presented in the Music Hall, George Street, on 23rd and 24th November 1923 under the patronage of the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Council. On 28th, 29th and 30th May 1929, to mark the 600th anniversary of the granting of the burgh's royal charter by Robert the Bruce, a revised and expanded version of the "Masque of Edinburgh" played to enthusiastic audiences of over 3,000 in the Usher Hall (37). In reporting the event, "The Daily Record" concluded that:

"The Masque is a fitting complement to the sexcentenary celebrations, is a great credit to all concerned, and should admirably secure the purpose of its promoters - to cause the citizens to emulate their ancestors, and to take a greater interest in their ancient and historic city" (38).

Another project intended to encourage the citizens of Edinburgh to "take a greater interest in their ancient and historic city" was the restoration of the 16th Century Huntly House on the Canongate as a civic museum. In June 1923, the Town Council agreed to purchase the properties of Huntly House and Acheson House, together with a public house at 142 Canongate and a range of rear properties in Bakehouse Close, for the purposes of preservation and rehousing (39) and in October, probably on the strength of his long association with improvement work in the Old Town, Frank Mears was appointed architect for the reconstruction scheme (40). The buildings acquired by the Corporation were included within the City's Improvement Scheme for Isolated Properties. However, in June 1927, on the advice of the City Architect, Ebenezer J. MacRae, it was decided that the centre block, including Huntly House, should not be restored for housing purposes as originally

intended, but should instead be used to accommodate the City Museum, then housed in the City Chambers (41). In November 1927, Mears submitted plans for the restoration of the property for museum purposes at an estimated cost of £9,500. In their joint report on the proposals, Mears and MacRae argued that:

"Though the cost may appear high, the large extent of the building should be kept in mind, as also the advantage that, through the removal of the City Museum, there is set free in the City Chambers a floor area of about 3,600 square feet in a useful position. Moreover, the increased floor space available in the new museum would make it possible to house exhibits for which there is no accommodation at present, and which are characteristic of old Edinburgh, at the same time retaining in position in the historic Canongate a building of unique and National Interest, which contains portions going back to pre-Reformation days" (42).

The plans were approved by the Town Council early in 1928 and the Huntly House Museum was completed and opened to the public in May 1932 (43). For Mears, who had devoted so much time to the elucidation of

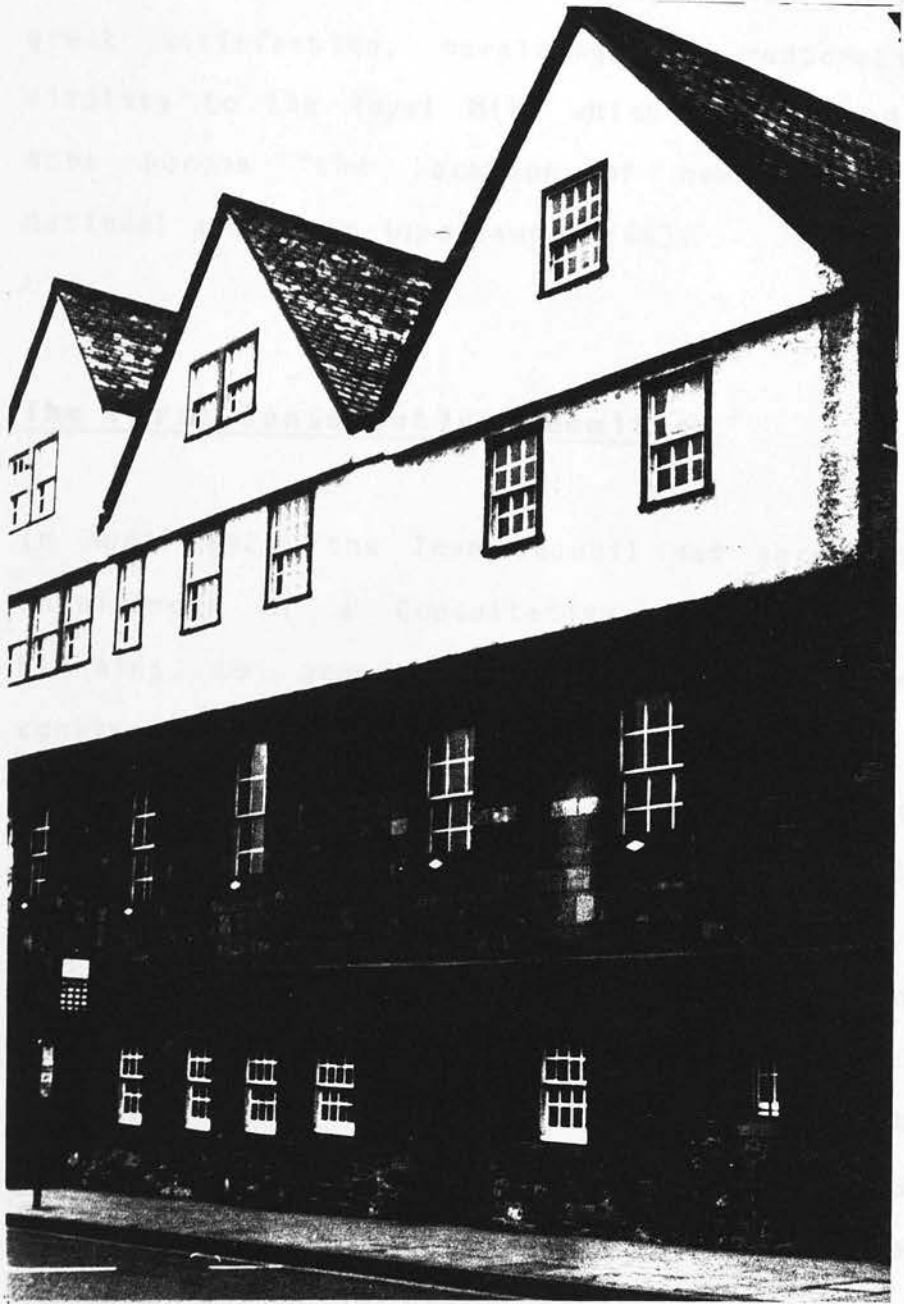


Fig. 5.8. Huntly House in the Canongate, restored by Mears in 1932.

the City's historical development, it was a moment of great satisfaction, heralding the restoration of vitality to the Royal Mile which he believed would soon become "the location of new buildings of national and civic importance" (44).

#### **5.4 The First Consultative Committee**

In April 1923, the Town Council had agreed to the appointment of a Consultative Committee on Town Planning to prepare planning schemes for the consideration of the Council's Housing and Town Planning Committee, and to carry out the regional survey of the city and its environs for which the Outlook Tower had long been pressing (45). The Consultative Committee was to consist of the members of the New Houses Sub-Committee of the Housing and Town Planning Committee, the Convener of the Streets and Buildings Committee and five outside members with knowledge of town planning. Frank Mears was appointed as one of the outside members, along with Mr. David Ronald, Chief Engineer of the Scottish Board of Health; Principal Laurie of Heriot-Watt College; Mr. George Bain, builder; and the architect, Henry F. Kerr, who was also associated with the Outlook Tower (46).

In a report submitted to the Housing and Town Planning Committee in November 1923, the Consultative Committee recommended that a conference should be arranged with the Counties of East, West and Midlothian with a view to preparing a regional plan for future development extending beyond the existing city boundary, for:

"If the Town Plan is to be comprehensive, it is thought that the boundary of the area on the west side may have to be carried as far as Uphall, or even Bathgate, while on the south side it might embrace Loanhead, and on the east side it should stretch as far as Longniddry, where it would join up to an area proposed to be town planned by the Eastern District Committee of the County of East Lothian" (47).

The Consultative Committee considered that the most important element within any regional planning scheme would be provision for an arterial road network of sufficient capacity to carry not only the present but also the prospective volume of traffic. It also recommended that a mining engineer should be engaged to provide expert advice on conditions in the Lothian Coalfield.

Discussions were held with the County Councils in 1924, but these came to nothing. Thomas Whitson, who was Convener of the Housing and Town Planning Committee at the time, afterwards attributed their failure to the reluctance of the Counties to commit themselves to the construction and up-keep of the new roads which the scheme would require (48).

In 1924, Mears submitted plans for the redevelopment of the Tollcross and the Union Canal Basin (49), an area which for him exemplified the muddle and congestion of the Industrial Age. His report emphasized the importance of Tollcross as a traffic junction. He pointed out that this would be further increased in the event of the construction of a new link road between Fountainbridge and Peffermill, which had been proposed to relieve Princes Street by providing a link between Corstorphine and Wallyford and a direct route between Gorgie/Dalry and the eastern coalfield. The most serious traffic bottleneck occurred at Earl Grey Street and, as an alternative to the generally favoured solution of widening on the eastern side, Mears proposed that a new road parallel to the existing thoroughfare should be cut through on the western side of the Methodist Central Hall, on land already largely in the ownership of the Corporation. Displaced residents

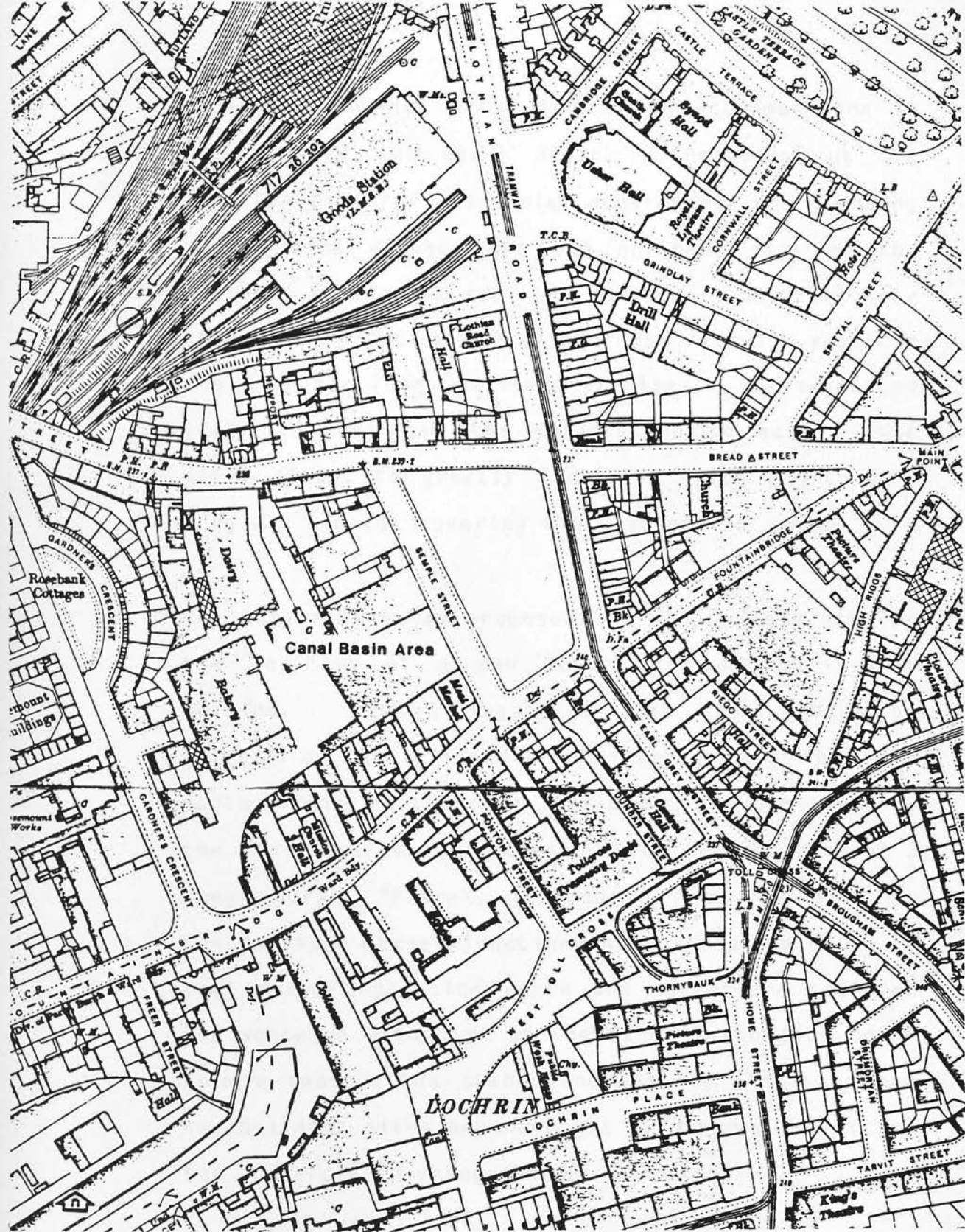


Fig. 5.9. The Tollcross and Canal Basin area, where Mears proposed major road realignment to alleviate traffic congestion in 1924.

could be provided with alternative accommodation on the site of the Canal Basin. Pointing out the opportunities for commercial development and planning gain, Mears argued that the northern part of the "island" created between the new street and Earl Grey Street would become one of the most valuable sites in the city for large business premises. He suggested that it would pay the Corporation to acquire the site, since its greatly increased value might go a long way towards covering the cost of the scheme.

The Corporation had proposed the Canal Basin site as the location of a new Motor bus and Char-a-banc Station. Mears suggested that this should be located on the Lothian Road frontage and that the eastern half of the site should be left open so that the whole improvement scheme would take the form of a long, curved "Place", stretching from Tollcross to the Morrison Street junction, with an island block in the centre separating north and southbound traffic. The westward extension of the Canal Basin site could form a reserve bus stance and parking place and the new building sites beyond might also prove attractive for commercial developments. Finally:

"Port Hamilton, the basin to the west, might be used for public recreation. A winter garden here could be very cheaply constructed and would be an ideally placed resort for the crowded population of this district" (50).

One of the objections to Mears' scheme was that it would have considerably reduced the space for housing electric cars at the Tollcross Tram Depot. The Corporation's Tramways Manager, Mr. Pilcher, therefore proposed an alternative scheme based on the same principle but with a new road to the east of Earl Grey Street, on the line of Riego Street (51).

Although the Consultative Committee continued to meet for some time, neither the Tollcross project nor any of the other schemes which it had under consideration made much progress towards realization. Afterwards, the Town Clerk, Mr. A. Grierson, explained the problem in the following terms:

"This Consultative Committee had a number of meetings and did a certain amount of useful work, but it could not proceed very far without having definite proposals ... placed before it by the technical expert of the Corporation. Unfortunately, however, this expert was the

Director of Housing, and as he was simply overwhelmed with housing work, he was never able to give the attention which was necessary to this special work, and, accordingly, for the time, the Consultative Committee ceased to function" (52).

Since part of the Consultative Committee's remit was to prepare schemes for submission to the Housing and Town Planning Committee, and Mears, at least, was not slow to take advantage of this opportunity, Grierson's version seems less than candid. Mears himself gave a less charitable assessment, writing to Whitson that:

"... while the ... committee was composed of people with expert knowledge, it broke down for two reasons: first because it was nobody's business to interpret and publish the data, and secondly because the officials took care that it should not interfere with their routine. They occupy their positions because they are instinctively administrators, not creators, and as good servants according to their lights they have no time for "wild adventures"" (53).

During the mid 'twenties, the city boundary was extended to embrace an area of about 32,000 acres, ranging from the Pentland Hills to a sea frontage

some ten miles long. Mears considered that this area embraced "a number of magnificent existing and potential parks and parkways, and various well-built and spacious suburbs". However, he was concerned about the form which suburban expansion was taking, pointing out that many of the city's radial roads were "being bordered "ribbon-wise" by small houses" (54).

At a meeting of the Town Council on 1st March 1928, Baillie George Brown and Councillor Thomas Whitson proposed that an expert be consulted as to the possibility and desirability of reclaiming the foreshore at Cramond with a view to future suburban development (55). Mears had doubts about the wisdom of such a scheme as he feared that extensive reclamation at Cramond would lead to problems of erosion elsewhere on the Forth foreshore. Although it is not clear what technical background he had in this area, he had dealt with similar questions in the course of preparing a scheme for the extension of Dublin's port facilities some years previously (56). As an alternative to development at Cramond, he proposed a scheme of land reclamation beyond the Edinburgh Dock at Leith, since:

"Vast quantities of rubbish could be used up there and all with a view to a positive return in

improved port facilities. Apart from new docks, large space will be needed for sidings etc., all on waste ground. Further, there is a good rock foundation for the sea walls, whereas at Cramond all is sand and mud" (57).

However, in October 1928, the Housing and Town Planning Committee was asked to provide a report on the preparation of a town planning scheme for the Cramond district, and "in particular the area along the sea front between Granton and Cramond" (58). In July 1929, when Mears and Geddes were in the final throes of their dispute with the Zionist Organization, Edinburgh Town Council appointed the consultant, Thomas Adams, to report on the area between Granton and Cramond and "the general conditions of the City in relation to Town Planning" (59).

## **5.5 Planning for National and Civic Institutions**

As Hague has observed, the conflict between pressures for modernization and preservation of the historic townscape has presented Edinburgh's planners with a recurring dilemma (60). In the late 'twenties, the problem arose with a vengeance as a result of a number of proposals for major new public buildings in

the City Centre. At a meeting of the Town Council on 5th July 1928, Councillor Whitson called for discussions with H.M. Office of Works and other relevant authorities over proposals for new Government Offices, a new Sheriff Court House, the National Library of Scotland, new Town Council Offices and a new Police Headquarters, in order that adequate consideration could be given to their "proper location, ... public convenience and ... general effect upon the aspect and development of the City" (61). On 28th July, Whitson continued his campaign with an article in "The Scotsman" urging the public to make their views known before plans were finalized (62).

His Majesty's Office of Works had first proposed that the old Calton Hill jail site should be redeveloped to provide Government Offices and a new Sheriff Court building, thus freeing the old Sheriff Court site on George IV Bridge for the erection of the proposed National Library. However, the plan was to precipitate one of Edinburgh's first modern planning controversies as opposition mounted to the removal of the Sheriff Court from its historic location in the vicinity of Parliament Square and to the loss of the fine old Sheriff Court building itself (63). A number of the city's most influential institutions and pressure groups joined in the protests and the

Royal Institute of British Architects gave its support to a call for a general survey and an architectural competition to select a building design worthy of the Calton Hill site (64).

In an article published in November 1928, Mears wrote that:

"Many of us think that the main solution of the reconstruction problem will be found, not in rehousing, often unsatisfactory and expensive at best, but in a bold programme of development of the whole area as a sort of national and educational acropolis, where history and tradition may unite with administration and education. Clearances and improvements if thoughtfully considered will provide room for new public buildings. The present evil of the smoke which tends to collect in the lee of the ridges will shortly be cured. The great danger is that piecemeal reconstruction of dwellings may hinder the revitalising of the Old City as a centre of Scottish culture" (65).

Thomas Whitson was elected Lord Provost in 1929, and in November he called together a meeting of "representative gentlemen" to consider the planning



Fig. 5.10. Thomas B. Whitson, elected Lord Provost of Edinburgh in 1929.

of the central area of the city as a whole. As a result, a Committee was established which drew representation from many of Edinburgh's most influential institutions. Mears, as representative of Edinburgh Architectural Association, was appointed to a twenty-strong working sub-committee. However, the familiar tensions between creative designer and cautious administration soon re-emerged. Mears quickly became frustrated by the Representative Committee's lack of progress and wrote in exasperation to Whitson that:

"This new committee is not even composed of people with special knowledge of town planning - most of them are merely representative of elected or other administrative bodies - and they are there primarily to guard specific interests. So we have the hopeless condition of a working sub-committee of yourself, two architects, and a host of solid officials. Not only have these latter failed to produce, after all these months, a single idea, they have not provided a single element of information, either from their departments or from the Bodies which were circularised.

But the trouble goes further, for they quite naturally protect themselves behind the scenes against any idea which may conflict with their settled policy - and the result can only be, more, or less, good natured wrangling ..." (66).

Mears felt the need to state the case for a wider conception of planning than that implicit within existing statutory practice and feared that, under the restraining influence of the Representative Committee, an important opportunity was being lost:

"We shall never be allowed in these conditions to consider the wood - for every tree will be a subject of detailed consideration - the months and years will slip by and all our effort will be wasted. This is not a sudden bad tempered effusion. I have been thinking a lot about it, and have decided in my own mind that if I am to make use of my years of preparation and to take advantage of a present lull in the office, I must make the drastic move of writing out my views on the whole town planning project independently ... The City can then take it or leave it, but at least the larger view of town planning will be ventilated" (67).

Mears had considerable experience of planning for national and civic institutions in Dublin and Jerusalem. He had already given detailed consideration to the reconstruction of Edinburgh's central area and carried out a survey of sites for public institutions while serving on the Consultative Committee in 1924. In memoranda submitted at that time, he had made clear his view that within the Old Town wards of St. Giles and the Canongate, the needs of national and civic institutions should take priority. The vision of a reconstructed Edinburgh which he offered was founded on an appeal to civic pride and romantic nationalism. The area's existing inhabitants were never directly mentioned. "Life" and "vitality" were to be restored to the central area by replacing decaying slums with vigorously expanding institutions. His view was that "housing may soon cease to be the important matter in this area", but "The needs of administration and education are increasing and should be given a very prominent place in Central Reconstruction Schemes" (58).  
For:

"The "Old Town" in spite of some encroachment on its area by the older Industrialism remains yet the seat of Scottish Law and our University as well as the Municipal centre of Edinburgh. Its

historic relics and its traditions draw visitors from all the world. In the latter period of its decay it seemed likely to lose its traditional character altogether - but during the last 30 years there has arisen a new regard for the value of this old nerve centre of our City, so that today it becomes possible to consider how we may plan for the orderly expansion of the great National and Civic Institutions which have clung to their old sites" (69).

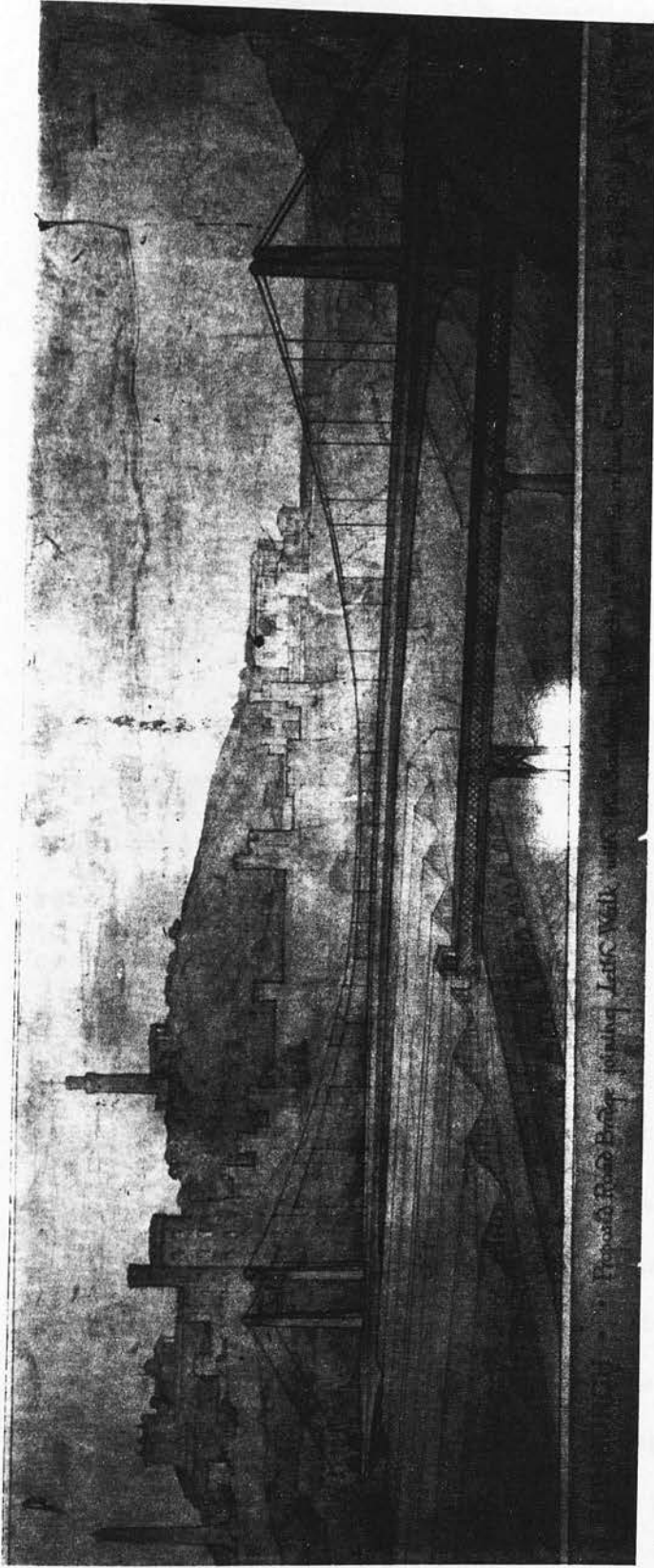
Mears drew on his earlier work in preparing his new report and, in March 1931, with the sub-committee's "tentative approval", he presented his preliminary suggestions for the development and replanning of the central area of the city to the full Representative Committee (70). The report proposed a concerted scheme of reconstruction over a period of about 50 years with the aim of creating a "renewed Historic Edinburgh". This was to be achieved by planning for the orderly expansion of public institutions which in the past had been allowed to establish themselves in a haphazard fashion, "interspersed with decaying dwellings, breweries and workshops and badly arranged streets".



Fig. 5.11. City of Edinburgh: Development Plan of the Central Area. F.C. Mears, 1931.

Mears' strategy included proposals for the modernization of the road network which he believed would both ease congestion and lead to the revitalization of rundown areas such as St. Leonards, thus securing a return for the Corporation under the betterment clauses of the town planning legislation. He argued that the difficult topography of the Old Town with its major bridging works actually conferred advantages in terms of vertical traffic separation and suggested that the system be extended by constructing a new low level bridge over the Cowgate between the Pleasance and St. Mary Street and another over the northern valley to the east of Waverly Station, thus providing a new link between St. Leonards and Leith Walk. He also advocated the creation of an improved east-west route through the Cowgate and West Port and, as Hague has pointed out, his proposals in combination can be seen as the eastern and southern elements of an inner ring road (71).

On the controversial question of sites for institutions, Mears argued that the site of the old Sheriff Court on George IV Bridge was too cramped to accommodate the National Library. Instead, he favoured its location in the block occupied by the Police Headquarters to the east of Parliament Square.



Proposed Road Bridge crossing Leith Walk

Fig. 5.12 Proposed new road bridge providing a link between Leith Walk and the South Side in order to relieve congestion at the G.P.O. and North Bridge. F.C. Mears, 1931. Courtesy of Sir Frank Mears & Partners, Edinburgh.

He also considered that the Calton Jail site was too small to accommodate both Government Offices and the Sheriff Court. In 1924 he had suggested that the Sheriff Court might occupy the island block between Bank Street and St. Giles Street (72), but in 1931 he proposed that this site should be used to provide a western extension to the City Chambers as well as a new Police Headquarters (73).

Mears' preliminary suggestions included the creation of a "College Mile" running along the ridge to the south of the Cowgate and Grassmarket, parallel to the "Business Mile" of the New Town and the historic Royal Mile on the Castle ridge. His plan involved the consolidation on the South Side of educational and medical institutions which, although largely administratively independent of each other, together constituted a "greater university".

The concept, which Mears had been developing over a period of twenty years, had its origins in ideas originally put forward at the time of the "Cities Exhibition". In 1910, Geddes had called for an extension of the academic initiatives which he had promoted through the Town and Gown Association to create a collegiate precinct running from the Castle to Holyrood, "on lines analogous to those of High

Street of Oxford" (74). Three years later, Mears had prepared a sketch plan for the expansion of Edinburgh University which included proposals for a Lister Institute on Lauriston Place and Halls of Residence in George Square (75). By 1924, he was writing of the development of a "collegiate mile", stretching from the College of Art in the west to the Teacher Training College in the east, as an alternative to the removal of the University to "the remote slopes of Blackford Hill" (76, 77).

Mears' fully mature scheme involved the expansion of the University eastwards into the decayed residential area beyond Nicholson Street, around a system of avenues, gateways and quadrangles. However, although institutional needs were to take precedence, he did concede that it was "neither practical nor desirable to plan for the wholesale removal of the population of central Edinburgh" (78). The Old Town was potentially a "healthy area" for people to live and rehousing should therefore be integrated with the general plan.

In the material which they prepared to accompany the "Cities Exhibition", Geddes and Mears had argued that the rival railway companies of the 19th Century had caused serious damage to the fabric of the city,

blighting large areas from Lothian Road to Gorgie and between Calton and Leith, and preventing cross connections between radial roads (79). In 1921, in anticipation of the fusion of the two railway companies then operating in Scotland, Mears had written to "The Evening News" suggesting that the opportunity should be taken to rationalize Edinburgh's railway network by concentrating traffic on a redeveloped Caledonian Station at the West End of Princes Street and retaining only a small commuter station at Waverly (80). At that time his proposal was dismissed as "visionary", but in his 1931 report he renewed his call for a single "Union" station at the West End, pointing out that much of the Waverly site could thus be released to provide an exhibition hall, market and winter garden, as well as additional open space in an extension to Princes Street Gardens. His preliminary suggestions also included his earlier proposal for a central bus station on the Canal Basin site on Lothian Road. In addition, he made proposals for conserving and enhancing the Royal Mile and improving the approaches to Holyrood Palace; a cause which he had first taken up before the First World War.

As Hague has pointed out, in some ways Mears' plan accorded well with Edinburgh's peculiar social

structure (81). The main beneficiaries would have been the national and civic institutions which played such a dominant role in the life of the city and which could themselves be seen as the contemporary expression of that sense of historic identity to which Mears appealed. Yet the preliminary suggestions, like so many of his earlier proposals, fell victim to prevarication and neglect. Certainly, the plan was presented to the Corporation at a particularly inauspicious time, only shortly before the collapse of the Labour Government as a result of the financial crisis of 1931. In the prevailing economic climate, Mears' far-reaching scheme, calling for a co-ordinated commitment of resources over an extended period, held little attraction either for the City, its major institutions, or its rate-conscious citizens. Thomas Adams and Colleagues, who submitted their final report on town planning to the Council six months later, were able to take account of the altered economic circumstances and therefore proposed a more modest and pragmatic package of proposals (82). They contrasted their approach with that of Mears in the following terms:

"Mr. Mears approaches the problem along different lines than those we have followed. He presents ideas based on going to the "limit of our

imagination" and "looking forward 50 years". In our approach we are compelled to limit ourselves to the consideration of what is practicable in the immediate future. Both approaches have their value but their difference has to be recognised so that they may not be regarded as in any sense competitive. Under present economic conditions the question is what can be done at the least cost to prevent the evil consequences of haphazard growth, and to secure improvement of traffic conditions and regulation of land development. To carry out a limited programme in keeping with these conditions would not interfere with any more elaborate schemes to be developed later but, on the contrary, would result in providing the foundations necessary for more extended operations in the future" (83).

Thus, as with the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, straitened economic circumstances favoured pragmatic short-term planning rather than the grander long-term vision advocated by Mears.

## 5.6 Mears as a Teacher

Mears had been lecturing in architecture at Edinburgh College of Art on a part-time basis since 1918.

When, in December 1924, he left for Jerusalem to carry out further work on the Hebrew University, his teaching duties were taken over by his friend, Charles D. Carus-Wilson, who also agreed to look after his architectural interests in Edinburgh (84). Their association continued on an informal basis until Mears' return to Palestine in 1928, when Carus-Wilson again maintained the practice in Edinburgh and Mears felt obliged to offer him a partnership (85, 86). Carus-Wilson had served in Greece and the Middle East during the Great War and was an expert in classical architecture. In contrast to Mears he had a fiery and explosive personality but the two men worked successfully together until 1936, when Carus-Wilson left for the United States (87).

Mears began formally to lecture in planning on his return from Jerusalem in 1925. In 1932, he was instrumental in establishing a separate Department of Planning under the architect planner, James MacGregor. From 1934, the new Department offered one-year Diploma courses to senior architecture and planning students. Mears remained Special Adviser and Lecturer to the Department for many years (88, 89). He was not a good lecturer. His delivery was unexciting and he frequently strayed from the point (90, 91). Many of his ideas were regarded as

eccentric and impractical and, in consequence, his students nick-named him "Bats" (92). Nevertheless, even allowing for the obligations of obituarists, it is clear from the reminiscences written by former students on his death that many regarded him with considerable respect and affection. Robert H. Matthew, who went on to become a senior civil servant at the Department of Health for Scotland, wrote:

"For two generations, Mears, by teaching and practice, has been the inspiration of those privileged to work with him, and of a greater circle to whom personally he can only have been a legend. With students his flashes of illumination - the twist of thought and the unexpected but entirely logical deduction - are long remembered. Leading a planning team, his reserve was at times profound, but inevitably broken by sudden humour and devastating exposure of humbug, which he found in many quarters. He was, however, the gentlest of counsellors, encouraging - perhaps especially so - to the young and untried" (93).

Rendel Govan, who was later to become a partner, wrote in a similar vein that:

"Many of the now accepted techniques of Scottish planning were worked out in his office or with the students of Edinburgh College of Art ... How well I remember history becoming a living subject when he took it over in the middle of term! And those telling phrases, blurted out with difficulty (for he was no facile lecturer) - "like stranded hulks floating on treacle", describing a badly laid-out housing scheme of out-of-scale blocks. And how often the "Old Man" made his students feel that they were senile and he a stripling in mind" (94).

Mears was more relaxed in studio sessions with his students than in formal lectures. He had a quiet but incisive wit which could be used to inflict deadly criticism. One of the more frequent butts of his humour was the City Architect, Ebenezer MacRae, whom he had known since their schooldays together at George Watson's College. Mears believed that MacRae had no appreciation of the infrastructural requirements of the schemes he prepared and was particularly scathing about his work at Niddrie and Craigmillar where large housing schemes had been constructed without adequate social facilities (95, 96).

## 5.7 A Growing Planning Lobby

During the nineteen-thirties, Edinburgh experienced a building boom which resulted in a major expansion of suburban housing in both the public and private sectors. Concern about the physical form this development was taking fuelled a growing campaign for the sort of comprehensive planning which Mears had long been advocating. Pressure was effectively maintained throughout the decade by means of a series of exhibitions, public meetings, conferences and articles in the local press; with staff, students and graduates of the College of Art frequently playing a prominent part.

In the early thirties, the case was put by an author styling himself "Acropolis", a term which Mears himself had used to describe his scheme for the reconstruction of the Old Town. The anonymous writer argued that:

"A well-organised town planning scheme for a whole city brings a betterment of conditions to every citizen at little cost. All that requires to be paid for, over and above present expenditure, is the preparation of the survey, report, and master

plan. This master plan forms a guide to the expenditure of money on public works, schemes of building, and site planning, as they are part of this greater whole, and as such should be controlled.

This control saves money because the suitability of a site or location of a building relative to its intended function is thoroughly examined before its construction. Had such a scheme of planning and control been established and in force in Edinburgh, with areas zoned for industry, business, residence, recreation, etc., each distinct and separate from the other, it is surely most obvious that we should not have had the various "battles of sites" with which Edinburgh has been plagued" (97).

By December 1932, a writer identifying himself only by the initials R.G.C. was urging that:

"What Edinburgh needs is a 15-year plan of development on scientific lines. If the Corporation and Mr. Mears can be encouraged to continue on the lines on which they have so well begun, then we may look forward with confidence to that city of splendid buildings, of dignified

civic centres, and well-planned thoroughfares that is the Edinburgh of the future" (98).

In 1936, Mears was still propounding the diagnosis and prescription contained within his preliminary suggestions. In a luncheon address to Edinburgh City Business Club, he expressed the hope that the Corporation would find the "breathing space" to adopt a more comprehensive approach to planning "once the most urgent part of the rehousing programme was overtaken" (99). He derived encouragement from the movement to preserve and develop the relatively unspoilt piece of coastline between Granton and Cramond and the parkway developments along the Braid and Figgate Burns. On the question of road improvements, he proposed the revival of a scheme first put forward by the Consultative Committee of 1924:

"to by-pass Princes Street by making a new road between Roseburn and Belford Bridge and thence proceeding eastwards to Queen Street" (100).

Mears ended by intimating that a group of senior students and research fellows at the College of Art had been carrying out a study of the planning problems of the city, the results of which were to be exhibited to the public early in the new year.

For the previous two years, a group of Andrew Grant Fellows in the College's Department of Town Planning had been conducting a detailed survey of the city. The project was started by W.T. Sutherland and Robert H. Matthew and continued by J.D. Carnegie and James Galletly, and aspects of the work had already been displayed at the annual exhibitions of the School of Architecture in 1935 and 1936, attracting a measure of attention from the public and the press (101, 102, 103). The completed project, entitled "A Survey of the Present Conditions of Living in Edinburgh and an Analysis of the Town Planning Organisation", which exhibited in the Royal Scottish Academy between 30th January and 6th March under the auspices of the Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Water-Colours (104, 105). In the guide to the exhibition, Robert H. Matthew argued that:

"Planning, to be effective, must be comprehensive,  
but no such plan for the whole city has yet been  
proposed.

The basis of all sound planning is the preparation of a complete survey of the city. This survey would cover the method of growth, scenery, topography, the nature and direction of traffic, distribution of industry, housing, historical buildings etc., and in fact the study of every aspect of present-day conditions and activities.

With this survey completed, and only on the basis of this information, can planning be attempted, and only then under the guidance of the expert trained in this complicated and highly-specialised art of civic planning.

Planning without knowledge is useless and wasteful, but planning, with knowledge and inspiration, means order and beauty, and may regain that pride of civic dignity that was Edinburgh's, and is surely worthy of this twentieth century capital of Scotland" (106).

As Hague has observed, the prescription offered was essentially technocratic and apolitical, thus avoiding any direct confrontation with the social and economic forces which were shaping the modern city (107).

During the course of the exhibition, a major public meeting on the town planning of Edinburgh was organized in the R.S.A. Galleries by the Women Citizens' Association and the local branch of the National Council of Women. Around eighty people attended, including representatives from a large number of the city's institutions, pressure groups and amenity societies, as well as the City Architect,

the City Engineer and several town councillors (108). In opening the public discussion, Mears once again reiterated his plea for a comprehensive plan for the central area, injecting a new note of urgency with the claim that:

"The emergency is upon us, and mistakes are going to be made, if not every day, every year, for there is no plan for development" (109).

In his remarks, he was critical of the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1932 which he believed were inhibiting town planning schemes by placing too great a burden of bureaucracy on local authorities. He considered that the procedures for the notification of third parties were excessively onerous and "in a city like Edinburgh would require a new Town Clerk's Department to serve the thousands of people with notices". Instead, he suggested that a simpler procedure such as advertising should be introduced.

In addition, he articulated the complaint against public apathy which anguished planners have repeated ever since. Pointing out that few people had been moved to view the plans for the development of the north-west of the city which had recently been on

display at the City Chambers, he asserted that it was unfair to throw stones at the Council after the event if no-one took the opportunity to find out what they were up to beforehand.

Despite the considerable public interest which was aroused by the events of the Royal Scottish Academy, the sustained campaign of the planning lobby continued to have little practical effect on the Progressive Town Council which drew support from Edinburgh's property and business community and was strongly committed to keeping down the rates. In 1939, in an address to a joint meeting of the Saltire Society and Edinburgh University Fine Arts Society, the nationalist architect, Robert Hurd, who had worked in Mears' office for a period in the early 'thirties, was still calling for a comprehensive survey of the Old Town and an equally comprehensive programme of improvement, saying:

"That survey and programme has been sketched out by the Edinburgh town planner, Mr. Frank Mears, some years ago; but the City Authorities are far too attached to the opportunist policy of carrying out improvements piecemeal to pay proper attention to it, and so as far as I know, it is locked away in the City Chambers in the hope that it may be forgotten" (110).

## 5.8 The Advisory Committee on City Development

With the advent of War, however, the balance began to tilt decisively in favour of Edinburgh's well-organized planning lobby, as local government came under increasing pressure to conform with the new planning ideology of the State. By 1941, Mears was confident of the changed circumstances. Referring to the recent Barlow Commission Report, he declared to the Edinburgh Conference of the Geographical Association that the future of large cities was now "in the melting pot". He pointed out that:

"The Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population had declared against further civic growth at the expense of smaller settlements, and Lord Reith was setting up an organisation to consider industry, the distribution of population, and the growth of big towns in relation to agriculture and a better balanced distribution of population. The Government had clearly declared that local planning schemes were to be brought into relation to general national policy, and not any longer to be worked out as independent problems" (111).

Responding to the mood of the times with a new emphasis on industry, he claimed that the future of Edinburgh lay in the Midlothian coalfield, the docks at Leith and the city's road and rail communications, as well as in her educational assets and local industries.

As the tide of the War started to turn, the Town Council at last began to respond to pressures to address the problems of "Reconstruction". Early in 1943, the Lord Provost, Sir William Darling, proposed that a town planning exhibition should be held in the City Chambers to show the past development of the city, the town planning schemes which the Council had already approved, and "something of the plans for the future" (112). On 6th May 1943, the Town Council approved by a large majority a recommendation by the Lord Provost's Committee that an Advisory Committee independent of the Town Council be appointed to report on the planning of the city (113). The Committee appointed was made up of three of the city's leading citizens. Its Chairman was James L.M. Clyde, K.C. (later Lord Clyde) and the remaining members were the former Lord Provost, now Sir Thomas Whitson, and Sir Donald Pollock, the Rector of Edinburgh University. Their terms of reference were not to prepare a plan themselves but:

"To report upon the general considerations governing the development and redevelopment of the City as the Capital of Scotland and the preparation of planning schemes in relation thereto. In particular to survey the influences which have tended to the creation of the existing character of the City and its place in the national and local administration, the extent to which these influences are still operative and the circumstances and considerations which now exist and which may be anticipated to arise; to consult with persons and bodies whose activities and interests may be associated with the development and redevelopment of the City; and to make recommendations thereanent" (114).

The Committee began by inviting "all bodies or persons interested in the welfare of the City" to make representations. They particularly sought observations on "the questions of preservation of characteristics, satellite towns, industries, rebuilding of cleared areas, transport, public utilities and national buildings" (115).

While the report of the Advisory Committee was being prepared, an exhibition on the lines earlier proposed by the Lord Provost was held in the National Gallery

under the auspices of the Corporation, the College of Art and Edinburgh Architectural Association (116). In a lecture given during the course of the exhibition, Mears indicated the lines on which he hoped that the city would be developed. He envisaged "a noble ring road bounding the main city on the south and west", and "a real green belt - not yards, but miles wide - with cornfields, dairy farms and market gardens". There would be expanded communities in the small towns such as Bonnyrigg, Dalkeith and South Queensferry at the southern end of a Forth Bridge and he forecast the purification of the polluted Rivers Almond and Esk and the coastline developed for holiday-makers.

The vision which Mears offered bore more than a passing resemblance of Howard's Garden City, yet, nonetheless, was in tune with wartime idealism. He expressed the view that Edinburgh was on the threshold of a great adventure and, perhaps emboldened by the prevailing mood, allowed himself the use of language which might have sounded dangerously political in the interwar years. It would be useless to plan the future on the lines of the recent past, he claimed, for "the period of unrestricted competition and exploitation" had passed, or was rapidly nearing its end (117, 118).

The inclusion of his old friend and collaborator, Thomas Whitson, on the Advisory Committee ensured that Mears' influence on its deliberations was substantial and, in addition, individuals and organizations associated with the Geddesian tradition were prominent amongst those who responded to its request for observations. The report itself, issued in the autumn of 1943, accepted the historical analysis of Edinburgh's ills which had been propounded by Mears since the days of "Cities Exhibition". Its tone was frankly millenarian and there was more than a hint of romantic nationalism in its emphasis on Edinburgh as "the historic capital of Scotland"; yet it was pragmatic in its objectives, arguing that:

"It would be easy to produce an idealised conception of an Edinburgh of the future which might stir a momentary gleam of enthusiasm and then moulder in some dusty pigeon-hole to await the munificence of some unknown benefactor, the passing of some problematical legislation, or the realisation of some industrial or economic change which would secure its achievement.

We consider we would be doing a disservice to Edinburgh in approaching the problem from this angle. What we have tried to do is to learn from

the errors of the past, and from the hopes and aspirations of the citizens of today, what principles must be adopted to enable Edinburgh to fulfil its destiny in the future" (119).

The Committee saw the main problem as one of "decongesting" the older parts of the city while at the same time allowing for the proper development of suburban areas. Within the historic city, rehabilitation was to be preferred to rebuilding but there was also a need for considerable new housing beyond the existing city boundary. Taking its cue from the Barlow Commission, it opposed further large-scale peripheral expansion. Instead, like Mears, it believed that further growth should be accommodated by consolidating existing settlements rather than creating new satellite towns around the capital.

The construction of a Forth Road Bridge and an outer ring road were regarded as essential elements in the development of Edinburgh's communications network and within the city the Committee supported the provision of a new route from Leith Walk to the Pleasance along the lines which Mears had advocated in 1931. In the central area, it endorsed the concept of the "College Mile" and called for a complete survey of the Royal Mile by a Committee of architectural and antiquarian

experts with a view to reproducing "as faithfully as possible the atmosphere of the old street" and not merely preserving a few individual houses (120).

## 5.9 An Old Adversary

Meanwhile, officials at the Department of Health for Scotland were taking steps to ensure that the Corporation followed up the recommendations of the Clyde Report with practical action. In particular, they were anxious that surveys should be undertaken to complement the work of the Central and South-East Scotland Regional Planning Advisory Committee which had been set up at the instigation of the Secretary of State, Tom Johnston, with Mears as its "consulting architect" (121, 122).

The main responsibility for Edinburgh's town planning still rested with the City Engineer, Mr. William Macartney, who had only one qualified planner on his staff. In June 1944, Department of Health officials visited the City Engineer's Department to investigate progress with survey work. They discussed the situation with the Deputy Engineer, Mr. Haldane, and afterwards reported that:

"He seemed to regard surveys as of minor importance, particularly having in view Mr. Macartney's extensive knowledge of the details of the whole City ...

It is clear that both Mr. Macartney and Mr. Haldane are well satisfied with the present position of planning for the City, which position is from our standpoint extremely unsatisfactory" (123).

The civil servants feared that, if the existing conditions were allowed to continue, the city would not be planned as a whole. They considered that the most satisfactory long-term solution would be the establishment of a separate Planning Department but noted that:

"... the City Engineer, Mr. Macartney, is known to be strongly opposed to this, and it would probably be very difficult to persuade the City to take such a step, at least until Mr. Macartney retires in about 4 years time. The City Architect, Mr. Macrae is also likely to retire before very long and the chances of setting up a Planning Department would be stronger when both Mr. Macartney and Mr. Macrae have retired" (124).

In the meantime, it was considered that the best option was to persuade the Town Council to appoint a Planning Consultant, whose "views would certainly carry more weight with the City than those of a Planning Officer in a position junior to that of Mr. Macartney and Mr. Macrae". However, perhaps believing that Mears was already fully committed with the Central and South-East Scotland Survey, the officials went on to conclude that:

"There is ... no-one in Edinburgh at present of sufficient standing to undertake the work and it would be necessary to consider the appointment of one of the consultants at present practicing in England" (125).

The Town Council eventually succumbed to central government pressure and appointed Patrick Abercrombie to prepare a civic survey and plan for the city. Although heavily involved in the work of the Central and South-East Scotland Planning Advisory Committee, Mears was deeply hurt by what he regarded as a slight, particularly as he regarded Abercrombie as a "superficial formula man peddling a standard recipe". On the other hand, Abercrombie's more flamboyant style seems to have appealed to the city fathers, some of whom regarded Mears as ponderous and indecisive (126, 127).

Afterwards, Mears tended to distance himself from the planning controversies of the city. His final involvement was with a scheme for the development of the eastern end of the Meadows as an alternative to the University's plan to redevelop George Square. He proposed that the loss of open space involved should be compensated by clearing the property between Montague Street and Rankeilor Street to create a Parkway stretching to the King's Park. His sketch plans were submitted to the Lord Provost in January 1951, but he declined to become publicly involved in the debate over the University's future expansion (128, 129).

In 1952, in his last public observations on the planning of the city, he wrote that:

"The housing and planning problems of the last 50 or 60 years have been very difficult. The City has been faced with the fact that the old well-planned areas hold but a fraction of the people. Fortunately, perhaps, the houses in these areas do not lend themselves to speculative subdivision, for where this has been tried the results have been bad. Fortunately, too, the character of the site of the city has caused areas of acute congestion to be localised and so admit of systematic treatment, and thus we may hope that

ere long this tragic aspect of Edinburgh will be a thing of the past. Meantime, general town-planning is not being neglected, though it comes too late to control the spread of suburban sprawl which began after 1918.

Yet the noble Old Town, with its unrivalled sites for civic and national institutions, the spacious character of the eighteenth century extensions, afford hope that the New Edinburgh of the future will be worthy of its great past" (130).

For Mears, as for Geddes, Edinburgh was the principal physical manifestation of Scottish cultural achievement - the archetypal Scottish burgh. In advancing plans for its future development he combined the conventional case for planning as the means of ensuring economy, rationality and order in development with a more emotional appeal to civic pride and romantic nationalism. His principal objective was to secure the continuity of the historic city through the planned renewal and expansion of national and civic institutions and the development of essential modern infrastructure. If both economic exigencies and the problematic relationship between freelance creative designer and planning advocate and cautious municipal authority

Notes

rendered his lofty vision distressingly difficult to realize, it nevertheless held considerable appeal for a wider public during a period of growing national self-consciousness.

1. HUGHSON, J. H. (1925). December 1925. "Garman in Old England", Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, 18, 212.
2. HUGHSON, J. H. (1925). February 1925. "Garman in Old England", Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, 18, 212.
3. HUGHSON, J. H. (1925). July 1925. "Garman in Old England", Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, 18, 212.
4. HUGHSON, J. H. (1925). August 1925. "Garman in Old England", Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, 18, 212.
5. HUGHSON, J. H. (1925). September 1925. "Garman in Old England", Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, 18, 212.
6. HUGHSON, J. H. (1925). October 1925. "Garman in Old England", Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, 18, 212.
7. HUGHSON, J. H. (1925). November 1925. "Garman in Old England", Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, 18, 212.
8. HUGHSON, J. H. (1925). December 1925. "Garman in Old England", Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, 18, 212.
9. HUGHSON, J. H. (1925). January 1926. "Garman in Old England", Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, 19, 212.
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## 6.1 A Growing National Consciousness

Harvie has pointed out that, until the first decade of this century, the politics which most directly affected the everyday lives of people in Scotland was that conducted at a local level; through the institutions of the four cities, the burghs and the 900-odd parishes.

"These traditional units had, during the nineteenth century, continually acquired new powers ... The result was that the dominance of local elite groups was maintained: landowners, farmers, ministers, and schoolmasters in the parishes; businessmen, rentiers, and shopkeepers in the burghs. After the 1860s this elite had extended the interventionist powers of local government to cope with the social pressures of industrialisation and to contain the urban working class, until a "civic consciousness" had been created which endorsed, both in the theory of such as Edward Caird and Patrick Geddes, and in the practice of bodies like the City of Glasgow Improvement Trust, extensive measures of "municipal socialism". Much of this ideology was also common to the "labour aristocracy" and even

to the socialist movement, although it stopped short of any intervention which seriously affected the distribution of wealth and power. Yet it was under stress - from lack of civic power to tackle housing, the most obdurate city problem, from the growing insecurity of skilled labour, and from the developing power of the state" (1).

Employing Geddesian terminology, the Checklands describe the Scotland of 1900 as containing four principal sub-economies or "city-regions" which, while showing a common national heritage, differed "geographically, meteorologically, racially and spiritually". However, they conclude that:

"... though each of the four was distinct, and consciously so, in another sense all four city-regions comprised a single phenomenon - they were the Scottish expression of the new urban age" (2).

This awareness of a common national identity was to assume increasing ideological importance during the course of the present century in response to the progressive centralization of political and economic power within the British State and the growing cultural dominance of London. Trends which were already evident by the latter half of the nineteenth

century were further accelerated by the emergency measures introduced to rationalize and sustain production during the Great War. In its aftermath, concern at the loss of local autonomy, disillusionment with the old Imperial order, and the influence of the Irish struggle for Home Rule all contributed to the development of a renewed national consciousness which was to find both cultural and political expression. As Harvie has put it:

"A provincial culture, distinct from that of England for various reasons, rather than superior to it. An acute awareness among Scottish intellectuals of the power of parochialism and the mediocrity of its cultural values; a sense of attraction to and revulsion against the metropolis. These factors appear to be constant throughout our period. But they were made explicit by the sudden efflorescence of the Scottish Renaissance in the 1920s and, despite its subsequent setbacks, this continued to sustain, and ultimately strengthen, a sense of a distinct national intellect" (3).

Harvie, H.J. Hanham and others have characterized the Scottish Renaissance as a short-lived literary movement which, notwithstanding its lasting influence on Scottish intellectuals, in fact had little

internal cohesion and was dependent for its existence on the commanding personality of the poet, Hugh Macdiarmid (4, 5). While there is much truth in this, there are dangers in defining the phenomenon too restrictively, since it formed part of a wider cultural movement. Harvie has argued that the Renaissance was over as a coherent movement by 1936 and that its achievements were largely confined to the field of literature. Yet, in 1950, Macdiarmid felt able to point to contemporary developments in the Arts, Architecture and Broadcasting in Scotland which he believed amounted to "nothing less than a revolution compared with the position twenty-five years ago". He included these activities under "the general name of the Scottish Renaissance Movement - a name which does not imply that that has been achieved, but simply that it is what is being aimed at" (6).

Macdiarmid did not coin the term "Scottish Renaissance", though he enthusiastically appropriated and promoted the concept. Its exact origins are obscure, but the idea had certainly been in currency in intellectual circles since at least the 1890s. As Elizabeth Sharp has pointed out, many of the activities which Patrick Geddes promoted from his base at the Outlook Tower were designed:

"to restore to Scotland something of the older pre-eminence in the world of thought, to recreate in Edinburgh an active centre and so arrest the tremendous centralising power of the metropolis of London; to replace stereotyped methods of education by a more vital and synthetic form; and to encourage national art and literature" (7).

Geddes had himself called for a "Scots Renaissance" in an article in "The Evergreen" of Spring 1895 (8), and later, in a letter to the writer and radical nationalist R.B. Cunninghame Graham, he railed against the decline in the intellectual vigour of the Scottish capital in a manner which foreshadowed Macdiarmid:

"You see her pinioned by her judges and preyed on by their wig-lice, that countless vermin of lawyerlings, swollen and small. You see her left in squalor by her shop-keepers, her bawbee-worshipping bailie-bodies and pushioned by her doctors; you hear her dulled by the blithers of her politicians and deived by the skreigh of the newsboy-caddies who squabble at their heels, and you know how she has been paralysed by the piffle of her professors, more than half-doted or driven into alternate hidebound or hysteric nightmares by

every chilly dogmatism, every flaring hell-blast imagined by three centuries and more of diabolical Divines" (9).

As both Cuthbert and the Checklands have observed, Geddes' regional and civic ideals were heavily infused with a late Scottish Romanticism (10, 11). He was primarily interested in cities as repositories of national and regional cultures. These he sought to nurture and develop as a healthy alternative to the stultifying provincialism and mismanagement which he saw as the lot of subject peoples under the sway of great Imperial capitals such as London. In seeking to apply his concept of planning, he was inevitably attracted to those settlements which could most readily fulfil his purpose. Thus we find him most at home in the historic capitals of Edinburgh, Dublin and Jerusalem and in the ancient cities of the Indian sub-continent. He saw cultures as primarily environmentally determined. In his Indore Report of 1918 he wrote that:

"While the Western (and engineer educated) sanitarian as complacently applies his English and Victorian manufacturing town experience to Indian sanitary problems, as do his educational or missionary fellow-students their corresponding instructional and denominational traditions, this

complacent assurance is impossible to the planner who is anything of a geographer and anthropologist, for he sees the people of different climates and environments as adapted through past ages to these. Thus he comes to their ways, their habits, their customs, their institutions, their laws, their morals, their manners, with the ordinary naturalistic attitude of observant and interpretive interest and not that of superiority. He thus seeks first to learn, to understand, to appreciate, before he attempts to criticise, much less to teach and transform" (12).

For Geddes, Edinburgh was the embodiment of Scottish cultural achievement and there it was unnecessary for him to make any distinction between civic and national consciousness, let alone acknowledge the possibility of a conflict between them. It has been pointed out that he had far less to say about industrial cities such as Glasgow or Dundee (where he taught on a part-time basis for over thirty years) despite the fact that their squalid living and working environments represented the harsh reality for the bulk of Scotland's urban population (13, 14, 15). Materialist critics have argued that Geddes failed to come to terms with the economic relationships which underpinned modern industrial

society and had therefore created the modern urban environment. John Hasselgren has dismissed Geddes' concept of the city as an evolving cultural entity with the studiously prosaic assertion that:

"... only by analogy is a city a living organism. It is a human artefact and not an autonomous living being. It does not develop or unfold a potentiality, it persists or fails to persist" (16).

Perhaps more perceptively, the Checklands have written that:

"Geddes was at the other end of the economic and social process to that of the entrepreneurs, both in outlook and in timing. He did not concern himself with the viability and growth of the firm in dynamic and difficult markets; much less was he concerned with the articulated functioning of the economy. This meant that he could too easily treat culture and capitalism as opposites. Moreover he took matters up not when industrialisation was accelerating, but when it had already remade the life of the cities. His mind was untrammelled by any sense of the economic limitations of his programme of refashioning the whole of the urban-industrial environment.

... It was only with the insight and drive that came from economic innocence that it was possible for Geddes to generate a movement such as his, challenging both the accepted pattern of values and the fatalism or indifference it sponsored with respect to man's power to control his social fate" (17).

One of the rare occasions on which Geddes did address the problems of Glasgow was in a speech to the city's Royal Philosophical Society in December 1912. However, all too typically, what he offered his audience was rhetorical exhortation rather than considered analysis and a practical prescription for improvement. While his message was harsh, its appeal was nakedly patriotic, as the following report from "The Glasgow Herald" makes clear:

"Professor Patrick Geddes, FRSE, St. Andrews University, who initiated the discussion, prefaced his remarks with a survey of housing in Scotland and remarked that in the development of modern cities it was manifest that the particular region between the Clyde and the Forth, divided as it assuredly would be by a canal which would make Glasgow a European port, would afford a substantial opening for the future of a great

city, which, instead of finding Scotland on a siding of the world, would find it more and more on the main road of the world's traffic between Hamburg and New York. They had therefore to prepare for a great and living city, and, in a large and effective way, a city second to none.

They in Scotland were at present peculiarly backward as regards housing compared with other civilised countries, and, however they might justify themselves in other matters, such as the education of their famous parish schools, their songs, the quality of their whisky - (laughter) - the excellence of the Waverley novels, the eminence of shipbuilding, and the distinctions of Glasgow School of Art, they still remained one of the backward populations of Europe as regards housing (Question). There was no question about it, and it was a necessary patriotism to realise that the proportion of rooms per inhabitant in this country was lower than that of their neighbours across the Border or of civilised people in other lands. That was a melancholy fact. They had too many one-roomed and two-roomed houses, and they should be spoken of as a nation of two-roomed dwellers. Discussing various factors which contributed to that

backwardness, and mentioning the historic, climatic, occupational, political, economic and social, he remarked that from no political party did they get as yet adequate contributions to the housing problem. He afterwards proceeded to deal with the question of how public opinion in Scotland might be aroused, enlightened, and rendered effective, and remarked that a society such as theirs would do a great service by stimulating travel. One of the best outcomes of the town planning movement was that it had stimulated travel to Continental cities, with their more developed standards of citizenship and wider ambitions of housing. Such travelling could be carried on in a definite and critical way until they realised the backwardness of Scotland ...

He pleaded for a visit to Ireland. They in Scotland were all brought up under the impression that Ireland had the lowest civilisation of the British Isles, that England was not so bad, and that in Scotland they possessed the cream of everything (laughter). But it was time frankly to realise that Ireland was practically crimeless, that England had twice the crime of Ireland, that Scotland had much more again, and that they in Scotland, with all their excellent qualities,

were not only the worst housed but were apt to be intemperate, violent, diseased, and insane (laughter). All these things were deeply connected one with the other - intemperance and the rest with bad housing and so on. In short, they had a great waste of what he believed with all his plain speaking to be the finest stock in the world (Applause). It was in that fuller development of citizenship that Glasgow stood for so much in the world and was looked to at once as the awful example and the leading one. It was a place of high initiative as well as of warning ...

In conclusion, he referred to the effectiveness of town planning in order to co-ordinate the appeals and ideals on the subject of housing. That, he said, was a business proposition which he ventured to submit to them, and he left it to them to show that they were prepared to deliver the goods" (18).

It is this type of rhetoric, demonstrating concern that his country should keep abreast of the leading developments in European civilization, which leads Hanham to identify Geddes as one of the heralds of 20th Century cultural nationalism in Scotland (19). Ian Finlay reaches a similar conclusion in writing that:

"The importance of Geddes in relation to Scottish Art, and to art in general, is not in his patronage or even in his essays in art criticism, but in this passionate belief of his in the need to maintain and develop the ancient roots of any society or community. His nationalism was the nationalism of Voltaire's il faut cultiver notre jardin. In his wisdom he was well aware that this - not vague Wellsian aspirations after a world super-state - was the only possible basis for a settled human society in which worth, not accumulations of power by individuals or by nations would be the determining factor ...

Geddes was to the great new art of city-planning what Mackintosh was to architecture and the Glasgow School and McTaggart were to painting. Together those men constituted the first wave of a true renaissance in Scotland" (20).

Hugh Macdiarmid knew Geddes and frequently attended meetings at the Outlook Tower (21). He was later to acknowledge the Professor as one of the progenitors of the Scottish Renaissance with which his own name is so inextricably linked (22).

## 6.2 A Tripartite Scotland

In the early part of his career, Mears was active at the centre of the artistic and intellectual circle which constituted Geddes' Scots Renaissance, performing a key administrative and organizational role at the Outlook Tower. Although born in England, his childhood ties had been predominantly with his Scottish relatives on his mother's side of the family and it was in the historic capital of Edinburgh that he completed his education and made his home. The formal training in architecture which he acquired there, and, in particular, the strong interest which he developed in Medieval design, place him even more firmly than Geddes in the Scottish romantic tradition. Indeed, the influence of romanticism pervades his work. It is as evident in the historical allusions of his designs for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem as it is in his architectural and planning work in his beloved Edinburgh.

Both Mears and Geddes were heavily exposed to the ideology of European nationalism in its various manifestations in the course of their work in Ireland and Palestine, and Geddes' culture-based planning was

also to bring him into contact with the emerging movement for Indian self-determination. As has already been indicated, the years following the First World War saw the emergence of a new preoccupation with the national question in Scotland. Jack Brand traces the history of the modern nationalist movement from this period, drawing a clear distinction between the radical, anti-establishment politics of post-war nationalism and what he characterizes as romantic expressions of national sentiment by sections of the Scottish establishment in the period before 1914 (23). One of the organizations which exemplified this change was the Scottish Home Rule Association. When it was first founded in 1886, its membership was drawn largely from the Scottish Liberal establishment; however, after its revival by Roland E. Muirhead in 1918, its supporters were predominantly radicals like R.B. Cunningham Graham and members of the Independent Labour Party like Tom Johnston.

Mears' response to this new nationalism provides us with the fullest expression of the vision of Scotland which he held. In an address to the Scottish Home Rule Association delivered at the Outlook Tower in the summer of 1920 (24), he stressed the heterogeneity of Scotland, arguing that the diverse cultural and social traditions which had contributed

to its creation were still potent forces in the life of the modern nation. In particular, Mears described three distinct Scottish identities, each of which found contemporary expression but could at the same time be seen to represent a different stage in the country's historical development. The first he characterized as primitive and Celtic - the Scotland of hills, glens and heather, inhabited by the noble but rather fey savage of Sir Walter Scott's imagination. The second was the Scotland of the Medieval East Coast Burghs with their strong, independent mercantile and administrative traditions. For Mears, this was the true Scotland - the Scotland with which he most fully identified - and an appreciation of this primary allegiance is fundamental to an understanding of his approach and contribution to Scottish planning. Finally, there was the modern industrial Scotland of the Midland plain, as Mears described it:

"... full of smokey, large towns - cosmopolitan - reading the Daily Mail type of paper, "John Bull" and the Sunday divorce news - looking on at football matches" (25).

This, for Mears, was a Scotland which had fallen from grace.

Mears' tripartite division of Scottish identity is particularly interesting in the light of the recent debate about media representations of Scotland which was sparked off by the Grigors' highly successful "Scotch Myths" exhibition and the subsequent "Scotch Reels" programme at the 1982 Edinburgh Film Festival (26, 27). The three great distorting myths which these events explored show a remarkable correspondence with Mears' own classification. The first, which finds its expression in what has been described as Tartanry, can be seen to correspond most closely to Mears' primitive, tribal, Celtic Scotland. The second, Kailyairdism, has its roots deep in the Presbyterian tradition of the small Scottish burghs which Mears himself tended to idealize. The third, Clydesidism - the myth of the Red Clyde and the craggy, male, hard-drinking, radical worker in heavy industry - is a potent force within Mears' third Scotland, the Scotland of the industrial population of the Central Belt.

Mears was among the first to appreciate the key role which the burghs established by the Canmore kings played in advancing civil administration and economic development in Medieval Scotland and this was a theme to which he frequently returned in his articles and lectures on the growth of Edinburgh and in the

historical introductions to his plans for Scottish towns. However, in his address to the Scottish Home Rule Association he lamented that:

"The Burghs have now largely lost their old self-supporting character, every burgher half farmer and half craftsman or merchant, their life governed by an elaborate code much of which has come down to us. The Older Life, however, still survives, perhaps making its last struggle. In Lochaber it was heard against the British (ie. the London) Aluminium Company. In Lewis it revolted more single-heartedly though incoherently against the late benevolent Lord Leverhume. Both these southern forces represented the third element in modern Scotland, that which is making Scotland provincial to London, industrial and financial, losing its native character in this age of coal and iron, largely content to become wealthy at the cost of following the lead of London" (28).

Thus Mears' industrial Scotland was not fully Scottish, but a degraded product of southern centralization. Herein lay the danger of Home Rule. For if a Scottish Parliament were to be established on the Westminster model, there was little doubt about which of his three Scotland's would be dominant.

"But it may well be that Scotland as a whole will not benefit - the Highlands more and more Leverhulmed - water power from every glen for the benefit of the cities - every Highlander a happy wage-earner - the county Burghs more and more dairy centres - proud Dunfermline content to be a shopping centre for Rosyth Base. Perhaps the Highlands might be taken over by the State as a holiday resort with vast benefit to the Exchequer - at the suggestion of some clever chancellor" (29).

The period just after the First World War was one of great economic uncertainty and foreboding, based on the experience of increasing foreign competition before the war and the loss of British primacy in world markets. Mears suggested that:

"The days of wholesale export to the Colonies, the States, India and the like seem to be coming to an end - so too the large import of the necessary raw materials. Are we to be plagued with legislation to bolster up a decaying system, or are we to look for more normal development? In seeking to formulate the future, are we to look forward to a Scotland seen as one huge city from Greenock to Edinburgh via the Forth and Clyde canal - with a background of "country" for a fraction of its

feeding, and for its recreation? Or can we hope for a more healthy scheme, maintaining naturally the best of Old Scotland and uniting it with the best of a cleaner age of industry?" (30).

He felt that there were great dangers in:

"the introduction of some new political system of centralised type, founded on the passing industrial age, and projecting its semi-obsolete habits of thought into the newer age ...

The hope of development of a healthy, well-balanced Scotland is in our view determined by the degree in which we use the power of Home Rule to keep alive the diversified character of the people ...

We want to get at a form of representation more like that of the Convention of Burghs than a Parliament elected by equal blocks of votes. The Burghs have been sitting in council quite as many hundreds of years as Parliament, but have escaped being the playthings of great nobles or politicians. They do their work quietly and efficiently. We want, I suggest, to work to a system of representation which will go further than the Burghs, which will give the primitive

sources of life in the great hills, in the isles, adequate consideration, if older Scotland is to become more than a place of water-power driven industries and sporting estates.

It seems to me that only so can the great industrial centres be prevented from levelling down the less populated but truly Scottish areas, the country and mountain districts, which are still rapidly losing their people. Yet it is on these that the country must depend for its life in the future" (31).

The tendency in the industrial districts had been:

"to level down the mass of people to wage earners, doing work of which they can hardly understand the meaning. Yet the great originators in Scottish thought, invention and practical constructive and social leadership have been men with roots deep in the soil. Perhaps it was for that very reason that they could fruitfully mix influences from outside Scotland with their own lifestream. If Scotland is to continue her share in positive and constructive activity, thought and idealism, it may be well to look ... both to the graft and the root" (32).

Thus, Mears attributed the wage system to industrial urbanization rather than capitalism and, pace the Checklands (33), it was 19th Century industrialism rather than capitalism which Geddes and Mears regarded as the antithesis of culture.

Mears recognised that the era of Empire and Industry which had sustained the great manufacturing centre of West Central Scotland was drawing to a close. It was not something which he regretted. His obvious disdain for manufacturing industry and the society it created perhaps owed more to the attitudes of genteel professional circles in Edinburgh than to Geddesian sociology. The dream of a Scotland revitalized by a Forth-Clyde ship canal, which, eight years before, Geddes had offered to Glasgow's Royal Philosophical Society, was transformed by Mears into the nightmare vision of an industrial conurbation stretching continuously across the Central Belt. The economic basis for the new, cleaner industrial age to which he preferred to look forward was not disclosed, although it was clear that planning was to play a central part in its creation. For it was by creating an environment in which people were able to maintain contact with their rural heritage that the spirit of creativity and innovation on which Scotland's future depended could be kept alive.

In many ways, Mears' message was profoundly conservative. His suggestion of an indirectly-elected Scottish Assembly weighted in favour of the ancient burghs and rural areas can be seen as an attempt to restore the position of the local elites whose power had been diminishing since the nineteenth century. If Brand's analysis is to be accepted, Mears' nationalism was certainly of the older, patrician sort. Nevertheless, there was a more progressive element in his response to conditions in modern Scotland. The problems of rural decline and industrial stagnation which he observed were very different from the problems of metropolitan expansion which preoccupied so many of the English planners of the period, and called for a different, more positive sort of planning. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Mears tended to withdraw from involvement with southern-based planning propagandists. For a short time, he had placed his hopes in the Regional Survey Association but in 1919 he resigned because of what he regarded as its excessive London bias and naively technocratic approach to survey (34).

### **6.3 Civic Patriotism and the Ties of Neighbourhood**

Mears saw survey as a means of involving the community in the plan-making process. In an address to Falkirk Rotary Club in 1925, he argued that:

"A survey in this new sense is a civic stocktaking; it includes scientific surveys, topographical, geological, statistical etc., but it goes beyond them. It is an enquiry into the growth, the resources, the environment of a burgh; into everything which makes for the "Common Good" in the fullest sense, and not overlooking elements which may have been making for inefficiency in social life. Its object is to enable us to plan for the more prosperous future of the burgh, and for the greater health and happiness of its people. This activity usually passes under the name of town-planning, but town planning is really a bad name for what we aim at; a better may be "Civic Development". Thus we may realise that before we can complete our plan much wider data are required than those provided by municipal or industrial statistics or the terrifying figures of traffic enthusiasts. The growing burgh of the opening future will reflect the lives and ideals of its inhabitants as a whole and not merely the interests of this or that group of specialists. Public health improvements or road schemes, however skilfully worked out, are too often tackled separately, and so with other developments. This specialisation leads to waste of resources; sometimes to inefficiency, and sometimes even to partial abandonment, as the work is found to clash with unforeseen circumstances.

A Civic Survey helps the expert by providing him with information, but it does much more. It educates the community who have made it, so that they are able to give intelligent support to their administration. True town planning becomes possible when every citizen realises how, in the home of the community, efficiency, health, and beautiful surroundings go hand in hand. This ideal plan is prepared for by means of education, the press, lectures, and exhibitions, all of which help the people to understand their history and unique characteristics as a community. The aim is to foster civic patriotism" (35).

The conception of survey which he offered was that which he and Geddes had formulated at the Outlook Tower and had subsequently attempted to apply in Dublin and in Palestine. His appeal to "Civic Patriotism" assumed a fundamental unity of interest - an idealized community free from economic, social, sectarian or ethnic divisions. Ever anxious to champion the cause of the independent Scottish burgh, Mears called for the establishment of a Falkirk survey committee on the Outlook Tower model. Under the aegis of this Committee, historians, engineers, architects, teachers and administrators would pool their expertise in the organization of a community-based survey. Thus, he envisaged that:

"In the schools, the future citizens begin to study their history, geography, drawing, composition, in the light of the excitements of exploration; as scouts and guides they learn to know the byways and pleasant places which will become the playgrounds of the future. Older students may combine economics with knowledge of their civic history in tracing out the rise or decay of local industries. Geologists, botanists, photographers can map and record their environment past and present. Old maps and views can be collected to show the beginning of the canals and railways. Very soon a considerable mass of material will accumulate which will form the basis for a Falkirk gallery and museum, but not a museum of dead relics. The relics will be so arranged and treated that they form a continuous series showing Falkirk and Region past, present, and possible in the way thought out by Professor Geddes in his Outlook Tower in Edinburgh" (36).

Speaking fifty years before the Wheatley reform of local government, he argued that:

"Your problem is that of the independent region of Central Scotland, lying midway between the Great Powers of the Lothians and the Clyde valley.

On both sides of your ambitious schemes are being promoted under the name of town-planning, and in the very near future committees of Greater Edinburgh and Glasgow will meet to parcel out your little vineyard ... Build up, therefore, your case for civic and regional independence, for that is what survey means. The problem is that of raising in the communities of this central area a spirit of protest against the generalised industrial dullness characteristic of the last century. Instead of depending on bureaucratic by-laws which define the lowest standard of endeavour, we want a new standard of pride of place, we want to strengthen the ties of neighbourhood" (37).

#### **6.4 Scotland's Rural Heritage**

Throughout the nineteen-twenties, Mears actively disseminated planning propaganda by means of letters to the press, articles, speeches, exhibitions and events such as the Masque of Edinburgh. As the decade progressed, he became increasingly concerned about the affect on the countryside of the new mobility conferred by motorized transport. Although, as Mears recognized, circumstances in Scotland were

frequently very different from those pertaining in much of England, large areas of countryside surrounding the lowland towns and cities were experiencing exactly the same development pressures that were causing such concern South of the Border. In an attempt to mobilize public opinion against what he saw as the threat to Scotland's rural heritage posed by unsightly sporadic and ribbon development on the urban fringe, he enlisted the support of Edinburgh Architectural Association. In December 1926, in his capacity as President of the E.A.A., he wrote a letter to "The Scotsman" drawing attention to the recent formation of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and calling for the establishment of a similar organization in Scotland. Referring to the provisions of the Town Planning (Scotland) Act 1925, Mears argued that there was:

"great need for watchful care at this time in respect of what remains unspoiled of our countryside, because every urban authority of any size is now compelled by statute to work out, in the course of the next two years, a definite plan to govern its future development. Further legislation is foreshadowed which will lay a similar responsibility on County Councils.

In England, not only are Local Authorities planning their own districts, but in a large number of cases they are combining to promote regional schemes covering very large areas, now largely rural, and much will depend on the spirit in which these plans are worked out. If progress has been slow in Scotland, there is now the greater danger than insufficient consideration may be given to the matter on the plea that time is limited, and thus great harm may result through the projection of urban or suburban ideals on an unresisting countryside. Again, unspoiled districts are being intersected by arterial roads which, in many parts, are being fringed by wretchedly designed and built bungalows and motor stations. In fact, in the rush to escape from the congested cities, we are in danger of destroying the beauty of our refuge. The tragic process may be seen intensively at work all round Edinburgh, while a mixture of industrialism and suburbanism has ruined the beautiful shores of the Forth from Cramond to Port Seton" (33).

The matter was not simply one of aesthetics, Mears argued. Ribbon development was not only offensive to the eye, it was also uneconomical. It weighted the roads with unnecessary traffic and imposed an extravagant burden on local authorities, since the

costs of drainage, lighting, cleaning, policing and road maintenance were all greatly increased without adequate return.

"The Scotsman" endorsed Mears' arguments in an editorial, and called on the public to give its support to the establishment of a Society which "would fulfil for the country at large something of the same function as the Cockburn Association now does for Edinburgh" (39). As a direct result, in the following Spring, a meeting was held in the Hall of the Incorporation of Architects in Scotland at 15 Rutland Square, Edinburgh, for the purpose of inaugurating a Council for the Preservation of Rural Scotland. Over thirty institutions, organisations and pressure groups were represented, including the Royal Scottish Academy, the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the Board of Agriculture for Scotland, the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, the Zoological Society of Scotland, the Board of Health, H.M. Office of Works, the Forestry Commission, the Convention of Royal Burghs, the Scottish Housing and Town Planning Council, the Regional Planning Advisory Council (Scotland), the Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, the Institution of Municipal and County Engineers, the Society of Antiquaries (Scotland), the Faculty of Surveyors of Scotland, the Royal Scottish Automobile Club, the Automobile Association, the

Scottish Women's Rural Institutes, the Scottish Rights of Way and Recreation Society, the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, the Cockburn Association, Glasgow Civic Society, the National Trust (England and Wales), the Royal Scottish Arboricultural Society, the Scottish Land and Property Federation, the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture, the Scottish Mountaineering Club, the Educational Institute of Scotland, and the Royal Scottish Society of Arts. Landed, professional, governmental and urban-based recreational interests were therefore well represented, but Highland, agricultural workers' and crofters' organizations were notably absent. At the meeting, Mears outlined the objectives of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and stated that it was intended that the Scottish Council should operate on similar lines and in the closest co-operation with its sister body South of the Border. Afterwards he was elected to an interim committee charged with responsibility for working out a constitution for the new organization and making arrangements for its first public meeting later in the year (40). That meeting, held in July 1927, marked the formal foundation of what was subsequently to be known as the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland (APRS).

The Earl of Crawford, already President of the CPRE, was elected Honorary President of the new Association, and the Earl of Haddington became its President. The first Chairman, Lord Constable, died shortly after taking office and was succeeded by Sir Iain Colquhoun, Bart., Chief of the Clan Colquhoun and Lord Lieutenant of Dunbartonshire. With the Scottish landed aristocracy so prominently represented on its councils, it is little wonder that Vice President, Sir John Stirling Maxwell, himself the owner of some 10,800 acres (41), was anxious to assure the first annual general meeting in April 1929 that they were "not out to tread on anybody's toes", but were "simply out to try and direct necessary development into the right channel" (42). "The Glasgow Herald" reported Sir Iain Colquhoun's view that:

"On the one hand they had people who wanted to preserve the hills and their beauty and their solitude; and on the other hand they had people to whom they did not appeal, but who wanted to go there in their Charabancs and have their glass of beer in beer halls and do the whole thing in what they call comfort" (43).

But if the offence caused by such plebeian excursions was to be minimized, the Association required the

co-operation of Scotland's businessmen. Sir Iain made a plea for that co-operation in an address to Glasgow Rotary Club on 14th May 1929. The next day, "The Glasgow Herald" reported that:

"As chairman of the Association, Sir Iain Colquhoun said that for some time he had felt that the business community regarded them with a certain amount of suspicion. He was exceedingly anxious that the suspicion should be removed because without their help they could perform comparatively little, and with it their sphere of usefulness would be almost unlimited ...

The Association did not seek to retard modern development; they welcomed it, and sought to guide it along rational and artistic lines" (44).

The APRS already had valuable links with the Scottish business community. Its first Honorary Treasurer was the Edinburgh chartered accountant, Alexander Harrison, who was later to become Director of the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce. The professions and town-based recreational organizations were also well represented. Other prominent members in its early years were the Professor of Electrical Engineering at Heriot-Watt College, F.G. Baily, a keen hill-walker and angler and friend of Patrick Geddes; Mr. George

Sang, President of the Scottish Mountaineering Club; the mountaineer and Chairman of the Scottish Rights of Way Society, the Rev. A.E. Robertson; and the motoring journalist and editor of "The S.M.T. Magazine", J. Inglis Ker.

Mears was elected as the Association's first Honorary Secretary, and was to play a central part in its activities for the rest of his career. At first, the APRS operated from premises at 3, Forres Street, Edinburgh, but in 1935 it moved to 44, Queen Street, where Mears' own office was also located. The Association took an active part in many of Scotland's early rural planning controversies, and Mears found it a convenient vehicle for the promotion of his concept of regional planning. In the summer of 1928, he made another visit to Falkirk to address the Rotary Club in his capacity as Honorary Secretary of the APRS. In his speech, he explained that:

"The reason for the Association's campaign was that with the new resources of motor transport and power distribution, it had paid the kind of exploiter who thrived in crowded towns to invade the country. Cheap bungalows, advertisements, petrol pumps followed the track of the holidaymakers along the new State-aided motor roads. In some parts it would seem as if life

had exploded out of the towns to cover all the land around with a disorder of fragments, so that the results were, town without the advantages of concentration, and country with neither economies nor beauty to recommend it" (45).

Again he referred to the regional surveys then being carried out in England by joint committees representing combinations of local authorities and claimed that the need for a similar approach was now becoming accepted in Scotland. He assured his audience that regional survey need not involve a sudden heavy increase of expenditure, but would simply ensure "that the problems were considered as a related whole, instead of being treated separately". Thus, "duplication of services was avoided, road development was considered on broad lines and reservation of ground for recreational purposes was put on a new footing" (46). He suggested that the APRS might assist in the promotion of such a survey by calling a preliminary conference with the aim of establishing a Regional Committee for Central Scotland.

In an article published in "The Architects' Journal" later in the year, Mears offered a modified version of the tripartite Scotland which he had described to the Scottish Home Rule Association and referred to

some of the regional planning issues with which the APRS was concerned. He pointed out that:

"The problem of rural preservation in Scotland is somewhat different from that in England, where conditions are relatively uniform. There are, in a sense, really three Scotlands, each with its own peculiar geographical and social characteristics.

First, in the north and west are the great mountain masses of the Highlands, with a deeply-indented seaboard and a complex system of lochs and rapid rivers which make communications difficult. The sparse population, still to some extent Gaelic-speaking, is mainly engaged in fishing, sheep-raising or primitive agriculture; but the old traditions are being profoundly modified by the advent of sporting tenants, motor traffic, and, in certain limited districts, by hydro-electric schemes. Reafforestation is making progress and will in time greatly change the character of the scenery. The sporting interests, which operate over vast continuous areas, have so far tended to prevent building, and particularly "ribbon" development, along the beautiful loch sides. Improved road transport conditions may, however, bring about a change in this connection, especially in the neighbourhood

of the through roads which are now being reconstructed with the help of the Ministry of Transport ...

The second division of Scotland, that of modern industry, which is much more concentrated than in England, is located mainly over the coal-bearing strata, which lie in the broad valley between the Firths of Forth and Clyde. The country here is relatively level, with many towns and villages now closely linked by rail, tram, and bus. The greater part of the population of Scotland is grouped in this area. It is of mixed character, including Irish and even foreign elements, and housing conditions are in many cases deplorable. Settlements have grown without any control, as pits or engineering works were opened up, with disastrous results both for agriculture and amenity, and all the streams are heavily polluted. In certain districts vast piles of refuse, particularly those resulting from the shale oil industry of West Lothian, almost assume the appearance of volcanic cones, especially when burning slag is being tipped. The problem of reconstruction in this area is one of very great difficulty, but a start has recently been made with a regional planning scheme for the Clyde valley.

There remains to be considered the agricultural area of the Lowlands, which may be taken as extending down the east coast from Aberdeen and then covering the greater part of Southern Scotland outside the industrial area. On the lower agricultural lands, with their old market towns, there has grown up a highly-efficient system of cultivation, dairying and stock-raising. These conditions appear to be well stabilized, the whole countryside has an orderly and well-tended appearance, and it carries a sturdy and typically Scottish population" (47).

Mears' advocacy of regional planning was faithfully reflected in the Association's Annual Report of 1930 which stated that:

"There seems no more promising manner of safeguarding the countryside from promiscuous exploitation and the Association therefore watches progress in this direction with very special interest" (48).

As, however, the executive powers lay in the hands of local authorities, the Association, unless invited into consultation, could do little beyond encouraging the invitation and guiding the evolution of schemes. At the same time, several APRS members were either

professionally or otherwise officially involved in the new regional planning projects which were then getting underway. The Clyde Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee had been set up in 1927, a regional plan was being prepared for Aberdeen, progress was being made in Fife and the Lothians and a Central Scotland Scheme was also projected. As a result of this activity, the Association was able to report that the Department of Health for Scotland, with which it was in frequent consultation, had expressed "marked satisfaction at the progress now being made in Scotland after years of delay". The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1929 had transferred town planning powers to County Councils from district committees and small burghs. The Association expressed the hope that the Government would soon introduce legislation to provide the County Councils with additional statutory powers for regional planning (49).

The Association's Annual Report of 1931 praised the Regional Plan for Aberdeen which APRS member, Councillor Henry Alexander, had played a leading part in initiating, but regretted that little other concrete progress had been made. Part of the problem, it believed, was that local government officials, already overburdened with routine administration, had insufficient time to devote to

planning, while the authorities themselves were reluctant to incur the preliminary expenditure necessary to get regional schemes underway. However, the APRS considered that:

"It is now generally conceded that the Town Planning Acts do not go sufficiently far, and it is understood that the Government has measures under consideration which will give statutory force to Regional Planning with its greater scope, whereby it will be possible to zone and schedule wide areas remote from the towns, and to regulate future development on a much greater scale. This seems to be the best method of conserving rural districts and agricultural lands, while providing for the needs of urban and industrial life. Through lack of foresight, and under the present crushing depression in agriculture and the burdens imposed on land, an exaggerated influence is exerted by the townsmen, rendering the countryside a prey to suburbanisation, or leaving it to the mercy of commercial vicissitude and expediency. The very word "industry" is thought of in terms of the factory and town life. The objects of the APRS are to conserve rural areas not merely in respect of amenity but in the vital aspect of a true rural economy and rural pursuits, and under Regional Planning, wisely developed, salutary action may be taken" (50).

The absence from this passage of any reference to specific economic initiatives suggests that, while the Association was prepared to profess a general commitment to the development of the rural economy, it was primarily interested in Regional Planning as a means of extending regulatory powers into the countryside in order to preserve, as far as possible, existing patterns of land ownership and management.

One of the first issues with which the APRS became involved was the question of whether National Parks should be established in Scotland. In the winter of 1928/29, a proposal to establish a National Park in the Cairngorms provoked a lively debate in the correspondence columns of "The Scots Magazine", and the Association responded by organizing a conference of interested parties in the Highlanders' Institute in Glasgow in the following June. As a result, a special committee, the Scottish Forest Reserve Committee, was set up under the chairmanship of the former Commissioner of the Balmoral Estates, Sir James Douglas Ramsay, to inquire into the matter and report. Shortly afterwards, the Government appointed a Committee under the chairmanship of the Rt. Hon. Dr. Christopher Addison to inquire into the question of establishing National Parks throughout the United Kingdom. The Scottish Committee, of which Mears was a member, continued its

investigations and liaison with the Addison Committee was maintained by Sir John Stirling Maxwell who served on both. The SFRC amassed a considerable amount of evidence, supported by technical information from leading Scottish scientists, which it presented as a report to the Addison Committee. Its main recommendations were the formation of a Scottish National Trust, the purchase of lands in the Cairngorms for a recreational park, and the control of an area around Glen Affric under a regional scheme for nature conservation (51).

The Addison Committee reported in April 1931, recommending the establishment of two separate Executive Authorities for National Parks; one for England and Wales and one for Scotland. No action was taken on the report, but the APRS maintained an interest in the question until the Government finally decided against the creation of National Parks in Scotland in 1949 (52).

The need for a Scottish body to fulfil a role similar to that of the National Trust in England and Wales was exercising the minds of leading members of the APRS even before the Association's formal inauguration (53). According to Robert Hurd, the earliest advocates of a Scottish National Trust included Sir John Stirling Maxwell, the Duke of

Atholl, Sir Iain Colquhoun and Frank Mears (54). A committee of the APRS was established to consider the matter further. It concluded that while, in certain circumstances, H.M. Office of Works was in a position to accept and administer properties gifted to the public:

"there is a feeling that over-much bureaucratic control is undesirable, and the constitution of a Scottish National Trust, administered by members of undoubted status, appears warranted" (55).

What was required, the APRS believed, was a Trust with power to hold land and buildings "for the benefit of the nation", independent of Government but so constituted as to be capable of working in concert with statutory authorities. At the invitation of the Association, a Provisional Council of the National Trust for Scotland met in Edinburgh in November 1930 under the Presidency of the Duke of Atholl. The Council decided to register the Trust as a company limited by guarantee and it was resolved that it should thereafter have no direct connection with the APRS. However, there was, at least initially, a considerable overlap of membership between the two organizations, with representatives of Scotland's landed aristocracy once again playing a leading role. The new body was incorporated as the

National Trust for Scotland for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty on 1st May 1931, and, at the invitation of Lord Provost Sir Thomas Whitson, its first ordinary general meeting was held in Edinburgh City Chambers on July 21st. The meeting elected the Duke of Atholl as President and Sir Iain Colquhoun as Chairman of the Council. The first Vice Presidents were the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres and Sir John Stirling Maxwell. The Trust became a statutory body on the passing of the National Trust for Scotland Act of 1935 (56).

Another APRS initiative with which Mears was involved was a scheme to improve the quality of new housing in rural areas. In 1928, he had complained that throughout the countryside new houses were being built according to standardized patterns which owed little or nothing to Scottish tradition. He suggested that the Association might be able to influence the situation by collecting and publishing photographs showing typical examples of older Scottish dwellings, and pointed out that under regional planning schemes it might be possible to provide design guidance for rural housing in areas where valuable landscape was at risk (57).

In its Annual Reports of 1930 and 1931, the APRS expressed concern at the generally poor quality of

low-income housing being provided in rural areas and suggested that part of the problem was that both local authorities and private builders were attempting to keep costs to a minimum by dispensing with the services of qualified architects (58, 59). The Association therefore enlisted the support of the Institute of Municipal and County Engineers and the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland for a scheme to make a range of alternative architectural designs available to both the public and private sector in an attempt "to avoid monotony and ensure relationship with traditional styles" (60). The proposal won the approval of the Department of Health for Scotland and, at the Annual Meeting of the APRS held in Glasgow on 2nd April 1931, the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Rt. Hon. William Adamson, personally endorsed the scheme in the following terms:

"I am pleased to know that the Association in co-operation with other public-spirited bodies are taking steps so that local authorities and private enterprise may have made available to them for a small fee alternative plans and elevations prepared by skilled architects. By adopting these plans, builders will have a guarantee that they are not building out of harmony with the traditions of Scottish domestic architecture.

It is true that the Department of Health requires to keep a strict check on cost, but, as the Association realises, there is no necessary antagonism between good design and economy. Without any extra expenditure it is quite possible to secure sound architectural effect by a judicious use of variety in elevations. I think that aspect of the question might receive more attention than it does" (61).

With this encouragement, the APRS set up a Committee of their architect members in order to prepare designs for a range of house types suitable for rural conditions. Most of the smaller houses then being provided in country districts were being erected under one or other of the State-assisted housing schemes, and it was therefore felt important that the designs should conform to the cost criteria which the Government laid down for grant assistance. Therefore, as a result of the pressure for economy exerted by the Department of Health for Scotland, the final scheme laid less stress on the importance of keeping faith with Scottish tradition, and sought only to ensure that the treatment of elevations would be "as far as possible in keeping with a Scottish environment". The primary consideration was now "the necessity of keeping costs as low as possible consistent with satisfactory interior and exterior

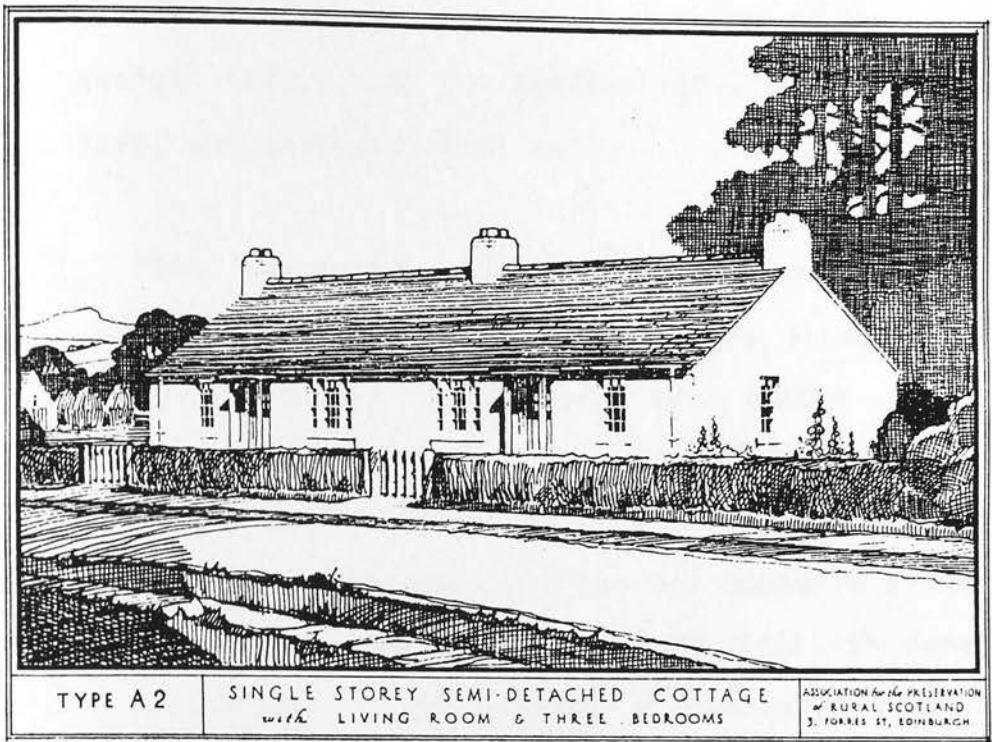


Fig. 6.1. Two of the APRS designs for Scottish Rural Housing.  
Source: Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland  
Annual Report 1932.

design" (62). As the nationalist architect, Robert Hurd, was quick to point out:

"The "haystack" house with its comfortable-looking roof and centre chimney stack as illustrated by the Scottish Department of Health and the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland, although it looks well in Scottish scenery, is soundly planned and economic to build, does not actually follow in the Scottish domestic tradition. The expense of ordinary mason work has led to the introduction of an alien but cheaper building material - brick; and the arrival of the English "haystack" house is a natural result of the need for economical building and compact planning. Brick has come to stay, and although an ugly kind is generally employed, as it is invisible beneath harling there is little point in objecting to its use" (63).

Although, at £2.00 per house, the fee which the Association charged for its designs was extremely modest, Scottish local authorities took little advantage of them. One of the few to do so was the Town Council of Peebles which, in 1933, erected a scheme of two-storey flatted houses in conformity with APRS advice. However, despite the fact that there was little direct use of the model designs, the

Association believed that the scheme had played a useful part in encouraging more local authorities to employ qualified architects (64, 65).

In 1933, continuing concern over the quality of Scotland's housing stock led the National Government's Conservative Secretary of State, the Rt. Hon. Sir Godfrey Collins, to establish a Committee under the chairmanship of Sir Thomas Whitson to consider what could be done to maintain working class housing at "a proper standard of fitness for human habitation", and to investigate the desirability of establishing "public utility societies or other bodies subject to similar limitations" to "promote the supply of houses for the working classes" without additional public cost. The Committee received written evidence from the Scottish Branch of the Town Planning Institute, of which Mears was an Executive Member. With particular reference to rural housing, the Whitson Committee observed that:

"... although housing in burghs and rural areas presents two separate aspects, the control and regulation of housing conditions is equally necessary in each. Possibly the existence of overcrowding is not so acutely felt or so prejudicial to health in rural areas, where the inhabitants enjoy to a greater degree the benefit

of fresh air and sunlight, as it is in the towns, where masses of the population are crowded together in insanitary dwellings under congested conditions. Nevertheless, we feel that housing conditions in rural areas need considerable investigation and improvement, and we recommend that a code of byelaws should be applied to rural areas as to urban areas, subject ... to such modification as may be permitted by the Department [of Health]" (66).

#### **6.5 The National Memorial to David Livingstone**

Another architectural project with which Mears was involved was the scheme to create a Scottish National Memorial to the missionary and explorer, David Livingstone, at his birthplace at Blantyre in Lanarkshire. In its full realization, this was to become a singularly fitting monument to an important period of transition. Livingstone, the great Victorian Scottish hero, could appeal both to the imperialist and the nationalist facets of Scottish sentiment.

The village of Low Blantyre had been built on the banks of the Clyde near Hamilton in about 1785 to house the workers at the nearby cotton mill founded

by David Dale. After production finally ceased in 1904, the settlement was progressively abandoned. The houses began to fall into decay and the local authority embarked on a programme of gradual clearance so that, by the early 'twenties, the tenement in which David Livingstone was born in 1813 was one of the few buildings left standing. On a visit in 1925, the Rev. Dr. James I. Macnair and the local Congregational minister, the Rev. D.N. Thomson, found it in a ruinous condition and Thomson suggested that an effort should be made to acquire the property and surrounding grounds with a view to creating a permanent memorial.

There were three remaining buildings on the site: a three-storey tenement of 24 single-ends, one of which was Livingstone's birthplace; an adjoining row of two-storey cottages; and a lodge in its own grounds. An option over the property was secured from Messrs. Baird & Co., the local coal-mining company, and a temporary Memorial Committee was established. In order to promote the scheme, the Committee recruited the support of an impressive array of Scottish dignitaries including J.M. Barrie, John Buchan, J. Ramsay Macdonald, the Duke of Hamilton, Field Marshal Lord Haig, the Earls of Elgin and Home, the official leaders of the Scottish churches, the Principals of the Scottish Universities and the Provosts of the

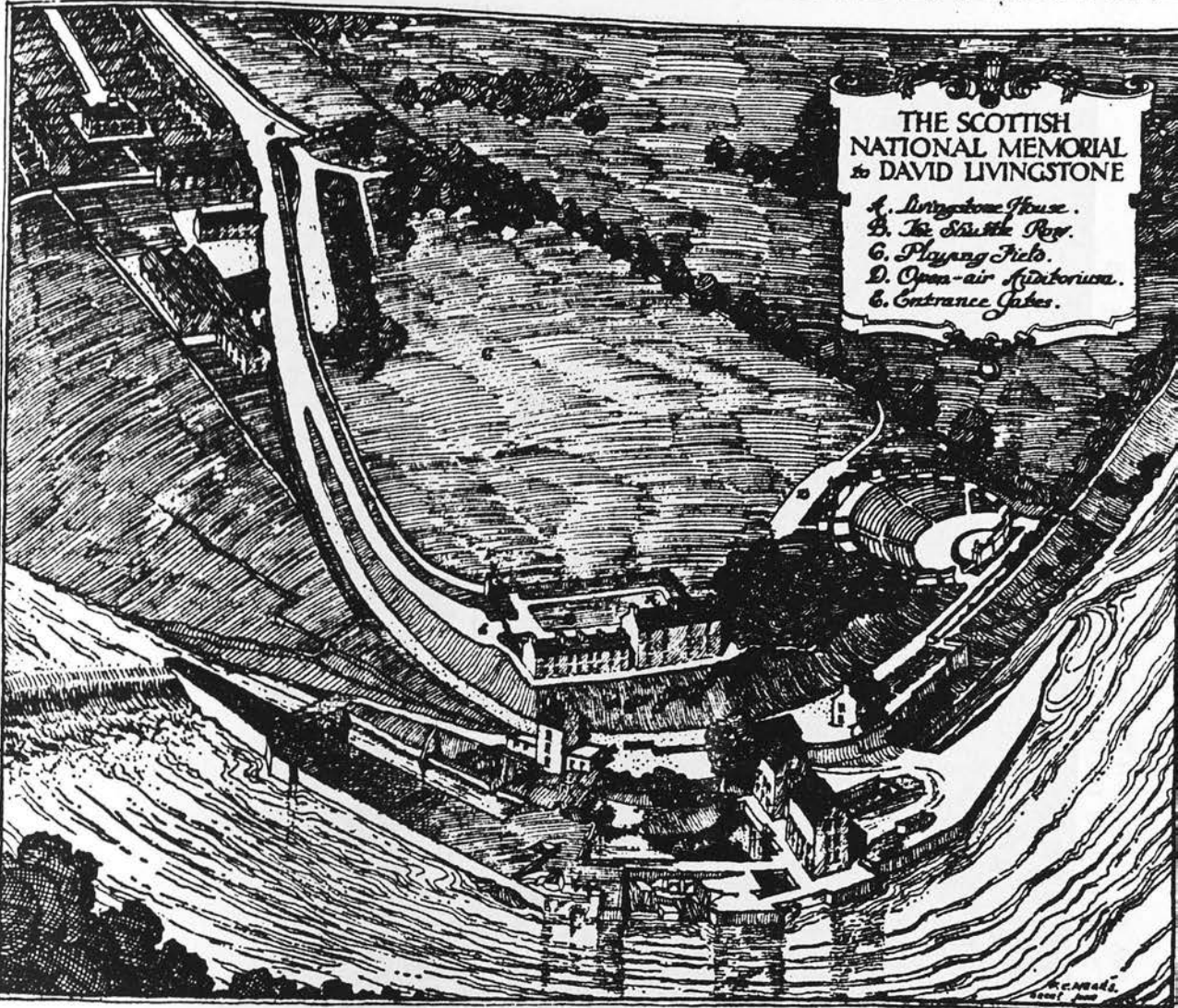
cities and principal towns. An appeal was launched in 1926 but, in the uncertain atmosphere created by the National Strike, wealthy benefactors were reluctant to come forward. It was not until the following year, after an approach had been made to Scottish Sunday Schools and Bible Classes, that sufficient funds were raised to allow the project to proceed (67, 68, 69).

It was the Rev. Dr. Donald Fraser of the United Free Church who first suggested that Professor Patrick Geddes was the most suitable person to prepare a restoration scheme. However, Geddes was by this time firmly ensconced in France, preoccupied with his university project at Montpellier. The Memorial Committee's Organizing Secretary, Mr. J.G. Harley, pointed out that Geddes had a son-in-law, Frank Mears, an architect in Edinburgh who was "a man filled with the same idealism" and "had great experience in the restoration of old buildings" (70). On this recommendation, Mears was invited to Blantyre to give his opinion. He was inspired by the opportunity to be involved in a restoration project of such national significance and, after his visit, he greatly expanded on the Committee's original idea of turning Livingstone's birthroom into a place of pilgrimage. James Macnair was later to acknowledge that, "it is to our architect, Sir (then Mr.) Frank

Mears, that we mainly owe the unique form which the Memorial gradually assumed" (71).

While negotiations over the transfer of the property were still taking place, the local miners, who were in dispute with Willian Baird & Co., descended on the ground surrounding the lodge and felled its trees for firewood. At first the Memorial Committee was greatly distressed by this but it turned out that the raid had improved the site for its purposes. Local children were recruited to tidy up the ground and plant new trees to create a park for Sunday School outings. It was decided to demolish the lodge to make room for a playing field. The high wall between the lodge and the other buildings was lowered and a combined wash-house and doocot was removed to make way for steps leading up from the memorial buildings to the new park. Mears emphasized the importance of maintaining the simple domestic charm of the buildings and their surroundings. In the autumn of 1929, a religious newspaper, "The Scottish Observer", made the proceeds of a charitable fund available to employ redundant miners in making further improvements to the grounds. An area of neglected ground near the river was thus turned into a flower garden and, in another characteristic touch, an old vegetable plot was transformed into an auditorium for outdoor meetings and pageants.

# SCOTTISH NATIONAL MEMORIAL TO DAVID LIVINGSTONE



THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL MEMORIAL to DAVID LIVINGSTONE

- A. Livingstone House.
- B. The Shuttle Row.
- C. Playing Field.
- D. Open-air Auditorium.
- E. Entrance Gates.

We publish above a sketch plan of the proposed memorial to David Livingstone, the great Scottish missionary and traveller. The scheme for the preservation of Livingstone's birthplace at Low Blantyre, Lanarkshire, was launched in the autumn of 1926. The immediate response, though gratifying, was not large in bulk, probably due to the appeal having been performed during the worst phase of the coal strike. But the fund has steadily grown until now some £7000 of the £12,000 required has been subscribed. A feature has been the response made by children, from whom some £1800 has already been sent in, chiefly from Sunday schools. Lanarkshire day school children contributed £220.

The property, including the tenement where Livingstone was born, has been bought, the picturesque if dilapidated Shuttle Row adjoining, which includes the schoolroom he attended and where the band also practised, and some nine acres of ground. This, besides preserving the amenity of the place, will provide ample ground for large parties on a summer afternoon.

The plans for restoration have been prepared by Mr F. C. Mears. The room in which Livingstone was born will be restored to its original form and refurnished as it was in his day. Other floors will be reconstructed to allow of an exhibit, which is intended will not merely be a museum of personal relics but will show vividly the leading episodes in his life. A new method is being used here, which is expected to be the leading feature of the exhibit. Various other developments are in view, the carrying out of which depends on the extent to which funds are available. One of these, the open-air auditorium, is shown in the sketch. Here is a natural amphitheatre, which is an ideal site for open-air gatherings, looking over the beautiful Clyde to the wooded banks of Bothwell Castle grounds.

This restoration of an essentially picturesque spot in the midst of industrial Lanarkshire cannot but have a considerable effect on the district, where rehousing schemes are already in progress. Much interest is being shown locally in the scheme.

Fig. 6.2. Scottish National Memorial to David Livingstone. F.C. Mears, June 1927.  
Photograph courtesy of "The Glasgow Herald".



Fig. 6.3. Livingstone's birthplace (left) and Shuttle Row (right), Scottish National Memorial to David Livingstone, Blantyre. Photograph courtesy of "The Scotsman".

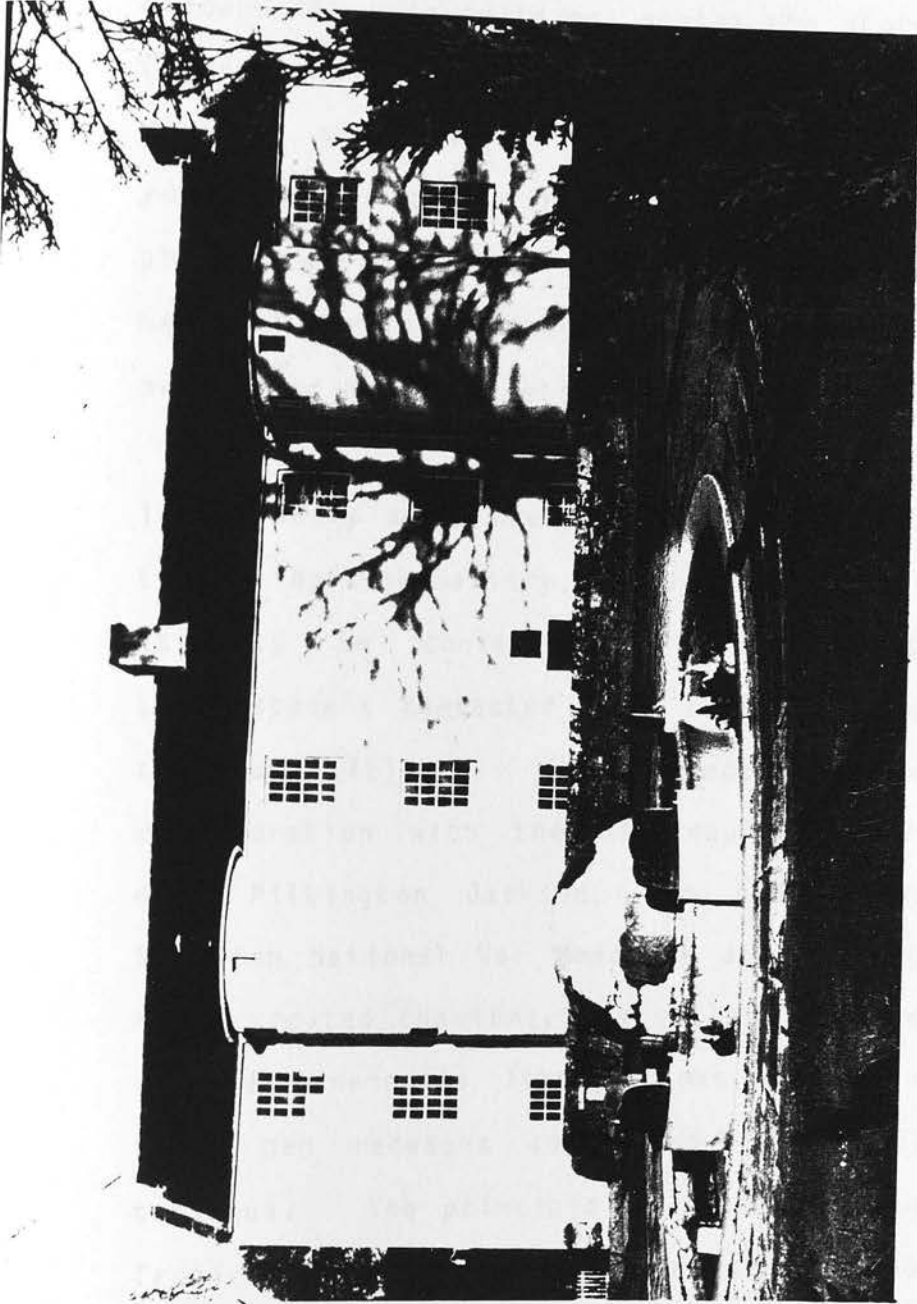


Fig. 6.4. Livingstone's birthplace - the three-storey tenement with the World Fountain in the foreground. Scottish National Memorial to David Livingstone, Blantyre.

In devising his scheme, Mears applied many of the ideas which he and Geddes had developed for use in exhibitions at the Outlook Tower in Edinburgh. He opened up passages so that visitors could walk right through the main building, seeing the story of David Livingstone unfold in each successive room. The Memorial was designed to appeal primarily to the young and so the story was told on short, simply-phrased wall placards and profusely illustrated by means of murals, tableaux, maps, photographs, working models and personal relics.

In its early days, the Memorial's main attraction was the Livingstone Gallery, a unique artistic work which attempts to convey the essential aspects of Livingstone's character in a series of eight relief tableaux (72). The concept was devised in collaboration with the distinguished sculptor, C. d'O. Pilkington Jackson, who had worked on the Scottish National War Memorial at Edinburgh Castle. Mears created the long, low gallery by throwing four of the tenement's little rooms together and used their bed recesses as niches for displaying the tableaux. The principle is similar to that of the Tropical Bird and Reptile Houses at Edinburgh Zoo; the gallery being kept in darkness while the tableaux are illuminated by hidden lamps.

Some years after work on the Shuttle Row buildings was completed, a gift from the widow of one of the early governors of the Memorial Trust allowed the construction of "The World Fountain" in the adjoining grounds. The design, which displays a strong Geddesian influence, was conceived by Frank Mears and executed by Pilkington Jackson. It takes the form of a globe of the world about six feet in diameter rising from the centre of a large double basin filled with water. The globe is tilted so that Blantyre lies on its summit and it is so oriented that, at any time, the area of its surface which is illuminated by the sun corresponds to that part of the world which is then in daylight. Five plaques around the edge of the fountain portray Geddes' elementary occupations of mankind, while, from the outer basin, bronze figures throw fine sprays of water over the globe's surface.

## **6.6 The Lucy Sanderson Cottage Homes**

The Lucy Sanderson Cottage Homes in Galashiels was one commission for new development for which sufficient money was made available to enable Mears to exercise his preference for traditional design and materials. The opportunity arose as a result of the death in November 1927 of Mr. James Sanderson, a

member of a Galashiels mill-owning family who had amassed a considerable fortune in the course of pursuing his "interest in developing the outlying parts of the British Empire" (73). A considerable proportion of his wealth was left to be divided amongst various charities, church missions and Edinburgh hospitals, and there were two larger bequests - one to the University of Edinburgh for technical and scientific research, and one of £30,000 to provide cottage homes in Galashiels in memory of his wife, Lucy, who had been a staunch supporter of charitable causes in the burgh. To loud applause, Provost Henry Hayward reported the terms of the bequest to Galashiels Town Council on 28th December 1927, stating that:

"It would take some years by the time the estate was realised and a proper scheme developed; but it was to be for deserving poor persons who were natives of Galashiels or residents who had lived at least ten years in the town. They must be people of good character who through no fault of their own had fallen on bad times and had no friends to support them. At the same time the cottages must be neat, and laid out with a regard for town planning. They wanted to improve the appearance of the town" (74).

Frank Mears and C.D. Carus-Wilson were commissioned to design what was essentially an early sheltered housing development for a site of approximately seven acres lying between Tweed Terrace and Abbotsford Road on the South East edge of the Burgh. The design brief called for the provision of 16 small houses suitable for elderly couples or single people, a neighbourhood hall and reading rooms, a matron's house, a wing for the care of infirm residents, a gardener's cottage and a communal wash-house and laundry. Space was to be reserved for the erection of 3 additional cottages when funds became available.

The architects were concerned to avoid giving the development an institutional appearance. Instead they sought to create a village atmosphere, with the cottages and communal buildings arranged around a central green. In addition, it was intended that the scheme should provide "a permanent and dignified boundary to the town" by screening the red asbestos tile roofs of nearby council housing which formed "a most discordant note on the landscape" (75). The buildings were to be so arranged as to provide fine views of the Tweed Valley and Eildon Hills to the East.

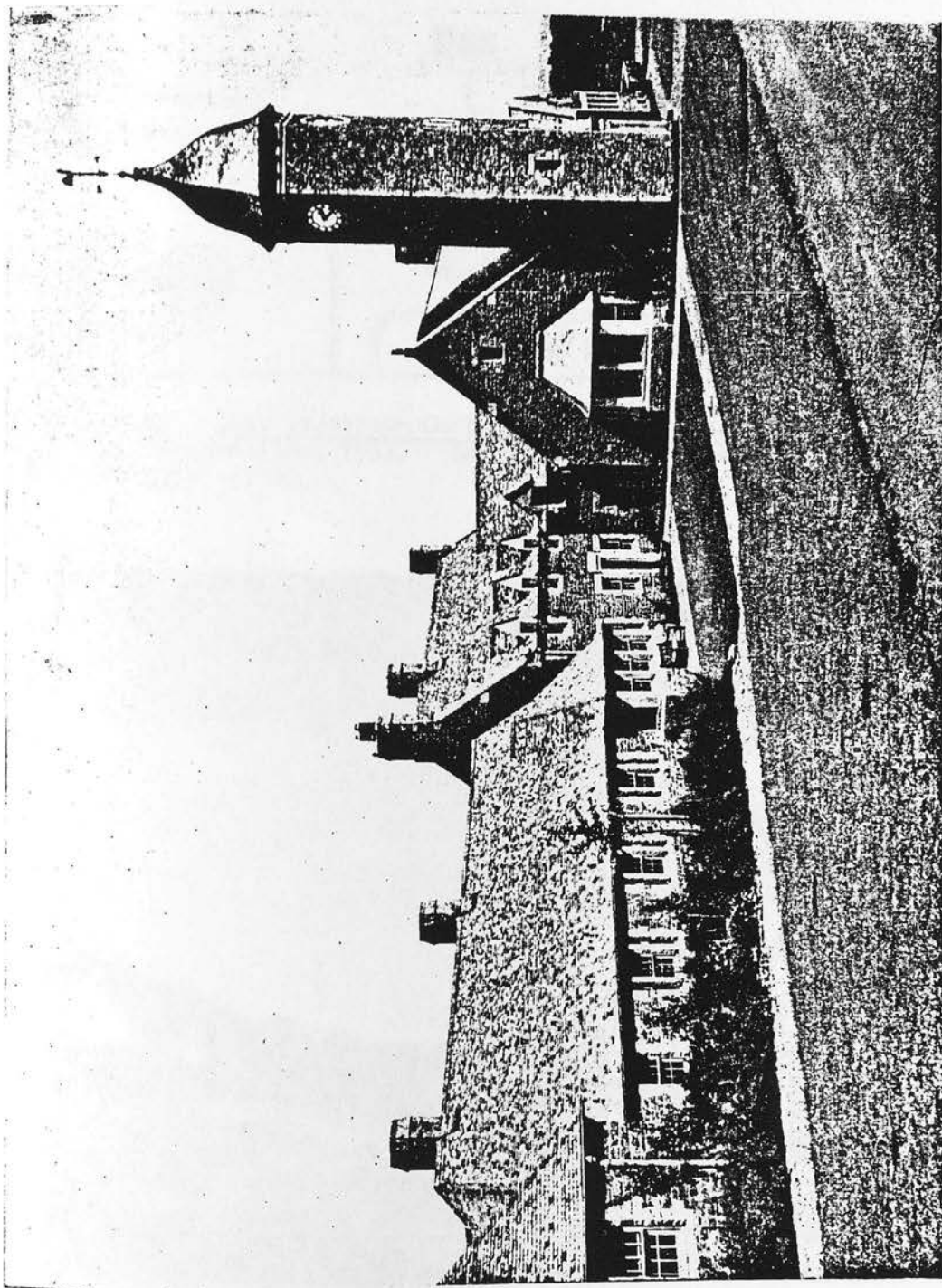


Fig. 6.5. Lucy Sanderson Cottage Homes, Galashiels. View looking East, showing the Ida Hayward Cottages, matron's house, communal hall and clock tower. F.C. Mears and C.D. Carus-Wilson, 1933. Source: *The Architect and Building News*, 17th August 1934, p.194.

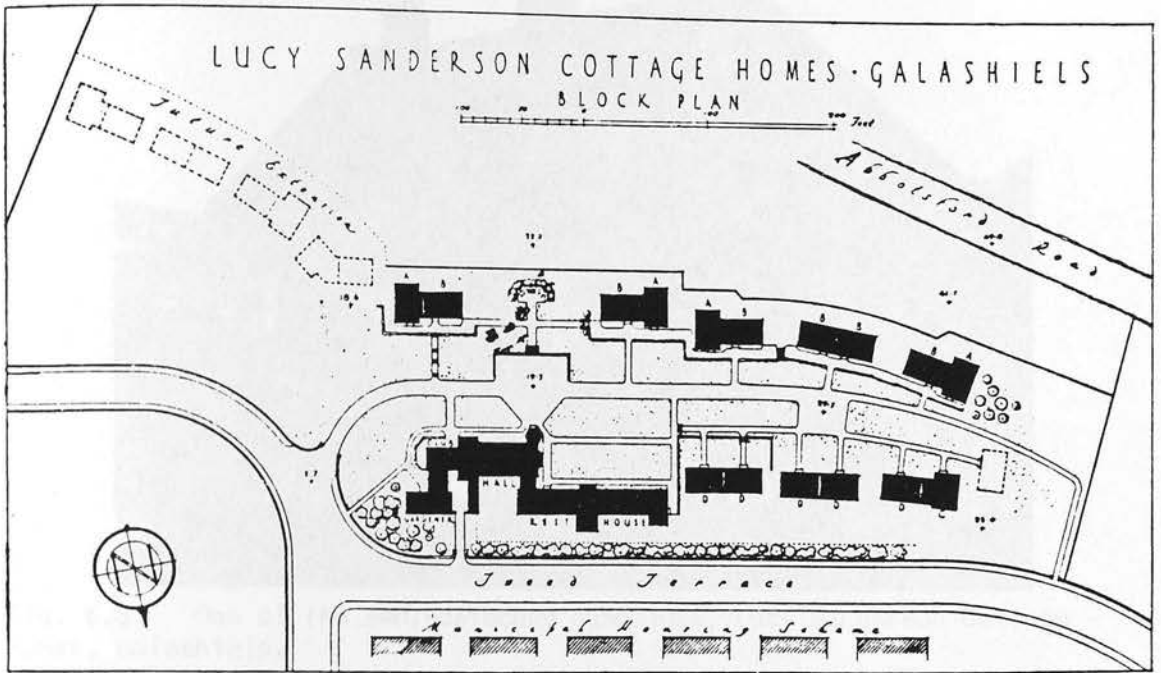


Fig. 6.6. Lucy Sanderson Cottage Homes, Galashiels. Layout plan, F.C. Mears & C.D. Carus-Wilson, 1933. Source: *The Architect and Building News*, 17th August 1934, p.192.

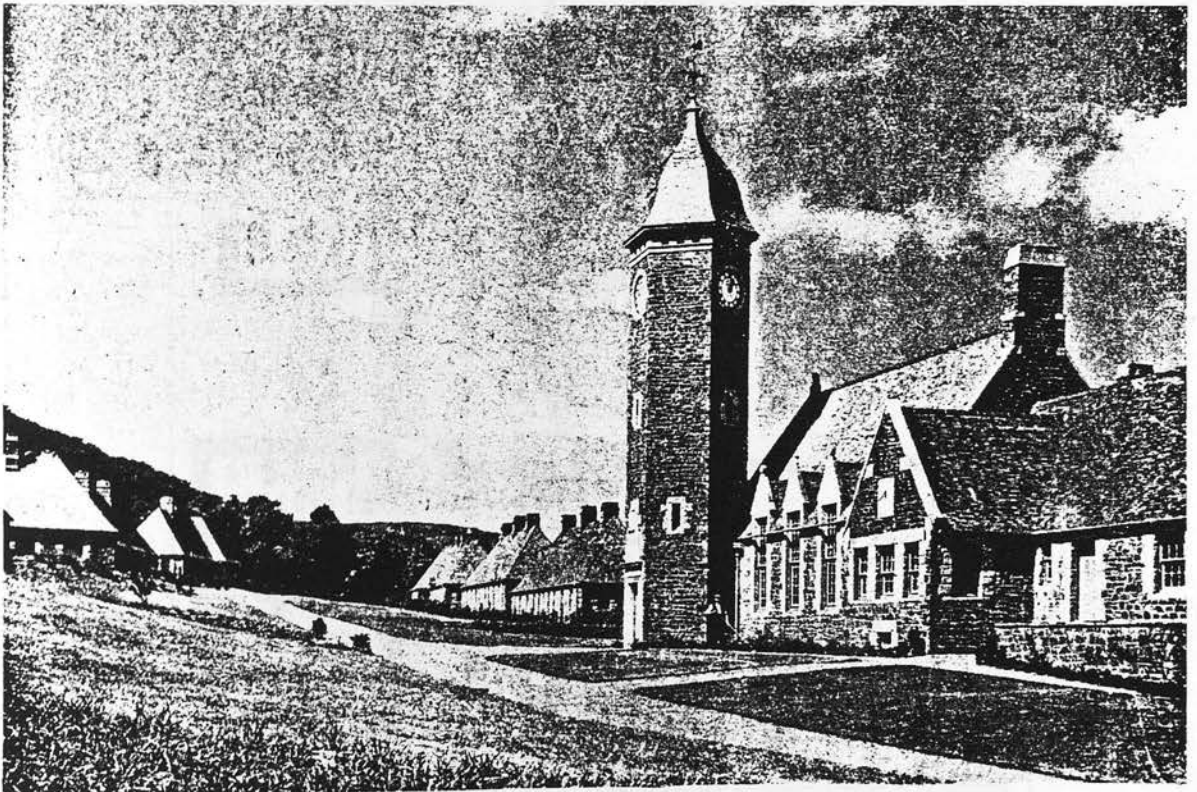


Fig. 6.7. Lucy Sanderson Cottage Homes, Galashiels. View looking West. Source: *The Architect and Building News*, 17th August 1934, p.192.



Fig. 6.8. One of the semi-detached bungalows, Lucy Sanderson Cottage Homes, Galashiels.

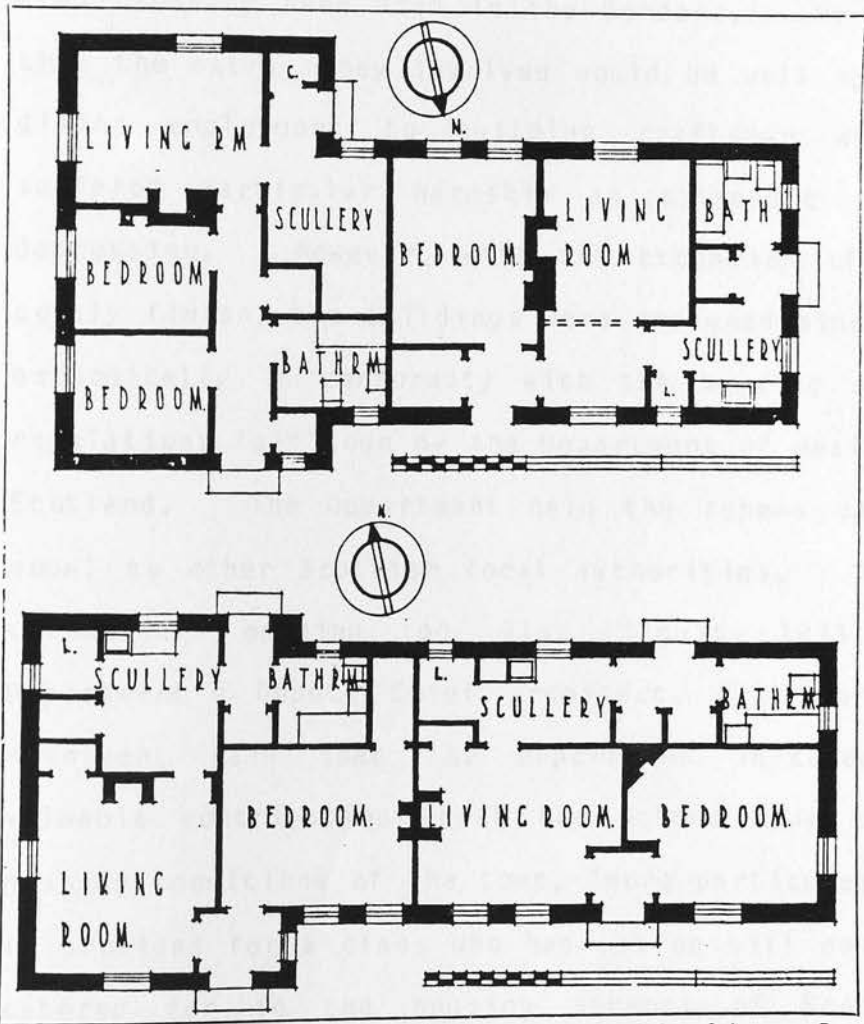


Fig. 6.9. Plans for two pairs of cottages, Lucy Sanderson Cottage Homes, Galashiels. Source: The Architect and Building News, 17th August 1934, p.194.

A strong Medieval influence is evident in the design of the buildings. A high clock tower provides a central feature and extensive use has been made of ornamental stonework carved by the sculptors C. d'O. Pilkington Jackson and Phyllis Jones. Originally it had been intended to adopt the contemporary brick and harl method of construction, but, because sufficient funds were available, Mears was able to persuade the Sanderson Trustees that an effort should be made to keep alive the method of whinstone building which had traditionally been used in the Borders. He argued that the extra money involved would be well spent in giving employment to building craftsmen who had suffered particular hardship as a result of the Depression. However, with the exception of their costly finish, the buildings were designed simply and economically in conformity with the housing subsidy regulations laid down by the Department of Health for Scotland. The Department held the scheme up as a model to other Scottish local authorities. At its ceremonial opening on 31st August 1933, the Department's Depute Chief Architect, Mr. George D. Macniven, said that the Department welcomed the valuable contribution which the scheme made to the housing conditions of the town, "more particularly as it provided for a class who had not up till now been catered for in the housing schemes of Scotland" (76).

In its Annual Report of 1934, the APRS reported the completion of the Lucy Sanderson Cottage Homes enthusiastically, pointing out that "less durable building in brick, harled and agreeably colour washed, would have achieved a very attractive appearance at a figure comparable with the costs of ordinary local housing". The lesson for modern house builders was "that good design is by no means necessarily dependent on high costs" (77).

#### **6.7 A Modern Scottish Architecture?**

As has already been remarked, Mears' training and experience had given him a strong Medieval bias and his particular fondness for Byzantine architecture is displayed in his designs for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Bahai Temple at Allahabad. He was trained during a period of revived interest in the Scottish vernacular tradition (78) and influenced by such architects as Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Robert Lorimer. The English Arts and Crafts Movement was another important influence and his work had affinities with Art Nouveau. He was often critical of the Modernists and scathing about the way in which their ideas were applied in practice. Le Corbusier, in particular, he regarded as a theoretician who had lost all contact with real

life. Although there was a strong emphasis on tradition in Mears' approach to design and the use of materials, he was capable to being innovative when occasion demanded, frequently combining traditional styles with modern building principles and novel methods of construction. He rejected the view that the Modern Movement represented a revolutionary break with the past, arguing that the best of modern design displayed the same uncluttered functionalism and sensitive use of light and mass which had long been evident within the vernacular tradition. His own architectural designs were never simply presented as sculptures to be viewed from a fixed point. Rather, he was interested in spaces and the relationships between them and many of his works either enclose the viewer or unfold before his progress (79, 80).

In the difficult economic climate of the interwar years, challenging design opportunities such as that provided by the Lucy Sanderson Cottage Homes were hard to come by. Mears was unsuccessful in the architectural competitions for the new Dublin Cathedral and the League of Nations Building in Geneva, and Govan has suggested that he perhaps lacked the self-confidence necessary to promote his work effectively (81). However, his Edinburgh practice managed to survive on small commissions within Scotland, a typical example being the new



*18th Century*



*19th Century*



*20th Century*

*Trend of Scottish domestic Architecture*

Fig. 6.10. Trend of Scottish Domestic Architecture. Mears' somewhat acid comment on changing architectural styles. Source: MEARS, F.C. (1949), "Regional Plan for Central and South-East Scotland", Central and South-East Scotland Regional Planning Advisory Committee, p.148.

industrial premises designed for the Edinburgh printing firm, T. & A. Constable in 1932.

Mears' former student, the nationalist, Robert Hurd, was perhaps the most active proponent of the Scottish cultural revival in the field of architecture. However, there had been little opportunity since the Great War to develop Mackintosh's conception of a modern Scottish architecture combining the best of the vernacular tradition with the new functionalism of the Modern Movement. In an essay published in 1932, Hurd complained that:

"Our difficulty nowadays seems rather to lie in the getting of opportunities for the private architect to practice and develop a technique of designing for, and building in, the new building materials that might subsequently evolve itself into a style known as "twentieth-century Scottish". The ordinary man and woman in Scotland today has very little to spend on building, the drift south of industry has brought business expansion to a standstill, multiple stores with their headquarters in the south give very little work to Scottish architects, the Scottish banks do not as a group pursue that active building policy that has caused the erection of so many beautiful big and little



Fig. 6.11. Industrial premises for the Edinburgh printing firm, T. & A. Constable Ltd., Hopetoun Street, Edinburgh, F.C. Mears, 1932.

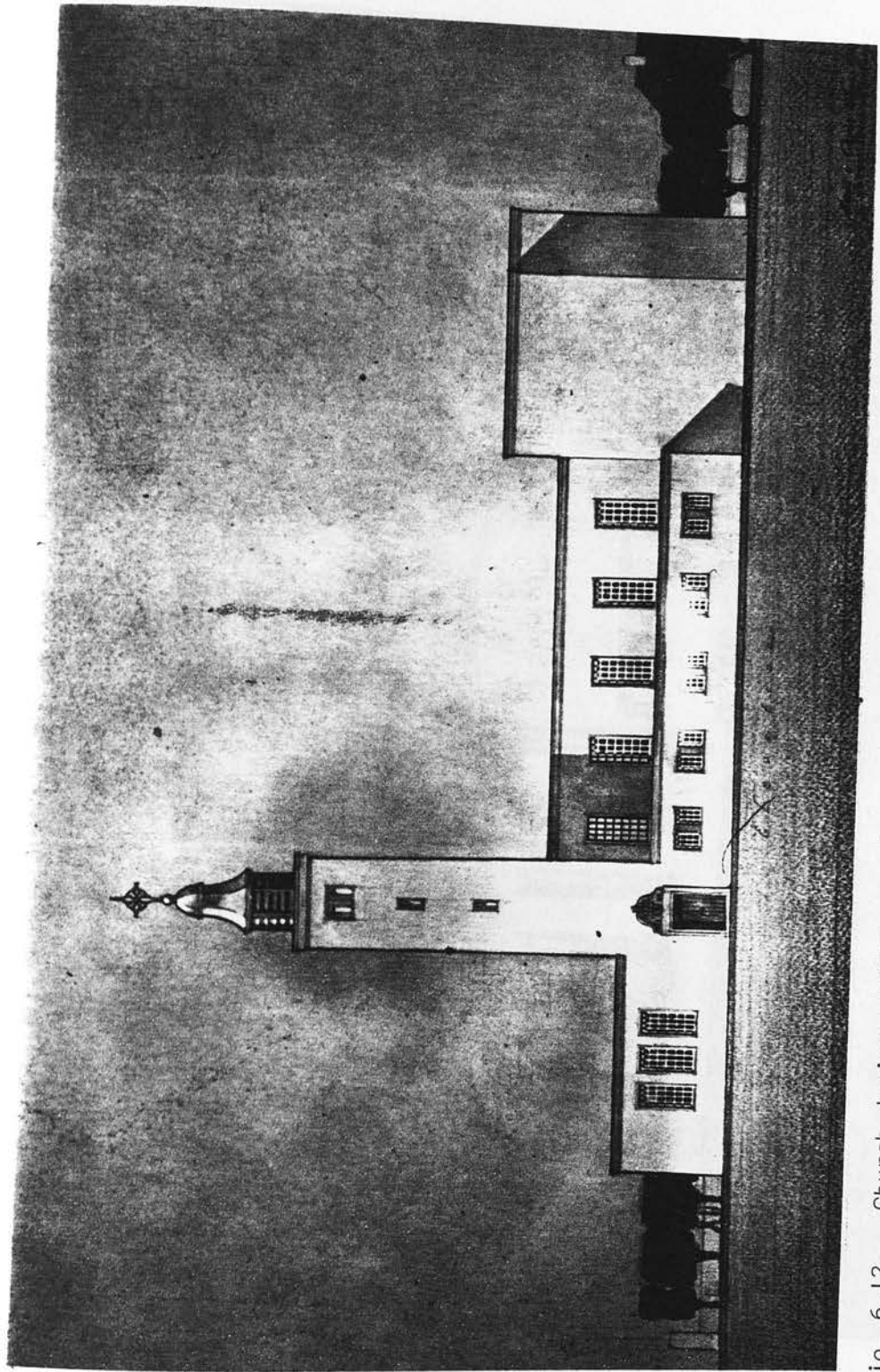


Fig. 6.12. Church design combining modern and traditional elements. Mears & Carus-Wilson, 1930s. Photograph courtesy of Sir Frank Mears and Partners, Edinburgh.

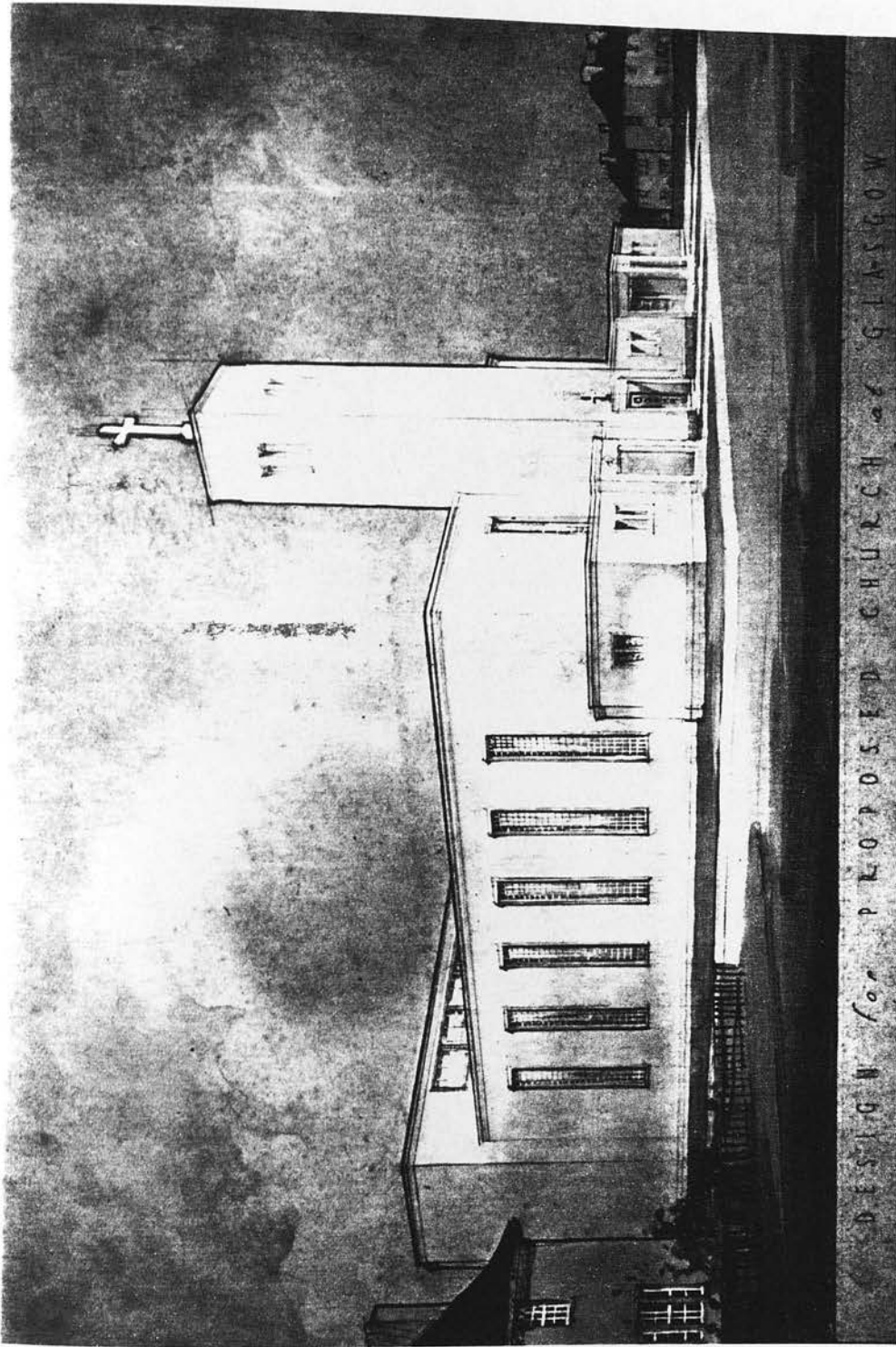


Fig. 6.13. Design for a Proposed Church at Glasgow. Mears and Carus-Wilson, 1930s.  
Photograph courtesy of Sir Frank Mears and Partners, Edinburgh.

buildings all over England since the war, and we certainly have no wealthy and intelligent clients like the Underground Railways in London to give scope for manifold architectural development" (82).

Part of the problem, Hurd believed, was that so much of contemporary building in Scotland was under the control of unimaginative central and local government bureaucracies. He called for a radical strategy of decentralization and a policy of opening up public projects to competition with the aim of stimulating the sort of progressive national architecture which was to be found in small European countries like Finland and Czechoslovakia. Such a view is unlikely to have found favour with Mears. During his period in Jerusalem, he had argued that co-operative organization rather than open competition was the best means of promoting the development of a modern Palestinian style of architecture, since competition tended to encourage ostentatious individualism rather than the growth of a common architectural ethos (83).

## 6.8 New Road Bridges

One public project which stimulated considerable debate over the respective merits of modern and traditional design and materials was the Ministry of Transport's programme for the improvement of trunk roads in the Highlands. Of particular concern to the rural preservation lobby was the Ministry's proposal to drive a modern road through Glencoe. Glencoe, Mears wrote, was a natural sanctuary where "noble scenery and tragic memories" combined to create a profoundly emotive atmosphere. Yet here, in place of the old road which was "in subtle harmony with the landscape", the Ministry was promoting a scheme which it regarded as "a triumph of engineering", with bridges, cuttings and uniform gradients to make the new road capable of carrying the heaviest traffic. The proposal, he believed, represented a grave threat to "the whole character of this unique glen" (83).

The APRS Chairman, Sir Iain Colquhoun, referred to the impact of modern design and materials on the countryside in his address to Glasgow Rotary Club in 1929. The following day, "The Glasgow Herald" reported that:

"The view of his Association was that the modern builder and architect who had such new and unresponsive material to work with as concrete and cement, of which our ancestors, to their own good fortune, knew nothing, should be given every encouragement to understand the possibilities and limitations of these new mediums, and to deal with them in a simple and artistic manner. He suggested that when in doubt they should stick to the simple and plain, and endeavour to realise that a bridge which might possibly be suitable in Palestine or Turkestan was glaringly and offensively out of place in a Highland Glen" (84).

Extensive road improvement throughout Scotland was resulting in the demolition or bypassing of many older bridges, and in its Annual Report of 1931, the APRS expressed concern that "The noble character of Scotland's historic bridges was in danger of being lost in the current preoccupation with utility" (85). In response to representations from the Association, the Ministry of Transport agreed to face its engineering works in Glencoe in local stone and to respect the natural land form in its designs for road improvements throughout the Highland area. The APRS closely monitored the progress of this work (86) and Mears and Carus-Wilson were appointed as Consulting

Architects for a series of new road bridges in the Great Glen, on the Glenalbyn section of the Glasgow to Inverness Road. The four bridges, which combined modern methods of construction with a traditional appearance, were completed between 1932 and 1935. Those at Kiachnish, Loch Dìch and Fort Augustus were built entirely in concrete, the aggregate being carefully chosen to ensure a pleasant colour and texture after bush-hammering. However, most commentators agreed that the stone-clad bridge at Invermoriston was the one which most successfully harmonized with its spectacular surroundings (87, 88).

At about this time, the Town Council of the City of Aberdeen was preparing plans for the construction of a new crossing of the River Dee at Allenvale, to relieve traffic congestion on the historic Brig o Dee upstream. In June 1935, the question of employing an advisory architect with experience in concrete bridge construction was remitted to a special committee under Provost Henry Alexander, who was himself a member of the APRS and a keen advocate of planning (89). Shortly afterwards, Mears was appointed as Consulting Architect for the project. In the summer of 1936, his design for a three-span reinforced concrete bridge faced in Kemnay granite won favourable comment from the Royal Fine Art



Fig. 6.14. The Kiachnish Bridge, between Ballachulish and Fort William. Constructed of uncoloured, bush-hammered reinforced concrete at a cost of only £5,900. Mears and Carus-Wilson, 1932.

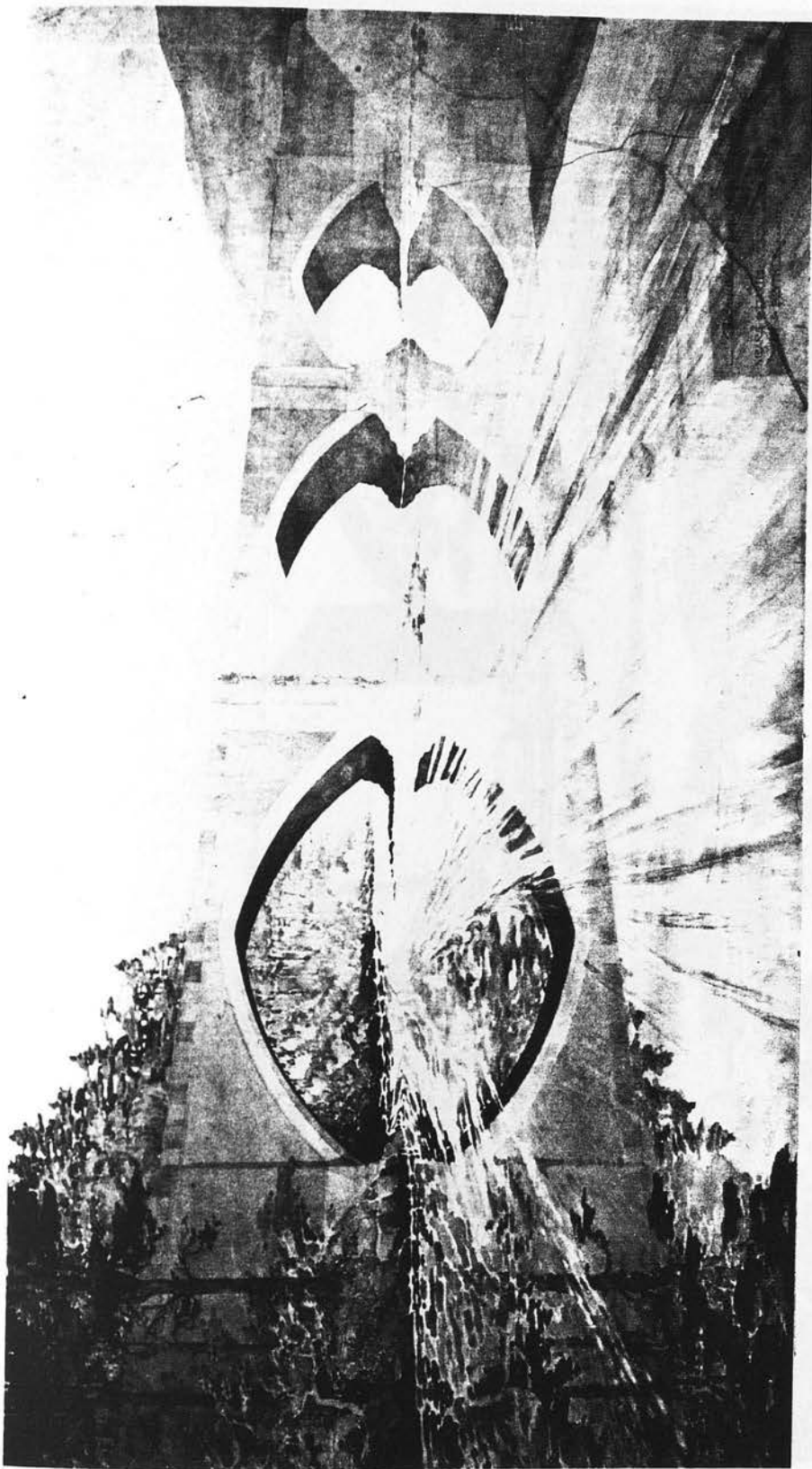
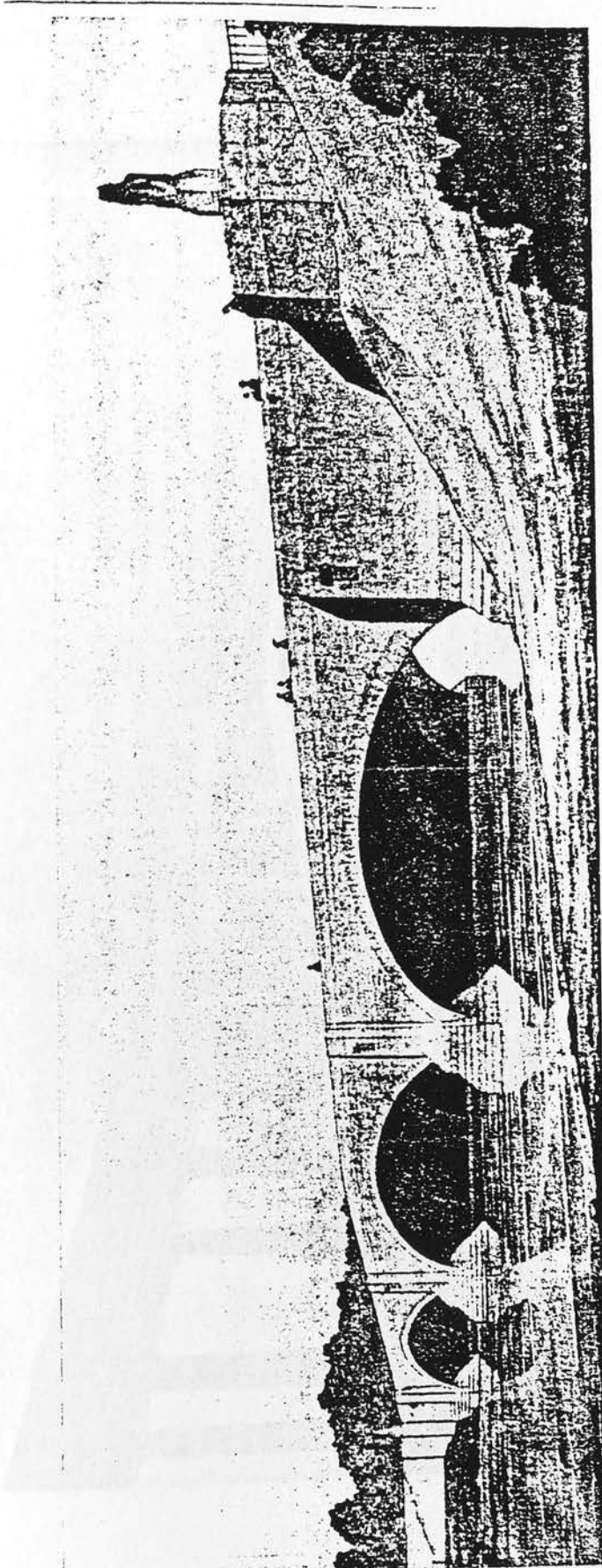


Fig. 6.15. Oich Bridge, Inverness-shire.  
of £23,500. Mears and Carus-Wilson, 1932.

Constructed in uncoloured, bush-hammered concrete at a cost  
Photograph courtesy of F.C. Mears and Partners, Edinburgh.



Fig. 6.16. Invermoriston Bridge, Inverness-shire. Concrete construction faced in local stone. Mears and Carus-Wilson in collaboration with Engineers, Blyth and Blyth, 1933. Photograph courtesy of the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh.



PROPOSED NEW BRIDGE OVER RIVER DEE AT ALLENVALE.

Fig. 6.17. The George VI Bridge over the River Dee at Allenvale, Aberdeen. F.C. Mears, 1936.  
Source: The City Engineer and Water Engineer's Report for the year ending 31st May 1939, Aberdeen Corporation.

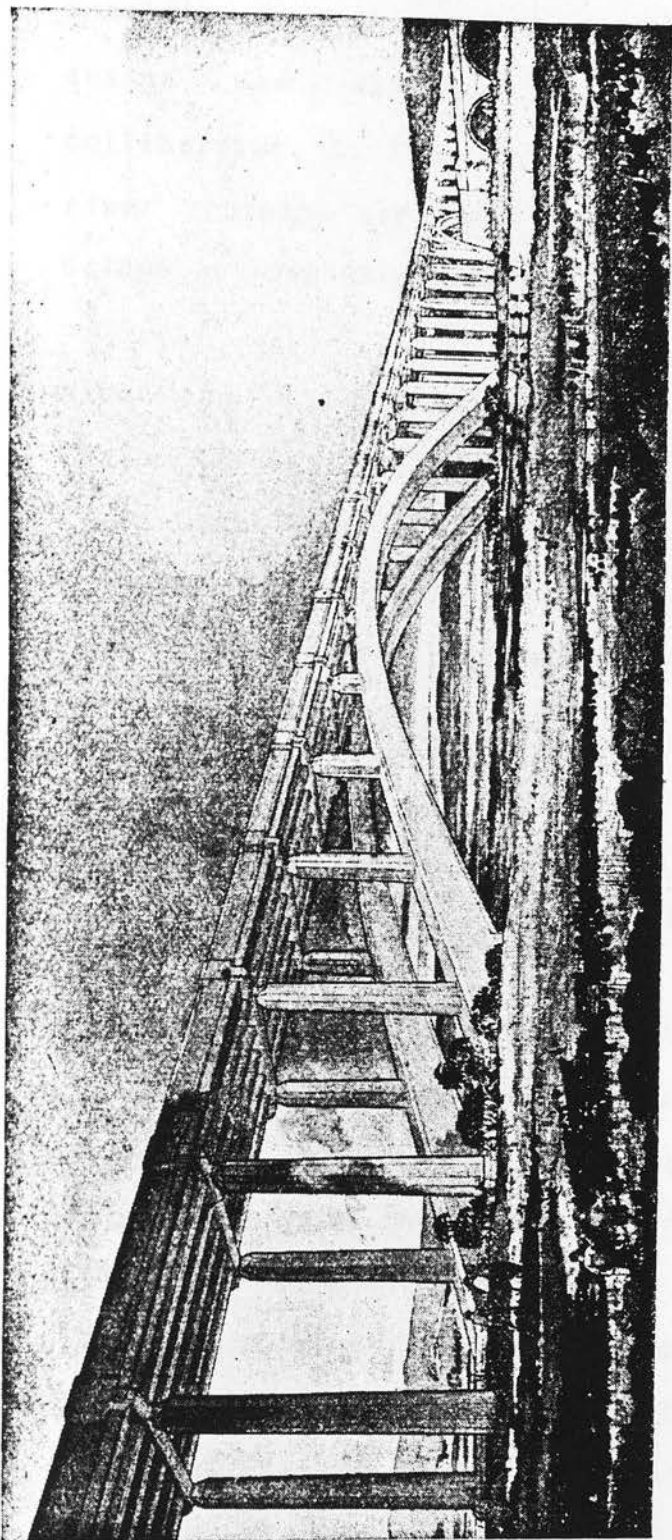


Fig. 6.18. Lower North Water Bridge, Montrose, F.C. Mears, 1948. Source: "The Builder", 30th June 1950, p.875.

Commission for Scotland, but construction work did not start until September 1938 (90, 91). The heraldic decoration employed in the traditional design was executed by Mears' friend and collaborator, C. D'O. Pilkington Jackson. The new river crossing was finally opened as the George VI Bridge on 10th March 1941.

After the Second World War, Mears prepared a design for a large modern concrete road bridge over the Lower North Water near Montrose. Although this won a prize for the best architectural drawing of the year when exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in 1950, the bridge itself was never built (92).

## **6.9 Urban Conservation in Stirling**

The housing legislation of the nineteen-thirties made provision for slum clearance and redevelopment in the overcrowded central areas of Scotland's towns and cities, and gave new impetus to public sector house building. However, the Scottish conservation lobby became increasingly concerned that the new schemes being undertaken by local authorities were resulting in the demolition of large numbers of houses "of a distinctively Scottish character" (93). Following the passing of the Housing (Scotland) Act of 1935,

the APRS, the National Trust for Scotland and the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland collaborated closely in a campaign for Government action to protect Scotland's architectural heritage. In a widely-reported speech delivered on behalf of the National Trust for Scotland in May 1936, the Marquess of Bute employed one of the favourite themes of the cultural nationalist movement in arguing that:

"... it is difficult to see any other basic reason for the great national loss that is being forced upon the country than the complete decay of national spirit, the complete loss in Scotland of that sense of home and country of which other countries boast ...

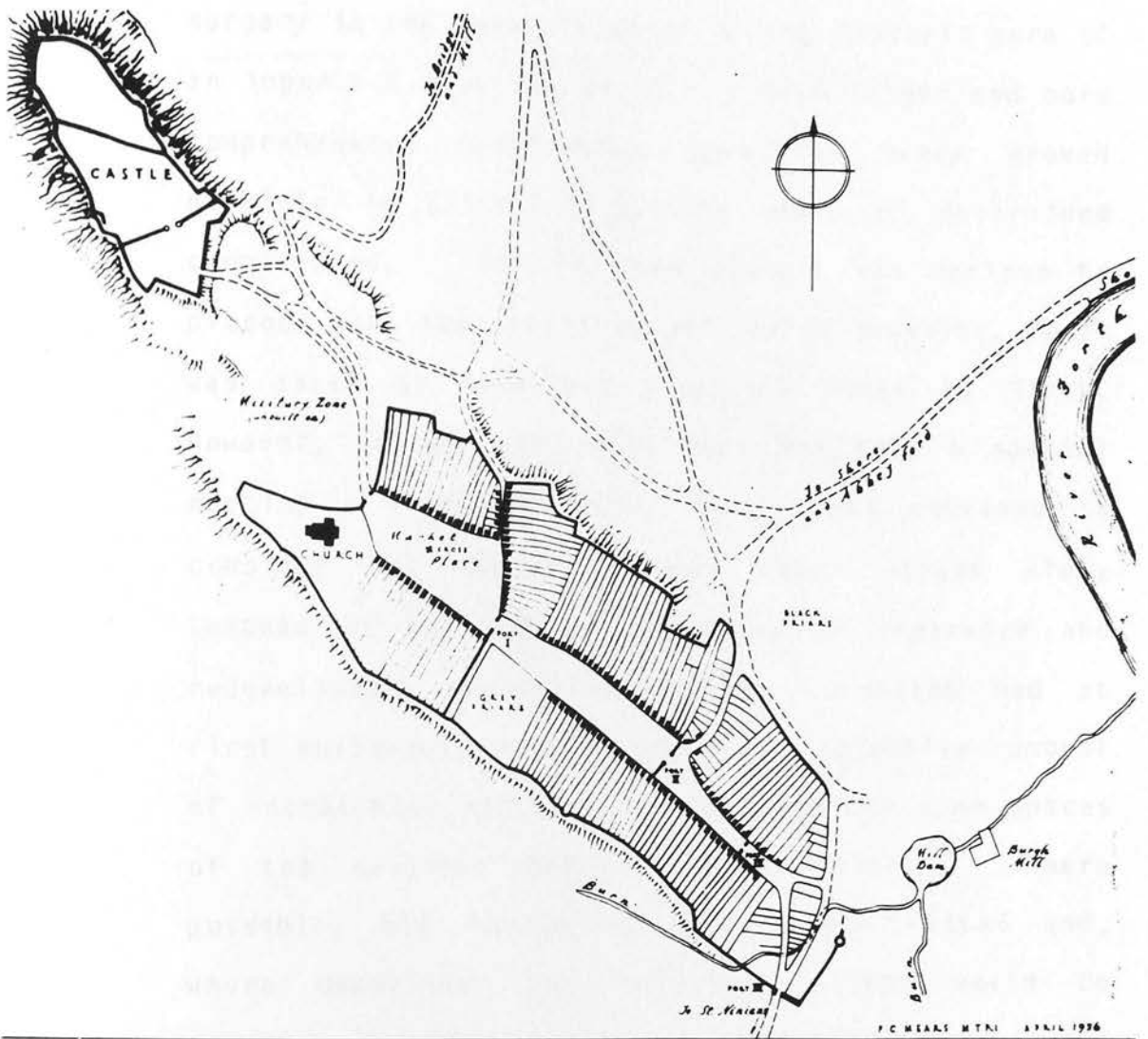
It is useless to argue that the face of our whole country must be changed in order to do away with slums; and yet this is in fact what is being loudly advertised to the whole world. That the Department of Health may go ahead heedless of the loss and destruction left in its wake is bad enough, but it is disconcerting, after all this country has spent on education, to think that Town Councils can be found that can so easily agree to the despoiling of the older amenities of their burghs ..." (94).

Although no action was taken on the call by the APRS for the appointment of special inspectors to advise local authorities on the conservation of domestic buildings, the various Government departments involved were sensitive to mounting public criticism on the issue. When in November 1935, the Town Council of Stirling submitted a particularly controversial scheme for the clearance of the Baker Street and Bow Street area within the burgh's Medieval core, the Department of Health responded by advising the Council to seek expert advice "with a view to ensuring that the development of the area would be carried out on the most appropriate lines" (95). On 16th December, the Council's Housing Committee met with George D. Macniven of the Department of Health for Scotland, John Wilson Paterson, Chief Architect for H.M. Office of Works in Scotland, and Miss Simpson of the Office of Works' Ancient Monuments Department, in order to discuss the scheme further. After a site visit, Mr. Paterson stated that unless the Commissioners of Works could be satisfied that every method of dealing with the problem had been thoroughly explored, including the possibility of retaining the original line of Baker Street, they were not likely to give approval to the scheme. The Government officials again recommended that the Council should seek "the very best advice available". Accordingly, the Housing Committee

agreed to recommend that the Town Council should employ an expert architect to advise it on the plans to be adopted for the Baker Street Clearance Area and, in January 1936, Frank Mears was appointed to "act on behalf of the Council and to report and submit plans covering:

- (i) old buildings worthy and capable of being preserved;
- (ii) town planning readjustment in the broad sense, covering traffic needs, better conditions of sunlight and ventilation for buildings, provision of open spaces and improved amenities; and
- (iii) outline site planning (to include suggestions for the grouping and architectural treatment of the new houses)" (96).

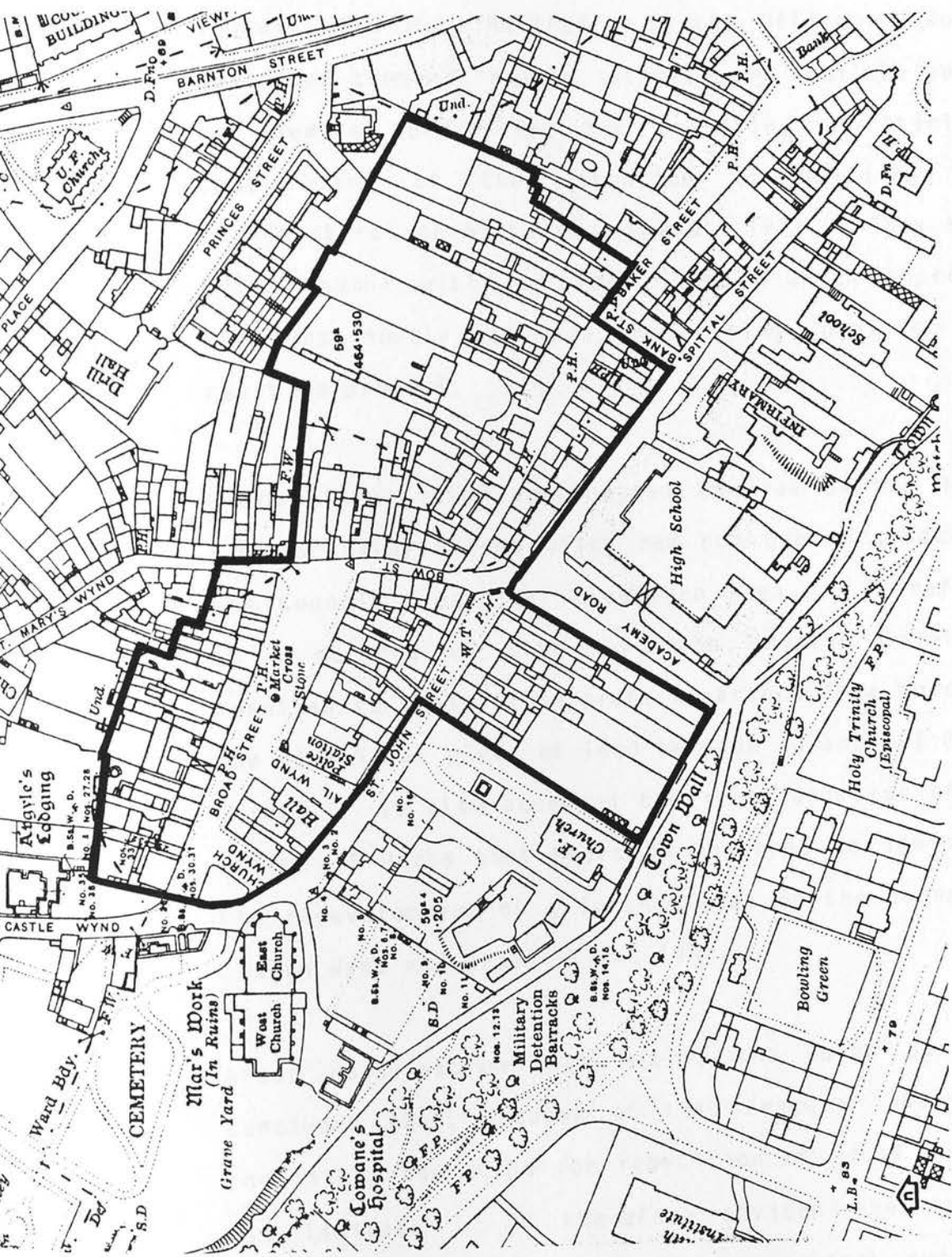
Mears undertook that attendance at Committee meetings to explain and discuss his report as well as any necessary conferences with officials of the Office of Works and Department of Health would be covered by his fee of 100 guineas plus travelling expenses. In addition, it was agreed that he should be employed to prepare detailed designs for the new buildings themselves, for which he was to be paid in the region of £1.00 per house.



*The* ROYAL BURGH of STIRLING

DIAGRAM SHOWING BURGH EXTENSIONS  
13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY & LATER

Fig. 6.19. Medieval Stirling. F.C. Mears, April 1936. Photograph courtesy of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Edinburgh.



Area replanned by Sir Frank Mears and Partners,

Central Stirling Reconstruction.

Fig. 6.20.  
1936-1960.

The plans won the approval of the two government departments concerned. In a letter to the Town Council, Mr. D.L. MacIntyre of the Office of Works described them as "highly satisfactory from the point of view of preserving the amenities of Stirling Castle and of the retention of buildings of architectural or historic interest" (97). They also found favour with the Town Council which approved them unanimously and gave the Housing Committee the remit to proceed.

Mears' layout plan encompassed an area on the North side of Baker Street which had not been included in the Council's original Clearance Area. Therefore, at a meeting on 25th May, the Housing Committee resolved to create a separate Clearance Area to cover the additional piece of land between 36 and 46½ Baker Street. It also accepted the recommendation of the Office of Works that Mears be employed to advise on the redevelopment of a further area on the corner of Church Wynd and Broad Street (98).

After consultation with Mears, the Burgh Surveyor concluded that, because of the irregular nature of the sites, the scope for repetition of house designs was limited. He therefore advised the Housing Committee that it would be more practical and less time consuming to have all the architectural design

work carried out by one hand. The Committee accordingly agreed that Mears should prepare all the preliminary plans and elevations, obtain the approval of government departments and inspect work as far as necessary to control external design (99).

The project was divided into several sections and Mears was instructed to prepare drawings for three and four apartment houses for the first phase of redevelopment on the new Baker Street Clearance Area. He submitted layout plans for the Baker Street Rehousing Scheme No. 1 in September 1936 (100). there were to be 26 three-roomed units and 12 four-roomed units and the development was to consist of two parallel rows of two-storey houses with the centre block of each now rising to three storeys. Since the new council houses would be screened from view by the Baker Street frontages, it was decided that they could be constructed in modern standard building materials to minimize costs. Elements of garden suburb planning were to be included in this part of the scheme. The new cul-de-sac was to terminate in an ornamental enclosure which would be linked by a stairway to the lower town (101). It was originally intended that the carriageway would be divided by a central strip of grass and trees but this idea was later dropped because of the restricted nature of the site. Today, this part of the

redevelopment area has the appearance of a rather unremarkable interwar council housing scheme.

The Church Wynd improvement scheme was to replace a group of vernacular buildings which had fallen into such disrepair that they had to be demolished. It was not necessary to designate a separate Clearance Area since the previous occupants had already been rehoused. Originally, Mears had suggested that the site should be filled by two cottages and a tenement of 4 houses. However, the final design was for a three-storey tenement of 6 three-apartment houses fronting Broad Street and a two-storey building containing 2 houses of four apartments fronting St. John Street. The buildings, which were completed in 1938, are in the vernacular style and designed with their skyline descending southwards in order to emphasize the apse of the Holy Rude Church on the opposite side of St. John Street. The provisions of the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act 1892 were invoked to allow the Church Wynd frontages to be set forward in order to improve the line of the street. Stone from the buildings which had been demolished was used in the facades of the new dwellings. The development is considered to be amongst the best of Mears' domestic work (102) and is the one of which he was most proud (103). At the time, George Scott-Moncrieff, a writer who enthusiastically promoted the Scottish Cultural revival, described it as:

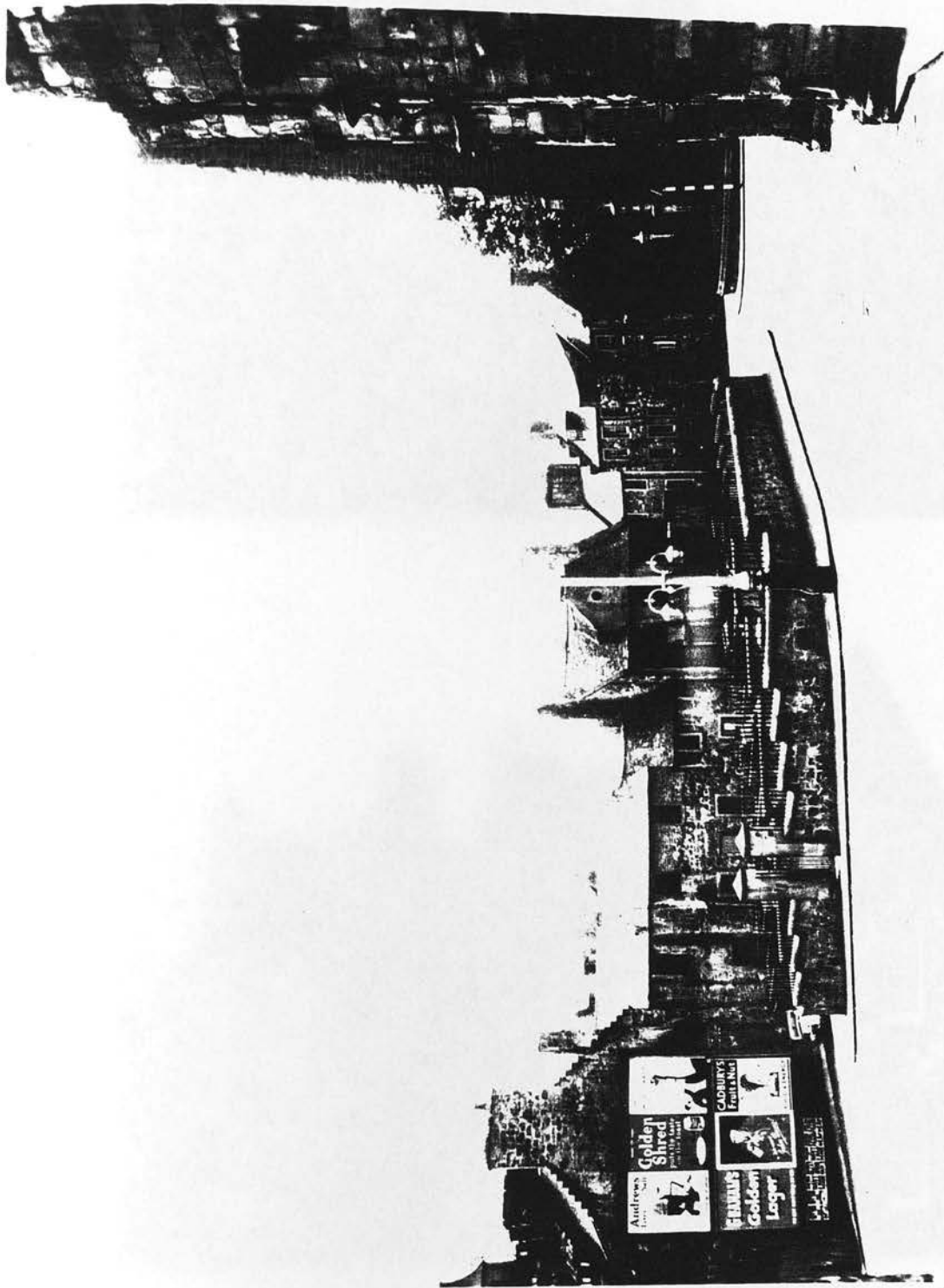


Fig. 6.21. Church Wynd, Stirling, prior to reconstruction. Photograph courtesy of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Edinburgh.



Fig. 6.22. Two views of the three-storey tenement and adjoining two-storey building on Church Wynd, Stirling. Stone from the vernacular buildings which had originally stood on the site was used in their construction. F.C. Mears, 1937.

"... a most creditable modern block, not tiredly imitative but a vigorous recapturing of the old forms" (104).

By 1938, Mears had prepared plans for a total of 102 new houses on sites within the old town and he estimated that a further 40 house units could be accommodated in reconditioned old buildings (105). However, the central Stirling slum clearance schemes were to result in the loss of a total of 850 dwellings, leaving a substantial displaced population which required to be housed in the new peripheral housing schemes at Raploch and Drip Road.

The objective of Mears' proposals was to maintain the character of the old town while improving living conditions for that fraction of the population which could be retained in the area. Reconstructed houses were to be given additional windows at the rear and prominent new buildings on street frontages were to be faced with stone or finished in harling with stone dressings. However, three quarters of the new housing would not be visible from the main streets and could therefore be built along standard lines. This included Baker Street Rehousing Scheme No. 1 which was finally completed as Morris Terrace in August 1941. Mears proposed a similar development of three storey tenements to provide 12 new house

units on the plateau behind Darnley House, but site planning proved difficult because of the desire to preserve the existing historic buildings and this part of the scheme was abandoned.

Mears believed that the attraction of Medieval towns lay in their suggestion of neighbourliness. Their townscape presented a succession of enclosed spaces. He attempted to preserve and enhance this characteristic in Stirling by opening up the original open spaces which had been encroached upon by later developments. Most notably, he proposed that the area between Baker Street and Spittal Street, which had once accommodated the burgh's second market, should be cleared of buildings to create a landscaped open space. Only the historic Glengarry Lodge and its neighbour at the upper end of the site were to be retained.

The convergence of five Medieval streets on Bow Street presented a particularly difficult problem. There was a need to carry out widening to accommodate modern traffic but it was considered desirable to retain the existing closed vistas. Mears proposed to do this by setting the footpath in arcades below the projecting gables of buildings at the top of Baker Street and the foot of Broad Street.

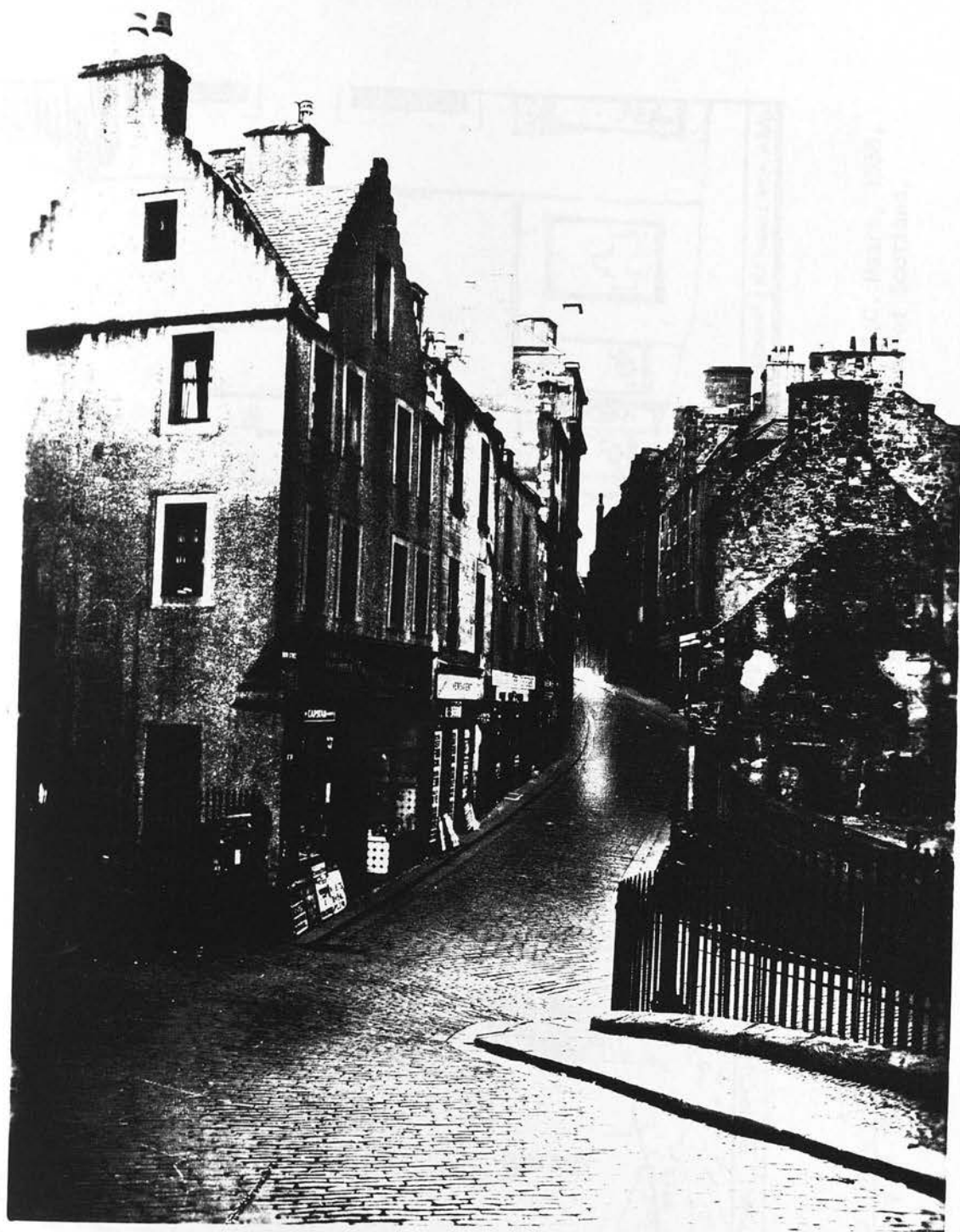


Fig. 6.23. Bow Street, Stirling, prior to reconstruction. Photograph courtesy of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Edinburgh.

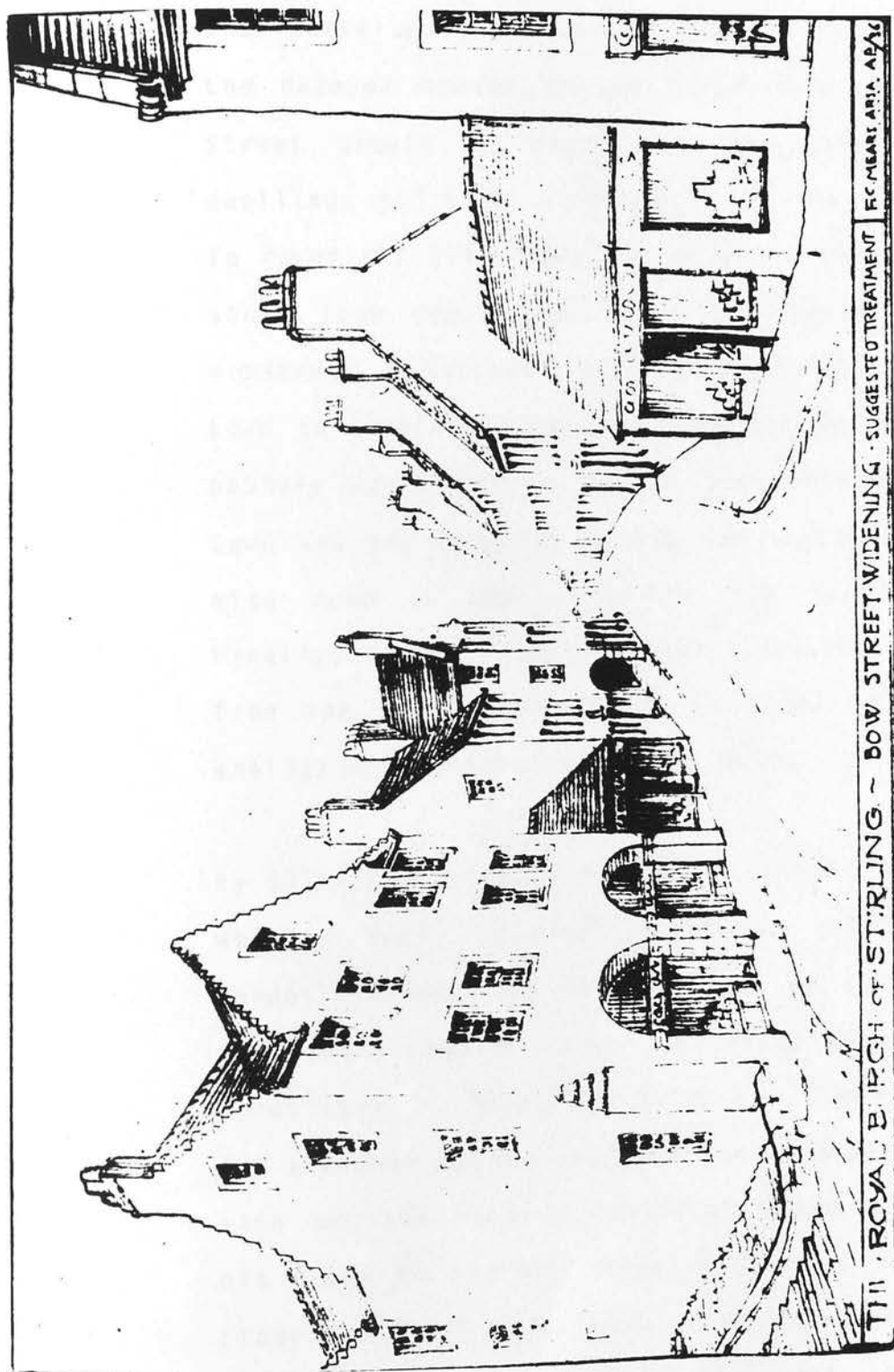


Fig. 6.24. Royal Burgh of Stirling, Bow Street Widening - Suggested Treatment. F.C. Mears, 1936.  
Photograph courtesy of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland,  
Edinburgh.

Mears regarded the area surrounding the Holy Rude Church as particularly sensitive. In addition to the redevelopment of Church Wynd, he recommended that the decayed houses on the North side of St. John Street should be demolished and replaced by new dwellings built in character with their neighbours. To round off his scheme, he proposed that some of the stone from demolished buildings should be used to construct a footpath on the North side of the old town to complement Back Walk to the South. The new pathway would form a useful link between the upper town and the shopping centre and station. It would also open up new views to the North and East. Finally, he suggested that the approach to the Castle from the lower town should be named "Kingsgait" in analogy with Edinburgh's Royal Mile.

By 1938, the property between 56 and 62 Baker Street, which had originally been earmarked for rehabilitation, had deteriorated to such an extent that the Office of Works was forced to authorize its demolition. Mears first of all prepared sketches for a number of new four-apartment houses to fill the site but the Housing Committee asked him to modify his plans to include three shop units on the ground floor and two houses, each of four apartments, above. Eventually it was decided that all the remaining

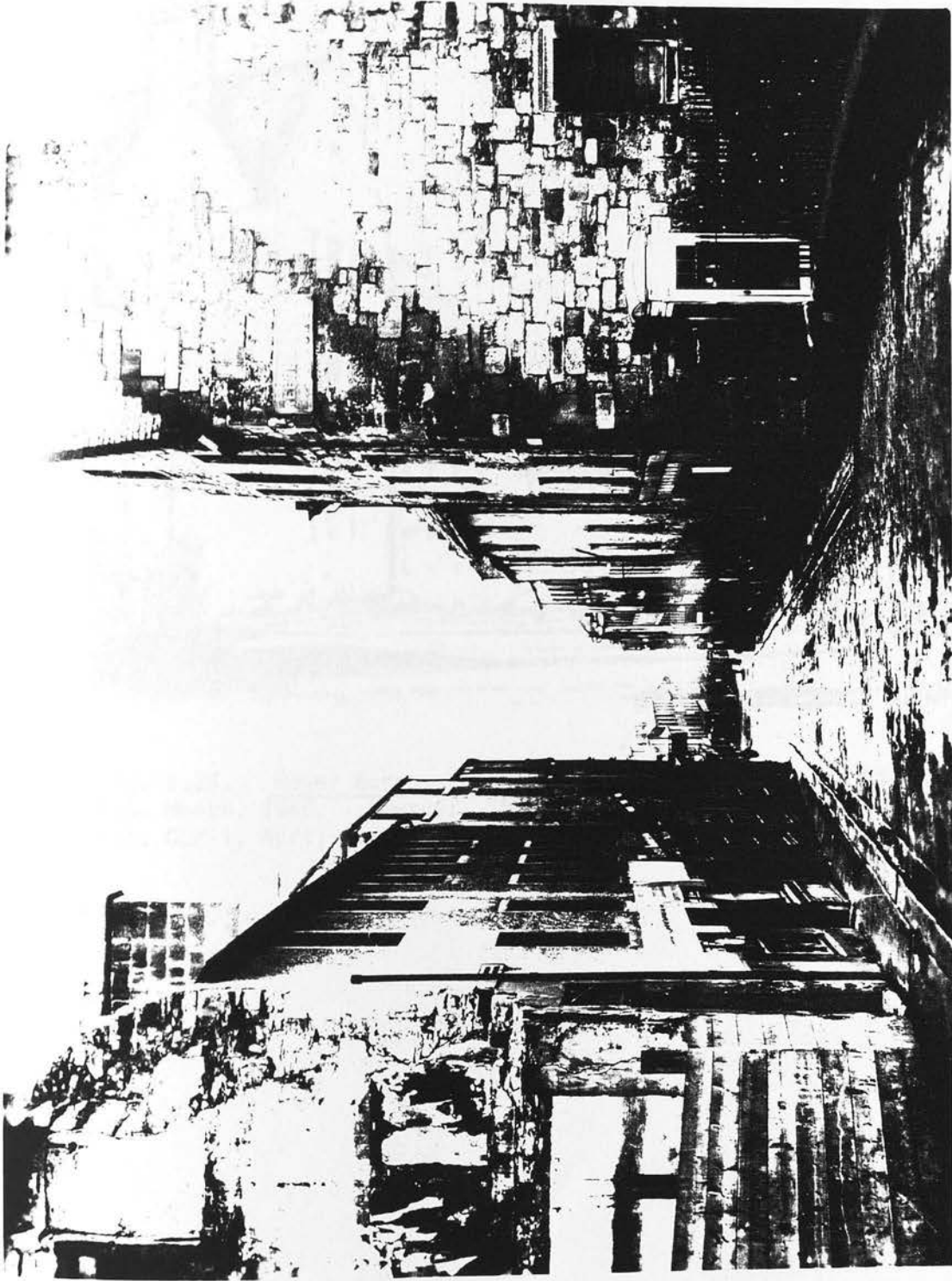


Fig. 6.25. Baker Street, Stirling, prior to reconstruction. Photograph courtesy of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Edinburgh.



Fig. 6.26. Royal Burgh of Stirling, Rebuilding of Baker Street.  
F.C. Mears, 1940. Source: "The Architect and Building News  
Vol. CLXII, April-June 1940, p.91.

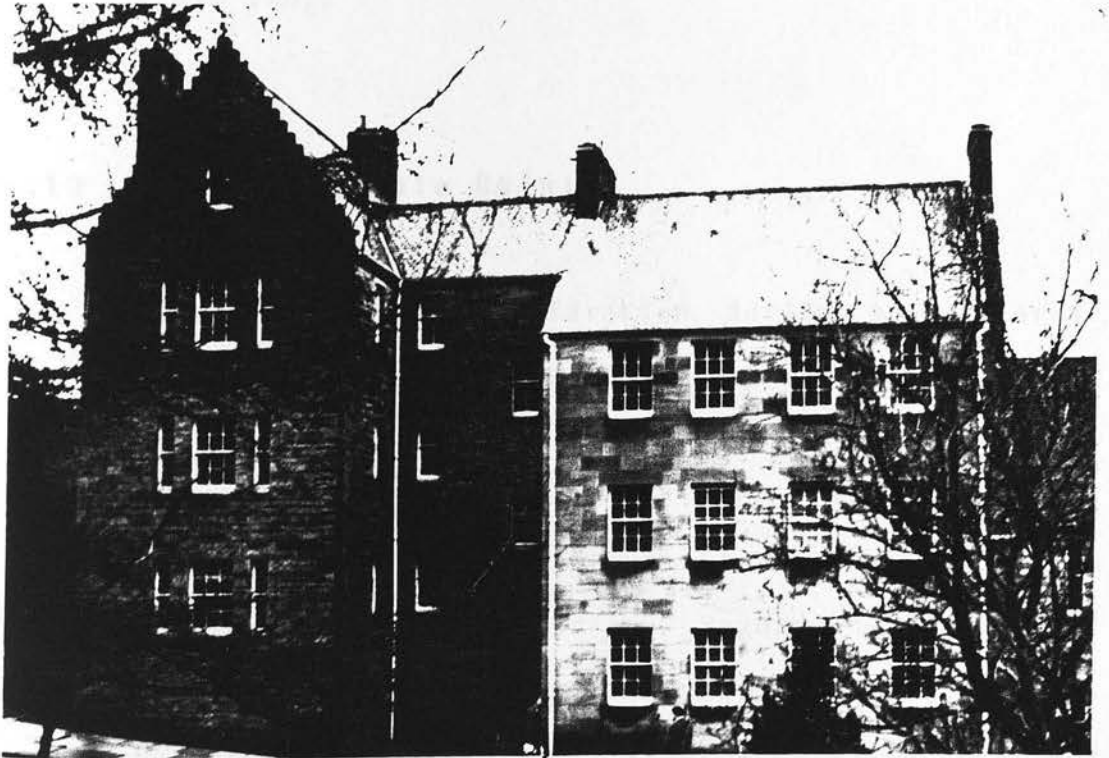


Fig. 6.27. Two views of Baker Street Rehousing Scheme No. 2, finally completed in 1955.

properties, from 64 to 110 Baker Street, would also have to be demolished. At a meeting of the Housing Committee on 20th December, Mears presented sketch plans of buildings for the whole length of the North side of Baker Street from Morris Terrace to Bow Street. He proposed 19 houses of three rooms and 4 houses of four rooms with between 7 and 9 shops included in the development (106, 107, 108). The detailed design of the Baker Street frontages proved more difficult than Mears had anticipated and little progress was made before the outbreak of World War II. When the project was suspended for the duration of the war in December 1939, work had only proceeded as far as the demolition of Nos. 64-84 Baker Street (109, 110).

#### **6.10 Scottish Middle Opinion**

The growth and proliferation during the interwar period of organizations such as the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland was a reflection of the growing national awareness throughout all aspects of Scottish cultural and political life. Beyond the confines of the literary renaissance, there was renewed interest in Scottish music, architecture, arts and crafts, and the conservation of Scotland's cultural heritage in

general. New initiatives were being taken in the developing fields of film-making and broadcasting and numerous articles and books were being written about a wide range of contemporary Scottish problems. As David Cleghorn Thomson wrote in his introduction to one such book of essays in 1932:

"The emergence of the Scottish Nationalist party [sic] as a significant force in politics has coincided with the return to Scotland of a group of Scots writers from the south, and with the development of regional broadcasting policy, which has provided an increasingly valuable platform for the views of those who, whether Nationalist in politics or not, are vitally interested in the future of Scotland as a cultural entity".

Many shared his view that:

"... a new day is dawning in Scotland, and that largely because a mobilisation of her youth is succeeding in breaking down some of the traditional barriers to imaginative expression and emancipation. There is a feeling of youthful battling abroad, and many of the alarms and excursions seem to be in the direction of artistic enterprise ..." (111).

In 1935, the APRS welcomed the rapid growth of the Scottish youth hostelling movement with the more cautious assertion that:

"... the rising generation is no whit less enamoured of old Scotland than are their elders - indeed perhaps more so - and it is claimed that a renaissance is discernible" (112).

As Harvie has pointed out, it was this mood which gave "a nationalist tinge to Scottish "middle opinion" groups, of the sort which in England laid the intellectual foundations for much state intervention after 1940" (113). Much of the leadership of this general movement was drawn from professional and academic circles, and this was reflected in the high level of activity and conspicuous public profile of such organizations as the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland and the Scottish Branch of the Town Planning Institute which was formed in 1930. Members of the Scottish aristocracy were also prominent, particularly in areas where their land and property interests were involved, and cultural nationalism could still display a distinctly patrician character. A more radical element, represented most notably by Tom Johnston, had its roots in the Independent Labour Party tradition in Scotland, and the idea of

Scottish cultural resurgence was promoted and sustained by able propagandists such as Robert Hurd and the journalist, William Power. Many of these diverse strands were brought together in 1936 with the founding of the Saltire Society:

"by a group of people who wished to see not a mere revival of the arts of the past, but a renewal of the life which made them, such as the Scots themselves experienced in the eighteenth century" (114).

Johnston, Hurd and Power played leading roles in the creation of the new Society and Frank Mears was a founder member and one of its first Vice Presidents. For many years, the Saltire Society's headquarters were located in Gladstone's Land, a seventeenth century tenement property in Edinburgh's Lawnmarket, which Mears restored on behalf of the National Trust for Scotland between 1936 and 1938 (115, 116).

In a small country like Scotland it was inevitable that there should be considerable overlap between the leaderships of the various organizations which constituted the Scottish cultural revival. As a result, an elaborate network of personal contacts existed within a relatively small circle of leading activists and this greatly facilitated the



Fig. 6.28. Gladstone's Land, Edinburgh. Restored by Mears for the National Trust for Scotland between 1936 and 1938.

organization of co-ordinated campaigns and initiatives in many areas of Scottish life. Mears was very much part of this circle, and his career appears to have benefitted considerably from his involvement. By the late nineteen-thirties, he had established a professional reputation which enabled him to take full advantage of the great new opportunities for comprehensive planning which the crisis of the Second World War was to provide.

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## 7.1 The Attractions of Planning

A writer associated with the Scottish Renaissance who took a particular interest in environmental matters was George Scott-Moncrieff. The son of a Theosophist minister, the Rev. C.W. Scott-Moncrieff, he was one of a small band of young intellectuals who had returned from England in the nineteen-thirties determined to stimulate and participate in a revival of Scottish cultural activity. In 1932, he ended a caustic essay on the state of the nation with the following clarion cry:

"Victoria is dead; the Industrial Age has crashed in flames. Scotland is free again. For too long she has tried to live as Scotland in these bones and ashes and gone for everything else to England. Now she has awoken to the sound of the world's chaos.

She may well have shuddered in horror at the state she has found herself in, with her Religion, her Art, her agriculture, fisheries, manufactures: over everything the deadening slime of Balmorality, a glutinous compound of hypocrisy, false sentiment, industrialism, ugliness, and

clammy pseudo-Calvinism; a slime that has made her forget that she is a country and regard herself as a suburb. But it is time to stop shuddering and to welcome the glorious difficulties of rebuilding" (1).

In the following decade, such sentiments were to have an increasingly powerful influence on Scottish middle opinion as confidence in the established order was undermined by the experience of the Depression and the onset of another devastating European war. Throughout the United Kingdom, middle opinion groups increasingly looked to planning as the means of securing a better future. As Hague has pointed out, the idea of planning as:

"... a neutral and effective means of furthering the interests of everybody was consolidated by the particular political conditions of the 1930s and the war. Rational executive action was a bulwark against the alternatives of laissez-faire and totalitarianism. The economic problems of recession and then reconstruction, and the political problems of refashioning the class compromise strengthened the credibility of an expertise that could manipulate the processes of urban and regional change so as to eliminate dysfunctions" (2).

In wartime Scotland, the need for comprehensive planning became the central campaign theme around which disparate political and cultural forces were able to unite. In 1941, Robert Hurd articulated the general view, shared by many English reformers, that the objective of planning was "to ensure that every individual will have reasonable freedom in which to enjoy a healthy worthwhile life according to his or her capacity". He saw it as a process "intimately concerned with human welfare, rather than as an academic exercise for architects at their drawing boards", providing "accommodation in the broadest sense for the results of economic and social policy" (3). However, from a Scottish perspective, planning could be seen as a means of achieving not only economic and social but also cultural objectives. The culture-based planning of Patrick Geddes, with its emphasis on geographical rather than class identities, held obvious attractions for nationalist propagandists like Robert Hurd and William Power, so that, by 1943, Power was arguing that:

"Planning is of supreme cultural importance. In a badly planned country, culture can never be much more than an exotic growth, cultivated by small groups in Universities, a few residential towns and the "select" quarters of the large cities. The vital current of a true national culture

circulates between two "poles": the city and the countryside. If the city is a mere amorphous sprawl, and if the countryside consists merely of a few large farms, the "policies" and sporting domains of big and small lairds, and the super-villas and "grounds" of well-off "incomers", the cultural current is feeble. If the means of cultural expression have been unduly absorbed by one city, and the others allow themselves to sink into near provincialism, culture will become decadent.

Cultural as well as all other national considerations demand that planning should aim primarily at the creation of real cities, properly functioning towns and live countrysides ..." (4).

This perception of planning as the key to cultural regeneration was very much in accord with the view which Mears had been assiduously promoting for over thirty years through such organizations as the Outlook Tower, Edinburgh Architectural Association, the Incorporation of Architects in Scotland and the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland. Since the days of the Edinburgh Survey, he had been advocating regional planning as the best means of ensuring just such a balanced and mutually-supportive relationship between town and country. However,

following the experience of the Depression, the case for regional planning had increasingly been expressed predominantly in economic terms (5). Throughout the nineteen-thirties, the process of industrial concentration in the South and Midlands of England had continued, while, despite Government assistance under Special Areas legislation and the ameliorative affect of rearmament towards the end of the decade, unemployment in the older industrial areas of Scotland, Wales and the North of England had remained stubbornly higher than in the South. The plight of the depressed parts of the United Kingdom became one of the dominant issues of domestic politics, and, in March 1937, the Conservative Government responded by setting up a Royal Commission on the Geographical Distribution of the Industrial Population, under the chairmanship of Sir Anderson Montague Barlow, to investigate the problem comprehensively and make recommendations (6). Among the bodies to submit evidence to the Commission on Scottish conditions was the Scottish Economic Committee (SEC) which had been established in the previous year by the Secretary of State, Sir Godfrey Collins. For a few years during the late thirties, the SEC very effectively "focused Scottish "middle opinion" approaches to economic and social reconstruction" (7), involving itself in such activities as the promotion of industrial estates, the Scottish Special Housing Association, Films of

Scotland, and the 1938 Empire Exhibition in Glasgow. The Committee drew on the work of a number of prominent Scottish academics, including that of the Principal of the Dundee School of Economics, James A. Bowie. A disciple of John Maynard Keynes and an active member of the Saltire Society, Bowie brought a strong social and cultural awareness to his analysis of contemporary Scottish economic problems. Like many others in the anxious years before the Second World War, he looked to planning as "the only hope of restoring order out of the prevailing chaos" (8). In his book, "The Future of Scotland", published in 1939, he argued that:

"It is not a question of the planning method destroying the nineteenth-century pattern of healthy competition. That pattern is already destroyed, and to look at contemporary conditions in the light of it is a complete misconception of the real position. The modern problem is to replace, not "healthy competition and individual initiative", but the chaos which has destroyed them, by a more stable system which will revive their good features within a framework of social responsibility.

... We need a new conception of the state as something more than a protection against invasion

or as the restrainer of malefactors. The state in its new function as the architect of economic life would review our industrial and social structure to the end that waste, unemployment, insecurity, poverty, crime and ill-health be eliminated, it would aim to satisfy real demand, to promote a steady rise in standards of living, and to regulate the pace of technical change" (9).

Bowie's advocacy of economic planning was based on a "faith in man's power to promote orderly development and social change through scientific research and control" (10). However, he also recognized the importance of the cultural dimension, and called for a "mental revolution", arguing that:

"Unless the people of Scotland learn to see visions and dream dreams of a rejuvenated land, all hope must be abandoned. If and when the vision of the end seeps into the mind of the Scot, and signs are not wanting that the process has begun, the quickened consciousness of purpose will reveal itself in the life of the spirit. Literature, art, drama, will all join in a new hallelujah. It is quite likely that Scotland's salvation will come through these creative arts rather than through any preachment, such as this book, on her economic ills" (11).

With regard to the question being considered by the Barlow Commission, he believed that:

"... it would be greatly in the national interest, as well as in the interests of the depressed areas, that the government should adopt as a settled policy the right to direct and influence the channels of industrial development so as to establish the lost equilibrium between different areas.

... For new industries settling in the stricken areas will find there already all the necessary industrial, commercial and social services, while in new areas, like Greater London, all these services have to be provided at great public cost, leaving to the older areas the increasing burden of maintaining services working far below capacity.

Our present towns, however out of date and badly planned, are very costly objects. To build and equip a small town of about 30,000 inhabitants costs at least £10,000,000. Several of our larger cities, mainly developed when prices were lower, have certainly had sums of well over £100,000,000 spent on them. Private investment on factories, houses and buildings of all kinds

is certainly very much higher. All these capital assets, public or private, will retain their value only if the people remain to use them" (12).

Mears reviewed "The Future of Scotland" for the Quarterly Illustrated of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland. He was impressed by the book, believing that "all who are concerned with housing, town and country planning or with administration or education will find in it much of value to their work" (13). Commenting on Bowie's plea for new consumer industries to be established in Scotland, Mears pointed out that the revival of indigenous industries using local resources could also make a valuable contribution to the alleviation of unemployment. As an example particularly close to his own heart he cited the Scottish building tradition, arguing that:

"If, as we have been told, Architecture is to become "functional", again it may be well that we guard against the "gas attack" of propaganda in favour of a building industry based on synthetic and "ersatz" materials, very few of which are produced in Scotland. In escaping from the Baronial style, it may be that we have lost something vital in our building tradition. A native architecture must be based on sound

economic not less than on theoretical considerations and it appears strange that, today, as evidence of the Drift South, even natural materials have to be imported, such as Northumberland freestone into Renfrewshire, or Welsh slates into Caithness, which has every good slates of its own.

Dr. Bowie makes a strong plea for the setting up of new industries to carry us forward when rearmament activity comes to an end. May it not be worth while for the Scottish Office, in conjunction with the Building Industry and the Scottish Economic Committee to organise a revival of the use of Scottish building materials.

Dr. Bowie's book makes it clear that we have very far to go before the average Scottish town will be fit to live in. The percentage of overcrowded houses in Scotland is 22.6, nearly a quarter, as against 3.8 for England and Wales. A minimum of a quarter of a million new houses is required before this state of affairs comes to an end. Why should not at least a proportion of these be built of native materials?" (14).

## 7.2 County Planning Schemes

Regional planning was slow to get underway in Scotland. In 1923, Edinburgh Town Council agreed to carry out a regional survey of the city and its environs and in the following year discussions took place with the County Councils of East, West and Midlothian with a view to preparing a regional plan. However, the authorities failed to reach agreement and the scheme foundered. The Clyde Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee was established in 1927, but there was little further progress for the remainder of the decade. After 1930, the pace quickened somewhat, with a regional plan being prepared for Aberdeen, the first tentative steps being taken in Fife and the Lothians, and the promise of a similar initiative in Central Scotland.

By the mid 'thirties, central government was taking active steps to encourage Scottish local authorities to proceed with planning schemes. In the summer of 1936, the Conservative Secretary of State for Scotland, Sir Godfrey Collins, informed a specially-convened local government conference that planning had "become an urgent matter" in view of the scale of the rehousing problem and the new development

pressures arising from the growth of motor transport. He believed that the attack on slums and overcrowding was "proceeding with commendable vigour" but pointed out that the planning problems associated with the redevelopment of slum areas and the creation of new built-up areas on the outskirts of towns were considerable. The great expansion of motor transport had created the need for new and wider roads, and it was "wise to plan these well ahead of immediate requirements". It was important "to decide where new factories should be placed for the convenience of industry and the comfort and amenity of the citizens", and it was also "becoming vitally necessary to ensure that sufficient open spaces were available to serve the recreational needs of the people". In rural areas, there was a need to protect Scotland's "rich heritage of natural beauty". Sir Godfrey went on to argue that:

"All these problems are inter-connected and it would be folly to attempt to solve them separately. They must be considered as component parts of one whole problem. In the solution of that problem the broad objective is the conscious direction of development in the interest of the community as a whole. To guide this development wisely is the task of the planning authority" (15).

The Secretary of State announced that the Department of Health for Scotland would be arranging a series of area conferences with local authorities throughout the country to discuss planning matters in greater detail. As part of this programme, a meeting was held between representatives of East, West and Midlothian County Councils and officials of the Department of Health in Edinburgh on 15th July 1936. In view of the fact that suburban development was spreading across existing local authority boundaries, the participants agreed to recommend to their respective councils "that a joint committee be appointed to consider the extent to which co-operation between the authorities was possible in the planning of their respective areas" (16). East Lothian County Council subsequently agreed to be represented on a Joint Advisory Committee but West Lothian County Council declined to take any action (17). By the end of 1937, the Department of Health had concluded that there was no immediate prospect of securing the co-operation of either West Lothian County Council or the Town Council of Edinburgh in a joint initiative and was urging the individual authorities to proceed with resolutions to adopt planning schemes under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1932 (18). Both East Lothian and Midlothian County Councils decided that the time was ripe to prepare single, county-wide

schemes and, early in 1938, the two authorities each engaged Frank Mears to prepare preliminary reports on the planning of their respective areas (19, 20, 21).

Mears was already familiar with the planning problems of the two counties. In 1933, under the auspices of the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland, he had been instrumental in organizing a series of rural surveys in the Lothians with the object of encouraging interest in the preservation of local amenities. As a result of this work, a report was submitted to East Lothian County Council drawing attention to the despoilation of the beaches east of Prestonpans by coal-mining debris drifting from coastal bings (22). In January 1937, Mears had been engaged by East Lothian County Council to report on the planning of the village of Dirleton and later in the year he had undertaken to prepare similar reports on Aberlady and the area between Dirleton and Port Seton, as well as preliminary notes on the development of the coastline between Port Seton and Tynninghane (23, 24, 25). In addition, under Mears' supervision, students at Edinburgh College of Art had carried out numerous planning projects in the Lothians. They had received particular assistance from officials of Midlothian County Council (26) and exhibitions of their proposals for the Burgh of Bonnyrigg and Lasswade had attracted considerable local interest (27, 28).

The Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1929 had vested planning powers in the County Councils and Large Burghs (those with over 20,000 inhabitants). Neither East Lothian nor Midlothian contained any large burghs within their boundaries and so each County Council was the sole planning authority within its area. However, the East Lothian Scheme was intended to encompass the seven small burghs of Cockenzie and Port Seton, Dunbar, East Linton, Haddington, North Berwick, Prestonpans and Tranent, while the Midlothian scheme was to take in the five small burghs of Bonnyrigg and Lasswade, Dalkeith, Loanhead, Musselburgh and Penicuik. These burghs were responsible for housing and public health within their boundaries and it was recognized that their support was vital to the success of the new county planning schemes. The two County Councils therefore took immediate steps to involve their Town Councils in discussions and, within a year, they had succeeded in securing the co-operation of all twelve. This was a considerable achievement, since the local government reform of 1929, which had strengthened the County Councils at the expense of the small burghs, was widely resented and the source of much political friction. Mears himself must have had mixed feelings about the loss of status of the small burghs. Although his commitment to a regional approach to planning forced him to accept the logic

of vesting planning powers in the County Councils, he had always stressed the important part which the ancient burghs had played in shaping Scotland's cultural experience and valued the strong sense of "local patriotism" which they engendered. He was therefore always careful in his county planning work to keep the Town Councils of the small burghs fully informed and involve them in discussions at an early stage. He frequently submitted reports and proposals to the individual Town Councils, either directly or through their officials, and also prepared layout plans for their housing schemes (29). In addition, he took care to maintain close contact with the City Engineer, Mr. William Macartney, recognizing the necessity of ensuring that the county planning schemes were compatible with those being prepared by Edinburgh Corporation (30).

By the end of 1938, the County Councils of East and Midlothian had both passed resolutions intimating their intention to prepare county-wide planning schemes under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1932. On the approval of these resolutions by the Department of Health in 1939, each Council became an "Interim Development Authority" under the Town and Country Planning (General Interim Development) Order (Scotland) 1933 and was therefore able to safeguard its intentions pending the adoption

of a Draft Planning Scheme by exercising interim planning control throughout its area for a period of up to two years. In both cases Mears undertook to provide general advice on planning applications submitted under the Interim Development Order (31, 32).

The common boundary between the two Counties was some sixteen miles long. However, in view of the fact that they shared the same planning consultant, their Councils considered that it was unnecessary to set up a joint committee and it was left to Mears to develop two compatible schemes concurrently. He and his staff therefore embarked on an extensive survey of both Counties in order to gather information on "natural features, economic resources, traffic conditions, use of land, condition of buildings, amenities, and other data likely to be of use in the preparation of the schemes" (33). Although not specifically mentioned in this list, important demographic studies of the two counties were also begun at this time (34). Since Mears could not himself drive, he had to make his frequent survey trips around the Lothian countryside in a hired car driven by former student, Robert Scott Morton (35).

A large part of the lowland area of the two counties was in intensive agricultural use. Much of the land

was of high quality and in the coastal strip of East Lothian there were extensive areas of arable farming and market gardening. However being within easy reach of Edinburgh, this area was coming under increasing development pressure and Mears was concerned that:

"... housing schemes, sprawling bungalow suburbs, mining operations, railways and roads, aerodromes, recreation grounds and golf courses have sterilised much of the best land, or, by breaking up farming units, have interfered with the economic working of some of the remainder" (36).

Industry was concentrated primarily in the Esk Valley, in a string of small burghs and mining settlements stretching from Penicuik to Port Seton. Since the turn of the century, many of the traditional industries associated with the older burghs had declined in the face of competition from Edinburgh, while in the mining areas subsidence had caused considerable damage to agricultural land and the careless tipping of waste material had disfigured the landscape and resulted in serious river and coastal pollution. The western part of Midlothian in particular had seen huge changes as a result of the rapid growth of the shale-oil industry, but the greatly increased population in this part of the

County had "suffered repeatedly from severe slumps caused by foreign competition" (37).

The survey involved Mears in a close study of the historical development of the road network in the Lothians, a subject in which he had taken a particular interest since the time of the Outlook Tower's Edinburgh Survey. As he pointed out, the Pentland Hills and the deep ravines of the Esk Valley had always been formidable natural obstacles, so that roads to the south and east of Edinburgh were forced to follow irregular routes dictated by topography and the limited number of river crossings. The burghs of Musselburgh, Dalkeith and Penicuik had grown up around the main strategic bridging points, with the result that modern long-distance traffic was being channelled along a restricted number of narrow and badly aligned roads, each of which passed through built-up areas for a considerable part of its length. To the west of the city, the River Almond, the Union Canal and the west-bound railway lines all acted as barriers to the flow of north-south traffic. The solution, Mears believed, was a programme of road realignment and bypass construction to provide a modern road system linked, first of all, to the proposed Edinburgh Ring Road and, eventually, to a Forth Road Bridge (38).

The two counties boasted several fine estates with extensive wooded policies, some fine vernacular buildings in the older burghs, and a number of picturesque villages. As a staunch champion of Scotland's burgh tradition and rural heritage, Mears believed that it was essential that comprehensive county planning should make careful provision for the protection of such amenities, as well as specific features such as river banks, prominent hills, groups of trees, ancient monuments, and old laneways and field paths (39). He advised that while wholesale protection enforced under a statutory scheme would involve the County Councils in an excessive burden of compensation, the 1932 Act made provision for planning authorities to enter into voluntary agreements with owners restricting the uses to which their land might be put. Since such agreements could appreciably reduce their tax liability, landowners were often willing to co-operate when involved in a process of "friendly consultation". Mears believed that, within the powers available under existing legislation, much could be achieved by means of consultation and voluntary agreement at minimal cost to the County Councils. He pointed out that, increasingly, there was a tendency for local authorities and private bodies to take over large estates to accommodate such facilities as hospitals, schools, holiday camps and golf courses. Section 33 of the 1932 Act facilitated:

"... the reservation of suitable properties as private open spaces, by means of agreements made with owners which may permit a change of use under defined conditions. In this way it may be possible to build up a reserve to be drawn on by public or other bodies who might otherwise take up large blocks of agricultural land" (40).

At this time, Mears was living in Inveresk, a village set in pleasant wooded surroundings to the South of Musselburgh. In 1937, he had been involved in the organizing of a petition by the proprietors and occupiers of the Parish of Inveresk urging Midlothian County Council "to prepare and put into operation a Planning scheme under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1932, with a view to protecting the existing amenities of the locality" (41). The Council had acceded to this request and, following his appointment as planning consultant, Mears advised that the best way to proceed would be for the County Council to secure agreements with individual proprietors as these could be concluded in advance of the approval of a statutory scheme (42). Perhaps because he was embarrassed by his obvious personal interest in the matter, he was careful to point out that:

"From the standpoint of the public interest the value of the project lies in the fact that Inveresk, with its large gardens and tree-planted slopes fronting on the river, occupies the whole area lying between the Lewisvale Public Park, the new Musselburgh golf course, and the northern boundary of Dalkeith Park, and it thus ensures the preservation of a continuous "Green Belt" over the whole length of the valley between Musselburgh and Dalkeith" (43).

However, the County Council instructed Mears to consult with the Department of Health before entering into negotiations with individual proprietors, and on being advised that the Government shortly intended to introduce new planning legislation, it decided to take no further action in the meantime (44, 45).

In the light of their surveys, Mears and his assistants prepared both "county zoning maps" (showing communications networks, services, existing agricultural, industrial and housing land, and reservations for future development) and preliminary development plans for the burghs and villages (46). The latter were prepared in greater detail than the plans which would finally be submitted to the Department of Health but, not having the force of law, could be readily modified. The anxiety felt by

later generations over the problematic status and authority of non-statutory working plans does not appear to have troubled Mears unduly. Using phraseology which suggests that he was aware of hostility or suspicion from landed, property or business interests, he stressed that these preliminary plans were of great value in discussions with committees, officials and landowners because they provided a visible indication that planning was not simply "based on irksome official restrictions, but rather on a pooling of ideas in the common interest" (47). The final statutory plans, he believed, should be "conceived on the broadest and simplest lines in order to admit of reasonable elasticity in the administration of the scheme" (48).

Zoning plans of the sort which Mears prepared for each town and village had, until that time, mainly been employed in the planning of much larger settlements. In his Preliminary Report on the Development of Midlothian, he set out his approach to the preparation of these plans in the following terms:

"Zoning if it is to be successful will be based, not only on a survey of existing conditions, but also on the results of consultation with owners

and others interested. Only in this way will public support be gained and, indeed, in cases where the method has been freely used, the number of objectors at the Official Inquiries has been reduced to negligible proportions.

Zoning, in practice, should be constructive rather than restrictive and all proposals should be carefully considered, particularly under the following heads:-

1. Elasticity, in order to make allowance, so far as can be foreseen, for changing social and industrial conditions.
2. Avoidance of measures which may involve the planning authority in meeting unforeseen or excessive claims for compensation. In this connection as in that of criticism in general or in detail, experience has shown that most difficulties can be overcome by explanation and co-operation at an early stage.
3. Consultation with neighbouring authorities who are promoting planning schemes" (49).

Unfortunately, the rather loose wording of this statement leaves unclear both the extent of the consultation which he envisaged and the precise characteristics which he believed rendered a zoning plan elastic and constructive rather than unduly restrictive.

In 1938, the Town Council of Haddington intimated its intention to acquire the substantial Georgian mansion known as the Old Bank House on the burgh's Hardgate with a view to redeveloping the site for housing purposes. The historic entrance to Haddington from the north-east, the Hardgate was extremely narrow for much of its length and East Lothian County Council had for some time been considering the question of its widening and improvement. A joint meeting was therefore arranged between representatives of the Town and County Councils with a view to initiating a comprehensive scheme for the redevelopment of the Hardgate area, and Mears was subsequently instructed to prepare layout plans for the 7 acres of land bounded on the east by the Hardgate, on the south by Market Street and on the west by Newton Port. His proposals involved the demolition of slum properties fronting the Hardgate to allow the carriageway to be widened to 50 ft., and the development of new housing on the Old Bank House site and other land lying between the Hardgate and Newton Port. The layout

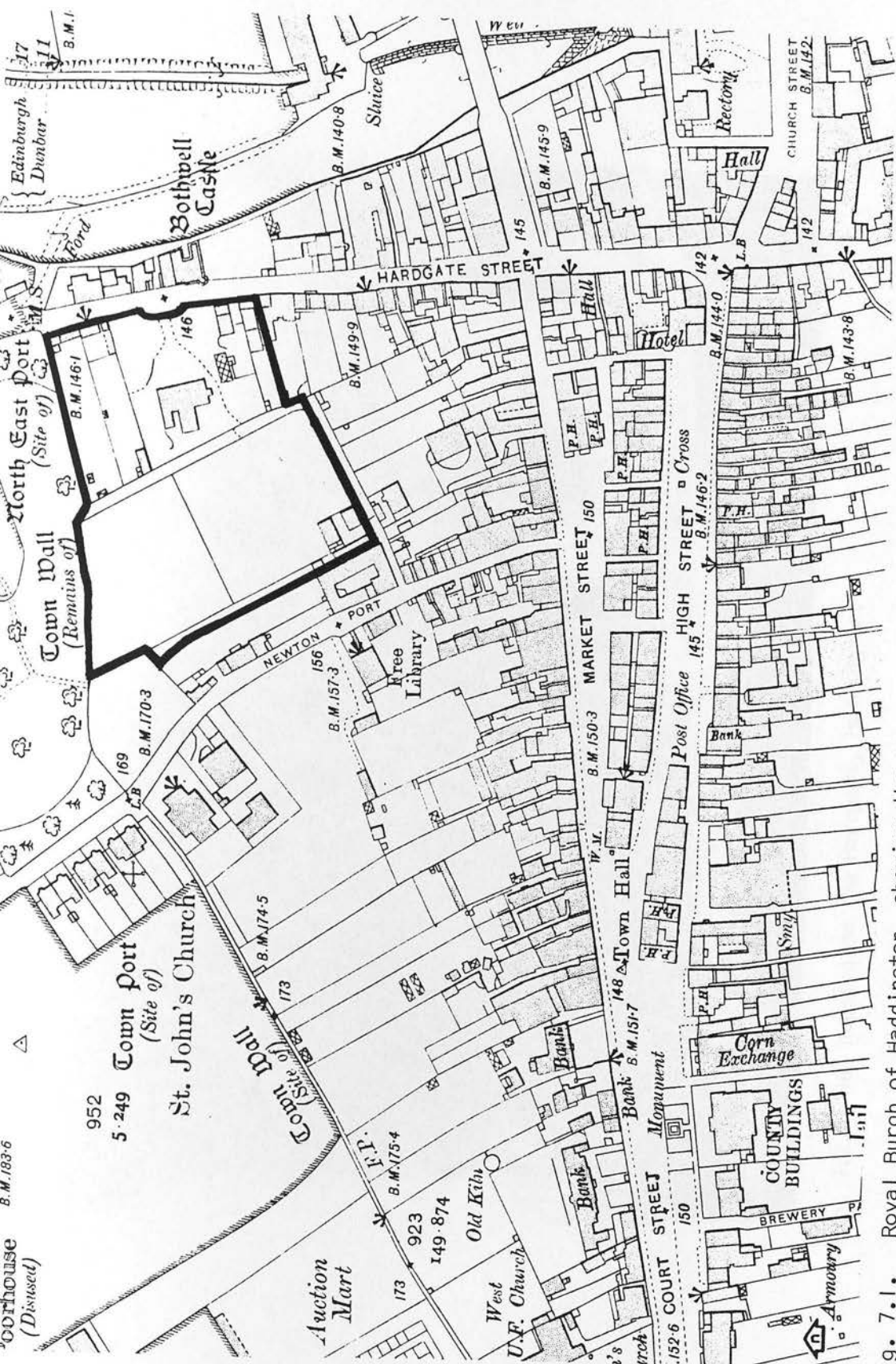


Fig. 7.1. Royal Burgh of Haddington, showing the area proposed for new housing on the Old Bank House property.

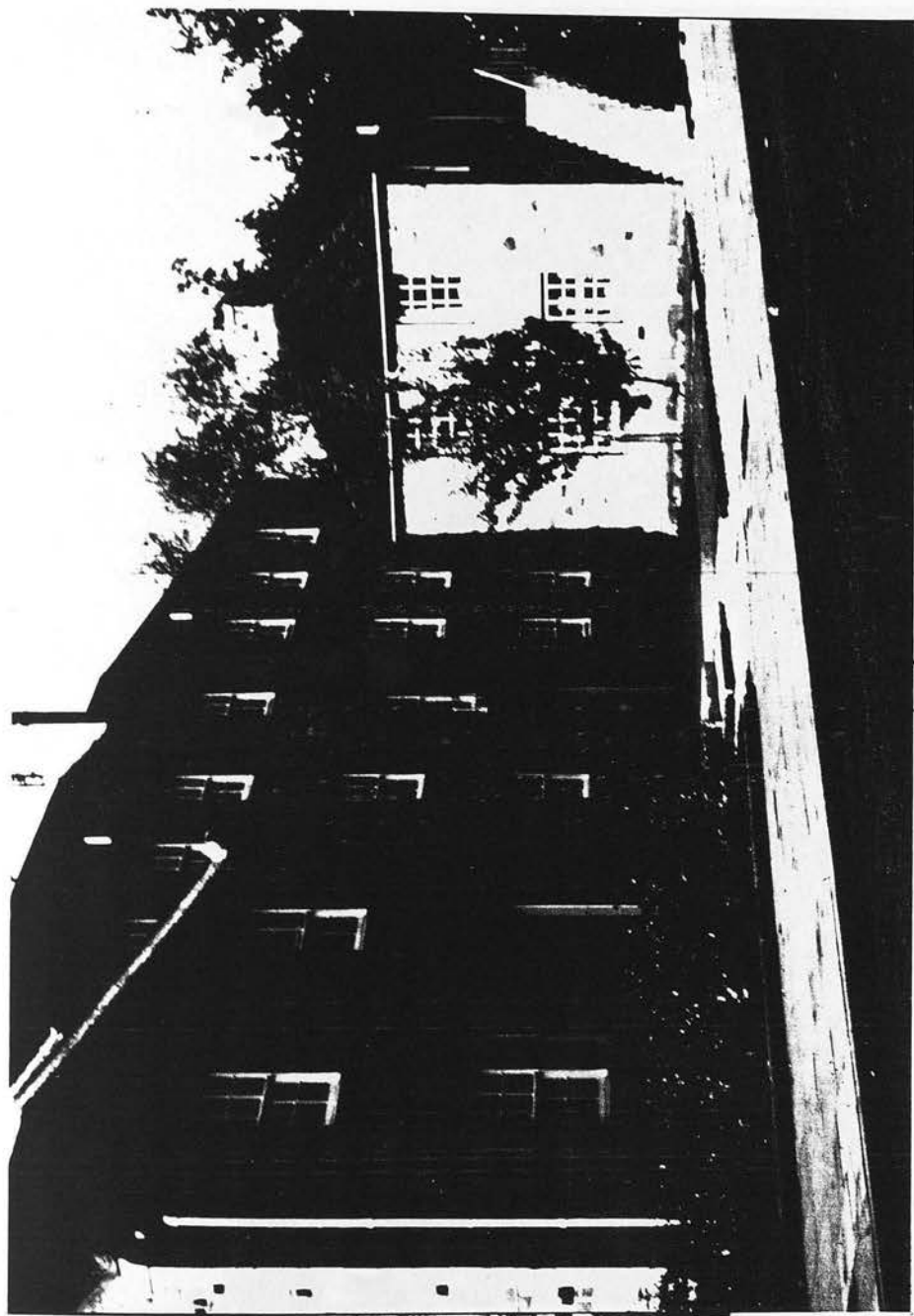


Fig. 7.2. New housing on the Hardgate, Haddington.

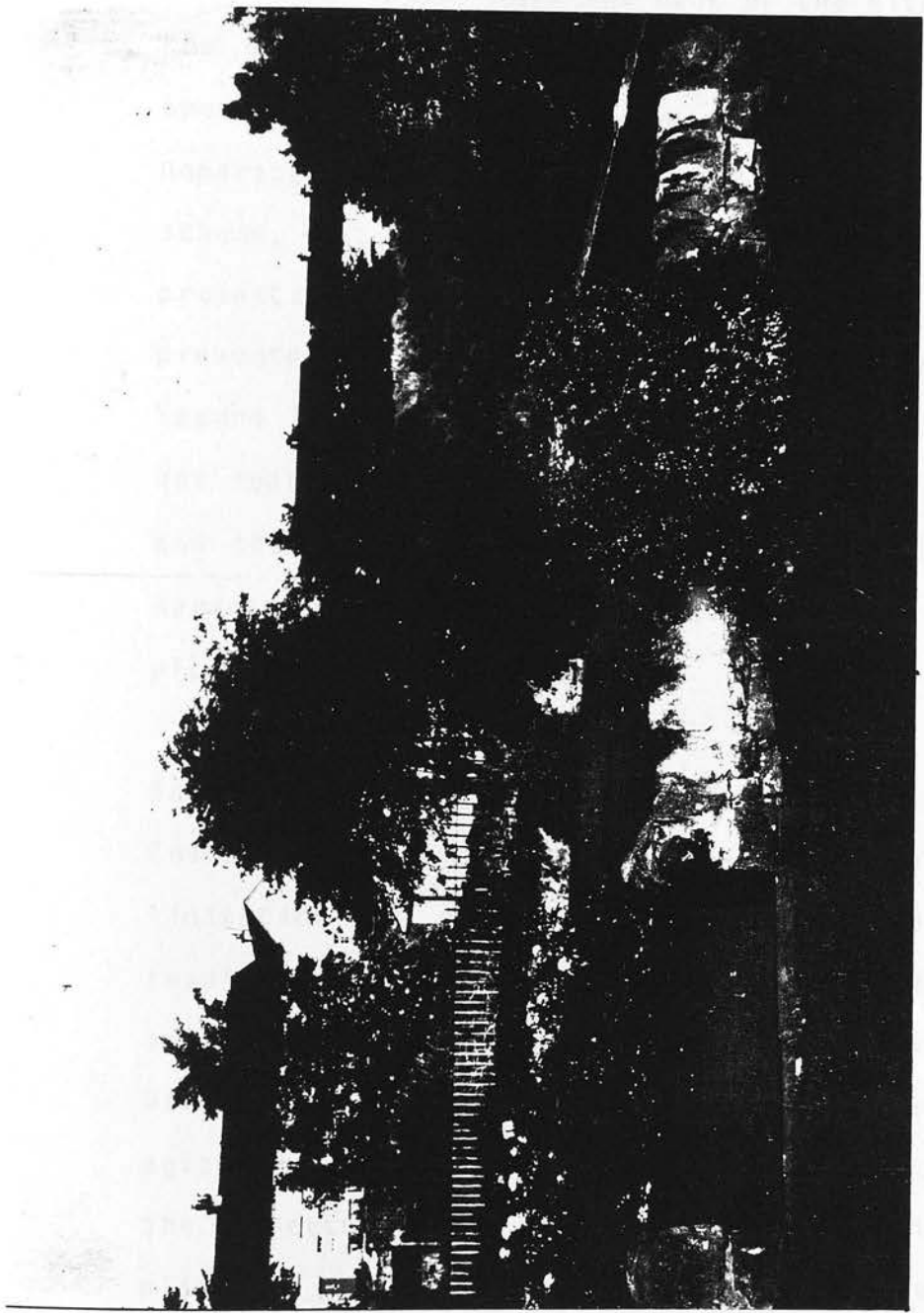


Fig. 7.3. Bothwell Gardens, Haddington, between the Hardgate and the River Tyne, on the site of Bothwell Castle.

made provision for about 80 houses, of both flatted and cottage types, and was designed to preserve as far as possible existing groups of mature trees. It was also proposed that the bank of the River Tyne, on the east of the Hardgate, should be left as public open space and planted with grass and trees. The Department of Health was favourably disposed to the scheme, but the general suspension of new housing projects imposed by the Government in September 1939 prevented further progress being made until after the Second World War. Eventually, the Old Bank House was reprieved, and only the road widening, open space and the new houses fronting the southern part of the Hardgate were ever completed according to Mears' plans (50, 51).

The Town Planning Committee of East Lothian County Council was quick to realize that the wartime limitation on public and private building would result in a reduction in the number of planning applications submitted under the Interim Development Order, and, at its meeting on 15th September 1939, it agreed that this reduction in workload would afford the opportunity to press ahead with the general planning scheme for the County (52). Because the future was likely to remain uncertain for the duration of hostilities, neither East Lothian nor Midlothian County Council proceeded to the formal

adoption of a County Planning Scheme within the statutory two year period. However, the Department continued to be happy with the progress being made and extended their interim powers on an annual basis until the end of the War (53, 54).

Mears continued to submit detailed reports on the planning of the burghs and villages to the two County Councils and, by 1941, a more general strategic framework had emerged from his extensive programme of survey and consultation. The details of his strategy, which he characterized as "Planning for Agriculture and Industry", were set out in a lecture delivered to the Royal Society of Arts in London on 23rd April 1941. He had long taken a particular interest in agricultural matters and, in 1939, had called for amending legislation to bring agricultural land under planning control, so that its use "might be tied in with the development of the country as a whole" (55). He argued that agriculture in the Lothians was already highly organized, and that planning policy should therefore be concerned, "not so much with projects for revival as with measures for the protection of an existing asset of great value" (56). Nevertheless, he believed that the planning schemes should not attempt to provide complete protection for agricultural land, but should "attempt to strike a balance between the needs of the

farmer and those of the other interests on which his prosperity depends".

"Towns and villages, even if they are situated, as is usually the case, on the best land, must be given opportunity for reasonable expansion" (57).

Many planning propagandists of the period were advocating the creation of entirely new settlements as the quickest and most effective solution to the problems of poor housing and badly-located industry in the older urban areas (58). In her evidence to the Barlow Commission on behalf of the Scottish Branch of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, Bailie Jean Mann had called on the Government to encourage local authorities to build garden cities or satellite towns where adequate provision for industry, housing and recreational facilities could be planned from the outset (59).

Both for the economic reasons advanced by James Bowie and in the interests of historical and cultural continuity, Mears was opposed to the creation of completely new towns in either East or Midlothian, and the County Councils, mindful of the need to secure the support of their small burghs, preferred to try "to revive the prosperity" of existing settlements. This strategy also had the advantage

of minimizing the loss of good quality agricultural land. The expansion of the burghs was to be carefully controlled, "partly by systematic internal redevelopment and partly by compact planning on their outskirts" (60).

In Midlothian, most of the older settlements were situated close to the River Esk, where choice of site had been governed either by ease of crossing, defensibility, or availability of water power. Later developments at Eskbank, Bonnyrigg and Loanhead had almost filled the gaps between them, so that, with the exception of the interval provided by the wooded policies of Dalkeith Park, they formed an almost continuous series stretching from the sea to Penicuik. The total population of the area, including the mining settlements was about 55,000. With the exception of stretches of ribbon development at Loanhead and near Gorebridge, the towns were reasonably compact and "the combination of busy built-up areas of moderate size with a prosperous agricultural countryside" approached what Mears conceived to be the ideal settlement pattern for Lowland Scotland (61) - a conception still largely inspired by Howard's original vision of an environment combining the best elements of urban and rural life in intimate and harmonious relationship. Under the planning scheme Mears proposed:

"the whole series of towns would be linked together to form a continuous chain in which built-up areas would alternate with open spaces of a kind not to be matched elsewhere. They would in effect fulfil the ideal of the "Satellite Town" now so widely advocated, but not by the promotion of a costly experiment on a new site. The aim would rather be achieved by making full use of the existing resources - administrative, economic and cultural - of a group of communities in which local patriotism is firmly established on long-standing traditions" (62).

To the north west of the Midlothian settlements, the County boundary followed the line of the watershed between the City of Edinburgh and the Esk Valley. Underlying this low ridge were extensive coal deposits which were likely to be mined for many years. Mears therefore proposed that:

"this area, handicapped as it is by drainage and subsidence difficulties, should be zoned as a "Green Belt" devoted in the main to its existing use for agriculture and market gardens" (63).

In summary, his planning scheme for the Esk Valley was based on the following three principles:

"(1) The reservation of a wide agricultural zone separating the south-eastern suburbs of Edinburgh from the Esk Valley burghs.

(2) The concentration of new industries at points which, well served by road and rail, are also conveniently near the homes of those who will work in them.

(3) The planning of new housing in relation to existing community centres, to places of employment, and to amenity, particularly that of the wooded estates ..." (64).

In February 1941, Mears prepared a report on the industrial planning of Mid and East Lothian in which he recommended that the County Councils should give priority to encouraging the expansion of indigenous industries based on agricultural produce, coal, lime, clays and oil shale (65). He argued that they should seek to build up a range of related and mutually supporting industries based on local resources which would in turn support a large number of specialized crafts. He pointed out that:

"A wide range of minerals, similar to but in some respects more varied than those so used in the West is found in the Lothians but, so far they do

not appear to have been worked in relation to each other, with resultant waste through lack of local markets for associated materials or by-products. For example, the coal, ironstone, clays and special sands afford a basis for metallurgical industry, or, again, the coal, along with certain limestones and clays, may be used to manufacture Portland cement" (66).

Returning to a favourite theme, he claimed that local reserves of good quality building stone had been "sacrificed by Government and commercial influence alike in the interest of substitute materials and short-term economic policy". He believed that many of the sandstones which had been so widely used for building in the past could again be quarried on a large scale. Much of the upland part of the two Counties he considered suitable for large scale afforestation, "particularly in view of the large market for pit props in the mining district nearby". As an improvement to the local railway infrastructure, he proposed that a large modern sorting yard should be provided in the neighbourhood of New Craighall. In conclusion he wrote that:

"It is certain that after the war we shall be obliged to face great changes in the distribution of industry and the character of trade at home and

overseas. The Report of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population foreshadows some of these changes, and suggests that we may be entering into a period when industry and agriculture will be more closely related.

The conditions which led to the great development of engineering in the West have to some degree ceased to operate with the exhaustion of deposits of coal and iron and it is likely that the Lothians and Fife will become the scene of new industries based on a more scientific use of coal and oil.

Should this be so, planning, if it is to be effective, must take account of industry in relation to agriculture and local resources, no less than of transport, housing and recreation. Thus the confusion, waste and squalor associated so often with the industrial expansion of the last century may be avoided, and the new settlements and factories may be sited in such a way as to preserve the best features of the existing beautiful landscape of Lothian" (67).

Mears clearly anticipated that the United Kingdom would face major structural changes in the post-war

period. His reference to the need for a closer relationship between industry and agriculture reflected his concern that, during the Imperial period, easy access to cheap raw materials from the colonies had freed manufacturing from dependence on local markets, leading to a general depression in agriculture and other primary industries (68). He looked to planning to provide the integrated approach to the development of indigenous resources which he believed the U.K. would require in order to survive in an increasingly competitive world.

### 7.3 National and Regional Planning

Mears had served on the Executive Committee of the Scottish Branch of the Town Planning Institute since its formation in 1930. In his toast to the guests at the Branch's Annual Dinner in January 1939, he reported with satisfaction on the progress of regional planning in Scotland, pointing out that:

"Town Planning Schemes now practically extend from Ayr to Fifeshire and over the entire industrial part of Scotland, a position which less than 10 years ago would have appeared impossible" (69).

In the following May, Mears was elected Chairman of the Scottish Branch of its Annual General Meeting held in Inverness (70), and he remained active in promoting planning through this and other organizations throughout the War. Within the Institute, he maintained an interest in planning education and expressed concern that the war effort was depriving the Profession of the services of well-qualified younger men at a time when there was a particularly urgent need for people capable of training more planners (71).

In an address to a town planning conference in Edinburgh in 1937, Sir William Whyte, Secretary of the Scottish Housing and Town Planning Committee and member of the Barlow Commission, had argued that a comprehensive planning system should involve the preparation of plans at national, regional and local levels. He believed that:

"It should be the business and the duty of the Government to make a survey of the country as a whole, in order to make available data as to the natural, economic, and commercial features and conditions of the country for the guidance of industry and others; and to mark out routes of national or arterial highways, sites for national parks, and other features of a national character.

The regional plan should be prepared by joint committees of Local Authorities operating over suitable areas, and their function should be to delimit or prescribe suitable lines of communication, regional open spaces, and zoning - matters that were of regional rather than local concern.

The local plan should have the national and regional plans as a basis, and should provide for the regulation of the internal development of the various units making up the country as a whole" (72).

Throughout the U.K. there was growing pressure for the establishment of some sort of Central Planning Authority capable of carrying out broad economic planning and directing the location of industry "in the national interest". In their evidence to the Barlow Commission, a number of Scottish organizations, including the Scottish Economic Committee, called for a Central Planning Authority for Scotland (73), but the Board of Trade in particular was unsympathetic to demands for economic devolution. On the outbreak of War, the SEC was suspended and the Government pursued a policy of centralized allocation of industry which was widely

resented North of the Border (74). Discontent over Scotland's failure to secure a proportionate share of war industries fueled a growing campaign for Scottish control over economic planning. However, the Whitehall view as stoutly defended by Sir William Whyte, who warned that:

"While Scotland would benefit in very great measure by a more equitable distribution of industry throughout the country, they could not put a fence round the country and plan their own development. They must not allow nationalism to outrun good sense" (75).

At the Conference of the Scottish Branch of the Town Planning Institute held in Kirkcaldy in October 1941, Frank Mears, who was by now Honorary Vice Chairman, called for the early establishment of a National Planning Authority and asked whether it was the Government's intention to give the Secretary of State for Scotland responsibility for national planning. In reply, Sir William Whyte explained that:

"... the National Planning contemplated by the Government ... embraced the economic, social and industrial life of the country, and by the country was meant England, Scotland and Wales, or the whole island as one unit.

The Government had agreed to the setting up of the National Planning Authority to carry out this work and it would probably operate from London, controlling regional authorities of which one might cover Scotland, or possibly Scotland and Northern England" (76).

However, such an arrangement was not calculated to appeal to the new incumbent at the Scottish Office. On his appointment as Secretary of State for Scotland in early 1941, Tom Johnston seized the opportunity to secure greater autonomy for Scotland within the emergency administrative structures being set up by the National Government. He succeeded in bringing the five living ex-Secretaries of State for Scotland together in a Council of State which effectively took over many of the responsibilities of the Coalition Cabinet within Scotland (77, 78).

The Council of State for Scotland was much preoccupied with questions of economic planning and industrial location and, in February 1942, in an effort to increase the involvement of the Scottish Office in industrial matters in the absence of a Scottish Board of Trade, Johnston brought together a number of Scottish economic interest groups to form the Scottish Council on Industry (79). The former Conservative Secretary of State, Walter Elliot,

played an important part in winning the support of Scottish industrialists for the new Council which also drew representation from the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) and the Convention of Royal Burghs (80).

The Convention of Royal Burghs had long been active in the campaign for greater Scottish control over economic development. In 1930, it had taken an early initiative in founding the Scottish National Development Council (SNDC) which was later merged with the Council on Industry to create the Scottish Council (Development and Industry) (81, 82). Early in 1942, the Convention passed a resolution calling for the Secretary of State for Scotland to be made the Minister responsible for a Scottish Central Planning Authority (83). A similar stance was taken by the Scottish Branch of the Town Planning Institute which was able to record at its Thirteenth Annual Meeting in Glasgow on 8th May 1942 that:

"the views of the Branch had been welcomed by the Government and had found happy issue in the Secretary of State for Scotland being appointed to administer national planning in Scotland" (84).

At the same meeting, Frank Mears was re-elected Honorary Vice Chairman of the Branch for the year 1942-43. He was by now regarded as one of Scotland's most senior planning practitioners and the Government's commitment to reconstruction planning ensured that his expertise was much in demand. Since the late 'thirties, officials at the Department of Health for Scotland, and in particular the Department's Depute Chief Architect, George D. Macniven, had been encouraging local authorities to seek Mears' advice on a wide range of planning matters. Thus, in 1938, he was engaged by Elgin Town Council to prepare plans for housing developments in the historic part of the burgh (85) and in the following year he was employed in a similar capacity by the small burgh of Thurso. In 1940 he was appointed planning consultant to Fife County Council and the Corporation of Greenock and, in January 1941, he was engaged by Aberdeen County Council to work on a series of village and small burgh plans similar to those which he had already prepared for Mid and East Lothian County Councils (86, 87).

The prevailing concern for the future of Scotland's strategic industries led on 27th January 1942 to the establishment of a Scottish Coalfields Committee:

"to consider the present position and future prospects of coalfields in Scotland and to report

(a) what measures should be taken to enable the fullest use to be made of existing and potential resources in the coalfields; and

(b) in this connection, what provision of houses and other services will be required for the welfare of the mining community" (88).

The Committee, which was chaired by the Solicitor General for Scotland, Sir David King Murray, included representatives of the colliery companies, the mining unions and local authorities as well as Frank Mears as planning expert and two consultant mining engineers.

Meanwhile, spurred on by Walter Elliot, the Council of State was turning its attention to the Scottish housing problem (89, 90). It was concluded that Scotland would need to construct some 50,000 new houses a year in order to provide within a reasonable timescale the 400,000 houses estimated to be required to end overcrowding and replace unfit houses and those destroyed by enemy action (91). In August 1942, Tom Johnston announced that he intended to reconstitute on a wider basis the Scottish Housing

Advisory Committee. With an eye to the growing support for Home Rule, he described the new Committee as "a sort of housing Parliament" which would spearhead a national campaign to eliminate poor living conditions (92).

The Committee, which met for the first time on 2nd October 1942 under the Chairmanship of Under Secretary of State, Joseph Westwood, was divided into three sub committees: one to consider the geographical distribution of new housing in the light of the recommendations of the Barlow Commission, one to look at housing design, and one to report on furniture and fittings (93). The remit of the Sub Committee on the Distribution of Houses was:

"to consider and advise on the measures required to secure the most appropriate distribution of the houses to be erected in the immediate post-war years" (94).

Mears was appointed to the new sub committee in order to ensure close liaison with the Scottish Coalfields Committee as it was believed that the future pattern of coalfield development would play a major part in determining the distribution of new housing (95). Other members of the Committee included Bailie Jean Mann, Secretary of the Scottish Branch of the Town

and Country Planning Association; Mr. A. Victor Wilson, President of the Scottish Branch of the Town Planning Institute; and Major G.H.M. Broun Lindsay, Vice Chairman of the Town Planning Committee of East Lothian County Council - all figures who had played a prominent part in promoting the cause of planning in Scottish local government. The Scottish planning lobby was therefore well represented.

Johnston made a special point of giving women a prominent role in the work of the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee. He appointed seven women members to the main Committee (96) and women's organizations took an active interest in its work. At a two-day conference on the problems of house planning organized by the Scottish Women's Rural Institute in June 1943, Mears gave an address on the plans being prepared for East Lothian County Council while Robert Hurd expounded his views on architectural design (97).

Mears' consultancy work for the counties of East and Midlothian continued, though he postponed the preparation of plans for settlements on the Lothian coalfield until the Report of the Scottish Coalfields Committee became available (98, 99). His report on the Industrial Planning of Midlothian was circulated to all the industrial concerns in the County as well

as to the relevant Government departments and a memorandum setting out the facilities available for industrial development in Midlothian was prepared for the Scottish Council on Industry (100).

In his evidence to the Barlow Commission on behalf of the Association of County Councils in Scotland, the Chairman of East Lothian County Council's Planning Committee, Viscount Traprain, had argued that while it was now possible to direct the future distribution of the industrial population along rational lines, existing local authorities were too small to cope adequately with the task. He called for housing and town planning to be made the responsibility of new regional authorities combining populous areas with their rural hinterlands. In the meantime, he believed that local authorities should be encouraged to co-operate voluntarily in the preparation of regional planning schemes (101).

In June 1942, the Chairman of Midlothian County Council's Town Planning Committee, Sir John Douglas Don-Wauchope, arranged a meeting between County Council and Edinburgh Corporation officials in a fresh attempt to involve the City Council in joint planning initiatives. The meeting discussed the future development of housing, industrial sites and drainage schemes and the route of the proposed

Edinburgh Ring Road, and Mears presented proposals for the development of the Currie and Balerno areas and a new industrial estate within the City boundary at Sighthill (102). Subsequently, on 28th October 1942, a special meeting of Edinburgh Town Council proposed the establishment of an Advisory Committee made up of representatives of the Corporation and the County Councils of East, West and Midlothian "to consider questions connected with the planning of their respective areas" (103). However, no formal approach was made to the three County Councils and the Advisory Committee finally set up under the Chairmanship of James Clyde in the summer of 1943 was entirely a City initiative.

#### **7.4 Central and South-East Scotland**

In the end, the intervention of central government was required to establish a framework for regional planning. In the spring of 1943, in an initiative which he later claimed had been motivated by his desire to ensure that the new planning powers were vested in the Scottish Office rather than a U.K. - wide Ministry (104), Tom Johnston moved to tackle the pressing problems of the industrial West of Scotland by reconstituting on a wider basis the Clyde Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee. The new

Committee was to work closely with the Scottish Council on Industry and draw on the work of the Scottish Coalfields Committee and the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee in preparing a regional development plan which would form the basis for the statutory planning schemes of its 17 constituent local authorities (105, 106, 107). In September 1943, the Committee appointed Professor Patrick Abercrombie as its Planning Consultant (108) and subsequently Mears was called in to give the Clyde Valley team the benefit of his experience of planning work in Greenock (109).

In the summer of 1943, Tom Johnston announced his desire to see the establishment of a Regional Planning Advisory Committee for Central and South-East Scotland on the same lines as the recently reconstituted Clyde Valley Committee and invited 14 local planning authorities from Fife, Perth and Kinross, Clackmannan, the Lothians and Stirlingshire to discuss the matter with him at a meeting in St. Andrew's House on 9th July (110). At the meeting, Johnston pointed out that it had been estimated that between 80,000 and 100,000 new houses would be needed in Central and South-East Scotland after the War. He considered that an Advisory Committee should be set up to ensure close collaboration between local authorities in the development of new and existing

settlements, the allocation of industrial sites, the construction of modern road systems and the provision of public services. He believed that this Committee should work closely with the Scottish Council on Industry which was represented at the meeting by its Secretary General, Mr. J. Gibson Kerr, Lord Provost Darling of Edinburgh and Major G.H.M. Broun Lindsay. After some discussion, the local authority representatives unanimously agreed to recommend that their Councils should follow the Secretary of State's advice and resolved that the Border counties of Roxburghshire, Selkirkshire and Berwickshire should also be invited to join the Committee (111). At a subsequent meeting on 3rd September 1943, representatives of the County Councils of Berwickshire, Clackmannanshire, East, West, and Midlothian, Fife, Peeblesshire, Perth and Kinross, Roxburghshire, Selkirkshire and Stirlingshire and the Town Councils of Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Falkirk, Kirkcaldy, St. Andrews and Stirling unanimously agreed to set up a Regional Planning Advisory Committee for Central and South-East Scotland (112).

The Committee was formally constituted on 2nd November 1943. It was to have 44 members: 10 representing the City of Edinburgh, 4 representing the County of Fife, and 2 from each of the other planning authorities. Edinburgh City Treasurer,

Sir John Falconer, was appointed Chairman and Major G.H.M. Broun Lindsay of East Lothian, Vice Chairman. The remit of the Committee was:

"to take cognisance of all major planning problems of the areas of the Local Authorities and to prepare an Outline Regional Plan for the area, into which the plans of the respective Authorities would be dovetailed" (113).

This was no mean task. The territory to be covered by the plan stretched from the Tay to the Tweed and, to the west, at a point near Milngavie, its boundary fell within two miles of the built-up area of Glasgow. While this area contained a wide diversity of physical and social conditions, two principal sub-regions could be identified; the open, semi-industrial landscape of the Forth Estuary contrasting sharply with the largely rural character of the steep-valleyed Tweed Basin.

From the outset, Johnston had stressed that:

"If the work of the Regional Advisory Committee and any technical sub-committees is to bear fruit, the work must be directed and co-ordinated by a planner of experience and standing" (114).

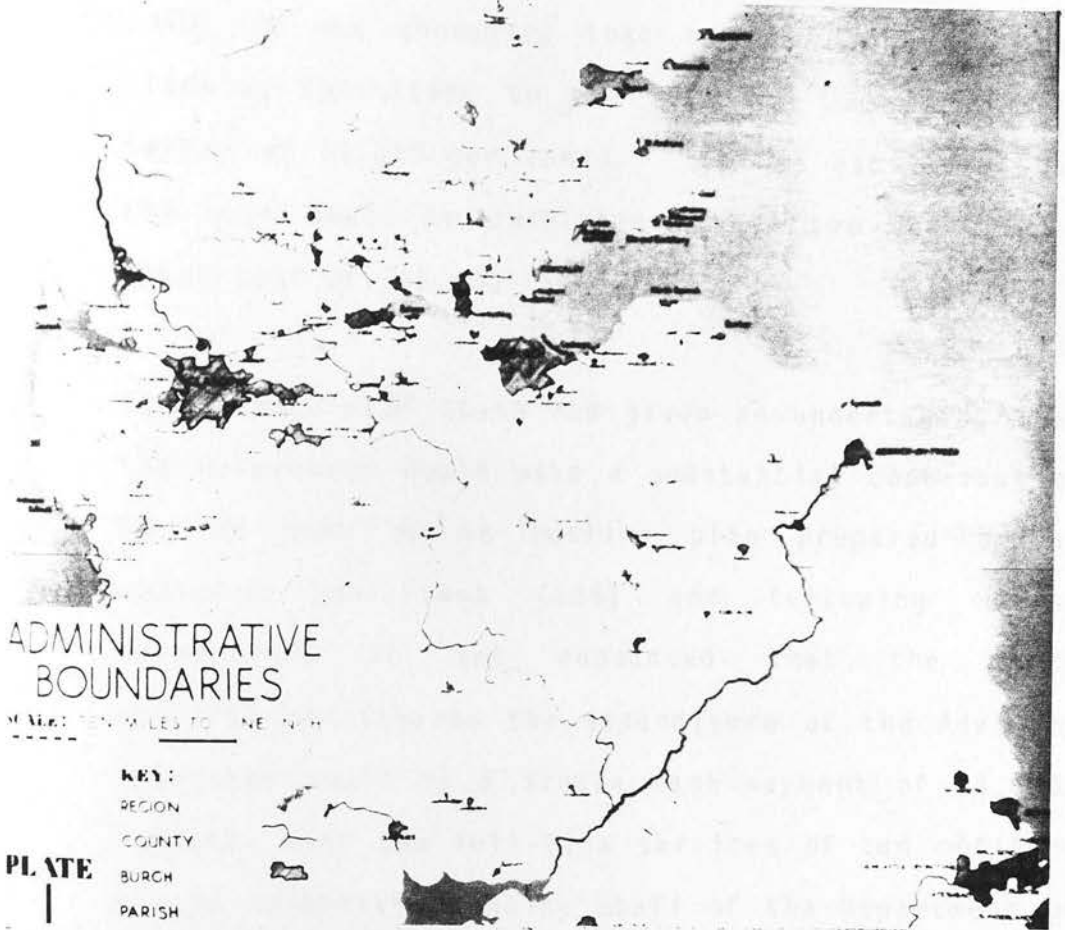


Fig. 7.4. Central and South-East Scotland: Administrative Boundaries. Source: MEARS, F.C. (1949), "Regional Plan for Central and South-East Scotland", Central and South-East Scotland Regional Planning Advisory Committee, Plate I.

Mears who was already consultant to the counties of East Lothian, Midlothian and Fife and had unrivalled knowledge of the planning problems of Edinburgh, must have seemed the obvious choice. On 6th December 1943, it was announced that he had been appointed Planning Consultant to the Advisory Committee at a salary of £3,000 per annum. It was estimated that the work would be completed within two years at a total cost of £16,000 (115).

The Secretary of State had given an undertaking that the Government would make a substantial contribution to the cost of an outline plan prepared by an approved consultant (116) and following Mears' appointment it was announced that the state contribution towards the expenditure of the Advisory Committee would be a single cash payment of £3,000, together with the full-time services of two officers of the technical planning staff of the Department of Health for Scotland, who would work wholly under the Committee's direction and control (117).

By February 1944, the Advisory Committee had secured offices at 17, Glencairn Crescent, Edinburgh, and by early March a small team of technical and administrative staff had been assembled (118). The two officers seconded from the Department of Health were Mr. T.A. Jeffryes who was appointed as Mears'

deputy, and Mr. A.C. O'Dell, an economic geographer (119). Other members of the staff included Robert Hurd, E.H. Crosbee, R.E. Moira and A.T. McIndoe (120).

In an address to the Advisory Committee on 7th February 1944, Mears anticipated the conclusions of the Scottish Coalfields Committee by predicting major industrial development on the East of Scotland coalfields. Recalling a prospect which had long alarmed him, he warned that this expansion "might reach the dimensions of a flood if the Mid-Scotland ship canal directed an arterial flow of shipping into the middle of this reservoir of potential power" (121). While he believed that nothing should be done to delay the provision of emergency housing for the immediate postwar years, he hoped that the regional planning team would be given the "breathing space" necessary to consider the most appropriate distribution of population and industry. The extraction of coal on a large scale would inevitably create problems of subsidence. Housing land would have to be carefully allocated to avoid sterilizing the coal reserves on which employment would so largely depend. He believed that the Committee should also consider whether any limit should be set to the growth of existing large towns and how far and in what ways they could encourage the disposal of industry to smaller settlements.

Referring to the legacy of past industrial activity, he said that it was a matter of some concern that so many of the region's rivers and beaches were heavily polluted by effluents and deposits of various kinds. What up to that time had been regarded mainly as a nuisance would become an actual menace to public health if plans were not made to deal with this matter in advance of the expected growth of industry and population. There was also a need to protect places of natural beauty, historic interest or architectural merit, some of which were threatened by new development and others by sheer neglect. Finally, Mears argued, the Committee:

"must plan deliberately for the recreational needs of a growing population not only of townsfolk but of those who, they hoped, would find renewed opportunity in a revitalised countryside. Their plan must be worked out not only with the object of canalising life but of providing a guide for free yet orderly growth" (122).

Afterwards, at a luncheon, Tom Johnston expressed satisfaction with the progress of regional planning in Scotland. He explained that he had asked local authorities to establish Advisory Committees because he believed that more could be achieved by voluntary co-operation than by compulsion and, making an

oblique reference to his recent success in securing control of national planning in Scotland, he expressed the view that it was important to avoid "long-distance planning from Whitehall", for it was "fundamentally necessary" that people should "plan for their own lives" (123). His remarks were a response to mounting concern about the trend towards centralization and the tendency of the wartime government to encroach upon the functions of local authorities. The small burghs in particular were expressing increasing frustration at their lack of planning powers as the preparations for reconstruction gathered momentum. The Glasgow Herald reflected a general mood in commenting that:

"Much that passed at the meetings of the Central and South-Eastern Committee in Edinburgh yesterday was stimulating and reassuring in all respects save on this question of truly local government. The co-operation which the Secretary of State has received, and will continue to receive, is inspired in equal parts by his own sincerity of purpose and the gravity of the problems affecting Scotland's future. His report on the economic state of the nation was encouraging. But both he and Mr. F.C. Mears, who was lately holding out the prospect of redeveloping the Scottish village and the smaller towns, raised many questions

without suggesting all the answers. The task of redrawing the map of a relatively large and complex area such as Central and South-Eastern Scotland is difficult enough. It will be the work of years to cajole new industries into the territory and assimilate them to existing undertakings. The physical problems relating to housing and services will be legion. And these problems will be multiplied through the length and breadth of the country, for there are many agencies at work.

In this context the anxiety of local Town Councils is comprehensible and even praiseworthy. The importance of regional interest is no new discovery so far as they are concerned, and it would be unfortunate if they were to be debarred from the larger and more exciting work that is in hand" (124).

As the champion of "local patriotism" and the Scottish burgh tradition, Mears was acutely aware of the dangers of alienation inherent in a centralized system of national and regional planning, but was uncertain how the problem could best be resolved. At the Town Planning Institute's Scottish Conference in Kirkcaldy in 1941, he had admitted that he "had difficulty in seeing how to relate national to local

planning" (125). He took refuge in the general maxim that planning must proceed by means of voluntary co-operation and consultation and was himself always careful to involve small burghs at an early stage in his country and regional planning work (126).

On 10th March 1944, the Central and South-East Scotland Committee and the Clyde Valley Committee met together in St. Andrews House for the first of a series of meetings to discuss matters of common concern (127). The cool relationship between Mears and Abercrombie does not seem to have been a hindrance. Mears got on very well with Abercrombie's deputy, Robert H. Matthew, who was responsible for the day-to-day work of the Clyde Valley team during the consultant's frequent absences. Matthew was one of Mears' former students, and the two men were able to work closely together on matters of mutual interest (128).

In order to concentrate on regional planning, Mears increasingly delegated his other consultancy work to junior members of his own staff such as Rendel Govan, Robert J. Naismith and Elizabeth F. Comrie (129, 130). His programme of regional survey reflected his commitment to "a revitalised countryside". Initially, the Central and South-East Scotland

technical staff embarked on surveys of regional infrastructure, concentrating primarily on the distribution of roads and water and electricity supply. In addition, they began an investigation of population changes in an attempt to identify the factors which led to declining population in the rural areas and continuing concentration in the towns. A survey of the region's industries built upon the work which Mears had already carried out in East and Midlothian (131). By mid-April, a report had been prepared on the Border woollen industry and work had begun on preliminary surveys for programmes of recreation and landscape planning (132).

## **7.5 The Distribution of New Houses**

The Scottish Housing Advisory Committee's Report on the Distribution of New Houses in Scotland was published in May 1944 (133). Pointing out that 22.6% of houses in Scotland were classed as overcrowded compared with only 3.8% in England and Wales, it claimed that inter-war housing programmes had proved a "startlingly inadequate" response to Scotland's housing needs. The Committee estimated that 500,000 new houses would be required in the immediate post-war period and stressed the need for careful planning to ensure their proper distribution, arguing that:

"If it is urged that the need for housing after the war will be so desperate that building cannot wait for planning, the answer is not that planning must be postponed, but that as much possible can and should be done now. If housing is urgent, planning is imperative" (134).

It was considered "of the utmost importance that every planning authority should have an adequate staff of qualified planning officers" and the Government was urged to secure the necessary personnel by releasing suitably qualified men from the armed forces, encouraging planning authorities to employ private architects and engineers, and instigating intensive Department of Health training courses in consultation with the Scottish Education Department and the Scottish Branch of the Town Planning Institute. The emphasis was on technical skills and recruitment from the architectural and engineering professions, although the Committee stressed that:

"We use the term "suitably qualified" in the widest sense. We mean not only men possessing technical qualifications and experience in planning, whether previously employed by local authorities or not, but men having technical qualifications readily adaptable to planning

work, even if they have had no previous experience of planning but are prepared to take some training" (135).

The Committee believed that "failure to link housing with industry was the most serious error in general housing distribution policy during the inter-war era". As a result of this failure, there had often been an excessive time-lag between new industrial development and new housing provision and employees had too frequently been forced to make long and expensive journeys to their places of work. It was emphasized that planning authorities should regard regular consultation with industry as an essential feature of their work. However, the Committee considered that broad industrial trends could be studied most effectively at regional and national levels and saw the recently-established Regional Planning Advisory Committees as having an important role in this respect. Particular attention was drawn to the considerable expansion anticipated in the Fife and Lothian coalfields, the prospect of new light industries on planned estates in the Central Belt, and the possibility of new development in the Highlands in association with hydro-electric and forestry schemes.

The Report argued that unplanned suburban sprawl militated against the development of a healthy community life and criticised local authorities for erecting large peripheral housing schemes with few community facilities. It followed contemporary fashion in stressing that authorities should seek to create and reinforce communities by applying principles of "community planning" which had been developed in North America during the 'twenties and 'thirties by planners who had themselves been influenced by Patrick Geddes and shared his belief in the importance of fostering a sense of local identity (136). According to the Housing Advisory Committee, the "basic community" or "neighbourhood unit" should be large enough to supply the essential requirements "for a twentieth-century way of life". It should contain facilities for work, shopping and public business, education and culture, health care, religious worship, recreation and entertainment. The Report suggested that:

"for Scotland such a community should be of the order of 5,000 to 10,000 persons. A basic community will therefore include, on an average of four persons per house, between 1,250 and 2,500 houses" (137).

Community planning was to be nothing less than an exercise in social engineering, for the Committee considered that:

"a local community must essentially be well balanced. It is not a well-balanced community if it is confined to one income group or to one trade or calling, or does not include enough people to form groups covering a variety of social and intellectual interests. A member of well-balanced community can meet people who share his views and interests and rub shoulders with others who do not. Both experiences are fraught with benefit to him in his training as a good citizen. In particular, life in a varied community can stimulate that tolerance and mutual respect which are essential in the world today. A community of this kind cannot easily be built up out of families coming exclusively from unfit or overcrowded houses and we have already recommended the extension of subsidy under the Housing (Scotland) Acts in order to assist housing authorities to build houses for the more varied community we have in mind" (138).

The Committee followed the Barlow Commission in recommending the adoption of policies of decentralization and dispersal to relieve congestion

in the larger urban centres. "Decentralization" was taken to imply a relocation of population or industry within a comparatively limited area, while "dispersal" was regarded as implying a more radical redistribution over a wider area. It was considered "that expansion of existing towns rather than the creation of new ones should be regarded as the first source of relief where dispersal rather than mere decentralization is found desirable". Like James Bowie, the Committee was conscious of the scale of social investment in existing infrastructure and argued that:

"There are very considerable advantages ... in building round an existing small town. One starts with an existing population nucleus, an existing social consciousness and an existing nucleus of public services; and these factors, we think, outweigh the advantages of the virgin site" (139).

The Committee did accept that there was a case for the development of some entirely new towns in Scotland. However, since the country's population was expected to remain virtually static for a generation, it believed that these were likely to be few in number. It was recommended that the development of new towns should be administered by

public boards financed directly by the Exchequer and that each should be built up of a number of neighbourhood units clustered round a town centre.

Many of the Committee's views and recommendations are clearly in accord with Mears' own planning philosophy, but his personal contribution is most readily apparent in the section of its Report which attempts to apply community planning principles to rural areas. South of the Border, the Scott Report on Land Utilization in Rural Areas had called for the preservation of the traditional English village system as the basis for an improved community life in rural areas (140). Adopting the historical approach to planning so characteristic of Mears, the Housing Advisory Committee pointed out that no comparable village tradition existed in Scotland. Instead, throughout most of the Lowlands, the pattern of rural settlement was based on industrial farm steadings and small clusters of houses, each occupying the site of a Medieval ferm toun. What the Committee proposed was essentially a move towards the English pattern since it believed that:

"a substantial contribution to stemming the drift from the country can be made by the systematic grouping of houses on a scale large enough to

enable community services to be provided to an extent approaching as near as practicable to that enjoyed in towns" (141).

It was generally felt that the superior services and social facilities available in urban areas had contributed substantially to rural decline, and not everyone agreed that the retention of a sizeable population in the countryside was a desirable objective. In the mid-thirties, the Mearns author, Lewis Grassie Gibbon, mounted a fierce attack on what he regarded as a romantic, urban-based "back to the land" movement, ignorant of the harsh realities of Scottish rural life. He wrote that:

"... when I read or hear our new leaders and their plans for making of Scotland a great peasant nation, a land of little farms and little farming communities, I am moved to a bored disgust with those pseudo-literary romantics playing with politics, those refugees from the warm parlours and lights and policemen and theatre stalls of the Scots cities. They are promising the new Scotland a purgatory that would decimate it. They are promising narrowness and bitterness and heartbreaking toil in one of the most unkindly agricultural lands in the world ...

For this life is for no modern man or woman - even the finest of these. It belongs to a different, an alien generation. That winter that is sweeping up the Howe, bending the whins on Auchendreich hill, seeping with pelting blasts through the old walls of Edzell Castle, malagarousing the ploughed lands and swashing about and above the heavy cattle-courts where in darkness the great herds lie cud-chewing and breath-blowing in frosty steam, is a thing for most to be stared at, tourist-wise, endured for a day or a week. This night, the winter on the countryside, the crofter may doze contentedly in the armchair in the ingleneuk and the mistress yawn with an equal content at the clock. For you or I or young Simon who is taking his girl to the pictures it is as alien and unendurable in permanence as the life of the Karntchatkan" (142).

However, the Housing Advisory Committee accepted the premise that at least a proportion of the population should be assisted to remain in the countryside. As a means of overcoming the grim isolation of rural existence, it recommended that, wherever possible, new housing in the country should be grouped in village communities, either by the expansion of existing settlements or by the development of what it

termed "village nuclei"; locations where such facilities as churches, schools, post offices or blacksmiths' shops already provided a focus for community life. Recognizing that the individual village could not support all the services considered essential for a modern lifestyle, the Committee proposed that groups of villages should be "planned in relation to a neighbouring small town or larger village containing probably some public buildings, an adult education centre, a fairly full range of shops supplying fundamental needs, a cinema and modern industries related to agriculture". Thus, in rural areas, the neighbourhood unit would "not consist of a single circumscribed built-up area but of a wider, less defined area composed of farms, clusters of houses or "clachans", villages and one or more small towns" (143).

The Committee's recommendations on rural housing distribution were strongly influenced by Mears' pioneering county planning work and its Report reproduced two maps which had been prepared as part of the preliminary survey of East Lothian. The first indicated the site of a potential village nucleus at Morham near Garvald and the second illustrated the composition and extent of a rural neighbourhood unit centred on Haddington. However, East Lothian was hardly typical of rural Scotland as

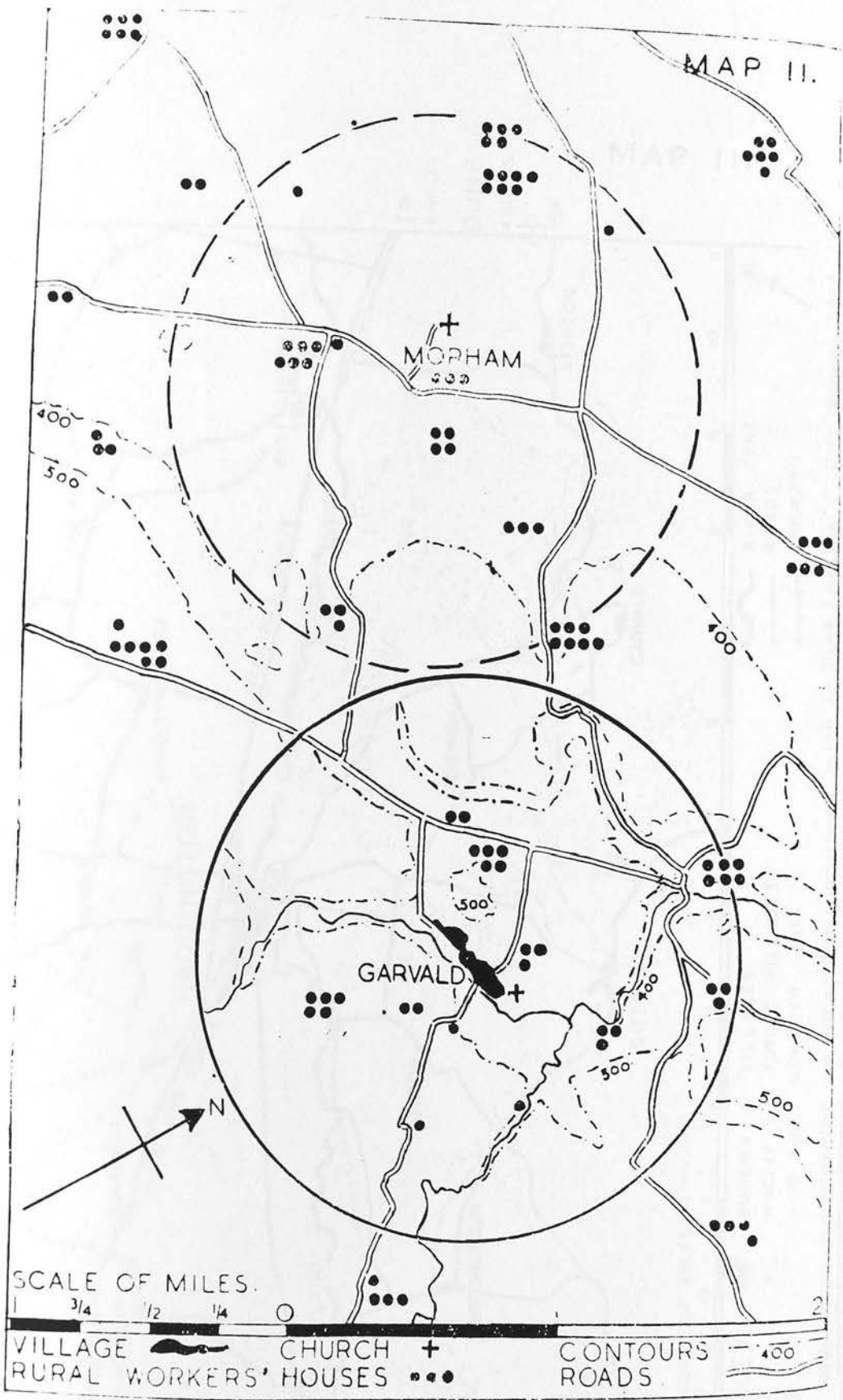


Fig. 7.5. Garvald and Morham - a village and "village nucleus" in East Lothian. F.C. Mears, 1944. Source: SCOTTISH HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (1944), Report on the Distribution of New Houses in Scotland, Cmnd. 6552, HMSO, p.76.

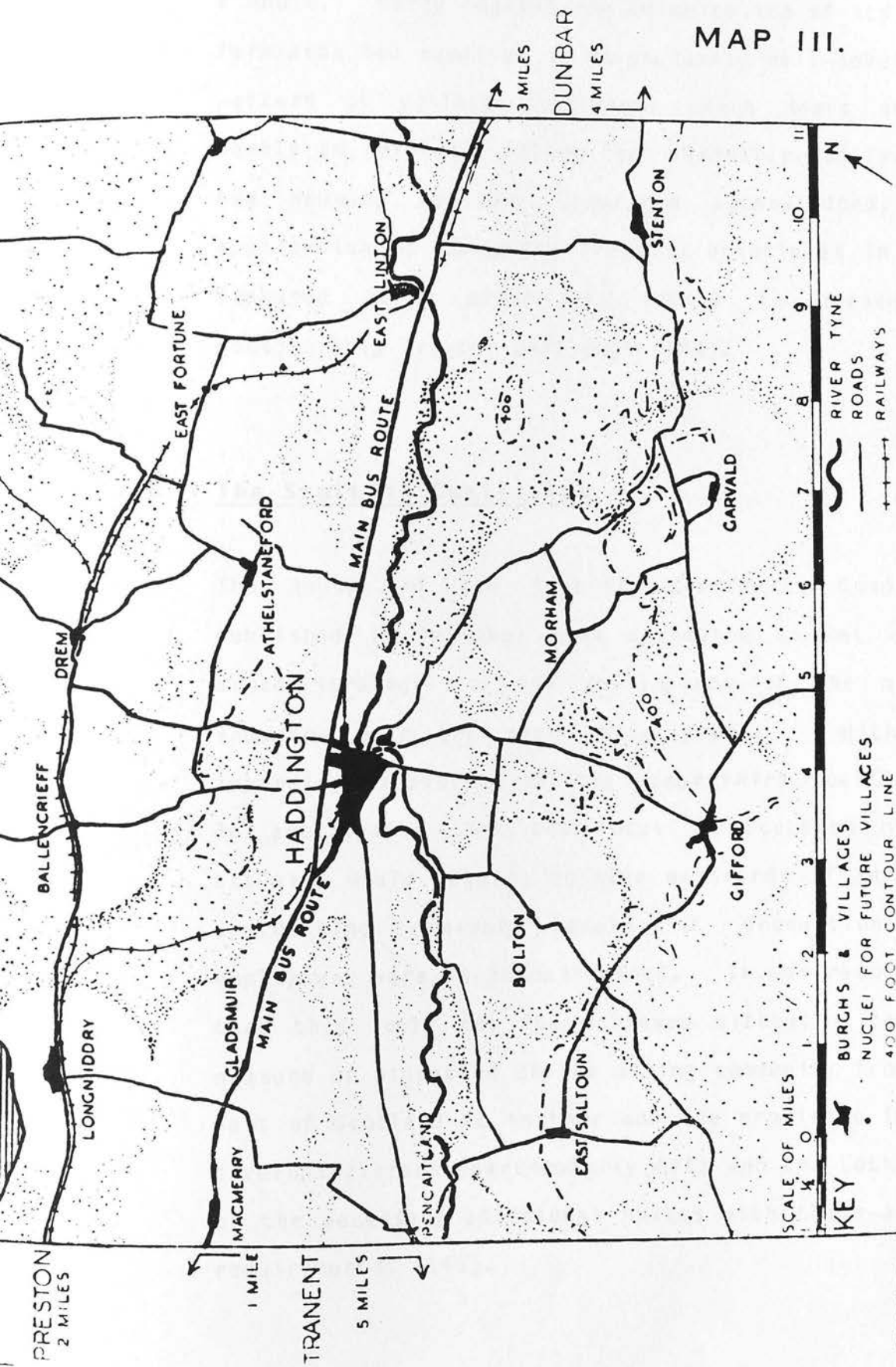


Fig. 7.6. Haddington and District - a rural "neighbourhood unit" in East Lothian. F.C. Mears, 1944.  
 Source: SCOTTISH HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (1944), Report on the Distribution of New Houses in Scotland, Cmd. 6552, HMSO, p.78.

a whole. Early Anglo-Saxon colonization of its rich farmlands had resulted in an unusually well-developed pattern of village settlement which Hears sought merely to reinforce rather than radically modify. As the Housing Advisory Committee acknowledged, the application of community planning principles in less favoured rural areas was likely to present a considerably greater challenge (144).

## **7.6 The Scottish Coalfields**

The Report of the Scottish Coalfields Committee published in December 1944 attempted to set out a broad strategy for the development of the mining industry over the next fifty years. With the impending exhaustion of the Lanarkshire coalfields, it anticipated that the focus of Scottish mining activity would require to move eastwards if anything approaching pre-war levels of production and employment were to be maintained. It was recognized that this could not "be achieved without a certain measure of migration of the mining community from one part of Scotland to another and the provision in the developing areas (particularly Fife and the Lothians) of the necessary additional houses with their allied requirements" (145).

The Committee argued that, if the fullest use was to be made of Scotland's coal reserves, the development of the individual coalfields must be co-ordinated on a national basis, according to a plan prepared "by a skilled and impartial central authority familiar with Scottish conditions and with the needs and aspirations of the mining population". It therefore recommended the establishment of a Scottish Coal Board which was to be "a small, expert body appointed by the Secretary of State for Scotland in consultation with the Minister of Fuel and Power". It was suggested that:

"The Board, being able to survey the Scottish coalfields as a whole, should co-ordinate the work of local authorities and others (and advise any Regional Planning Authority which may be set up) in the housing of and the provision of welfare services for miners, and in arranging where necessary for the migration of miners and their families from declining districts to other parts of the coalfield with as little discomfort as possible" (146).

The Committee's prescription was very much in accord with Tom Johnston's strategy of pursuing economic and social objectives through the agency of an autonomous Scottish technocracy. However, it failed to meet

the aspirations of the mining unions whose campaign for public ownership placed little emphasis on the Scottish dimension. In a memorandum of dissent, the four miners' representatives on the Committee argued that:

"So long as the industry is controlled by private enterprise there cannot, in our view, be any real hope of solving the present main problem confronting the industry. We cannot conceive a solution through a Scottish Coal Board nor through duality of control by the Government, through the Ministry of Fuel and Power, and by colliery owners. The only way in which the development of the industry in the national interest can be secured is, in our opinion, by the nationalisation of the industry ..." (147).

On the strategic aspects of coalfield development, the Committee achieved greater unanimity, however. Its Report stressed the need to safeguard approved colliery sites and ensure that coal reserves were not needlessly sterilized by unco-ordinated surface development. The potential conflict had already been recognized by the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee which had stated in its Report on the Distribution of New Houses that:

"In view of the large amount of housing which will be needed in some of the mining areas in Scotland during the immediate post-war years, we recommend that a survey should be carried out in all mining areas where mining is likely to take place during those years with a view to the classification of the land according to the degree of its suitability for building purposes from the mineral aspect" (148).

The Coalfields Committee went further in calling for the establishment of specific machinery to determine whether surface or mining development should take place in any given location but gave no indication of how this would relate to the rest of the planning system (149).

Improvement of the housing conditions of mining families was seen as an important priority and the Committee called for the early elimination of the traditional miners' row, arguing that:

"For drabness of appearance and atmosphere there is no group of dwelling-houses we know which can compare with collections of the older miners' rows: dreary long lines of single-storey houses and between them only narrow strips of drying greens (though there is now no grass left, even

if there ever was any), often with communal wash-houses, conveniences, and, in these times, air-raid shelters, scattered over the greens" (150).

The Committee enthusiastically endorsed the concept of community planning. While it acknowledged that conditions in local authority housing schemes were generally greatly superior to those in miners' rows, it considered that too often local authority housing programmes had neglected amenity and the provision of community facilities with the result that "Council Housing" had become stigmatized. It therefore urged that:

"Every effort should be made by local authorities in the future to move on from the conception of quantitative housing to that of community planning such as has been accomplished so successfully by Stirlingshire County Council in their scheme of some 450 houses at Westquarter where both lay-out and individual design of houses have been carefully considered in relation to trees and open spaces ..." (151).

As a general principle, it was recommended that the practice of housing mining families in separate and sometimes remote village communities should be ended. The exclusive dependence of such villages on the

mining industry rendered them particularly vulnerable in times of recession and their separation from other communities tended to isolate mining families from the rest of society and restrict their opportunities for alternative employment. The Committee considered that, wherever possible, "miners should ... be housed away from the collieries and encouraged to form part of a mixed community, living side by side with members of other trades and occupations" (152). On Mears' advice, East Lothian County Council had already begun to implement this policy by transferring the populations of the small mining settlements of House o Muir and Newtown to the mixed village communities of Ormiston and Pencaitland (153).

The Coalfields Committee foresaw a greater need for the development of new settlements than that envisaged by the Housing Advisory Committee. It emphasized that:

"The number of houses required in certain counties amounts to some thousands for miners alone and, especially in the eastern counties, they will be mainly for additional workers to operate the proposed new collieries. With the influx of large numbers of miners there will be corresponding increases in the numbers of

shopkeepers, officials, professional people and a mass of others - not to mention new industries attracted by the mining developments - and the scale of the growth in population might well justify the establishment of new population units in addition to the expansion of existing areas" (154).

### **7.7 The Regional Plan**

In March 1945, in the light of the two major reports on housing distribution and the future of the Scottish coalfields, Mears presented the Central and South-East Scotland Regional Planning Advisory Committee with an Interim Report on Population Trends in Relation to Industrial Development and Housing Needs (155). A draft Final Report was submitted to the Committee in July 1946 (156) and, after detailed revision and editing, was finally published as a lavishly-illustrated, 179-page volume in January 1949 (157).

Like his father-in-law, Mears regarded the river valley as the fundamental unit of regional planning. Indeed, his desire that the Regional Plan should respect the integrity of natural valley systems led him to suggest that its boundaries be extended to

include both the port of Berwick and the valley of the River Till in Northumberland (158). In accordance with Geddesian precepts, his plan was founded on a wide-ranging survey of the Region's geographical attributes and history of human settlement. He saw the modern Region as the product of continuous interaction between man and his environment; each of its communities adapted to its particular geographical setting and responding to changing circumstances by a process of cultural evolution. He therefore rejected standardized solutions to contemporary problems, believing that planning proposals should be individually tailored to local conditions, with due regard to existing customs and systems of social organization (159). He argued that:

"Under Scottish conditions all planning schemes, if they are to be successful, must be directed so that the land may be used in the best way to promote a variety of conditions and occupations under which the traditional way of Scottish life may be maintained" (160).

Of course, in the modern world of long-distance communications, centralized production, mass media and international trade, pressures towards standardization were strong and human horizons

stretched far beyond the boundaries of the individual valley unit, let alone the sturdy little Scottish burgh. Such considerations have led Hague, from his Marxian perspective, to describe Mears Report as combining "a vibrant awareness of the unfolding political economy of Scotland's development, with a nostalgia for a way of life and associated settlement pattern which modern capitalism had destroyed". He has further suggested that its analysis "anticipated more recent debates about relations between metropolitan centres and dependent peripheral regions (161). Certainly, Mears did recognize that, what he called "financial and industrial methods" were favouring "massive concentrations of industry and manpower" in certain key locations, with the consequent marginalization of other, less-favoured areas (162). Thus, just as rural areas were declining as a result of loss of population to the Central Belt, so Scotland itself was suffering a decline in prosperity relative to the major conurbations of mid and south-eastern England where the new generation of consumer and service industries was expanding rapidly. Mears argued that in remaining primarily dependent on the older heavy industries, Central Scotland had been:

"relegated to the status of a Development Area like Northumberland, Durham and South Wales, and, therefore, taking only a secondary part in the service of metropolitan industry, may be compared in this respect with certain colonial dependencies which have been exploited to their disadvantage as sources of raw materials" (163).

Mears considered that radical industrial decentralization coupled with an expansion of trade with the ports of the Baltic and North America offered the best prospect for Scotland's future economic development (164). The Distribution of Industry Act which received the Royal Assent in July 1945 sought to implement the recommendations of the Barlow Commission by steering manufacturing industry away from London and the Midlands of England to the newly-designated Development Areas of Merseyside, North-East England, West Cumberland, Central Scotland and South Wales (164). The Act established a crucial administrative separation between the machinery of industrial allocation and the developing planning system, as the new package of controls and incentives was operated centrally from London by the U.K. Board of Trade. Mears was critical of the new legislation, believing that it would do little to revive the fortunes of Scotland's depopulated rural areas. In a progress report submitted to the

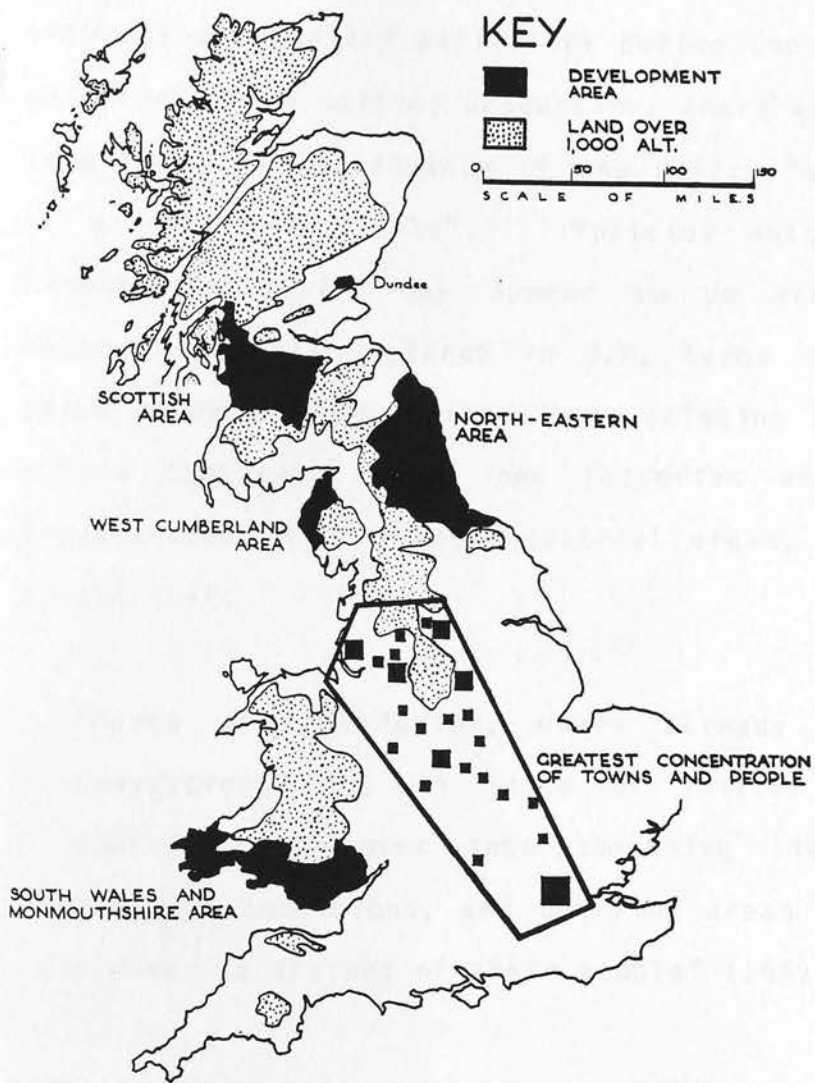


Fig. 7.7. Development Areas According to the Distribution of Industries Act 1945. Source: MEARS, F.C. (1949), "Regional Plan for Central and South-East Scotland", Central and South-East Scotland Regional Planning Advisory Committee, p.15.

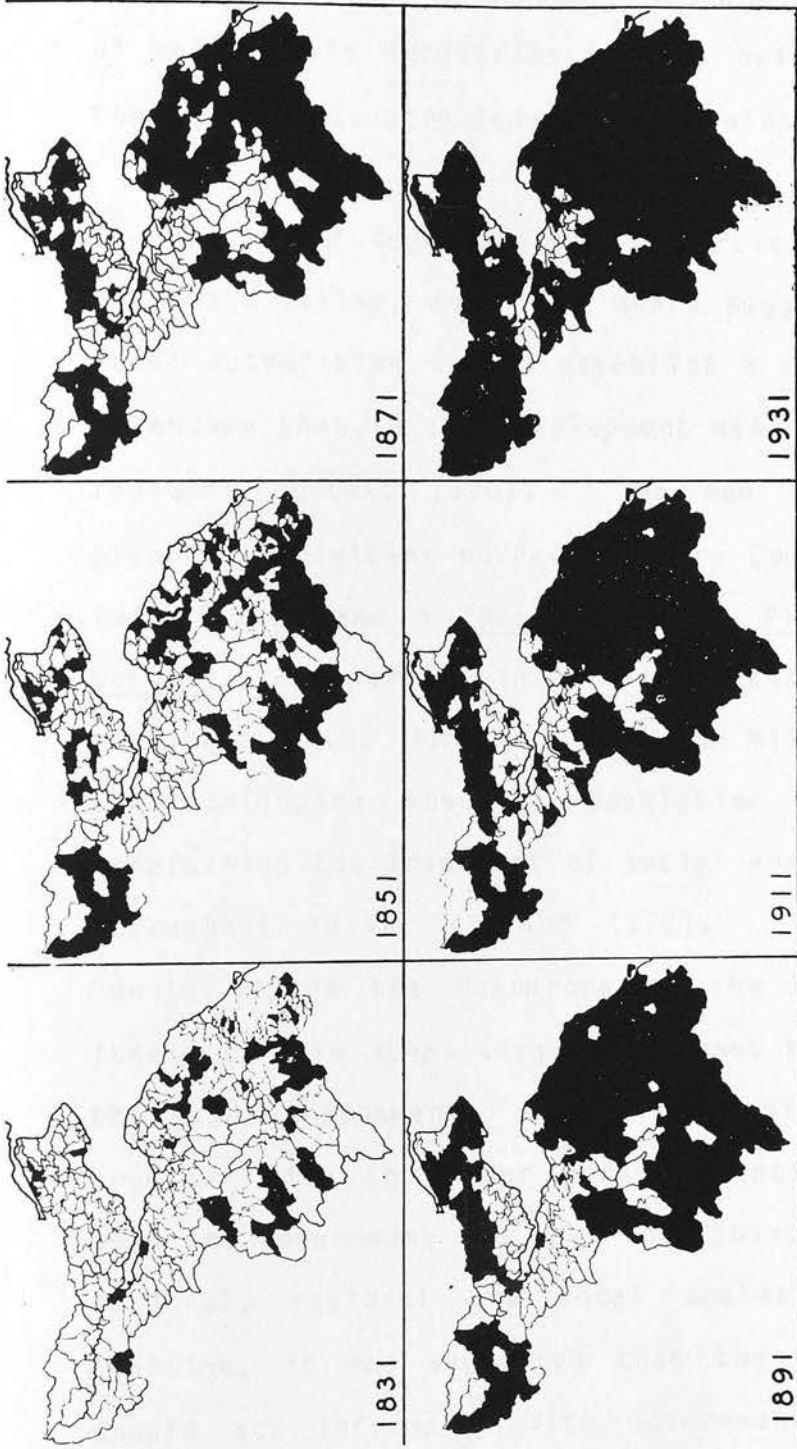
Regional Planning Advisory Committee in February 1946, he pointed out that the "not very appropriately named" Distribution of Industry Act was being used primarily to foster the existing concentration of industry in parts of the Central Belt. While this might be a necessary palliative during the period of adjustment from wartime production, there was a grave danger that a continuance of the policy "would lead to a real catastrophe". Policies which from a London perspective may appear to be achieving a better industrial balance in U.K. terms might only serve to perpetuate or exacerbate existing imbalances within Scotland. If new factories were to be concentrated in existing industrial areas, there was a risk that:

"Parts of the Region, where already there is congestion, may, in spite of initial planning control, slip over into something like "Black Country" conditions, and outlying areas may still further be drained of their people" (165).

## **7.8 Rural Regeneration in the Tweed Valley**

Mears urged the Government to recognize that healthy and balanced economic conditions could not be created simply by redistributing population within existing

industrial areas (166). He regarded rural depopulation as the most pressing problem facing both the Region and Scotland as a whole and called for a joint campaign of action by central and local government to encourage recolonization of the countryside (167). Without providing an explanation for his choice of figure, he suggested that the ultimate goal should be the return of approximately 10% of the urban population to the rural areas (168). In claiming that Scotland's economic problems would be solved "not by haphazard dispersal of industry but by redistribution planned to harmonise the hitherto competing claims of country and town" (169) he was calling essentially for a return to an earlier economic period in which industries were much more closely tied to local markets and indigenous resources. However, there were also more forward-looking elements in his prescription for Scotland's countryside. He was influenced by the work of men like Sir John Boyd Orr of the Rowett Institute in Aberdeen which appeared to offer the prospect of rural regeneration through the application of modern scientific principles to agricultural production, and he sought to improve the quality of life in the landward areas through the application of community planning principles to rural settlement patterns. His strategy for the reversal of rural decline involved the provision of improved services and



*Decline of population by parishes. The population of each parish shown black had, by the date given, decreased below its maximum as given in the census reports from 1801 to 1931.*

Fig. 7.8. Decline of Population by Parishes: 1831-1931. Source: MEARS, F.C. (1949), "Regional Plan for Central and South-East Scotland", Central and South-East Scotland Regional Planning Advisory Committee, Plate 10.

community facilities and the creation of new employment in agricultural improvement and reclamation schemes, forestry projects, and the sort of small craft industries already being promoted by the Scottish Country Industries Development Trust.

The problem of depopulation was particularly acute in the Tweed Valley, and there Mears suggested that the local authorities should establish a Joint Committee to ensure that future development was considered in a regional context (170). He had been appointed planning consultant to Peeblesshire County Council in 1944 (171), and a "Report on the Planning of the County", prepared in collaboration with the architect, A.H. Mottram, repeated his warning that the continuing loss of population was seriously undermining the framework of social and economic life throughout rural Scotland (172). Since it was "quite beyond the resources of the County Council itself to take steps adequate to meet the situation", the Report recommended that Peeblesshire should work together with the other Border Counties to impress upon the Government the need for "joint action on the national, regional and local scales". In the meantime, it was suggested that the County Council should act informally with Government Departments, public agencies, landowners and farmers to promote schemes for the improvement of agricultural land, the

expansion of forestry, the extension of electricity supplies and the development of rural industries (173). Ultimately, Mears envisaged that a Joint Committee of Border authorities "strengthened by official representation and by the assistance of statutory powers" would evolve into a new agency for promoting and directing development" throughout the Tweed Valley. Initially, the new organization would work "in parallel" with the existing local authorities, though his Plan anticipated that administrative arrangements would "conveniently and logically" reflect the new regional emphasis in the long run (174).

The Border burghs were heavily dependent on the woollen industry which recruited a predominantly female labour force. Mears therefore proposed a strategy of industrial diversification with the primary aim of providing additional employment opportunities for young men. He urged that measures should be taken to establish small industries related to the surrounding rural economy; specialized industries should be encouraged to locate in the area by the provision of "nest" workshops; and an attempt should be made to attract a number of larger industries, each employing up to 500 workers. While Mears considered that much of this development could be accommodated on flat, greenfield sites round the

edges of existing burghs, he argued in the Interim Regional Report that there was also a strong case for establishing a new centre of employment in the vicinity of St. Boswells which he saw as lying at the focal point within seven miles of most of the surrounding settlements (175).

Some of the features of Mears' strategy for arresting the decline in the landward areas had already been set out in the Report of the Housing Advisory Committee. He was convinced that the drift to the towns could be stemmed by providing modern, well-serviced housing and improved community facilities in the countryside and suggested that in areas like the Merse this could be done most economically by grouping new development around existing village nuclei. He anticipated that the development of forestry might provide additional opportunities to establish new rural communities but recognized that in the sparsely-populated Border hill-country there was little scope for concentrating development in closely-knit settlements. In such areas he proposed that the loose grouping of houses and farms within each individual upland valley should constitute the basic rural planning unit. If shepherds and other rural workers could be resettled at less remote locations within these "Valley Units" the provision of services such as water and electricity might

become more feasible. His idea that community facilities could be shared between a number of settlements within a given locality was combined with the more conventional concept of a settlement hierarchy in which a progressively wider range of facilities and services was provided in centres at local, district and regional levels. According to the Peeblesshire Report:

"The local centres should be gathering places for the social and cultural life of the valley communities, while the district centre, besides serving the same purpose in its immediate locality, should act as a base which distributes practical assistance to the local centres in its district. Such a system is already in operation in regard to education in the County, and it should be extended to cover facilities for library and public health services, for crafts, drama, visual art, music, physical recreation and special localised technical information as well as for youth clubs, hobbies and the more homely social activities.

For these purposes, each local centre should have its village hall, towards the erection of which generous grants are made available through the Scottish Council of Social Service, and each

district centre something larger, more in the way of a fully-fledged community centre" (176).

On the basis of topography, settlement pattern and existing administrative arrangements, Mears proposed the primary subdivisions of Upper, Middle and Lower Tweed, served by centres at Peebles, St. Boswells and Berwick respectively. These main centres would be "planned as centres for organisation of the expanding social services, marketing and distribution of local production and all other matters included in regional planning and development" (177). In deference to local support for the establishment of a new industrial estate at Netherdale Mills, Galashiels (178), the final Regional Plan placed less emphasis on St. Boswells as a location for industrial development, stressing instead its suitability as a regional administrative, agricultural and communications centre. In an attempt to allay the suspicions of the surrounding small burghs, an assurance was given that any tendency towards urban growth in competition with the existing towns would be "vigorously" controlled. St. Boswells together with Hawick, Jedburgh, Kelso, Galashiels and Selkirk "would comprise a grouped community of 50,000 people living in close touch with the life of the countryside but at the same time afforded full industrial and social facilities" (179).

## 7.9 Accommodating Development in the Forth Basin

Within the Central Belt, the regional planning team faced the problem of providing for a major shift of coal-mining activity from West to East. In his Interim Report, Mears forecast that over the next 30 years the population of the Forth Basin could be expected to rise by some 150,000 as a direct result of the development of the eastern coalfields (180). Despite his reservations about the wisdom of new town planning, Mears accepted that the bulk of this increase would have to be accommodated in new settlements, and the Interim Report recommended the creation of a new township in association with each of the ten new pits envisaged by the Scottish Coalfields Committee. In accordance with the recommendations of that Committee, these were to be "mixed communities" providing a variety of employment opportunities and a wide range of services, and, to achieve this end, it would be necessary to establish "balancing industries" to complement the mining activity. Coal was seen as a versatile fuel which could either be burned directly or used to produce gas or electricity. In addition, it was expected to have increasing utility as a raw material for the new chemical and plastics industries. Mears considered that integrated development of the eastern coalfields

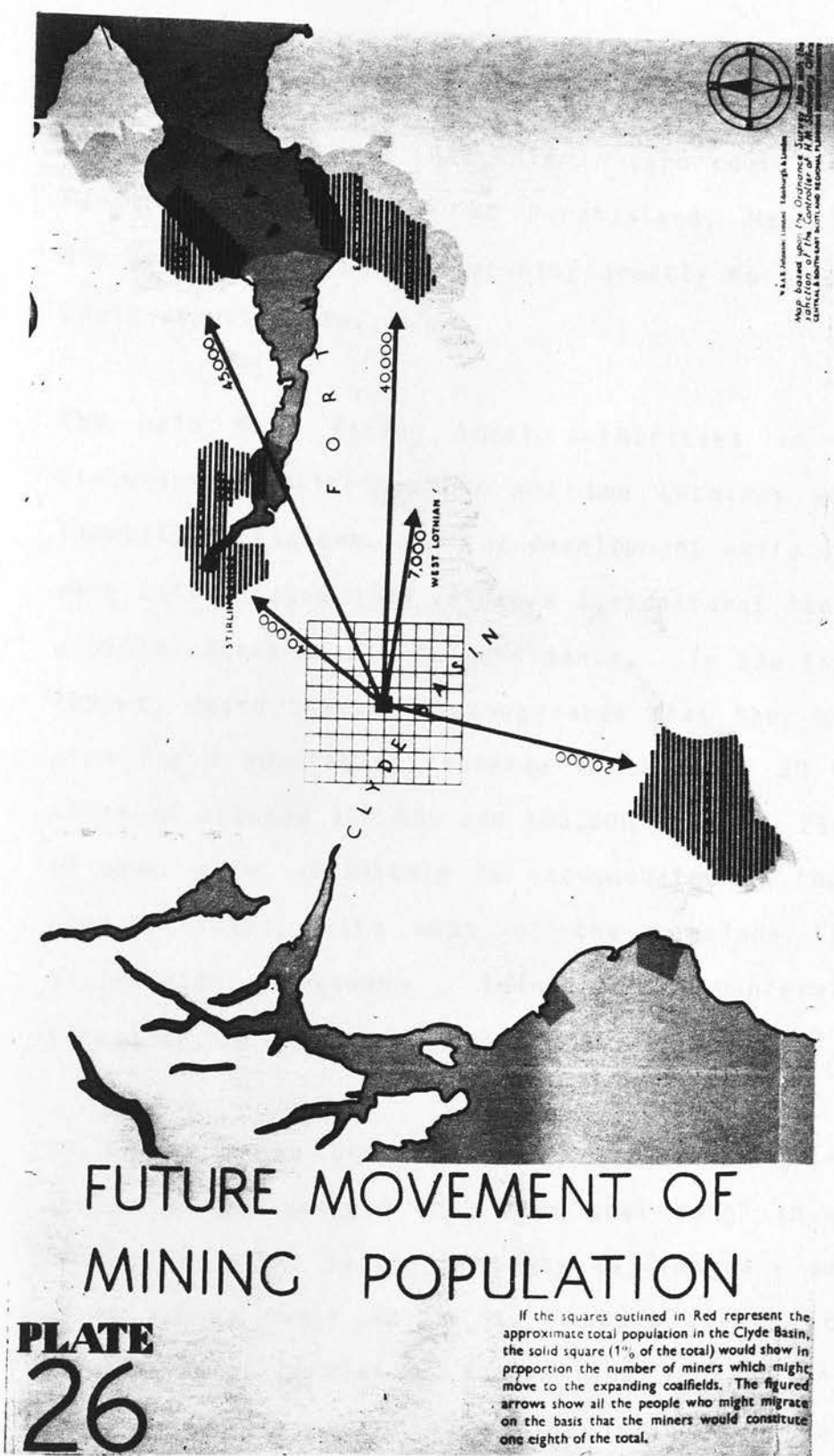


Fig. 7.9. Future Movement of the Mining Population. Source: MEARS, F.C. (1949), "Regional Plan for Central and South-East Scotland", Central and South-East Scotland Regional Planning Advisory Committee, Plate 26.

might attract a diverse range of light industries to Central Scotland and that this in turn could provide East Coast ports such as Burntisland, Methil and Grangemouth with the opportunity greatly to diversify their export trade.

The main task facing local authorities in Fife, Clackmannan, Stirlingshire and the Lothians was to identify sufficient land for development while at the same time safeguarding valuable agricultural land and avoiding areas liable to subsidence. In the Interim Report, Mears tentatively suggested that they should plan for a population increase in the next 50 to 60 years of between 350,000 and 400,000 people - 250,000 of whom might ultimately be accommodated in the ten new townships, with most of the remainder being distributed between Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy, Stirling, Falkirk and Alloa (181).

In a BBC radio broadcast in December 1947, Mears warned of the dangers of a new "coal rush" in which "Edinburgh might go the same way as Glasgow - suburb after suburb built on to it, factory after factory planted down, population snowballing in, and in the end, the Castle Rock must a tiny island in a sea of chinneys" (182). In order to avoid the creation of "a new Black Country stretching through the Lothians and Fife" he recommended that:

"8 or 10 communities should be provided in the coalfields under the New Towns Act, each of them for, say, 30,000 people, in the proportion of not more than one miner to every eight people in the town, thus giving society and balanced employment" (183).

However, he believed that New Towns could not provide the whole answer. By themselves they would simply act as "one more magnet" to help denude the countryside of its population. He argued that the New Towns Act should be complemented by a "New Countryside Act" to provide improved services and a diversity of opportunity in rural areas (184).

During 1946, Mears had radically modified his proposals for new settlements in the Forth Basin in the light of the recommendations of Lord Reith's New Towns Committee. The settlements which the Government intended to establish under the New Towns Act were considerably larger than the new townships proposed in his Interim Report and Mears took the view that the creation of New Towns of over 50,000 people could seriously disrupt Scotland's traditional pattern of small-scale urban settlement. In addition, he argued that the widely-dispersed locations of new pit sinkings precluded the concentration of population in a few large centres.

These considerations led him to propose that, to meet Scottish conditions, facilities under the New Towns Act should be extended to federal groups of communities comprising new townships and established settlements, each with a combined population of between 20,000 and 30,000 inhabitants. Thus, under Mears' conception, which had evolved directly from his experience of planning for the future development of the communities of the Esk Valley, "constellations" of settlements "working in co-operation for gracious development" replaced the more familiar model of the dominant centre and its dependent satellites. This, he believed, would allow each community to retain its own distinctive character, while making possible the provision of social and industrial facilities on a scale not previously within the means of individual local authorities (185).

Before embarking on his Final Report to the Regional Planning Advisory Committee, Mears had arranged a series of meetings with the constituent local authorities to seek their observations on the proposals contained within his Interim Report (186). However, he and his staff were already making provision for post-war expansion in the Forth Basin in the County Development Plans being prepared for East Lothian, Midlothian and Fife.

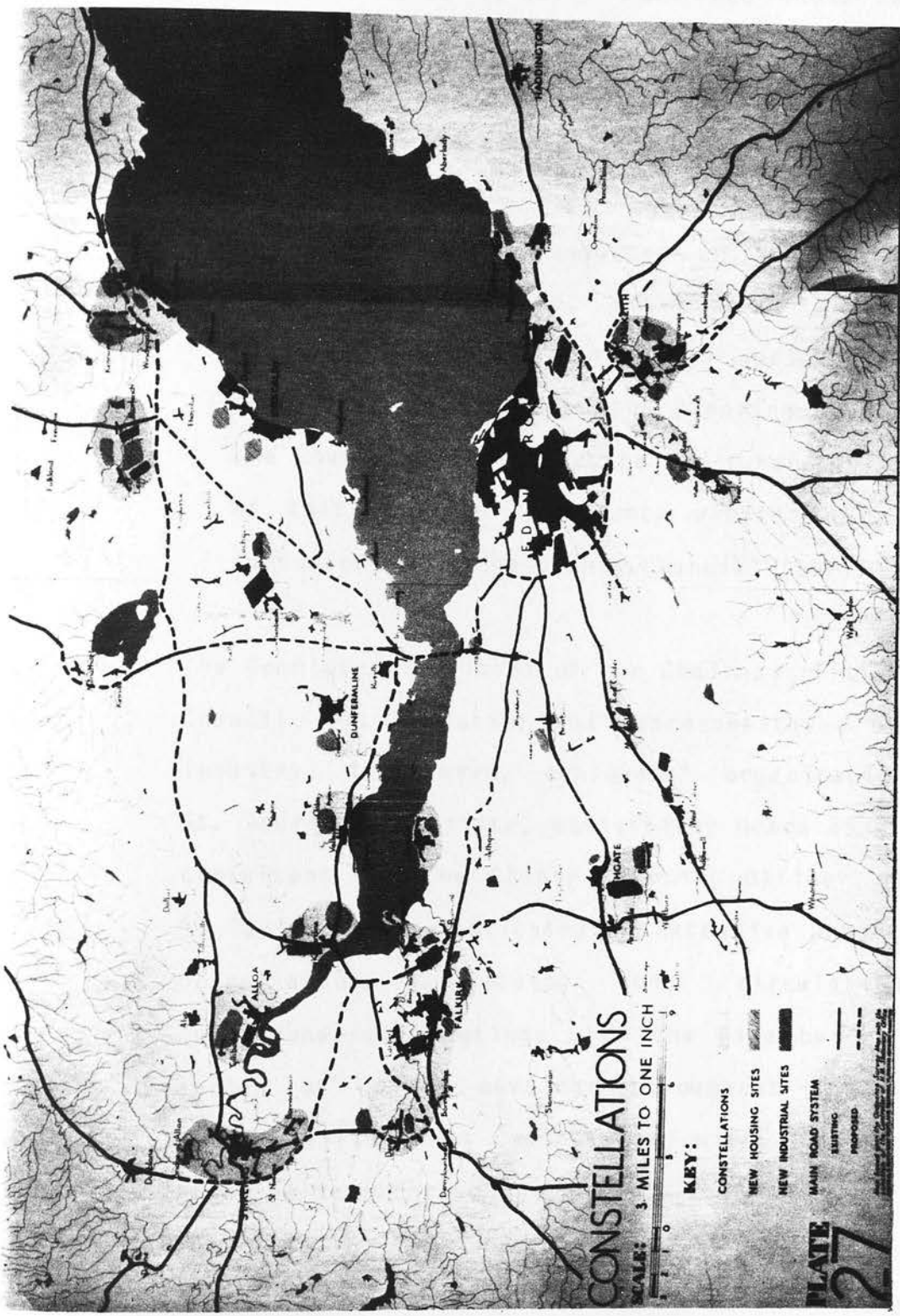


Fig. 7.10. Constellations in the Forth Basin. Source: MEARS, F.C. (1949), "Regional Plan for Central and South-East Scotland", Central and South-East Scotland Regional Planning Advisory Committee, Plate 27.

In January 1944, Fife County Council had appointed its own Planning Advisory Committee whose terms of reference bore the clear mark of Mears' influence. "Having regard to the history, traditions, and past development in the County", the Committee was:

"to examine the resources of the County in minerals, agriculture, and others; to consult with all interested bodies and persons; and to make recommendations to the Planning Committee of the Council with respect to the future development of that part of the County within the planning jurisdiction of the County Council" (187).

The Committee consisted of the Chairman of the County Council, Mr. Christie, and representatives of local industry, landowners, employees' organizations and St. Andrews University, assisted by Mears as planning consultant and the County Planning Officer, Maurice E. Taylor. It instituted an extensive programme of consultations involving the circulation of questionnaires, meetings with the Fife burghs and a series of public meetings throughout the County. Close liaison was maintained with the regional planning team through both Mears and his Deputy, T.A. Jeffryes.

One of the most pressing questions facing the planners was the identification of sites for major new housing developments in the eastern part of the Fife coalfield where the first new pits were expected to enter production in 1954 (188). A number of possible sites for new settlements were considered during the course of the Fife Planning Advisory Committee's consultation exercise. The County Council tended to favour the location of a new town at Kennoway, to the west of Leven, but this was opposed by Leven Town Council on the grounds that it would be detrimental to the future development of their own burgh (189). At a public meeting in Markinch on 4th June 1945, discussion focused on the most appropriate location for new housing to serve the proposed new Rothes Colliery. A draft plan for a new town at Coaltown of Balgonie had already been prepared, but the meeting expressed a strong preference for development centred on the existing burgh of Markinch. In July 1946, Mears' draft Final Report to the Regional Planning Advisory Committee recommended the creation of a constellation with a population of between 30,000 and 35,000 in the Markinch - Leslie area. However, attempts to bring Markinch, Leslie and Coaltown of Balgonie within a single integrated development scheme ultimately came to nothing and Glenrothes was finally designated as a conventional green-field New Town in June 1948 (190).

In Midlothian, the need to identify sites for incoming workers seemed equally urgent and on the outskirts of Edinburgh there was competition between the County Council and the City Corporation for the few remaining suitable locations. In the summer of 1945, the Corporation sought the reaction of the County Council to a proposal to develop a suburban housing scheme on 182 acres of land at Edmonston, within the County boundary. Mears advised the Midlothian Planning Committee that the suggestion was unacceptable since "the area at Edmonston which the Corporation desire to develop is the only safe area for building a new town to meet the housing needs of the County in connection with the expansion of existing coal pits and the sinking of a new pit in the area (191). He considered that the rehousing of the people of Edinburgh must largely be directed to the West of the City.

The Scottish Coalfields Committee had recommended the sinking of a large new pit at Monktonhall, a short distance to the east of Newcraighall, and it was proposed to accommodate incoming workers and their families in a large new housing estate in the Danderhall - Woolmet area (192). A site for another new settlement had been identified at Miltonbridge in the Valley of the North Esk. In addition, Mears had renewed his proposal for substantial new developments

in the Valley of the South Esk to create a population grouping large enough to support a wide range of institutions and services. Under this scheme, new housing and industrial areas would link the existing settlements of Dalkeith, Eskbank, Newtongrange, Easthouses and Bonnyrigg in a "Ring Town" focused on the central open space of Newbattle Park (193). Sewage disposal facilities in the Esk Valley were already inadequate and it was recognized that substantial improvements would be required to cope with the expected increase in population. In a Report to the Midlothian Town Planning Committee in September 1945, Mears borrowed from contemporary military jargon in stressing that:

"... housing and public services must be planned as a "combined operation" carefully synchronised with the expansion of existing pits and the sinking of new ones" (194).

In order to provide adequate drainage capacity and substantially reduce pollution in the River Esk, he believed it would be necessary to construct new trunk sewers along the entire length of the valley between Penicuik and Musselburgh.

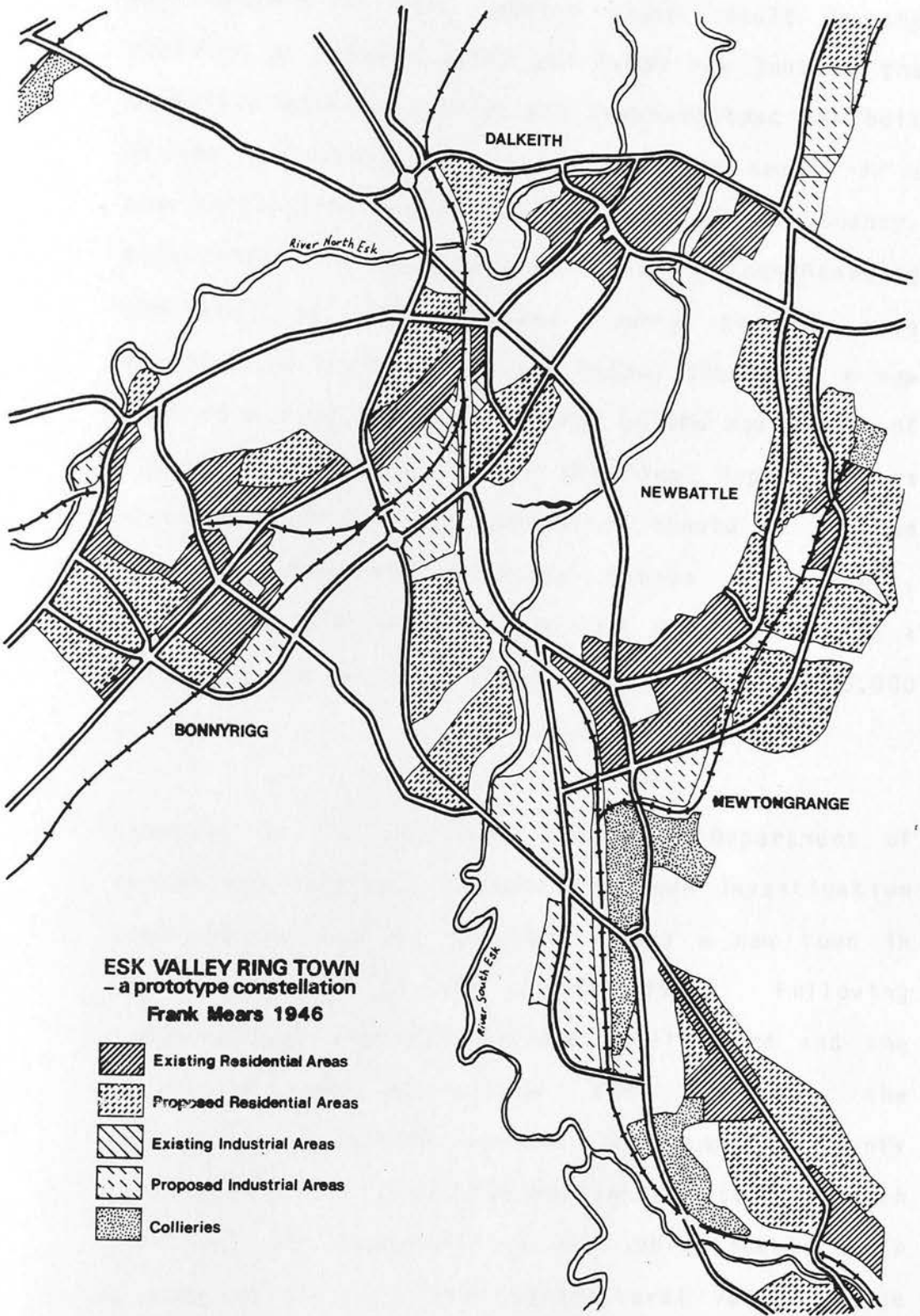


Fig. 7.11. Esk Valley Ring Town - The Prototype Constellation.  
 F.C. Mears, 1946. Source: MacGILP, A.L., PERCIVAL, R.T. &  
 WEBSTER, I. (1965), "Newbattle: Survey Report", Edinburgh College  
 of Art.

Mears' Interim Report had estimated that mining developments in East Lothian would result in the creation of between 1,000 and 2,000 new jobs in the immediate post-war period and proposed that the bulk of the additional population should be housed in a new settlement in the Western part of the County. Accordingly, in the summer of 1945, the Town Planning Committee of East Lothian County Council gave approval in principle to the establishment of a new town on a site of some 300 acres to the south-east of Cockenzie (195, 196). In his Final Report, Mears proposed that the new settlement should be grouped together with the existing burghs of Tranent, Prestonpans and Cockenzie and Port Seton to create a constellation with a target population of 25,000 (197).

However, in the summer of 1948, the Department of Health for Scotland initiated its own investigation into the possibility of establishing a new town in the western part of East Lothian (198). Following consultations with the National Coal Board and the Department of Agriculture for Scotland, the Department of Health advised East Lothian County Council that it considered development to the south and east of Cockenzie to be impracticable both because of the very high agricultural value of the land and because the Coal Board's latest projected

mining operations would render much of the site unsuitable for building purposes (199). Instead, it proposed that all outstanding housing needs should be met outside the coalfield on poorer agricultural land in the vicinity of the existing villages of Macmerry and Penston. At a meeting of the County Council's Town Planning Committee on 22nd November 1948, Mears advised against any substantial development in the Macmerry area on the grounds that it would be very expensive to service. He pointed out that:

"A township on the scale proposed would ultimately carry a population far in excess of any of the existing Burghs and, lying in the intermediate position between Tranent - Prestonpans - Cockenzie and Haddington, might be expected very seriously to compete with them as a shopping and cultural centre. If the township was not intended to grow to this extent, then it became only a large village with all the disadvantages of a certain isolation" (200).

Mears recommended only modest enlargement of the village of Macmerry to provide additional accommodation for local people engaged primarily in agricultural occupations.

The County Council accepted Mears' advice and agreed to press the case for locating major new development in the vicinity of Cockenzie and Port Seton. At a meeting between the Department of Health and representatives of the County Council on 25th June 1949, the Secretary of State, Mr. Arthur Woodburn, indicated that it was desirable that the matter should receive a full public airing. He suggested that the County Council should use one of the statutory procedures open to it under the Housing and Town Planning Acts in order to precipitate the holding of a public inquiry (201). Accordingly, on 11th July 1949, the Council resolved to make a Compulsory Purchase Order for land in the vicinity of Cockenzie and to apply to the Secretary of State for its confirmation (202). However, by this time the National Coal Board had embarked on a major review of its plans for long-term development in Scotland and Mears was complaining that he could not keep up with its constantly changing proposals (203). By the end of the year, the Board was advising that it no longer saw any urgent need for new housing to accommodate incoming miners in the western part of East Lothian. Expressing "extreme disappointment" at this "drastic" turn of events, the County Council resolved that, in the circumstances, it should proceed no further with its Compulsory Purchase Order (204). The episode provided a sobering demonstration of the difficulties

inherent in long-term planning for major strategic industries operating in a dynamic economic environment.

#### **7.10 Communications**

Mears regarded the construction of a Forth Road Bridge as an essential element in any plan for the industrial and social development of the Forth Basin. He considered that:

"... a satisfactory distribution of population and industry can best be achieved by a planning scheme based on a system of roads radiating from the northern and southern approaches to a bridge at Queensferry. The Kincardine Bridge, lying as it does near the western margin of the expanding coalfields, will be useless as a link between those of East Fife and the Lothians" (205).

When the issue was discussed by the Planning Advisory Committee on 11th April 1945, representatives from Fife expressed their dissatisfaction at the Government's lack of commitment to a new road bridge. On the suggestion of Major G.H.M. Broun Lindsay, who had succeeded Sir John Falconer as Chairman of the Committee, it was agreed to make representations to

the Minister of War Transport, Lord Leathers, and provide him with a copy of Mears' Interim Report (206). Pressure from Scotland continued, and by the time the Final Report was published, in 1949, the Government had given approval in principle to the construction of a road crossing at Queensferry and preliminary plans for a suspension bridge were already being prepared (207).

Mears' roads proposals placed particular emphasis on the improvement of crosscountry connections as a means of restoring vitality to the rural areas (208). Indeed, his concept of shared community facilities located at a number of different centres within any given locality was dependent for its success on an improved road network and comprehensive public transport system. Many of his major roads proposals were designed to improve east-west links. In the South he proposed the improvement and realignment of existing roads to create a new trunk road through the Borders and Lanarkshire, arguing that:

"In the recent past the emphasis laid on the north-south road system has tended to starve the Tweed Basin rather than to serve it, and road improvement in the area should therefore be carefully planned, to afford better facilities for traffic between east and west" (209).

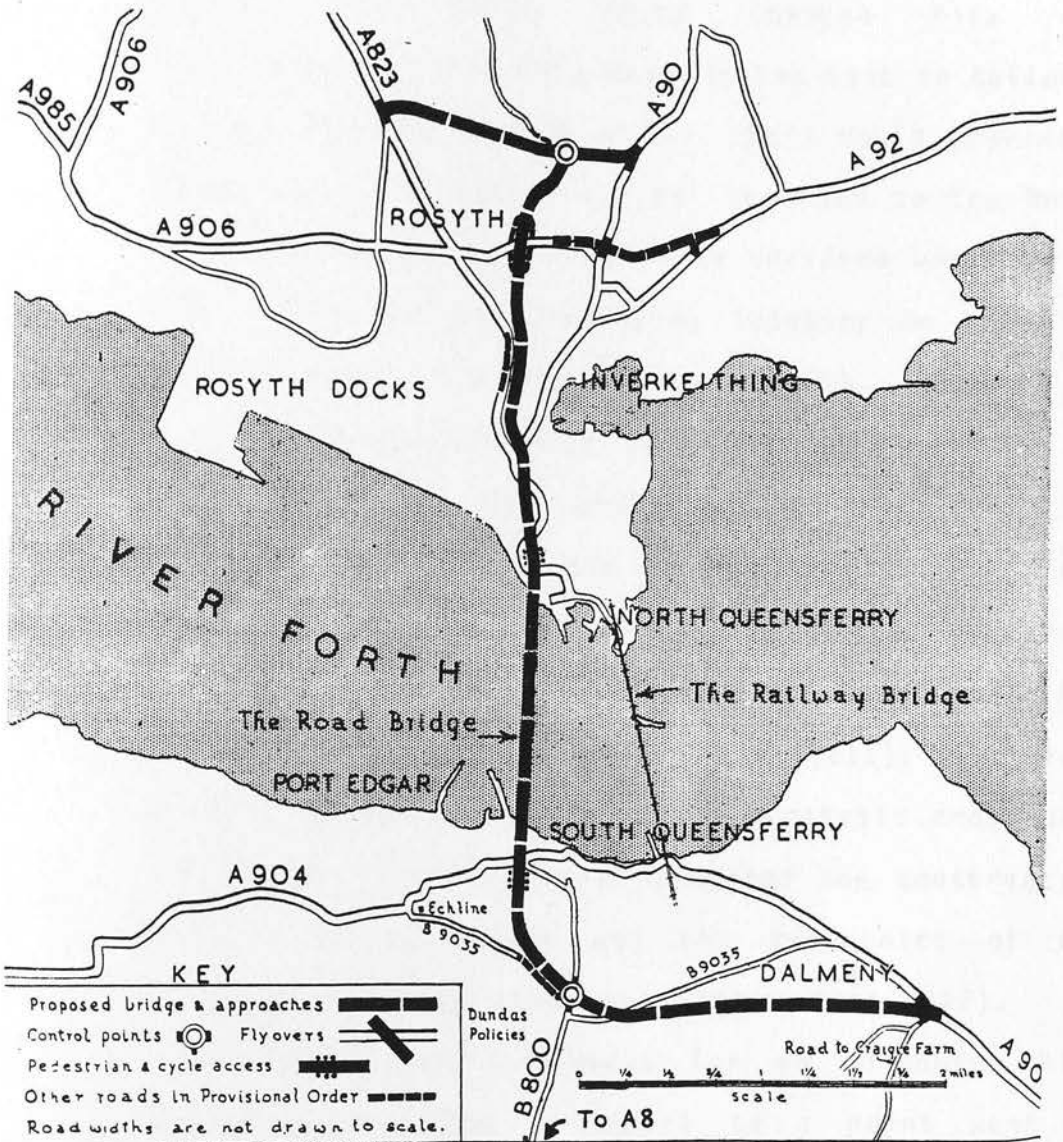


Fig. 7.12. Proposed Forth Road Bridge. Source: MEARS, F.C. (1949), "Regional Plan for Central and South-East Scotland", Central and South-East Scotland Regional Planning Advisory Committee, p.44.

To the North, Mears proposed the construction of another new trunk route through Fife and Stirlingshire, from Fife Ness in the East to Balloch, by Loch Lomond, in the west. This would provide a new direct link across Central Scotland to the North of the Forth and Clyde which he believed would be of great value to the developing industry on the Fife coalfield and as a tourist route (210). Within Fife itself, he proposed the realignment of the A90 to Perth in order to bypass the mining towns of Cowdenbeath and Kelty and the construction of a new "Mid-Fife Road" striking north-east from the road bridge to provide a direct link with the proposed New Town in the vicinity of Markinch (211). To ease traffic congestion at the major strategic crossroads of Central Scotland, Mears proposed the construction of a Stirling bypass and the rerouteing of the Edinburgh-Stirling road over Letham Moss (212). He also renewed his proposals for an Edinburgh Ring Road, running from Wallyford to a point west of Corstorphine, to improve east-west communications to the south of the city (213).

### **7.11 Expectations Unfulfilled**

The Central and South-East Scotland Plan was widely praised by contemporary Scottish commentators.

Robert Grieve's description of it as "an extraordinary combination of a philosophical treatise with a searching survey of a great area of land surface" (214) was typical of the general response. In contrast, some of the other products of the new planning were already attracting adverse criticism. Referring to the ambitious proposals of Glasgow's City Engineer, Robert Bruce, to solve the city's housing problem by contiguous development within expanded boundaries (215), and to Abercrombie's Plan for Edinburgh, Ian Finlay, one of the propagandists of the Scottish Renaissance, wrote in his history of Art in Scotland that:

"The gigantic proposals for Glasgow, which have been published, set aside the architect in favour of the engineer and expunge most of the remaining character from the city, which becomes a transport distribution centre rather than a place for living and working in. They turn their back on the native wisdom of Patrick Geddes. And the proposed plan for Edinburgh appears to fall within the category which in another place I have called "Roman Planning". This is impressive at the scale model stage; but its emphasis on rationalisation and ruthless efficiency as against natural growth finds no encouragement in the light of history".

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On the other hand, he argued:

"There appears to be very great promise in the planning proposals for the south-eastern area, carried out largely in the spirit of Geddes by Geddes' own son-in-law, Sir Frank Mears, President of the Royal Scottish Academy. In his scheme it would seem that nothing hard and fast is to be laid down, but districts are to be encouraged to develop each according to its own nature and by its own initiative, the planning authority serving rather as a co-ordinating body. A good doctor, like a good gardener, will always aim at getting results by stimulating natural processes, and not the least part of the menace of tighter and tighter controls, to which the world seems fated to be subjected, is that the control in a modern urban nation passes more and more to urban types ignorant of the conditions which foster free, healthy growth and the good life" (216).

Finlay's criticism reflects a general hostility to continuing urbanization, the abiding appeal in Scotland of Geddes' evolutionary approach to planning, and his own perspective as an art historian and cultural nationalist. His support for Mears was based on a shared belief in a planning characterized by sensitive design and a respect for tradition and

local diversity, rather than simply regulation, rationalization and technical expertise.

With the resumption of peacetime government in 1945, the Scottish administration lost much of the autonomy which it had enjoyed during the war years. As James Kellas records in his survey of modern Scotland:

"Clement Attlee, the Labour Prime Minister from 1945 to 1951, was less inclined to leave the Scottish Office alone to run Scotland, and the great programme of nationalisation and social legislation naturally increased the relative power of the central authorities and ministries which operated them ... The immediate post-war period thus saw an increase in "remote control" from London, and it seemed that the task of postwar reconstruction was also in the hands of London ministries and not the Scottish Office" (217).

In 1945, Tom Johnston abandoned politics in the apparent belief that he could do more for Scotland within the devolved administrative machinery which he had nurtured so assiduously during his term as Secretary of State. By 1948, he was performing three key roles simultaneously as Chairman of the Scottish Tourist Board, the Scottish Committee of the Forestry Commission and the North of Scotland Hydro-

Electric Board (218, 219, 220). Unfortunately, his successors at the Scottish Office had neither the vision nor the authority to pursue distinctively Scottish solutions to contemporary Scottish problems. In his history of the period, Henry Pelling records dismissively that, in the post-war Labour Government, Arthur Woodburn succeeded Joseph Westwood; "neither of them distinguished figures but there had to be a Scottish Secretary in the Cabinet" (221). Hugh Dalton's Distribution of Industry Act ushered in a centralized system of economic controls rather than the autonomous development authority which had been advocated by the Scottish Economic Committee (222). The Scottish "middle opinion" groups whose expectations had been raised during Johnston's tenure at the Scottish Office were quick to express their disenchantment. "The Glasgow Herald", newspaper of the West of Scotland business establishment, reflected the general mood in a series of leading articles in which Mears was accorded something of the status of a national champion. Welcoming his draft Final Report in July 1946, the paper commented that:

"It will quickly be noted that the main conclusions and recommendations offer, in effect a flat contradiction of all the theories of the government now in office. Sir Frank Mears is not merely opposed to centralisation, standardised

methods of planning, and the movement of yet greater numbers of people into the central areas of Scotland, he has attempted to show how development along these lines must inevitably aggravate ills which the Regional Committee are seeking to cure" (223).

In the autumn, the "Herald" returned to the theme, arguing that:

"Much of what passes for planning today, in Scotland as in England and Wales, is a relatively simple survey of things as they are. At the local level it has more to do with housing and public services than with reconstruction in the larger sense. At the regional level, at least in Scotland, more vigorous efforts have been made to discover the cause of economic upsets and to suggest a cure. In fact, Sir Frank Mears has proposed a very positive policy for the control of industrial development and a systematic redistribution of the population in the Forth Basin, Fife and the Border counties. And it is at this point that planning begins to lose reality, for in the absence of a national plan for social and economic reconstruction the consultant and the community are alike unable to secure the orderly progress of their schemes or even to progress at all.

Three or four years ago, at the time when Mr. Tom Johnston set up one committee of inquiry after another, it was generally assumed that they would produce automatically a coherent programme, or that the Secretary of State would act as co-ordinator. Mr. Johnston was, so to speak, the first fact-finder; the only Minister of modern times who understood that before anything could be done about rehabilitation, we should require to know very nearly everything about the state of the nation. The reports and recommendations have been duly delivered. The situation has been completely transformed, however, by the action of the present Government, whose insistence on nationalisation is in accord with their pre-election policy, but whose passion for centralised control has caused the transfer of authority in nearly all lines of activity to London.

There has been no hint that any of the Ministers who have visited Scotland lately are aware of the difficulty thus created" (224).

Thus, while there was a general welcome for Mears' Plan, there was also a growing recognition that the problems of implementation were considerable. Many Scottish local authorities had little real enthusiasm for regional planning and, in the absence of strong

Leadership from the Secretary of State, much of the initial impetus was lost as traditional jealousies quickly reasserted themselves. While a few authorities continued to press for the establishment of a more permanent regional planning framework, the more reluctant conscripts favoured the disbandment of the Regional Planning Advisory Committees as soon as they had completed their allotted tasks. Following the submission of Mears' draft Final Report in July 1946, the Central and South-East Scotland Regional Planning Advisory Committee wrote to its constituent authorities requesting their views on the question of establishing a long-term planning organization for the Region (225). The Scottish Office believed that it was essential that the Regional Plan should be kept up-to-date to provide continuing guidance for local authorities in the preparation of their own development plans (226). This view was supported by East Lothian County Council which proposed that the Planning Advisory Committee should be retained "in a suitably modified form", with at least the nucleus of a technical staff (227, 228). However, at a meeting on 11th December 1946, the Committee decided by a majority that, its responsibilities to the Secretary of State having been discharged, its activities should be brought to an end (229). The Regional Planning Office was closed down in March 1947, leaving Mears to complete arrangements for the

publication of his Report (230). Nearly two years later, at a press conference on the occasion of the formal submission of the Report to the Secretary of State, Mears stressed the need for greater co-operation between local authorities, arguing that:

"It cannot but happen that some form of grouping of authorities will have to be arranged. Whether it is to be on the basis of the Tweed Valley or the Western Forth basin it is not for me to say, or whether it will be necessary to set up a large body like the original regional committee. But I cannot see any effective reconstruction planning going on while the local authorities are all isolated.

It would be better if the local authorities could get together themselves. Otherwise it would seem as if central authority action will have to be taken" (231).

But it was not to be. With the precipitate disbanding of the Advisory Planning Committee, the entire burden of responsibility for implementing the plan was thrust upon central government and, in particular, the Regional Planning Section and Research Unit of the Department of Health for Scotland (232). Under the Department's Chief

Architect and Planning Officer, Mr. R. Gardner-Medwin, an attempt was made to draw together the essential elements of the three major regional plans (Clyde Valley, Central and South-East Scotland and East Central Scotland) as the first stage in the development of a national plan for Scotland (233, 234). However, the two eastern plans were progressively overshadowed as the Scottish administration became increasingly preoccupied by the sheer scale of the housing problem in the Clyde Valley (235, 236). This western focus was no doubt accentuated by the fact that former members of the Clyde Valley team were actively recruited by the Department of Health and appointed to senior positions in its Planning Section (237).

It has been suggested that the unorthodox presentation of Mears' plan may have militated against its implementation, for, although it was interestingly written and well illustrated, there was no single map in which the various proposals were brought together to present a complete picture of the regional scheme (238). Mears regarded such an approach as inappropriate in an area which contained such diverse elements as the Forth Basin, the Tweed Valley and the Slammanan Plateau, but to politicians and administrators his plan may have seemed inconveniently diffuse and lacking in cohesion. It



was not simply a matter of presentation, however. In the prevailing political climate, many of Mears' proposals had simply strayed too far from contemporary British planning orthodoxy to be pursued with any enthusiasm by the Department of Health. In any case, by the early 'fifties, the basis of the plan had been seriously undermined by the failure of the coal industry to develop on the scale and manner which had earlier been anticipated (239, 240).

The Central and South-East Scotland Plan was not entirely without influence, however. Through his consultancy work, Mears was able to ensure that many of its objectives were reflected in the County Development Plans for East Lothian, Midlothian, Peeblesshire and Fife. His emphasis on the creation of constellations rather than agglomerations of settlements was invoked by the Department of Health for Scotland when, in 1951, Falkirk sought unsuccessfully to extend her boundaries to absorb the neighbouring towns of Larbert and Stenhousemuir (241), and both the constellation concept and the proposal for the development of a regional service centre at St. Boswells were taken up in the Central Borders Plan of 1968 and, to some extent, eventually realized (242).

## 7.12 Comprehensive Statutory Planning

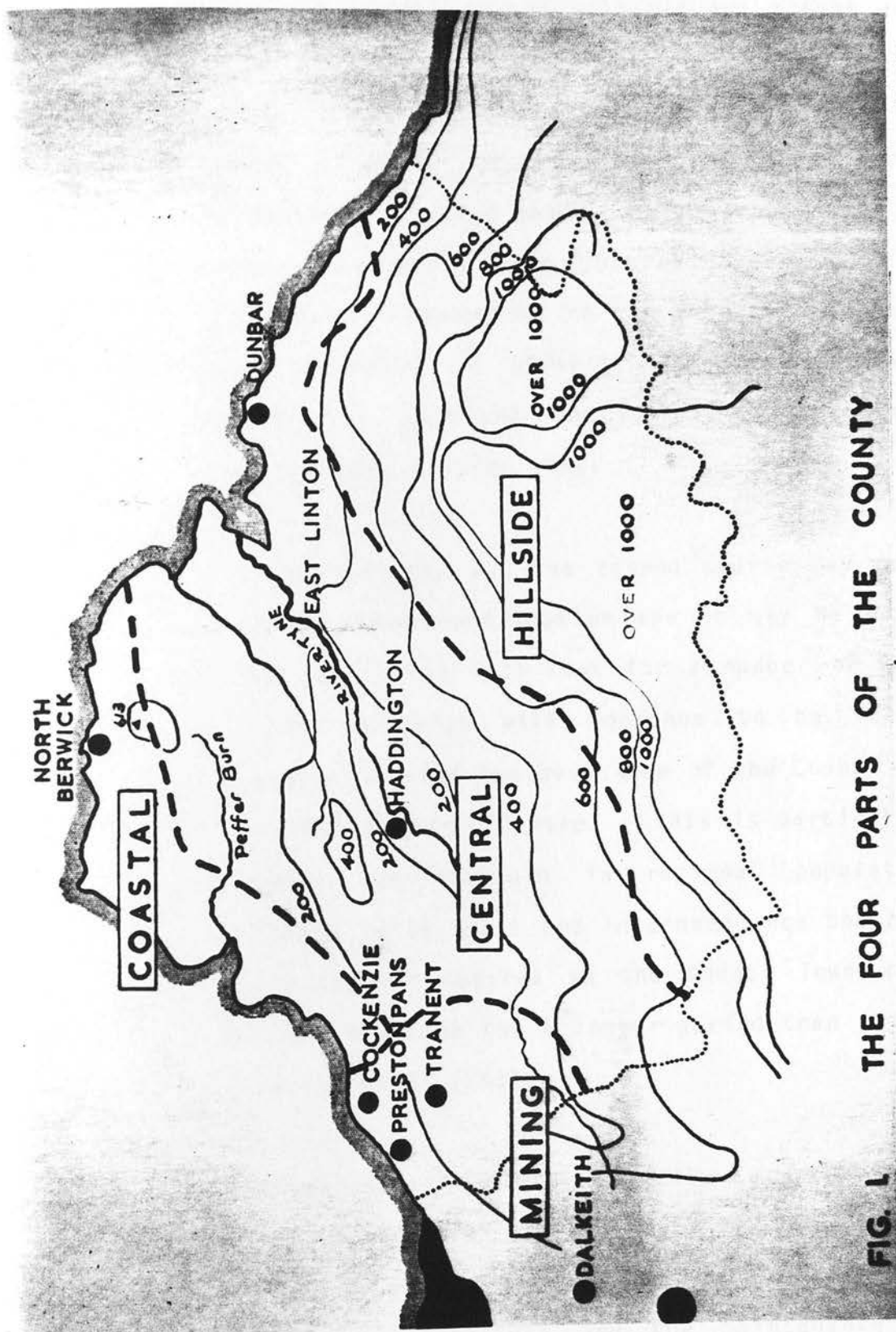
By the mid nineteen-forties, many of Scotland's counties and large burghs were beginning to consider the appointment of permanent professional staff to cope with their ever-growing planning workload. In February 1944, Mears advised the Town Planning Committee of Midlothian County Council that, in view of his appointment as consultant to the Central and South-East Scotland Regional Planning Advisory Committee and the anticipated scale of post-war development in the County, they should establish a permanent Town Planning Department to take over his County planning work. His suggestion that the County Planning Officer should be a qualified architect and his Assistant a qualified surveyor reflects the importance he continued to attach to design in addition to technical skills (243). Pending a final decision by the County Council, Mears agreed to continue as planning consultant on a temporary basis and, in order to expedite the preparation of the County Planning Scheme, arranged for an assistant to be employed full-time on planning work in Midlothian (244, 245). The County Council finally resolved to set up a County Planning Department "with similar status and relationships as other technical departments" in September 1945. It

was agreed that Mears should continue as planning consultant until the new department was established, "to ensure continuity of advice and assistance in the preparation of the County Planning Scheme" (246).

The comprehensive statutory planning system ushered in by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1947 imposed a substantial additional workload on planning authorities North of the Border. In the autumn of 1948, Mears advised East Lothian County Council that, in view of his many commitments and the limited size of his staff, he would be unable to devote sufficient time to perform the many new planning functions which now devolved upon the Council (247). In another attempt to encourage co-operation between local authorities, he proposed that East Lothian County Council should approach its Midlothian counterpart with a view to setting up a joint planning department. An earlier suggestion that Peeblesshire and Midlothian should share a single planning establishment was already under active investigation (248) and, in January 1949, representatives of East Lothian and Midlothian County Councils met to consider the possibility of setting up a joint planning department for all three counties (249). However, in the end, East Lothian chose to appoint its own planning staff, leaving Midlothian and Peeblesshire to proceed with the joint scheme on

their own (250). Mears, who was by this time 69, declined East Lothian's invitation to take charge of its new planning department as part-time Town Planning Officer, but agreed to continue as consultant, in a reduced capacity, until the department was fully consolidated. Frank P. Tindall was appointed as the first County Planning Officer later in the year.

In December 1950, Mears and Tindall sought the approval of the Town Planning Committee for a report entitled "An Analysis of County Planning Problems" (251). The report provided a brief summary of existing conditions and, on the basis of a number of assumptions about future trends, set out what were considered to be the two "policy alternatives" facing the Council. Although there would now be no large influx of miners to the western part of the County, this area was still subject to development pressure as a result of the continued expansion of Edinburgh. The Council could either accept that the western mining and coastal areas would "more and more become absorbed into the Edinburgh conurbation" or it could attempt to spread development more evenly in order to maintain the integrity of the County as "a balanced social and occupational unit as well as an administrative one". Not surprisingly, Mears and Tindall recommended the second of the two



**FIG. 1 THE FOUR PARTS OF THE COUNTY**

Fig. 7.14. East Lothian: The Four Parts of the County. Source: MEARS, F.C. & TINDALL, F.P. (1950), "An Analysis of County Planning Problems", East Lothian County Council.

alternatives, under which population would be "widely dispersed to the inland villages and burghs and any large increase should take place centrally in the county at Haddington" (252). However, while the County Council fully endorsed the report's recommendations as a basis for the preparation of the County Development Plan, central government was more sceptical. Commenting on the Report in a letter to Frank Tindall, an official of the Department of Health for Scotland cautioned against excessive expectations, writing that:

"In practice, ... the second course may not work out without modification and it may be necessary to accept the fact that for a number of years to come Edinburgh will continue to be the local centre serving the West side of the County as well as the Regional Centre. This is particularly so where the increase in regional population is likely to be small and in consequence the counter-attractions desired in the County Town will not reach fruition for a longer period than appears to be the hope" (253).

Nevertheless, the County Council was determined on a plan which would "spread the county's population widely in places large and small, ensuring a prosperous agriculture and the maintenance of its

great legacy of landscape beauty", and, instead of accepting continuing domination by Edinburgh, sought "to build up the county's towns and foremost amongst these ... the County Town of Haddington" (254).

Mears did not live to see the completion of the East Lothian County Development Plan which was finally approved by the Secretary of State in May 1955, over two years after his death. However, the plan bears the imprint of his influence in over thirteen years as County Planning Consultant. The objectives which he had pursued throughout his County planning work were clearly summarized in the four main principles on which the plan was founded. These were:

- (i) The prevention of suburbanization by enlarging and maintaining the Edinburgh Greenbelt, providing industrial sites within the county and expanding existing urban centres;
- (ii) Checking rural depopulation and "the maintenance of a large and contented agricultural population by building up the social and recreational facilities of the small towns and developing especially the County Town to unify the different parts of the County";

- (iii) Making improved provision for recreation by defining recognised camp sites and footways, protecting and improving coastal amenity, enhancing "the beauties of the countryside" and protecting "interesting old buildings";
- (iv) The proper development of all the communities in the county and the provision of housing for an increased population together with the full range of social, commercial and recreational facilities (255).

The period from 1938 to 1951 had been one of intense planning activity in Scotland, and Mears had been at the forefront, guiding the preparation of planning schemes throughout the length and breadth of the country. It was a time of great opportunity but not without its disappointments. The fate of the Central and South-East Scotland Plan had demonstrated the vulnerability of regional planning to the vicissitudes of politics and the forces of economic change, pointing to the need for new administrative structures, more sophisticated methods of forecasting and adequate mechanisms for monitoring, review and implementation. However, the Plan's vision of a rejuvenated Scottish countryside had clearly struck a chord with Scottish "middle opinion". As its most eminent practitioner, Mears was in a position to exert an important influence on the ethos of post-war Scottish planning.

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## Chapter Eight

### The Post-War Years.

## 8.1 Labour's Programme

The immediate post-war years saw the culmination of Mears' career. While the War had brought a halt to much of his detailed civic design work in historic Scottish burghs, the preoccupation with reconstruction had presented great new opportunities in regional planning. Planning now seemed to offer a rational and civilized solution to many of the problems which had beset the United Kingdom between the wars. Its long-neglected advocates assumed a central rather than peripheral importance and Mears was accorded the ultimate accolades of a receptive establishment. In 1944 he was elected President of the Royal Scottish Academy, in 1945 he received an honorary doctorate from Edinburgh University and in 1946 he was knighted in the New Year Honours.

The Attlee Government promised a new era of economic and social management in which planning was to play a vital part. However, both its nationalization programme and its regional policy resulted in a centralization of power in London which aroused considerable displeasure in Scotland (1, 2). The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act of 1947 established a comprehensive statutory planning system North of the Border and the Scottish Office promoted planning as "an economic and social "combined

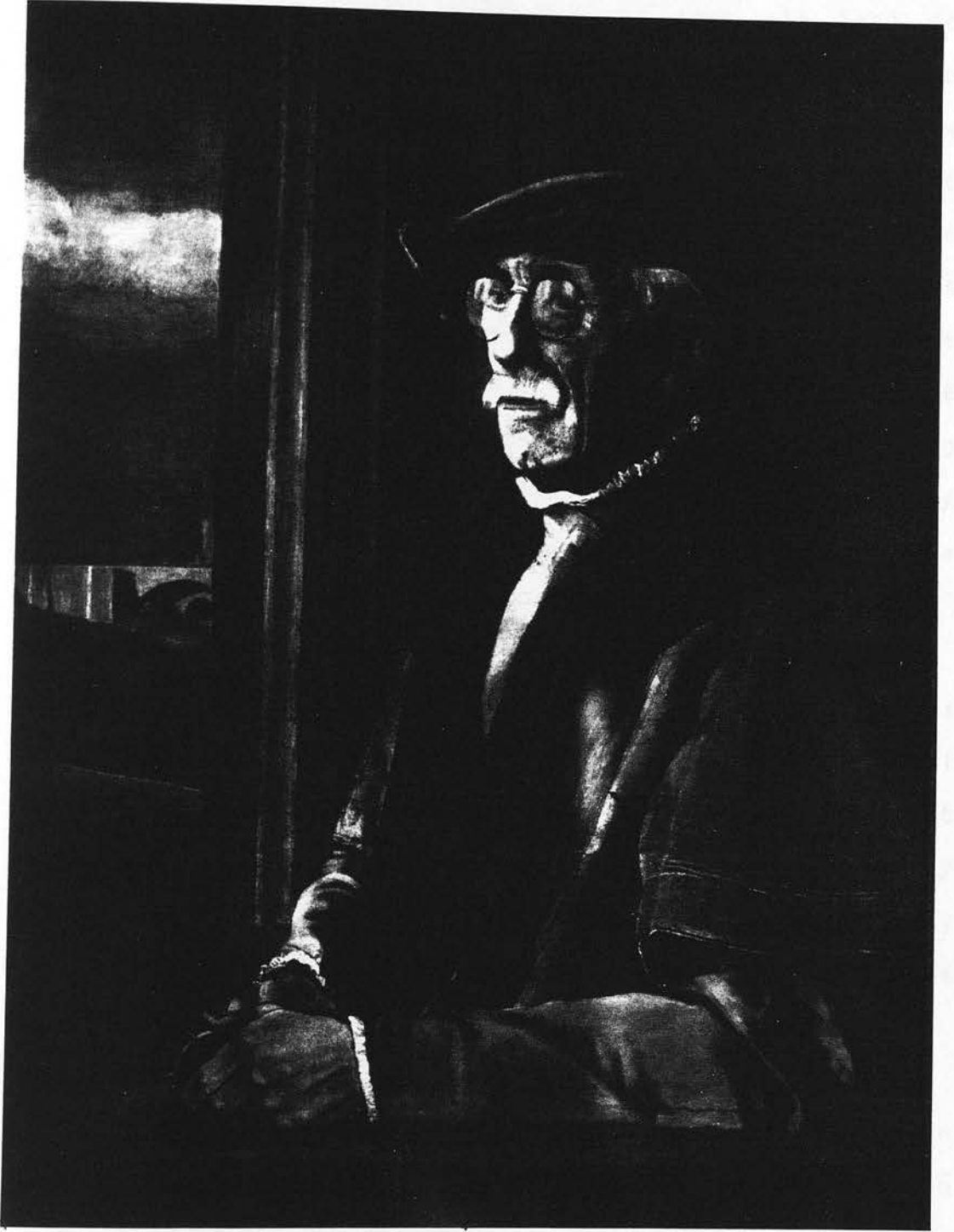


Fig. 8.1. Frank C. Mears, 12th President of the Royal Scottish Academy. Portrait by James Cowie. Photograph courtesy of the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh.

operation" which would "ensure that all land in Scotland is used to the best advantage and for the purposes to which it is most suited" (3). New industrial estates were established in Development Areas, local authorities embarked on schemes for the comprehensive redevelopment of existing settlements and central government pressed ahead with the planning of New Towns (4). In addition, the Scottish Office went some way towards committing itself to the sort of programme for rural recovery which Mears had advocated for so long. In a statement published in 1947 it recognized that:

"To arrest the drift from the land to the towns and to stabilise and build up the agricultural population, the new agricultural policy must remedy the conditions of rural life and work by the reclamation of land, the improvement of soil, drainage schemes, the provision of better roads and the modernising of farms.

Rural housing must be intelligently planned and grouped in community units conveniently placed in relation to social and recreational activities. And new and existing light industries must be developed to offer alternative employment to agricultural workers' families who, seeking work away from the land, would otherwise drift to the industrial towns" (5).

£8,000,000 was to be spent on major afforestation schemes covering some 150,000 acres of rural Scotland by 1951. Many of the new forestry workers were to be housed in specially planned villages within the forest areas. In the Highlands, large water-power schemes offered the prospect of new industrial development and improved social conditions (6). However, despite the hopes of many of Labour's supporters in Scotland, there was to be no radical assault on existing patterns of land ownership.

## **8.2 Traffic Congestion in Elgin**

In the prevailing climate, Mears' professional services remained much in demand and he maintained a busy planning consultancy. In 1938, at the suggestion of Mr. George D. Macniven, Deputy Chief Architect at the Department of Health for Scotland, he had been engaged by the Town Council of Elgin to advise on a scheme for the redevelopment of a historic part of the town. However, this project had been suspended following the outbreak of hostilities (7, 8, 9). During the course of the War, Elgin's civic leaders, like those of many other small burghs, became increasingly unhappy about their lack of involvement in the preparations being made for reconstruction. Under the Local Government

(Scotland) Act of 1929, planning powers had been vested in the counties and large burghs. The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act of 1932 did make provision for the transfer of planning powers to small burghs in special circumstances but this had only been invoked successfully by Thurso and St. Andrews (10, 11). In the autumn of 1943, representatives of over 30 small burghs attended a special conference in Inverness to consider what steps they could take to have post-war planning in their own areas placed under their control. Addressing the conference, the Provost of Elgin, Mr. Edward S. Harrison, argued that, since small burghs were in the best position to assess local conditions and public sentiment, they, and not County Councils, should enjoy compulsory planning powers in their own areas (12). When it became clear that the Government did not intend to respond to such pressure, the Town Council of Elgin decided to take its own initiative. In the summer of 1944 it invited Mears to assist the Burgh Surveyor, Mr. G.N. Blane, in the preparation of a Draft Development Plan for the Burgh (13). As an advocate of "local patriotism" and an admirer of the Scottish burgh tradition, Mears had always stressed the importance of involving the small burghs as closely as possible in county and regional planning schemes. He accepted Elgin's invitation, and, in a Memorandum on

Town Planning Policy submitted to the Town Council in October 1944, he stressed his belief in the importance of proceeding by negotiation, stating that:

"It should be emphasised that these proposals are merely preliminary, in order to provide a basis for discussion; the agreed plan which may form the basis for the development of a historic yet progressive city [such] as Elgin can only be built up in this way.

Such a plan is not a fixed thing, to be approved and then put away for future reference. If rightly conceived it will be based on sound principles, yet will remain adaptable to meet the needs of those who will follow us" (14).

The Town Council considered that a major house building programme was required to eliminate overcrowding in the town centre. Mears proposed that the bulk of new housing development should take place on rising ground to the North of the River Lossie. He suggested that some 1,100 to 1,200 local authority houses could be accommodated on the Seafield Estate to the north-east of the town and that new private housing should be located on the Morriston Estate to the west of the Lossiemouth Road (15).

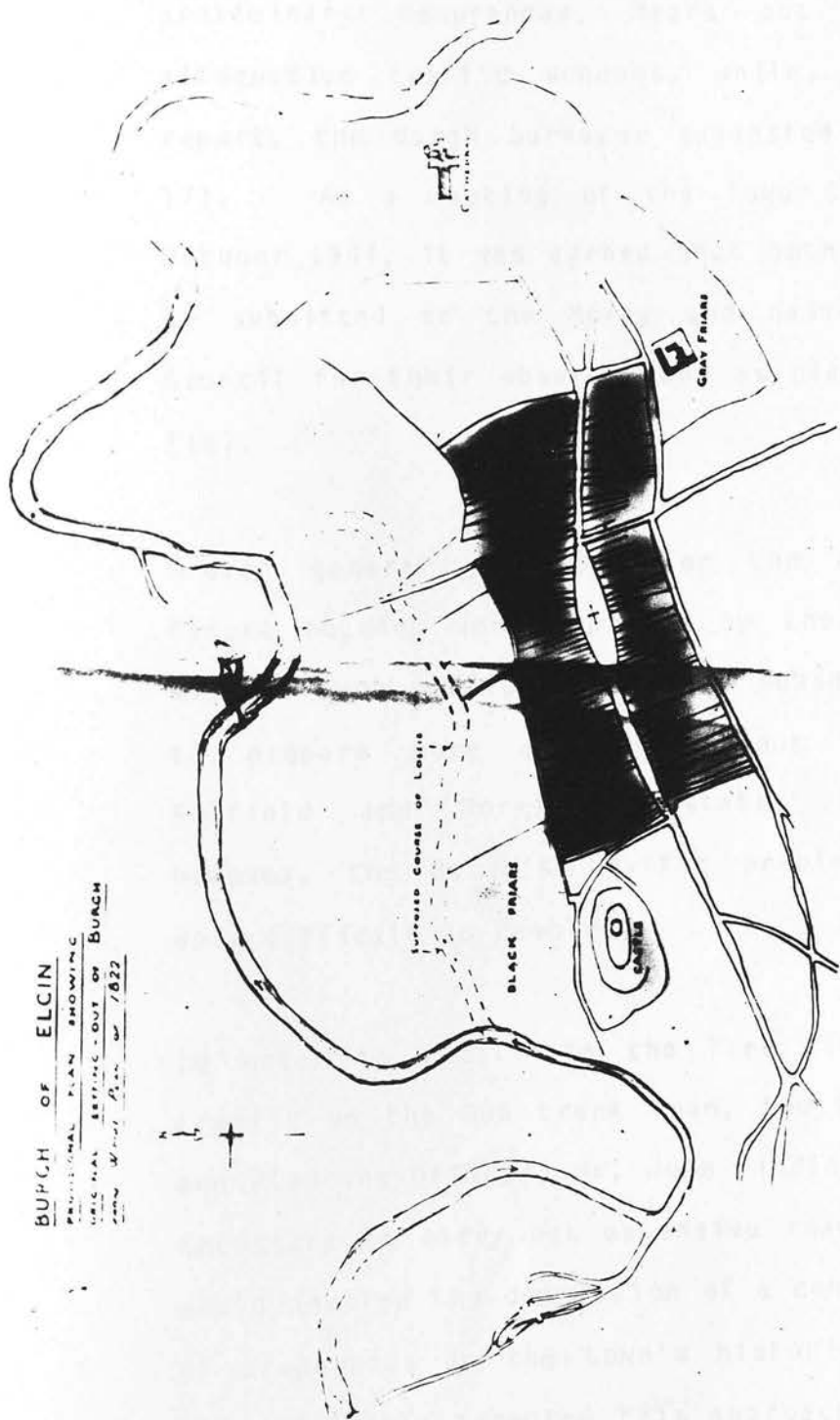


Fig. 8.2. Elgin: Sketch Plan of the Medieval Burgh. F.C. Mears. Photograph courtesy of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.

It was anticipated that, within the existing town, substantial road improvements would be needed to cope with rising post-war traffic levels. In his preliminary memorandum, Mears put forward three alternative traffic schemes, while, in a separate report, the Burgh Surveyor suggested a fourth (16, 17). At a meeting of the Town Council on 30th October 1944, it was agreed that both reports should be submitted to the Moray and Nairn Joint County Council for their observations as planning authority (18).

Mears' general proposals for the distribution of future housing were approved by the County Council without much difficulty, and he subsequently went on to prepare more detailed layout plans for the Seafield and Morriston estates (19, 20, 21). However, the Burgh's traffic problems proved much more difficult to resolve.

In order to facilitate the free flow of east-west traffic on the A96 trunk road, the County Architect and Planning Officer, Mr. John Findlay, considered it necessary to carry out extensive road widening which would involve the demolition of a considerable number of properties in the town's historic core. Mears had originally accepted this approach (22), but at a meeting of the County Council's Planning Committee

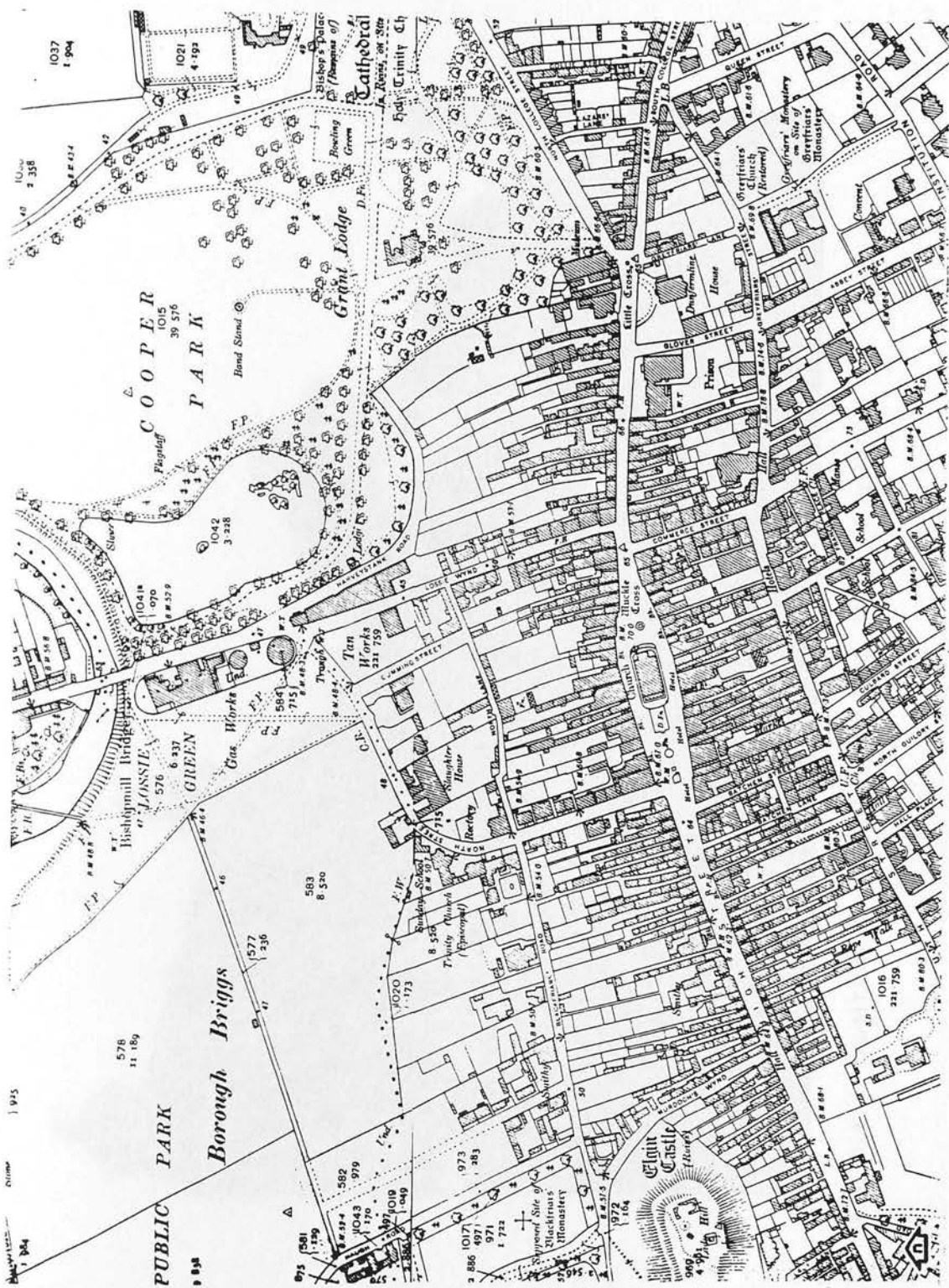


Fig. 8.3. The Burgh of Elgin.

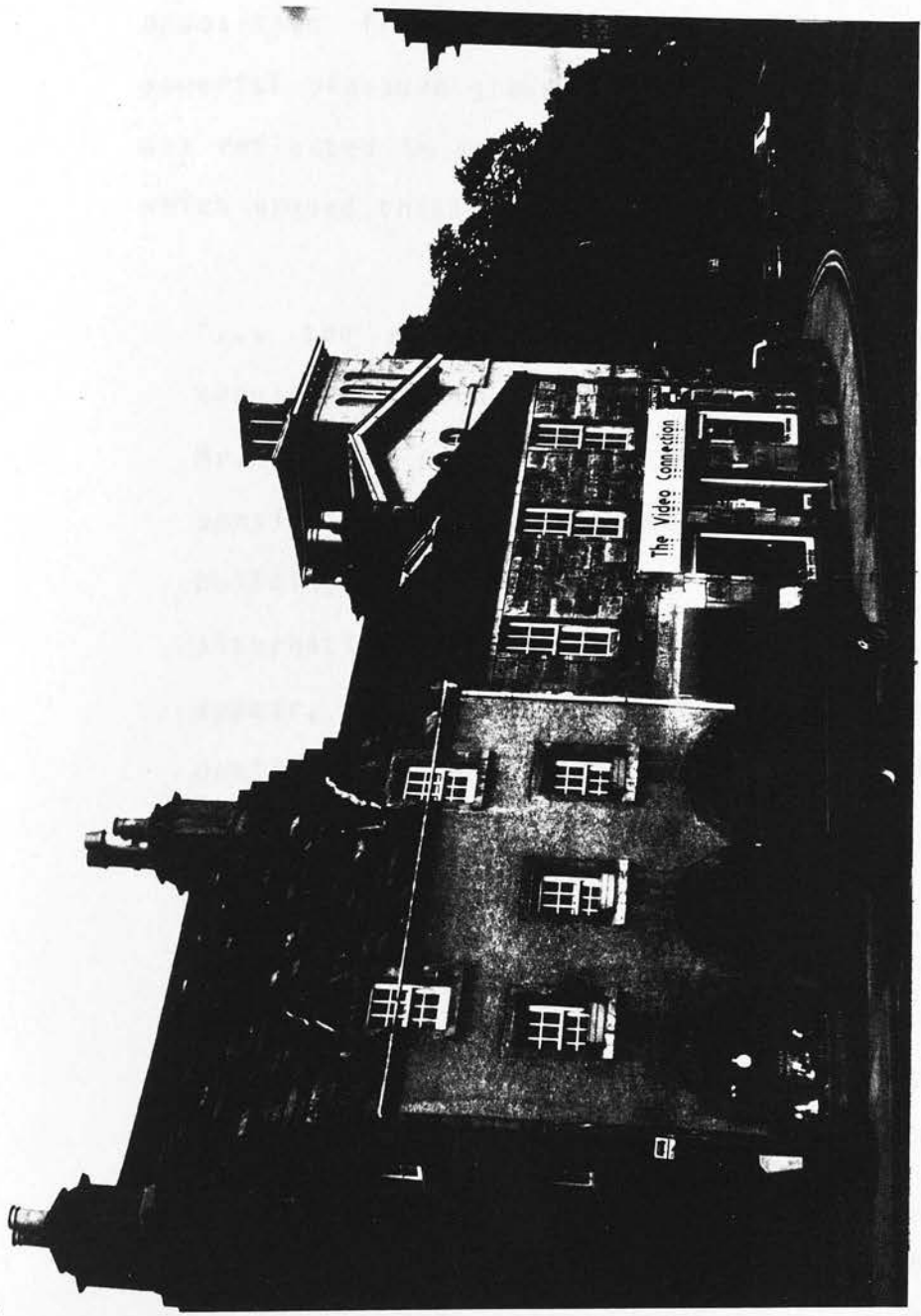


Fig. 8.4. Traditional buildings on the High Street, Elgin.

on 4th December 1944, he suggested that a less damaging solution would be to construct a new "loop road" skirting the northern margin of the town centre (23). This proposal attracted considerable opposition from local traders who constituted a powerful pressure group in the town. Their attitude was reflected in an editorial in "The Elgin Courant", which argued that:

"... the eventual widening of High Street and keeping it as the main East-West traffic route, as Mr. Findlay proposes, would appear to be the most sensible solution. To contemplate any scheme of building a new by-pass road or roads, as has been alternatively proposed, commendable as that may appear, would more than likely prove a waste of public money. Statistics show that the bulk of the traffic passing through Elgin wish to varying reasons, to make a halt there, and that being so, drivers of motor vehicles will continue to choose the shortest route, which is that leading direct through the High Street. And that, after all, is exactly what Elgin's traders, on whom the life of the town so greatly depends, would wish ... Everything that is possible must be done to attract traffic rather than divert it from Elgin" (24).

Nevertheless, the County Council agreed that Mears' proposal merited further consideration and, following discussions in the early part of 1945, the County Architect conceded that the northern loop road offered the most satisfactory solution (25). Mears submitted more detailed proposals for the route of the new road in a report to the Town Council in June 1945 (26) and, early in July, he travelled to Elgin along with T.A. Jeffryes, Deputy Chief Planning Officer at the Department of Health for Scotland (and Mears' deputy on the Central and South-East Scotland planning team), to discuss the scheme with the Burgh Surveyor and County Architect (27). This meeting reached general agreement on the line of the road but, later in the year, as a concession to the concerns of the Elgin traders, Mears suggested an alternative route running closer to the town centre. In a report on the scheme in February 1946, he wrote that:

"On mature consideration of the whole problem, I feel that to attempt to go north far enough to include the whole potential commercial zone is likely to fail in view of the big northwards pull which the large developments on the north side of the river would exert. I think, therefore, it is better to bring the line of the Loop sufficiently far south (a) to minimise deviation from the

normal line of flow and (b) to attract cars to come in by the Loop, to park beside it and their owners to walk from the car park a matter of a mere 100 yards or so to the High Street shops" (28).

The new route was strongly opposed by the County Architect who wrote in a letter dated 26th February that:

"Your suggestion that the line of the Loop now proposed will allow for reasonable commercial expansion north of the Loop seems to me all wrong, as the Loop in addition to being a reliever of High Street is to be a major traffic route and will, when development takes place north of the Loop, cut the commercial centre in two. This arrangement means that the Bus and other traffic will in future be passing through a built up area and [will] increase the danger to both pedestrians and drivers if people have to do shopping and transact business on both sides of the main road.

There is no doubt in my mind that the Commercial and Business part of Elgin should be confined within the perimeter of the main traffic routes ..." (29).



Elgin Town Council favoured Mears' route but at a meeting of the County Planning Committee on 7th March 1946, the Chairman, Mr. F.O. Stuart, stated that he was more inclined to accept Mr. Findlay's arguments. However, as "The Elgin Courant" reported, he considered that:

"the Town Council of Elgin ought to accept the responsibility of where they were going to put the new road through their town. If they chose to make a mess of it that was their look out" (30).

However, the Committee drew back from relinquishing its responsibilities in the matter and agreed that, prior to reaching any final decision, both Mears' proposals and those of the County Architect should be submitted to the Ministry of Transport for its observations (31). In a letter dated 5th October 1946, one of the Scottish Divisional Road Engineers, Mr. J.A. Burnett, informed the County Council that the Ministry preferred Mears' route (32) and so the southern line was subsequently adopted (33).

Mears' problematic status as planning consultant to an authority with no statutory responsibility for planning inevitably resulted in strained relations with the Joint County Council from time to time. In November 1944, the County Architect recommended that

the main road North to Lossiemouth should be improved by the construction of a new bridge over the Lossie to the west of the existing bridge at Bishopmill (34). The proposal was accepted by the County Council and, in April 1945, an official of the Ministry of War Transport advised the County Clerk that:

"the line which your Council have in mind at Bishopmill Bridge is a suitable one and, informally, I have ascertained from the Deputy Chief Planning Officer of the Department of Health for Scotland (Mr. Jeffryes) that he is unlikely to disagree with this view from the planning aspect" (35).

The County Council was invited to make a formal application for the approval of the line after this had been precisely defined.

Later in the year, the County Council engaged a firm of Edinburgh engineering consultants to report on the condition of the existing Bishopmill Bridge. In the course of discussions, Mears advised these consultants that he considered that any new bridge at Bishopmill should be built on a much higher level than the existing one and that the old bridge would still be required to provide access to the mills and

to spend some £7,000 on the existing structure which would in effect be money thrown away when the new bridge is provided" (37).

However, in March 1946, the County Planning Committee was advised that the County Architect had reached agreement with Mears on the line of the new Lossienouth Road and it was therefore agreed "that the Ministry of Transport should be asked to approve the construction of a new bridge on the line of the new road and that only such temporary repairs should be carried out on the existing bridge as would suffice until the new bridge was constructed" (38).

The inability of existing urban infrastructure to cope with ever increasing levels of motorized transport was a problem faced by many Scottish burghs during the 'thirties and 'forties and Mears was frequently called to give advice on traffic problems. His regard for traditional burgh architecture and townscape led him to seek solutions which caused minimal damage to the existing urban fabric and in a town like Elgin, which retained many fine vernacular buildings within its historic core, this was a particularly important consideration. In many of his plans for towns and villages in the Lothians, Aberdeenshire and elsewhere he sought to solve the problem by diverting through traffic from the existing centre by means of a "loop road" or bypass.

It is somewhat ironic that in Elgin this approach was seen to threaten the commercial interests of that very merchant class which had forged the Scottish burgh culture he so admired. In considering road matters, he faced the additional difficulty of impinging on an area which had been traditionally, and remained primarily, the province of surveyors and civil engineers. The claims of planning, and the new insistence that roads should be planned with regard to social and cultural considerations, could easily be resented by professionals accustomed to conceiving their role in purely technical terms. On top of this, Mears was providing advice to the Burgh of Elgin which not infrequently ran counter to the established policies of the statutory planning authority, Moray and Mairn Joint County Council. The fact that, as a senior Scottish practitioner, he enjoyed considerable influence at the Department of Health served to heighten the County Council's annoyance. In such a situation, planning could be neither simply philosophical and creative nor dispassionately technical. Although Mears adhered strictly to the principle that planning was an "apolitical activity" (39), he was in fact working in an extremely political professional environment, in which the complex web of relationships between authorities, councillors, officials, rival disciplines and private interest groups was all-important.

### 8.3 "Greenock - Portal of the Clyde"

Mears was appointed planning consultant to the Corporation of Greenock in 1940. It was the only consultancy in which he directly confronted the problems of the industrial West of Scotland which for him represented a society and culture in decay and disarray. His plan for the redevelopment of the Greenock area was completed in 1947 and published early in the following year with considerable attendant publicity. The work of men like the pioneering documentary film-maker, John Grierson, had done much to stimulate an interest in film-making in Scotland (40), and Mears himself was fascinated by the power of the cinema (41). During the War, the Scottish Office had been quick to appreciate the usefulness of film as a means of informing and influencing the population and had sponsored a number of dramatized documentaries dealing with various aspects of social and economic reconstruction (42). Inspired by these precedents, Greenock Corporation commissioned Hamilton Tait Ltd. to produce a special promotional film entitled "Greenock Plans Ahead" to complement the exhibition of Mears' proposals in the Town Hall (43). The Plan itself, inspiringly titled "Greenock - Portal of the Clyde", outlined a programme for the long-term development of the part

of Renfrewshire lying to the North of a line between Kilmacolm and Wemyss Bay. Besides Greenock, it encompassed the burghs of Port Glasgow and Gourock as well as the villages of Inverkip and Wemyss Bay (44).

During the Depression, the slump in shipbuilding had resulted in high levels of unemployment in Greenock and Port Glasgow. As in the mining areas, reliance on a single heavy industry had resulted in a particular vulnerability to economic recession. Mears argued that future security was dependent on the diversification of the area's industrial base with particular emphasis on the creation of new employment opportunities for women. He was insistent that:

"... the future well-being of the people cannot be assured by the simple policy of attracting miscellaneous light industries as an emergency measure, but demands the building up of a balanced employment structure in relation to the town's position as the deep-water portal of the Clyde" (45).

On the basis of an analysis which traced Greenock's economic history from its origins in the 18th Century, Mears concluded that the town should seek to build on its long-standing local industrial tradition

based on tobacco, sugar, distilling and products ancillary to marine engineering, and that particular priority should be given to the promotion of industries geared to export (46).

Greenock had grown up on a restricted site, hemmed in by steeply rising ground to the South. As a result of a large influx of population during the nineteenth century, housing conditions in the central area had become seriously overcrowded and there was very little open space. During the War, this central area had sustained severe damage as a result of enemy bombing and a rehousing programme was therefore urgently required. It was proposed to redevelop the lower part of the town at lower densities, with much of the area reserved for commercial and industrial purposes. On the basis of an assessment of industrial prospects and in view of the limited availability of sites for housing and industry, Mears proposed a planned reduction in the population of the Burgh from 79,000 to between 65,000 and 70,000. He believed that the bulk of the displaced population could be relocated in other industrial districts and, with characteristic romanticism, suggested that many inhabitants of Highland descent might "well desire to help in the recolonisation of the glens and isles which will be made possible by hydro-electric, forestry and other organised schemes" (47).

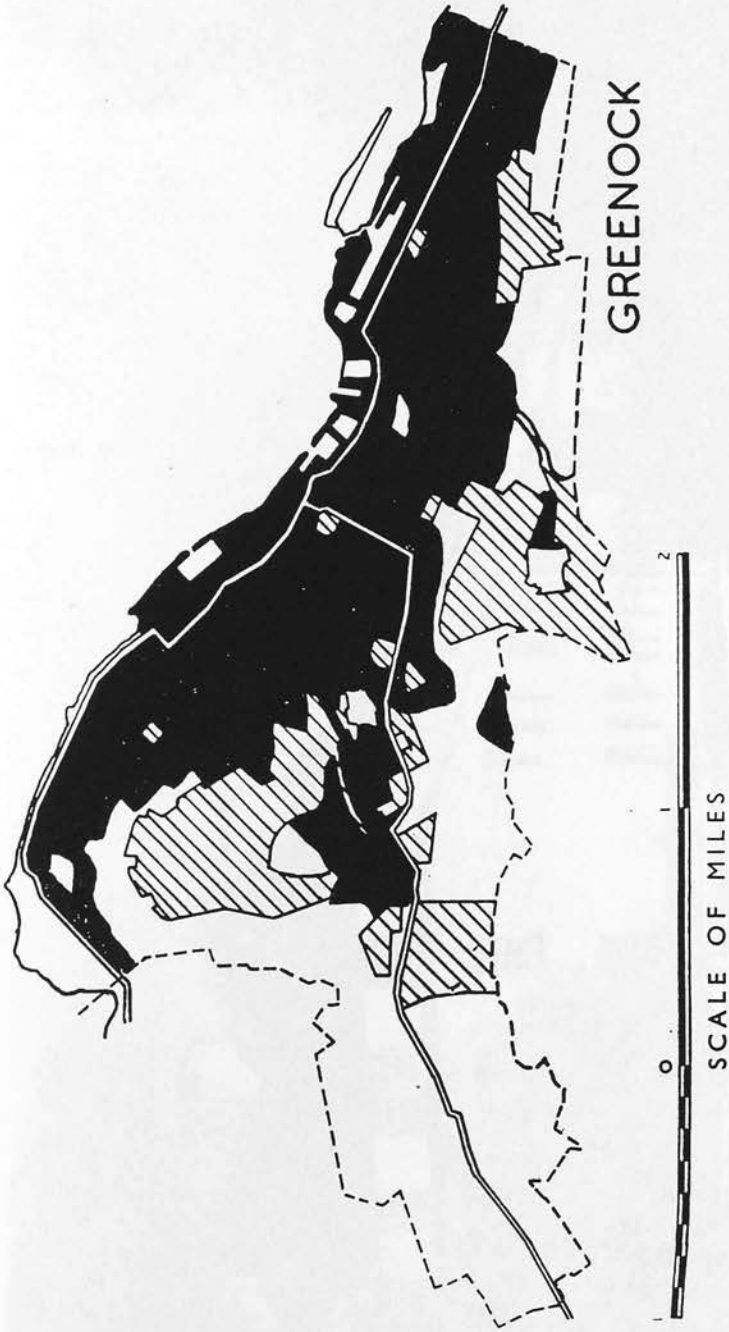


Fig. 8.6. Open Space Deficiency in the Inner Urban Area of Greenock. Source: ABERCROMBIE, P. & MATTHEW, R.H. (1949), "The Clyde Valley Regional Plan", HMSO, p.113.

Fig. 8.7. Map of the Inner Urban Area of Greenock. Prepared by the  
 Sir Frank Newell and Partners, Edinburgh.

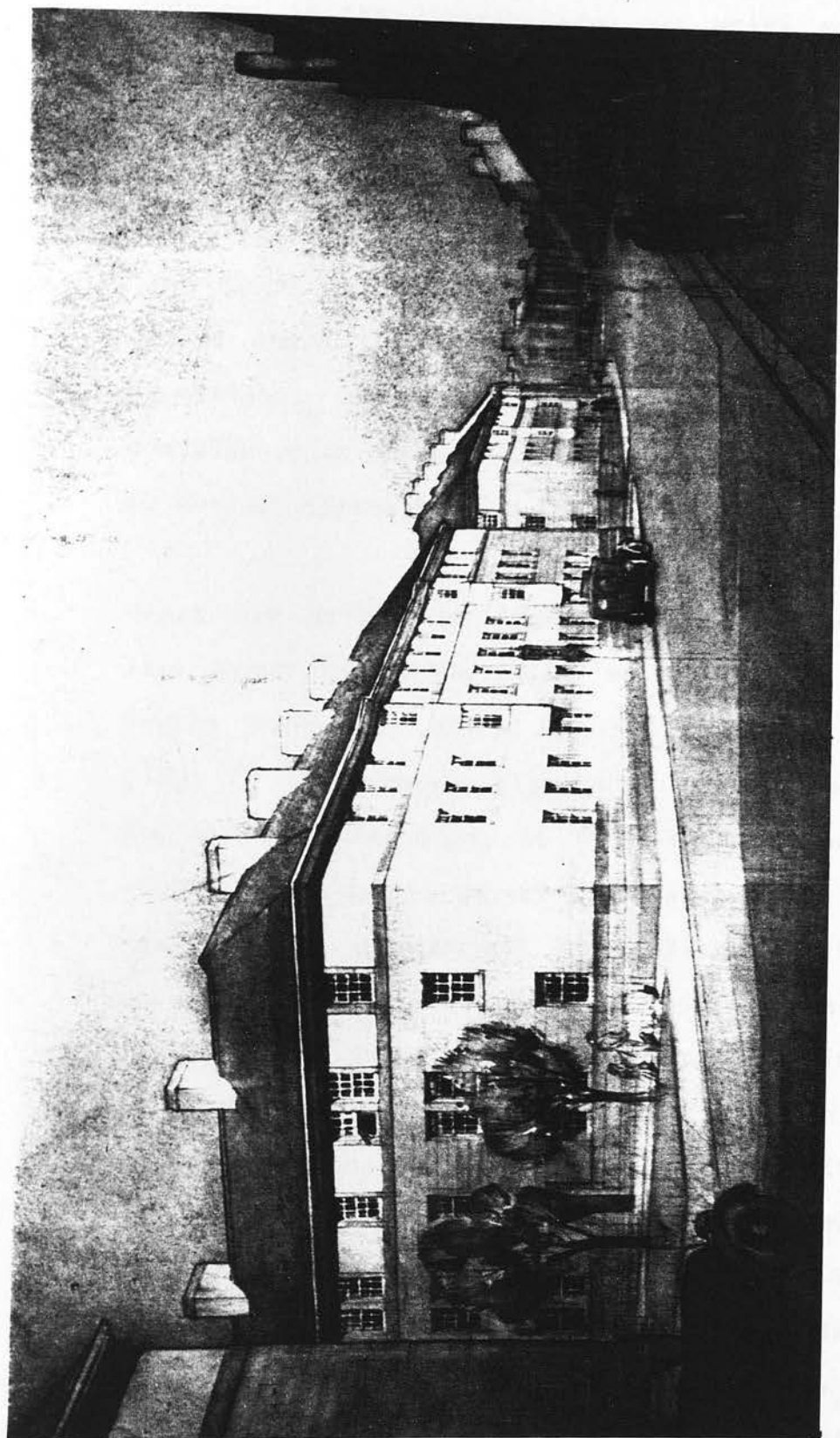


Fig. 8.7. Mears' design for new tenement housing in Greenock. Photograph courtesy of Sir Frank Mears and Partners, Edinburgh.

It was estimated that some 10,700 new houses were required in the Greenock area, of which only 3,540 could be built within the redevelopment areas. Mears advocated the dispersal of the remainder to a number of separate neighbourhood units to the south and west of the existing town. He proposed that some 2,060 houses should be built on sites on high ground above the town at Larkfield, Auchneagh and Maukinhill, while a further 5,100 should be distributed on either side of the Kip Valley on sites at Dunrod, Flatterton and Lunderston (48).

Mears had originally dismissed the possibility of development in the Kip Valley on the grounds that its broken topography would make it costly to service (49). In consultation with the Clyde Valley Regional Planning team, he investigated a number of alternative sites as potential locations for a single settlement to accommodate overspill population from the Greenock area. The regional planners suggested sites at Langbank, Kilmacolm and Bishopton but Greenock Corporation rejected each of these as too far from the existing Burgh (50, 51). It was a dispute which was typical of this period of overspill planning and in the end it proved impossible to reach agreement. The Clyde Valley Plan identified Bishopton on the Glasgow to Gourock railway as the most suitable location for a new settlement and

designated the Kip Valley as an area of high amenity which should be reserved for the recreation of the whole of the industrial population on the South Bank of the Lower Clyde (52). In the Greenock Plan, Mears claimed that his final housing proposals preserved the amenity of the Kip Valley by locating the new neighbourhood units in shallow basins which were screened from the main valley by intervening ridges. Invoking a fashionable American planning concept, he argued that the Kip Valley "should be envisaged as a Parkway where amenity and good cultivation go hand in hand" (53). Around this Parkway, new and existing settlements would be planned as a "constellation". In summary, he envisaged the Greenock Promontory "as a single entity where country and town are woven together into a new kind of federal Garden City, in which belts of open country interweave with each other to separate, yet unite the whole group of communities" (54).

#### **8.4 Rural Recovery**

In November 1947, a definitive statement of Mears' approach to rural planning was published in the Quarterly Journal of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (55). The article drew on his considerable experience of county and regional

planning in putting forward an ambitious programme of action designed to bring about the social and economic regeneration of the Scottish countryside. Mears described how his survey work in the Lothians and Fife had first alerted him to the marked disparity between the population profiles of industrial and rural parishes and how the Central and South-East Scotland team had gone on to provide a much clearer picture of population trends within a wider regional context. Studies had indicated that all of the rural parishes and even some partially industrial ones were suffering a steady decline in population. In these areas, the remaining population was becoming increasingly elderly as younger, more economically-active people sought work in the industrial centres and overseas. Mears argued that recent reductions in the growth of population in industrial districts could be directly attributed to the decline of "their former recruiting ground in the countryside" where there were few young people left. Thus, he maintained:

"... if the active sections of the industrial belt, Aberdeen, Dundee and a few smaller towns be excepted, the whole of Scotland is suffering from progressive depopulation, which in certain large marginal areas already approaches totality; so that in Sutherland there are only 7 people to the square mile as against 1,400 in Renfrew, a county

with by no means inconsiderable area of high moorland.

The consequences of rural depopulation on so wide a scale go far beyond that of a decline in the number of physically fit recruits for industry and the defence forces. Maintenance of agriculture land and buildings becomes increasingly difficult; administration and public services of all kinds, including capital equipment, must be carried on for a dwindling population of pensioners, perhaps augmented by holiday-makers for a few months in the year. Country craftsmen, shopkeepers and transport men in villages and small towns are starved out and farmers and local authorities alike must depend more and more on the spare-parts man or the contractor with migratory gang labour; a large home market for specialised goods manufactured in industrial centres will disappear, leaving us more at the mercy of export trade, and finally, the great resource of varied skills on which the Scottish way of life has been maintained will tend to be lost in favour of alien methods of mass production. ... conditions in the Highlands have passed danger-point, and the universal spread of birch scrub, bracken, rushes and moss gives evidence of social and economic disaster in many places which once supported a contented people with their flocks" (56).

There is a lack of economic sophistication in this analysis of Scotland's population problem. The vague reference to "alien methods of mass production" little more than hints at the wider economic forces contributing to Scotland's relative decline. The loss of vigour in Scotland's industrial areas could not simply be attributed to the reduced scope for recruiting labour from the countryside. As Mears himself was shortly to acknowledge in the final version of the Central and South-East Scotland Plan, the traditional industrial base of Central Scotland was assuming an increasingly marginal position in the U.K. economy as the new consumer industries expanded in the major population centres of the Midlands and South of England (57). What Mears analysis does display is a strong sense of nostalgia for an idealized rural past in which a large population lived in harmonious relationship with the land. This perspective leads him to attribute the neglect of land and farm buildings to depopulation rather than to the underlying agricultural depression of the inter-war years. His romantic vision of traditional Highlanders contentedly tending their flocks stands in remarkable contrast to the reality of a society based on cattle and subsistence farming which had been ruthlessly destroyed because its landlords could secure a better return from sheep.

Mears considered that the scale of the population problem was such that redevelopment must be organized on a national level "with physical planning in the local sense serving only as one of its instruments" (58):

"... rural planning, whether it be physical or economic, must be envisaged for a time at least from a new standpoint, so that all concerned with roads, housing, and services, agriculture, forestry, hydro-electricity, light industry, tourism, and not least national finance, may come to realise that there is great need for co-operation" (59).

While Mears' prescription called for greater intervention by public authorities, it mounted no fundamental challenge to the economic, social and political relationships which underpinned existing patterns of rural land use. Rather, there was to be a new emphasis on co-operation, co-ordination and consultation. Along with much of Scottish middle opinion, Mears appears to have hoped that the spirit of solidarity which had sustained the war effort could be harnessed in support of a peacetime programme of economic and social development in which both public agencies and private interests would be happy to co-operate for the greater good. It was

just this sort of progressive, integrated programme that Tom Johnston sought to promote through his simultaneous chairmanship of the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board, the Scottish Tourist Board and the Scottish Committee of the Forestry Commission (60).

Mears believed that the problem of rural decline could not be solved "by a simple process of decanting a given proportion of large-scale industries into partially depopulated areas" and he repeated his warning that "the establishment in outlying districts of new towns, with associated mechanised industries, while it may give comfort in time by boosting up the census returns, may actually serve to create new problems of depopulation unless balanced by rehabilitation schemes directly related to the land and its resources" (61). What Mears sought was the application of a new technocratic approach to the development of indigenous resources in order to sustain viable rural communities and a traditional "Scottish way of life". He considered that:

"The first step towards recovery will be through land rehabilitation in the widest sense with the object of attracting into the Countryside a nucleus of skilled technicians and agriculturalists. This start having been made,

balancing occupations should be fostered in the form of small-scale industries related to the resources of any given countryside.

Only at this stage should establishment of large-scale industry be considered, and this in relation to the setting up of new towns of moderate size in carefully selected localities.

These towns must not be regarded as primarily industrial; they will have social, educational and cultural institutions such as cannot be afforded by small scattered communities, their primary purpose being to sustain the community life of the surrounding countryside" (62).

Mears argued that in planning for rural recovery, particular attention should be given to the provision of modern services and community facilities. He set out his guiding principles in the following detailed list:

"(a) That not only the number but the distribution of new houses is the measure of their value to the rural population.

- (b) That, although a proportion of houses must remain on farms, as many as possible should be grouped near roads on which public transport is available and where electricity, water and other services can economically be provided.
- (c) This grouping, should be related to a graduated system for the provision of Educational and Health Services and of social facilities ranging from the fully equipped community centre to small halls or club rooms in sparsely populated areas.
- (d) Where no village exists, these halls should be carefully sited in relation to "Valley Units", each embracing a number of farms and cottage groups.
- (e) Too great a proportion of the few houses at present even nominally habitable is occupied by pensioners or "week-enders" from the cities, and thus even the few remaining young people are being forced into exile.
- (f) In other areas where farms are more evenly distributed, village centres should be created on a carefully considered plan in relation to those which exist and to a neighbouring market-town.

(g) Priority should be given to rural housing on at least an equal footing to that in the large centres of population.

(h) Vehicular road access is essential to every house.

(i) A good water supply, electricity and telephones are even more necessary in rural than in urban areas" (63).

Thus, on the basis of his considerable experience of county and regional planning, Mears was able to offer a practical approach to the problems of rural service provision which could be accommodated within the reformist parameters established by the post-war Labour Government.

## **8.5 Hydro-Electric Schemes**

During the interwar years, several attempts to establish major private hydro-electric developments in the Highlands were defeated by an unusual coalition of mining, landed and environmental interests (64, 65). Prominent amongst the organizations which opposed the Caledonian Power Schemes of 1936 to 1938 was the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland, then at the height of its activity and influence.

In November 1935, the Council of the APRS appointed a special Committee to examine the British Oxygen Company's proposals for a hydro-electric power scheme to harness the waters of Glengarry and Glenmoriston in Inverness-shire. On considering the report of this Committee, the Council agreed to urge the Secretary of State for Scotland to institute an inquiry into the scheme. In addition to its concern over the environmental consequences of the project, the Association was anxious to ensure that any development of this nature should confer local economic benefits. Among the questions which an inquiry should address, it suggested, were how many persons the scheme would permanently employ, how many of these would be drawn from the locality, and how much power would be distributed locally for industrial and domestic purposes? (66). However, the Secretary of State declined to hold an inquiry and on 18th February 1936 he announced that the Caledonian Power Scheme would proceed by means of a Private Bill in Parliament. The APRS immediately joined in a vigorous lobby of M.P.s and, on 18th March, the Bill was defeated on its Second Reading, by 199 votes to 63. When it became clear that attempts were being made to revive the scheme, the Association published an illustrated booklet on the subject in which it stated that:



"... the policy of the Association towards hydro-electric power schemes is that they will not oppose any schemes that are undoubtedly beneficial to the district concerned or desirable from a national point of view, and will co-operate in such schemes in every way possible in order to ensure that the harm done to scenery and other amenities is as small as possible. They consider, however, that before any new schemes are permitted very full enquiry should be made into the working and results of all the existing hydro-electric power undertakings in Scotland" (67).

Again no inquiry was forthcoming and the APRS went to oppose the Caledonian Power Bills of 1937 and 1938, both of which were defeated in Parliament. In a second booklet published in 1938, the Association spelt out its policy towards hydro-electric development in the following terms:

"While the question of the use or abuse of this power may be of no great moment to the nation, it is of vital importance to the Highlands. The canon for its use was laid down by the Highlands Reconstruction Association, of which the late Lord Lovat was first Chairman; it received conditional approval from the Water Power Resources Committee of 1921; and in 1929 it became the governing

factor in the decision of Lord Younger's Committee to reject the two schemes of hydro-electric development which were promoted in that year. Briefly stated, that principle is that the Highlands must not be used simply as a power house for the South; and, more fully, that "their water power must be developed for use in the area in which it originates with a view to improving the conditions of life there". In all the water-power development that has so far taken place in the Highlands, and equally so in the proposed Caledonian scheme, that principle has been flagrantly violated.

... It is time that this process of exploitation came to an end. Half the Highland water power has already been appropriated, with ... only insignificant return to the Highlander. The remaining half must be safeguarded with the most anxious care so that it may be made available in the Highland area, which is suffering so acutely through the depression in its traditional occupations of agriculture and fishing. The first step to this end may be through the passing of an Act making provision for a special Highland Electricity Board, to have full control of the production and distribution of electric power within the Highlands, and to be guided by the

principle that this power shall be used primarily to encourage the development of industries and occupations likely to lead to a real and widespread revival of Highland prosperity" (68).

Though it is not clear to what extent Mears was instrumental in formulating this policy statement, it is clearly consistent with his own ideological position.

Under wartime conditions, Tom Johnston was at last able to override the vested interests which had frustrated the development of Highland hydro-electric power for over twenty years (69). In 1942, he set up a Committee under the Chairmanship of Lord Cooper, "to consider the practicability and the desirability of further development in the use of water power resources in Scotland for the generation of electricity, and by what type of authority or body such development, if any, should be undertaken" (70).

While the potential water-power resources of North-West Scotland greatly exceeded local demand, there was a ready market for cheap hydro-electricity outwith the Highland area. The Cooper Committee therefore recommended that part of the surplus Highland power should be exported to the Lowlands in

order to earn the revenue required to meet the high cost of distribution schemes in sparsely populated areas. By this means, it was argued, the benefits of modern electricity supply could at last be extended to Highland communities, opening up new prospects of economic development and improved social facilities (71).

The Cooper Report won general public approval in Scotland and was particularly welcomed by local pressure groups such as the Highland Development League (72) and by the Highland local authorities for whom it held out the promise of increased rate revenues (73, 74). Its main recommendations were incorporated into the Hydro-Electric Development (Scotland) Act which passed through both Houses of Parliament without a division, thus establishing the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board as the public authority responsible for all further hydro-electric development in the north-western two-thirds of Scotland's land area (75). The concept drew inspiration from the pioneering work of the Tennessee Valley Authority (76) and the Act required that, in addition to discharging its responsibilities in connection with the production and distribution of electricity, the Board should, so far as its powers and duties permitted, "collaborate in the carrying out of any measures for the economic development and

social improvement of the North of Scotland or any part thereof" (77). Addressing a Labour Party meeting in Falkirk in the spring of 1943, Tom Johnston envisaged the Board as:

"a great public services corporation ... harnessing the water power of the North, opening up the possibilities of new industries, providing employment directly and indirectly for years for as many men as are in the 51st [Highland] Division, at an estimated cost of £30,000,000" (78).

Although, as a leading member of the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland, Mears had opposed the prewar Caledonian Power Bills on environmental grounds, he had long stressed the importance of bringing electricity to the remoter rural areas. In 1946, he succeeded Robert Hurd as architect member of the Hydro Board's Amenity Committee (79) when Hurd left to join the Board's panel of architectural advisers (80). In the following year, Mears became the Committee's Chairman (81). The five member Committee, which was appointed by the Secretary of State for Scotland, had been established to advise the Board on measures to protect Highland scenery largely in response to pressure from the APRS (82).

The Committee was able to exert considerable influence, setting high standards of siting and design for the major hydro-electric installations built during the 'forties and 'fifties (83). On the Committee's recommendation, the Board undertook that, wherever possible, its installations would be constructed in local stone; a policy which was particularly dear to Mears' heart as it furthered his strategy of developing local resources and promoting rural craftsmanship. The post-war scarcity of modern materials such as bricks, concrete and steel meant that traditional building in stone was sometimes a more economic proposition and, by the early 'fifties, the Board was able to report that its development programme had stimulated an expansion of the Scottish quarrying and stone building industries and encouraged local authorities to make greater use of local stone in their own house building programmes (84). The policy went some way towards reviving the craft of the stone mason in Scotland and the quality of design and construction achieved during this period attracted international attention (85).

## 8.6 Sutherland - The Ultimate Challenge

Towards the end of his career, Mears addressed the problem of rural depopulation in its most acute form in a plan for the revitalization of the County of Sutherland. There, the population had fallen from a maximum of 25,800 in the mid nineteenth century to only 13,700 in 1951 (86). In an Interim Report presented to the County Council in June 1951, he warned that there was a danger that the remaining population would be lost from the area before any of the large State-sponsored schemes for the redevelopment of crofting, farming, forestry and fishing could become effective. He was critical of both Government and local agencies for failing to give sufficient priority to the issue. Referring to the East African Groundnut Scheme, he argued that:

"It seems unreasonable that National policy and finance should recently have been directed towards strange schemes for development of backward countries, whilst, in a great part of our own land which has in the past been a training ground for explorers and colonisers and seamen, we contentedly continue to promote depopulation to the point of total dereliction; whilst we pay exorbitant prices for timber or meat from abroad

and yet allow thousands of square miles here to deteriorate under bracken and moss. Even more unreasonable is it that young people of Highland descent who seek to settle on a croft and work it to the best advantage find themselves deterred by local inertia or absentee interests, backed by a Land Court ruling that security of tenure may hold good in spite of neglect, on the footing that grass-covered land is not losing fertility and therefore is not being improperly worked" (87).

Thus, like much of Scottish middle opinion, Mears was prepared to acknowledge that, in the Highlands at least, there was a pressing case for land reform. He agreed with the criticism of prevailing land use practices contained in the preliminary report of Frank Fraser Darling's West Highland Survey (88), arguing that overstocking with sheep, destruction of trees and careless overburning of heather and grass were all contributing to a progressive deterioration of the soil (89). What was needed, he believed, was a "policy of redevelopment" which would maintain the crofting tradition at its best "whilst providing the people with much needed services, social as well as material, and, not least, with opportunity for obtaining auxiliary means of livelihood for themselves and their children" (90). Initial economic recovery, he argued was dependent on the

establishment of a balanced stock-raising regime based on sheep and cattle in conjunction with the gradual expansion of forestry and the development of a sea fishery based on the ports of Loch Clash and Lochinver (91). He saw little future in attempting to introduce large-scale industry into the Highlands, and suggested that:

"The story of 150 years consistent failure to solve the basic Highland problem of emigration, whether to other parts of the country or overseas, may well be one of wrong-headed attempts to force a people of independent spirit into alien forms of wholetime industrialized employment" (92).

Here the Geddesian sociology of Work : Place : Folk can be seen to reinforce the traditional romantic view of the Highlander as noble primitive. Mears' contention was that:

"Vigorous and independent young people of the kind bred by our varied homeland will not stay in her straths and glens if they are to be tied to a very limited choice of fixed wage jobs settled for them by industrial economists in the South.

The crofting system at its best in giving opportunity to combine a source of livelihood from the land with part-time occupations, some of them related to forestry or fishing, some of them in the form of handicraft or specialised light industry, is considered to be the only way in which a population can be maintained in good heart in the North West Highlands, where, in any case, the special physical conditions and the transport difficulties must rule out all but a very few industries of factory type.

If Southern critics challenge this conception as uneconomic in a world of increasing mass production, they will do well to take note that a totally depopulated countryside of many thousand square miles would raise quite serious economic and administrative problems, the burden of which would have to be shouldered by themselves" (93).

Mears did acknowledge that there was a need to establish some small factories or large workshops, particularly to provide employment for women who might otherwise leave to seek work in the South (94). He believed that priority should be given to the development of craft industries which encouraged the "exercise of skill and judgement rather than mere machine minding" and produced goods of high quality

and low bulk which might more easily overcome the disadvantage of remoteness from markets. Such industries should be capable of being worked on a part-time basis in order to provide employment for crofting families during the winter months and periods of bad weather (95).

However, Mears believed that initial efforts should be aimed at injecting new vigour into the crofting system itself. While he was convinced that more people were required to adequately work the land, he considered that:

"The number of newcomers called for will not be large even in terms of the districts as a whole, but even so such resettlement cannot be envisaged as a consequence of piecemeal improvements; it demands well considered "combined operations" on the part of all concerned - with the main aim that, until the population becomes stabilized, the human side must take precedence over that of economic production regarded as an end in itself" (96).

Like Fraser Darling (97, 98), Mears advocated the development of a system of land use based on the combination of traditional crofting skills with a

modern ecological approach to agricultural production (99). For the crofting parishes in the North and West of the County, he proposed the systematic improvement of winter feeding and shelter planting on or near the inby lands, combined with the extension of rough grazing areas, possibly on the lines of a modernized sheiling system (100). Although he believed that some regrouping of very small crofts was desirable, he was opposed to the introduction of large-scale farming or ranching on the grounds that it would lead to further depopulation and less efficient land use. Some twenty years before Ernst Schumacher coined the popular slogan "Small is Beautiful", Mears was urging that there "must be no wholesale attempt at combination of several or even a whole group [of crofts] into a single unit, in terms of the fallacy that a large unit is always more efficient than a small one" (101).

Mears regarded the improvement of local services and community facilities as a vital part of any plan for the revitalization of the crofting counties. His report stressed the importance of retaining rural schools as a focus for community activities and argued that the imposition of a "standardised education based on urban needs" had played a significant part in the depopulation of the countryside. He was quick to point out that:

"whilst the modern "neighbourhood unit", used as a basis for planning new towns and the expansion of old ones, is based on the school, the County Councils all over Scotland are busy closing them and plucking the children from their homes in the interest of book learning" (102).

Characteristically, he proposed that groups of crofting townships "should be recognised as partners for the organisation of social services" and that "the distribution of halls, club centres, playing fields etc., should be governed by the principle of co-operation and interchange", so that as far as possible each township could feel that it was "contributing something to the general welfare of the group". Care should be taken to avoid the largest units becoming "metropolitan", "gaining size and importance through the concentration of facilities at the expense of the smaller ones" (103).

Mears took the view that:

"Planning, in terms of the 1947 Act and of the multitude of rules and instructions which have been added into it, is primarily devised to meet the needs of growing communities. Even in the south east of the County, Lairg and Brora are possibly the only two places where such paper

planning can have practical value, and here it must be emphasised that planning of this kind does not initiate development but only regulates it" (104).

As a young official at the Department of Health for Scotland, Robert Grieve apparently reached a similar conclusion. In an article recalling the period, he later wrote that it did not take him long to realize that the provisions of the 1947 Act "could not be applied except as a kind of administrative ritual in the Highlands and Islands" (105).

What Sutherland required, Mears believed, was "a comprehensive programme worked out and agreed to by central and local authority, by State-sponsored bodies, by voluntary organisations, and by landholders whether they be large or small" (106). Since before the War, a number of organizations had been calling for the establishment of some sort of powerful executive agency to stimulate economic development in the Highlands and Islands (107). However, interestingly enough, unlike Fraser Darling, and for reasons which he did not make clear, Mears was opposed to the creation of a single special development authority for the northern counties (108). Probably he feared that such an authority would place too great an emphasis on urban industrial strategies for Highland development.

At the time of its publication, Mears' Report found little favour with local councillors, most of whom sought a more ambitious approach to industrial development (109). Radical land use reform of the sort advocated by the West Highland Survey was frustrated by the hostility of the Department of Agriculture for Scotland and the political opposition of powerful landed interests (110).

Today, after bitter experiences at Invergordon, Corpach and elsewhere, Mears' warning against pursuing industrial development without first addressing fundamental questions of land use may perhaps be more easily understood. Many of his views about the potential of the crofting system would be endorsed in rather less romantic language by the activists of the recently-formed Crofters' Union (111). In a recent study of the same Sutherland parishes, MacGregor has demonstrated that depopulation of the area is still continuing. He too sees reorganization of the crofting system within the context of a wider development programme as the key to economic and social recovery. However, he concludes pessimistically that:

"At present the political will for such action is lacking and if it were present difficult decisions would be required concerning resource allocation, for the Highland population is small and the problems of urban Scotland are great. It is more likely that decline will continue, slowly and inexorably, through neglect" (112).

### **8.7 A Certain Disillusionment**

As Scotland's most senior planning practitioner in the immediate postwar years, Mears was in close and continuous contact with the small nucleus of planners at the Department of Health for Scotland. Some, like Robert Matthew and B.L.C. Moira, had been students at Edinburgh College of Art and some, like T.A. Jeffryes and A.T. McIndoe, had worked closely with Mears on the Central and South-East Scotland Plan. By the mid-forties there were no more than a couple of dozen qualified planners in the whole of Scotland (113) and, following the passage of the 1947 Act, there was an acute shortage of suitably trained personnel to operate the new comprehensive statutory planning system. In 1948, Mears became involved in the preparation of a series of twenty-four technical broadsheets designed to give local authority planning officers detailed guidance on the preparation of

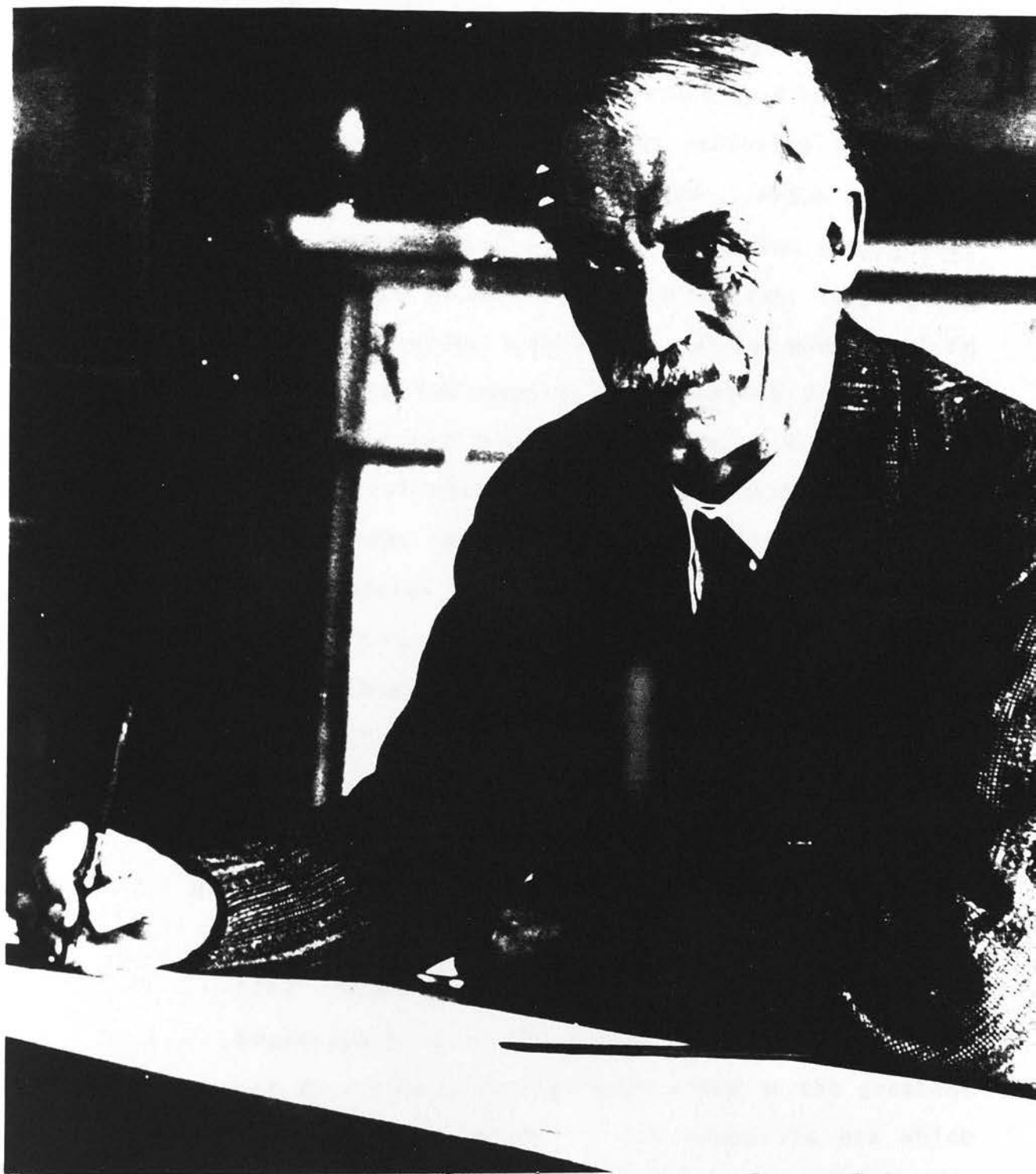


Fig. 8.10. Sir Frank C. Mears, FRIBA, MTPI, FRSE, LL.D.

development plans under the new legislation (114, 115). The broadsheets were issued by the Department of Health with the objective of achieving reasonable uniformity throughout Scotland while leaving sufficient scope for local innovation and experiment. Sheets 1 to 12 related to the collection, mapping and reporting of survey information, while numbers 13 to 24 dealt with the mapping and notation requirements of the Development Plan Regulations. A reviewer in the Journal of the Town Planning Institute remarked that the sheet dealing with "Agricultural Types and Units" "embodied a form of survey technique relating to agriculture considerably in advance of that generally supplied by the English Department of Agriculture" and that the "Survey Analysis Map", which was intended to illustrate the more important facts revealed by survey, had no English equivalent. He concluded that:

"The Scottish system of issuing technical broadsheets is on the whole to be highly commended and encouraged, as they must prove of the greatest value to technicians. The system is one which could well be duplicated in England and Wales, and without wishing to create a major international incident, English and Welsh planning officers might consider obtaining a copy of these broadsheets for their general information and use" (116).

Despite such direct influence on the development of Scottish practice, Mears became increasingly unhappy about the way in which post-war planning was developing. The days of the peripatetic gentleman planning consultant were over and, in Scotland, Mears had done much to hasten their end. Yet he feared that planning was becoming excessively bureaucratic, restrictive and insensitive and, in 1948, much to the embarrassment of the Scottish Office, he wrote to "The Scotsman" calling for a moratorium on the preparation of development plans (117). He repeatedly pointed out that the new statutory planning system had been designed to regulate development in growing urban areas and that what was required in rural areas - and indeed throughout much of Scotland - was a much more positive programme of co-operative action involving both public agencies and private interests.

In January 1950, Mears elaborated on his misgivings about the direction of contemporary planning in an address to the Outlook Tower Association entitled "The Next Planning Act" which was subsequently reported in "The Builder". He painted a picture of an "army of planning officers, technical, legal and administrative, struggling to do a spot of survey or organisation of control in the intervals between advising their committees to give or refuse temporary consents to a multitude of would-be developers" and

argued that both developers and the public generally were "becoming very sceptical about the whole business". Underlying his arguments was a plea for a Geddesian rather than a class-based sociology. In spite of his own espousal of community planning principles, he attacked what he regarded as an undesirable tendency for teams of "qualified organisers" to use the "neighbourhood unit" concept as a means of social engineering, and criticised "the determination of many planners to tie up the future in a network of fixed ideas in the face of continuing evolution" which could be sudden and unpredictable.

Surveys, he believed, became dangerous when they reflected routine-methods imposed from above; "when the surveyor was not allowed to plan and the planner had no time to study them". Some 15 years before the Planning Advisory Group concluded that the post-war development plans were proving too inflexible, Mears was arguing that:

"In the mind of the planner both survey and plan react on each other all the time, whether for failure or success - and outside this are all the people, not at all likely to submit to his request that they stay put till he gets his scheme approved. If this be true we must plan not only for change but for a greater, or lesser measure of

unpredictable change. Probably too, we must accept that what we have grown up with will be distinctly unpalatable to our successors" (118).

He did not believe that planners could "get very far on the basis of plans based on surveys of physical conditions alone". They must also try to take account of "human nature" and consider how people might want to live and work in ten, twenty or thirty years' time. For Mears, this meant a return to a more dispersed settlement pattern and a new, more harmonious relationship between town and country. "Planning legislation, including the last Act", seemed to him "to be based on an urban-industrial economy, but now with bigness as the governing principle so that decentralisation becomes a new kind of re-centralisation". He contrasted the new statutory planning system with his own evolutionary approach in the following terms:

"If planning is regarded as a legally enforceable code, the planners will call for more and more support from central authority, but if it is regarded as one method, first of all, of promoting tidiness in social living, the planners will seek to learn all the time from their neighbours. If this be right, planning schemes based on the programme priorities of the Act will merely record

a series of statements, each out of date by the time it is approved - each, in turn, a source of dissatisfaction and appeals to the Secretary of State for Scotland.

I prefer that planning control, like living, should be a continuous process of adaptation. Those whose duty it is to create or administer should seek to learn something new, some improvement, from almost every application for consent. In my view it is a poor planner who does not succeed in improving a large proportion of the ideas of applicants. Sometimes he should be able to totally transform them. And all this with no loss to the scheme as a whole" (119).

Characteristically, Mears appears to have contented himself with a general statement of his planning philosophy. If he had any specific proposals for new legislation, "The Builder" did not see fit to report them.

## **8.8 A Town Plan for Perth**

One of the last places in which Mears was able to apply his co-operative and consultative approach to plan-making and development control was in the Royal

Burgh of Perth, where he was appointed planning consultant in January 1948 (119). In the course of the following two years, he prepared draft reports on the redevelopment of the central area and future housing developments on the edge of the town which were submitted to the Town Planning Committee "as a basis for discussion" (120, 121). The Council approved his proposals for the central area as the basis for future development (122) but asked him to give further consideration to the siting of new housing before submitting a final report on the planning of the burgh as a whole (123, 124). On the expiry of his initial contract in January 1950, the Town Council extended his appointment for a further year (125) and his Report was finally submitted in April 1951 (126).

As a prosperous historic burgh, Geddes' home town already possessed many of the characteristics which Mears sought to promote in an urban settlement, for, as his Report pointed out:

"The City of Perth never experienced the dramatic development of mechanised industry which caused the rapid expansion of so many towns in Britain and not least in the Central Belt of Scotland. Throughout its history it has continued to serve the countryside and therefore its activities are based on well-established traditions" (127).

As a strategic crossroads and the centre for a large and wealthy agricultural area, Perth provided a wide range of employment opportunities in commerce, the distributive trades, service industries and the professions. Its diverse economic base had enabled it to weather the Depression more successfully than most Scottish burghs and in the post-war period it was actually experiencing a shortage of labour. In an address to the Scottish Branch of the Town Planning Institute in April 1951, Mears described the town as "a Garden of Eden" which in winter faced a deficit of about 300 workers and in summer a shortfall of some 700 (128). When asked whether Perth should be expanded to accommodate overspill population from the Clyde Valley, he replied that:

"If I were a dictator, I should say that Perth must never grow beyond the 50,000 population level for its own good. That figure seems just about right for its position. If it started to grow bigger it would lose what it has at present and become a not-too-good industrial town, for it is too remote for that. Perth cannot contribute to the solution of the Clyde Valley problem but there are many small towns round about, and along the Angus coast, which could" (129).

This response prompted "The Glasgow Herald" to report the meeting under the mischievous headline:

"Planner Describes Perth as "Garden of Eden":  
Unsuitable for Clyde Valley "Immigrants"".

Predictably, Mears stressed that the development of the Burgh must be closely co-ordinated with that of its rural hinterland, pointing out that:

"From the point of view of Perth a prosperous countryside is essential. The City's function as the local regional capital has been fully acknowledged in the Tay Valley Report by Gordon E. Payne, who recommends the development of the small villages to a size appropriate to the territory which they serve in order to offer a more economic and socially sound foundation for the basis of rural life" (130).

He argued that the Town Council should co-operate closely with the County Council in devising policies "to promote balanced development in the surrounding territory in the interest of the countryside, and the towns and villages, and the city itself" (131) and he believed that:

"... under our promised renewal of rural life and of increased prosperity in the northern hill country through development of stock-raising, forestry and electric power, it may be hoped that Perth will not only maintain but increase her importance as regional capital of Strathmore and of the central and S.E. Highlands and therefore may feel justified in planning, if not for a great growth in population, at the least for her increased future usefulness as a focus and a point of radiation alike over a wide field of cultural and economic activities" (132).

Mears did not consider that there was any need to provide large industrial estates of the kind being developed in Scotland's manufacturing centres. However, he identified a number of small sites on the edge of the town to accommodate both new industries and existing companies requiring room for expansion (133).

In preparing his planning proposals, Mears aimed to avoid both "arbitrary restriction and the kind of total redevelopment which depends on wholesale demolitions and re-groupings in the interest of oversimplified zoning" (134). Although he put forward broad zoning proposals for the future development of the Burgh and regarded these as an

important means of promoting "convenience and amenity", he felt that it was important to stress that:

"... the satisfactory growth and renewal of a town such as Perth must depend on a continuous process of building and rebuilding on the part of many different interests and that, in the main, consents or refusals for building, reconstruction, or change of use should be determined on the basis of well-defined planning principles and not by reference merely to zone boundaries arbitrarily marked on a map" (135).

He was again critical of the impact of post-war planning legislation, arguing that:

"It is unfortunate that procedure appropriate for this progressive type of development does not appear to have been envisaged in the regulations relating to the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1947. These regulations seem to have been based on the theory that as nearly as possible total clearance and redevelopment would be carried out block by block throughout a congested district, according to a programme largely predetermined at the time of the approval of the Planning Scheme by the Secretary of State.

It is submitted that the places in the City which can be dealt with in this way are very few in number and that the system of redevelopment here recommended should be a continual process throughout the whole of the central area. It would be based as far as possible on the careful consideration and adjustment of each application for consent and total refusal of an application for alteration, rebuilding or reconstruction should only be made after every effort to reach a satisfactory solution had proved unworkable" (136).

Modern levels of traffic were resulting in severe congestion in the central area and, in order to relieve this, Mears proposed extensive redevelopment of back court areas to provide a system of lanes and parking spaces affording access to the rear of existing properties (137). In pursuit of this objective he held a series of meetings with groups of proprietors (138) and involved himself in discussions on individual planning applications. To improve traffic circulation and draw vehicles away from the main shopping streets, he proposed the creation of an inner ring road running partly through areas of obsolescent property but mainly on the line of existing roads. He believed that a large proportion of through traffic could be diverted from the town

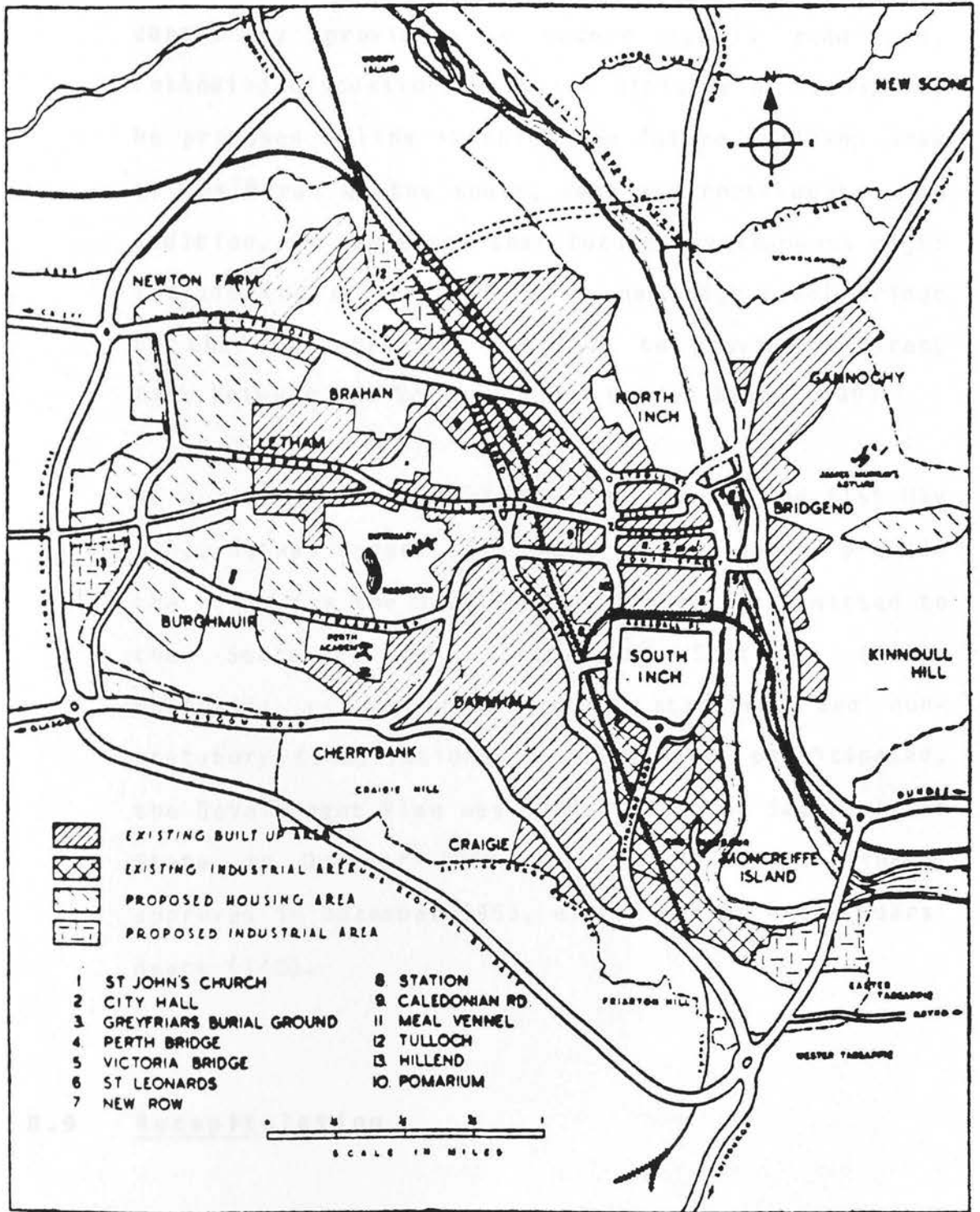


Fig. 8.11. Plan for Perth. Sir Frank Mears, 1951. Source: GLASGOW HERALD, 18th July 1951, p.6.

centre by providing a modern bypass road and, following discussions with the Ministry of Transport, he proposed a line skirting the future built-up area of the Burgh on the south, west and north-west. In addition, he suggested that future developments might include the construction of a new high-level bridge to the south-east of the town to provide a direct link between the Edinburgh and Dundee Roads (139).

At a special meeting of the Town Council on 21st May 1951, it was agreed that Mears' Report should provide the basis for the Development Plan to be submitted to the Secretary of State for Scotland (140). Following a lengthy period of statutory and non-statutory consultations in which Mears participated, the Development Plan was lodged with the Secretary of State in October 1952 (141). It was finally approved in December 1953, eleven months after Mears' death (142).

## **8.9 Recapitulation**

Towards the end of his life, Mears returned to earlier themes. He served on the Scottish Committee of the Arts Council and was appointed Vice Chairman of the Committee established to organize the "Living Traditions" exhibition held in the Royal Scottish

Museum as part of Scotland's contribution to the Festival of Britain celebrations of 1951. The exhibition emphasized separate identity and historical continuity in the development of Scottish architecture and craftsmanship through the ages (143).

Also in 1951, Mears submitted a scheme for a major expansion of Glasgow University northwards into the Hillhead area of the City. In the eighty years since Sir Giles Gilbert Scott had laid down his monumental Gothic edifice, the University had outgrown its Gilmorehill site and much of the original accommodation had proved to be ill-suited to the requirements of modern academic disciplines. In order to maintain a sense of unity in the expanded University precinct, Mears proposed the progressive transformation of the space between the existing Reading Room and the Scott Building into a "Great Central Court". This would involve the transference of the main entrance of the Scott Building from its south to its north side, the grouping and design of new buildings on both sides of University Avenue in careful relation to the old, and the closing of the Avenue to through traffic in the interests of noise reduction and safety. As with his earlier schemes for Jerusalem and Edinburgh, he sought "to combine the maximum of adaptability in construction and use



of buildings with firm adherence to planning principles which will promote an environment of academic dignity" (144) and he suggested that this could best be achieved by the development of a system of courts and quadrangles linked by tree-planted alley-ways (145). As at Jerusalem, he recommended that, wherever possible, internal partition walls should be erected independently of the main structure in order to facilitate rearrangement of accommodation as new needs arose (146). In an editorial commenting on the scheme, "The Glasgow Herald" welcomed the fact that:

"The mistake will not be made at Glasgow that has been made at universities elsewhere of dispersing activities that ought to be part of the central framework of academic and corporate life" (147).

In 1949, Sir Frank's son John, in whom he had placed great hopes as a successor, had been killed in a flying accident at Turnhouse Aerodrome, shortly after qualifying as an architect at Edinburgh College of Art. Finally, in 1952, Mears entered into partnership with H.A. Rendel Govan and Robert J. Naismith who had been working in his practice since the early 'forties. These two men were to carry on the firm's traditions in architecture and planning consultancy for the subsequent three decades. One

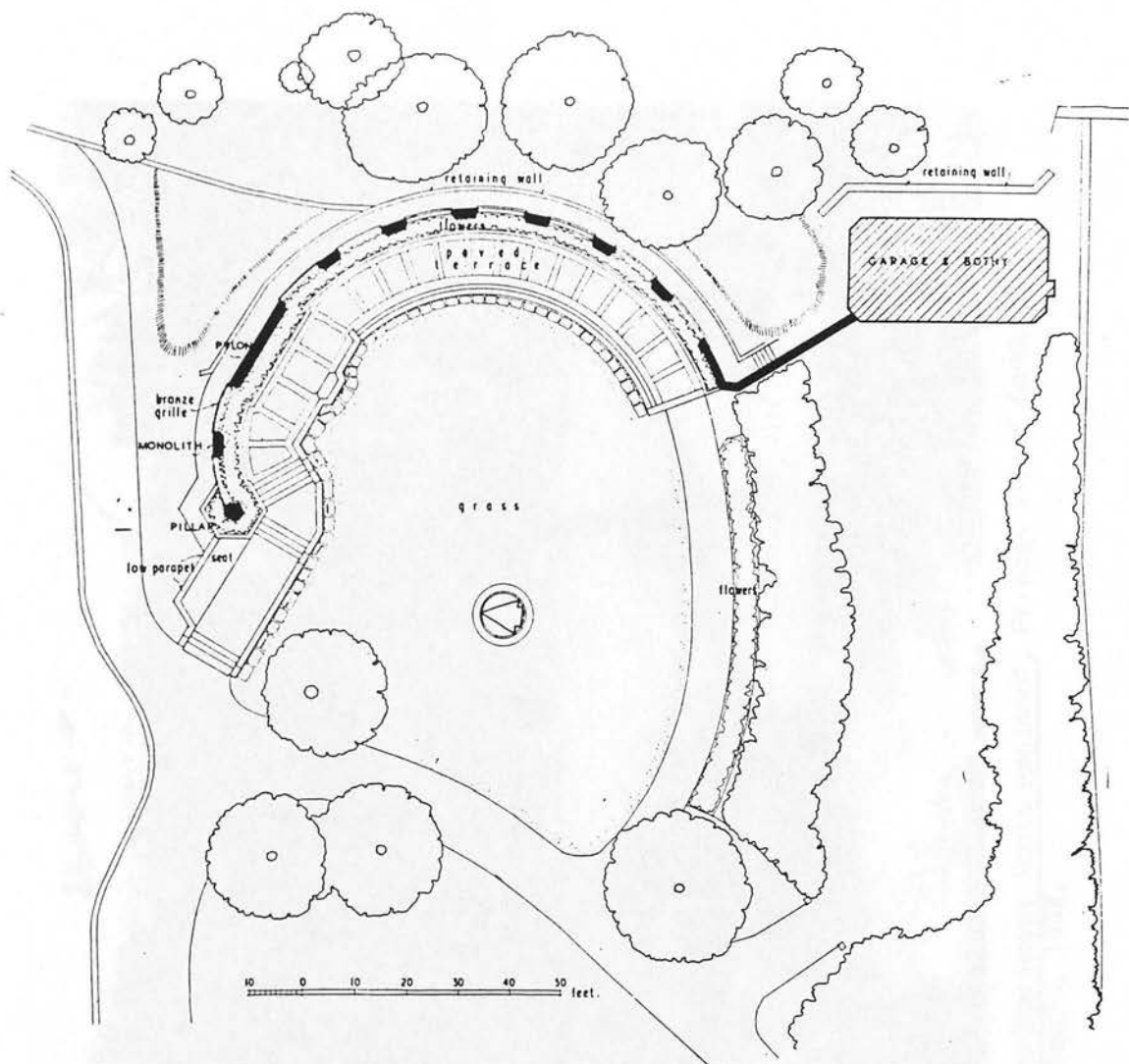


Fig. 8.13. Monument to the Royal Scots Regiment, Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh. Sir Frank Mears, 1952. Source: The Architect and Building News, 26th June 1952, p.737.

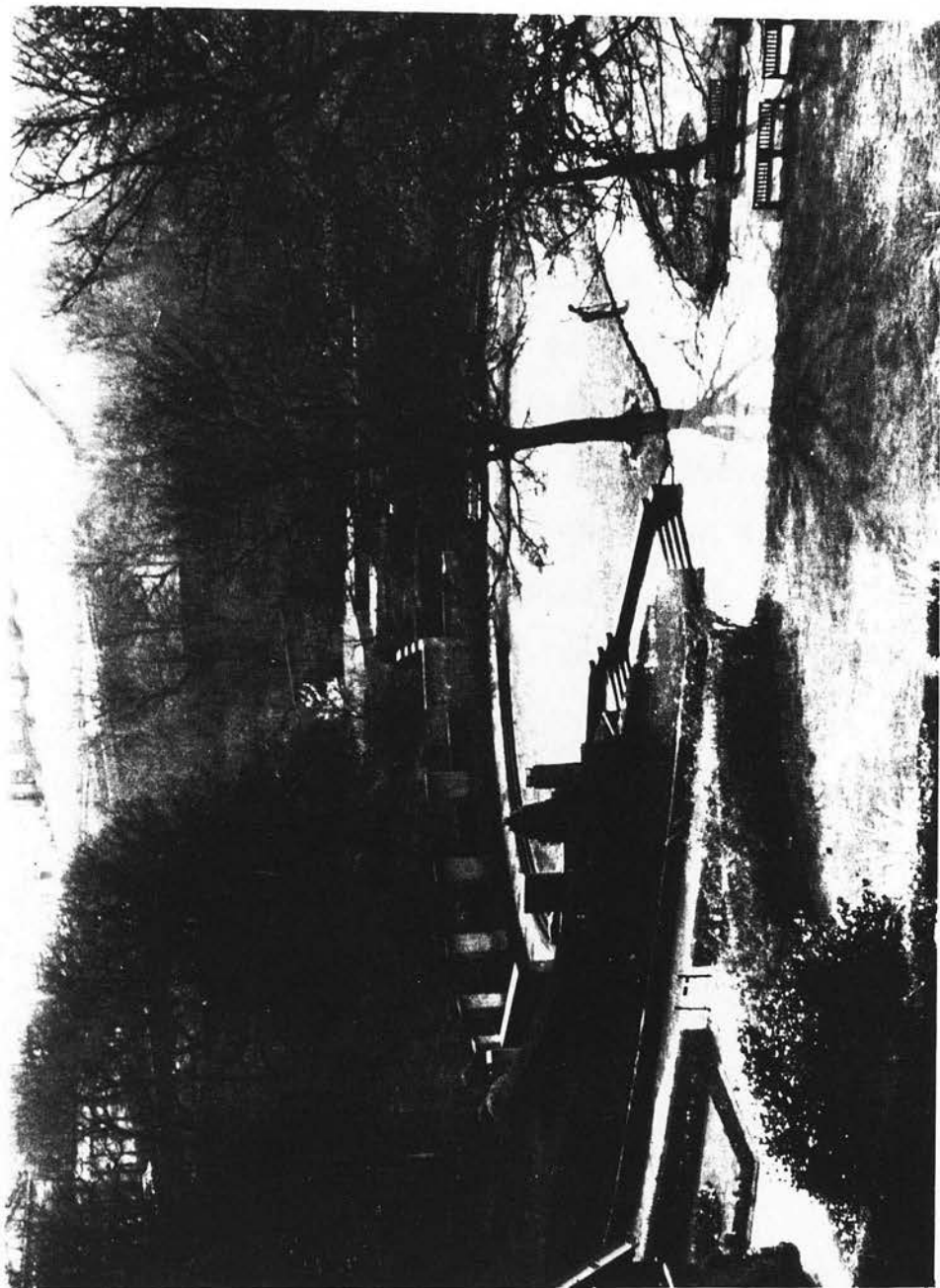


Fig. 8.14. Monument to the Royal Scots Regiment, Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh. Sir Frank Mears, 1952.

of the last projects on which Sir Frank worked with them was the design for the Monument to his old regiment, the Royal Scots, in Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh, completed in 1952. The form of the memorial recalls his proposals for a "Via Sacra" to commemorate the fallen of the First World War in 1919.

Sir Frank Mears died on 25th January 1953 while on a visit to his only surviving son, Kenneth, in Christchurch, New Zealand. He was 73. In a tribute published in the Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, his partner, Rendel Govan, wrote that Scotland had lost "one of the kindest and quietest of her prophets" (148).

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#### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.



## A Cultural Perspective

Much the most striking feature of Mears' approach to environmental planning is the primacy which he accords to cultural continuity. Throughout the whole range of his work from detailed civic design to broad social and economic planning on a regional scale he displayed an acute concern for history, custom and tradition. It was a concern first nurtured by his formal architectural training in the Romantic capital of Edinburgh, then developed through exposure to the evolutionary sociology of Patrick Geddes.

Both Mears and Geddes were ultimately concerned with spiritual rather than material welfare. Insofar as their criteria for defining evolutionary social progress were ever made explicit, they were described largely in spiritual rather than material terms. What they sought was the restoration of a "harmony" or "balance" to human life which they believed to have been lost during the trauma of the industrial revolution; in short, the recreation of physical and social environments in which human creativity could once again find full expression. In this respect, their ideology had closer affinities with the modern Environmental or "Green" Movement than with the technocratic planners of the mid-Twentieth Century and, considering its distinctly religious aspect, it is perhaps not so surprising than in extolling the environmental virtues of the Fair City of Perth, Mears should describe it as a "Garden of Eden" (1).

While a similar spiritual awareness is apparent in the thinking of early English social pioneers such as William Morris, by the turn of the Century, the emergent British town planning movement was characterized by a more pragmatic concern with the improvement of physical conditions in the interests of public health, social order and Christian morality. It is perhaps no accident that the spiritual element was most evidently sustained in the work of some of planning's Scottish protagonists. Since the time of the Reformation, the Scots had enjoyed a fiercely intellectual religious tradition and in Scotland, as Annand Chitnis has remarked, it could be claimed that Theology was "the original social science" (2).

Geddes and Mears both had strongly religious family backgrounds. Geddes' father, to whom Boardman ascribes an important influence and whom he credits with awakening the young Geddes' interest in the natural world (3), was an elder of the Free Kirk, and it may be that Geddes' intellectual development was fashioned, at least in part, by a need to reconcile the challenging new scientific and social ideas of the latter half of the Nineteenth Century with the devout Presbyterianism of his parents.

Mears was the son of medical missionaries. Following exposure to the strict regime of a school for missionaries' children in Sussex, his upbringing and education were completed within professional circles in Edinburgh, where a

commitment to such concepts as "improvement" and "social progress" remained an important component of the Presbyterian ethos. His family background, his training in Medieval and Church architecture, his association with Patrick Geddes and his involvement with Theosophy and Freemasonry all contributed to the strong awareness of the potency, diversity and universality of religious and cultural symbolism which was reflected throughout his work in architecture and planning.

Michael Cuthbert has acknowledged the spiritual element in Geddes' appeal, ascribing his ability to attract younger disciples in a variety of disciplines to a certain "prophetic authority", and suggesting that "much of being a follower of Geddes meant being a true believer" (4). This certainly appears to have applied in Mears' case. Separated from his parents for a long period, he had spent an emotionally unrewarding childhood. In his relationship with Geddes, he discovered the moral assurance and paternal guidance which he had been unable to obtain from his natural father.

Like many of the early planning propagandists, Mears was imbued with the anti-urban-industrial ideology which pervaded Victorian and Edwardian polite society. Recoiling from the widespread social and environmental degradation which had accompanied Nineteenth Century industrialization, he sought models for a more congenial and spiritually-

rewarding social environment in a reconstructed and sanitized pre-industrial past. It was an intellectual response which reflected more general public perceptions evident in the popular literature of the period, a literature to which Scottish authors had made no small contribution. From the historical romances of Sir Walter Scott to the sentimental invocations of rural parish and small burgh life manufactured by the writers of the "Kailyard" school, nostalgic representations of pre-industrial Scottish society enjoyed a wide readership throughout the English-speaking world.

Mears had first been drawn to planning on reading Ebenezer Howard's "Tomorrow", with its Utopian vision of a new form of settlement combining the best elements of urban and rural life (5). At a less abstract level, the Garden Suburb movement was a particularly English response to the Nineteenth Century industrial city. At Hampstead and in the cottage estates of London County Council, architect-planners sought to recapture traditional English village forms in modern suburban development. Geddes, whose initial inspiration was the historic culture-capital of Edinburgh, was less conventionally anti-urban in his outlook than many of the Southern planning propagandists. The great variety of projects which he promoted from his base at the Outlook Tower were primarily aimed at restoring the intellectual and cultural vigour of the Old Town. As Cuthbert has pointed out, his standpoint was essentially anti-metropolitan (6). He deplored the apparently

inexorable accretion of wealth and power in a few great world capitals and called for the replacement of the Roman cultural model, with its dominant Imperial Capital, with a Greek culture-ideal in which lesser "regional" cities of more equal status could each begin to develop their full potential. The distinctive planning philosophy which Mears began to develop in his early years at the Outlook Tower sought to reconcile the Garden City ideal, with its emphasis on "restoring the balance between country and town", both with Geddes' conception of anti-metropolitan cultural evolution and his own strongly historical perspective.

As Meller has pointed out (7), Geddes was frequently cavalier in his employment of broad historical generalizations in support of his concept of social evolution. Mears' often painstaking research into the growth of Edinburgh and other settlements displayed a much greater concern for historical detail and accuracy. However, Mears was no detached academic historian. Like Geddes, he saw the past as a rich treasure-house of tradition and cultural symbolism which could be raided selectively to inspire and facilitate what he regarded as progressive social developments. This propagandist use of the past is evident both in the Masque of Edinburgh (itself directly inspired by Geddes' own use of historical pageantry) and in the various versions of the tripartite Scotland which he derived by combining a popular romantic view of Scottish history with a Geddesian social analysis.

## Raising Civic Consciousness

An essential element in Geddes' strategy for promoting progressive social evolution was the mobilization of popular civic movements or organizations. As Meller has argued, he believed that:

"... revitalisation, social reconstruction, revivance, depended on the self-awareness and determination of the community at large. In an urbanized society, this meant the urban community, and Geddes was ready to regard citizenship and work for the local community as attempts at self-directed evolutionary effort, which was the antithesis of totalitarianism. Thus for him, the key problem for a planner was to gain a consensus of support for future social developments from the whole community. He considered this to be the central problem, the most important part of the whole exercise of planning. Planning was not a matter of ironing out the technical and physical problems of modern city life. It was a matter of opening people's eyes to their biological nature, treating with respect the interaction of the human organism with its environment, and engaging people in their own development activities, since the only objective of importance was the social evolution of the species" (8).

The group whose activities were centred on the Outlook Tower in Edinburgh was the first of a number of civic organizations which Geddes either helped to establish or collaborated with in various parts of the world. In the years before the Great War, Mears played a key role as an organizer and propagandist for the Outlook Tower, and for the organizations with which Geddes was associated in Dublin. He shared Geddes' belief that sound planning was dependent on popular support and the encouragement of a strong sense of what he himself called "civic patriotism" (9). In the interwar years he continued to advocate the establishment of local civic organizations, calling in 1925, for example, for the initiation of a popular survey of the area of Central Scotland surrounding Falkirk (10).

Though both he and Geddes envisaged a general social mobilization, in practice, the activists recruited to their civic pressure groups were predominantly drawn from professional and artistic circles. There is not doubt that in favourable circumstances, organizations such as the Outlook Tower, the Civics Institute of Ireland, the Greater Dublin Reconstruction Movement and the Pro-Jerusalem Society were able to exert considerable influence and generally raise public awareness of planning issues, particularly where, as in Ireland and Palestine, they secured the patronage of powerful individuals. However, when it came to specific initiatives, the status of free-lance planning advocates like Geddes and Mears became extremely problematic. Such a role demanded qualities of diplomacy

and single-minded tenacity which neither man appears to have possessed in sufficient measure. Repeatedly, ambitious planning schemes in Edinburgh, Dublin and Jerusalem foundered because of a failure to establish stable and congenial relationships with key officials or other crucial protagonists. With neither firm commitment from the public sector nor adequate financial backing from private sources, major free-lance initiatives of this kind stood little chance of success.

### **The Emerging Professional**

In the 'twenties and 'thirties, Mears continued to make effective use of pressure groups such as the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland, and latterly he was elected to the Council of the Cockburn Association, Edinburgh's venerable and influential civic trust (11). However, he also began to appreciate the value of a more formal and secure relationship between planning practitioners and the public authorities. By 1928, he was calling for the establishment in Falkirk of a Regional Committee for Central Scotland composed of the representatives of local authorities and special interest groups (12) - something which sounded much more like a creature of the existing establishment than the popular survey organization which he had advocated only three years earlier.

Throughout the 'twenties, Mears' Edinburgh practice had survived primarily on small to medium architectural commissions. The extension of local government planning powers under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1932 at last created sufficient demand for the particular expertise which he offered to enable him to begin to build up a substantial planning practice. After his disappointments in Dublin and Jerusalem, he worked exclusively in Scotland. Although, as Geddes' assistant, he had been directly involved in the events surrounding the birth of the modern British town planning movement, attending both the RIBA Town Planning Conference in 1910 and the inaugural meeting of the Town Planning Institute in 1914, after the First World War he does not appear to have maintained particularly close personal contact with any of the leading planning practitioners South of the Border and his activities on behalf of the TPI were largely confined to playing a leading role in the Scottish Branch. His resignation from the Regional Survey Association in 1919 indicates that even by this early date he had begun to feel a certain alienation from the mainstream of U.K. planning. He expressed irritation both at what he saw as the Association's excessive metropolitan bias and at what he regarded as its naive reduction of survey to a routine gathering of data on contemporary physical conditions (13).

Meller has remarked that Geddes himself was painfully aware that by the nineteen-twenties his particular conception of planning was no longer commanding the attention which it had received in the period immediately preceding the First World War (14). Perhaps after the carnage of 1914-18, his vision of evolutionary social progress opening the way to a better, brighter neotechnic future could less readily be accepted. In the aftermath of War, and in the face of the labour unrest of 1919, it was enough to plan for an improvement in housing conditions under the slogan "Homes for Heroes", and what emerged during the 'twenties was a design-oriented planning geared to tackling the problems of suburban expansion. As a disciple of Patrick Geddes, Mears maintained a much broader perspective than many of the architect planners of his generation. He saw the problems of urban expansion and rural decline as complementary and believed that satisfactory solutions could only be achieved by planning on a regional scale. He argued that survey must be much more than the habitual accumulation of a standardized range of data which he feared it was in danger of becoming. For him, survey was a means of educating people to appreciate their environment and inspiring them to a more active participation in the development of their community and to this end it must take the form of a wide-ranging enquiry into the physical and cultural resources of an area rather than a simple recitation of municipal statistics (15). At the same time, he recognized that no survey could be fully comprehensive and that for practical

planning purposes it was necessary to proceed on the basis of a working hypothesis, using data selectively to focus on what were perceived to be the most significant problems in the locality concerned (16). His commitment to the concept of cultural evolution made him critical of the great Master Plans being prepared by Abercrombie and others during this period. He believed that such exercises were both excessively egotistical and insufficiently flexible to cope with the constantly changing requirements of society (17).

### **A Growing National Consciousness**

But if Mears' approach was at variance with the prevailing ideology in the U.K. as a whole, the particular emphasis which he placed on history and culture was very much in accord with the reawakening national consciousness within Scotland. This circumstance was not simply fortuitous. In historic Edinburgh, "civic consciousness" and "national consciousness" conjoined. The Scots Renaissance which Geddes and his collaborators had sought to foster at the turn of the Century in many ways anticipated the more widely-acknowledged cultural revival of the 'twenties and Mears' work on behalf of the Outlook Tower had brought him into contact with many of the leading artists, writers and politicians of the period. In addition, in the course of his early architectural career, he had secured the patronage of the third Marquis of Bute, whose aristocratic and

antiquarian nationalism played an influential part in the revival of interest in traditional Scottish architecture and craftsmanship (18).

A growing awareness of the relative decline in Scotland's economic fortunes within the U.K., the waning power of the Imperial ideal and a reaction against the stultifying effects of a provincial culture all contributed to the rise of Scottish national sentiment during the interwar years (19, 20, 21). The new mood was apparent right across the political spectrum from those conservative and patrician elements who harked back to a lost world of worthy burgesses and paternalistic landowners to those progressive forces who believed that Scotland's depressed industrial and rural areas could only be revived under a radical new social and economic order. Increasingly, in the years after the Depression, planning provided a common cause round which diverse Scottish interest groups could rally, so that, by the late nineteen-thirties, even a staunch defender of the Union like the publisher, Alexander MacLehose could argue that Scotland's salvation lay in the application of a "sturdy patriotism" to the problems of economic and social regeneration, prefacing his book on the subject with the assertion that:

"This is an age of planning. Plans in democratic countries often break down because they do not grip the imagination of the people who have to work them.

This is especially true of Scotland, but the lack of national enthusiasm has prevented them from being so fruitful as they would otherwise have been" (22).

This was a climate to which Mears' apparently politically neutral, inspirational, culture-based planning was well suited.

The increasing awareness of Scottish national identity was reflected in the establishment of a wide range of new organizations and pressure groups dedicated to furthering various aspects of Scottish life and culture. Within his own sphere of interests, Mears played an active part in this development, taking a leading role in the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland and the Scottish Branch of the Town Planning Institute, maintaining a keen interest in the development of outward bound movements such as the Scottish Youth Hostels Association, and participating in the foundation of both the National Trust for Scotland and the Saltire Society.

### **Architecture and Conservation**

In the field of architecture, Mears was a stout champion of indigenous building styles and traditional craftsmanship. He had received his architectural training at a time of renewed interest in the Scottish vernacular tradition, when,

under the influence of men like Sir Robert Rowand Anderson, the Scottish architectural curriculum had placed considerable emphasis on the measurement and drawing of historic buildings and their details (23). As Charles McKean has argued, this traditional revival:

"... reached its peak about the turn of the century, coinciding with the Arts and Crafts movement in England. It was a period of social ferment, Sir Patrick Geddes and colleagues trying to revive and humanise the slums of the Royal Mile by attracting back the middle class to live there; cultural ferment - the Glasgow Boys School of Painting, the Glasgow Style, and art nouveau; and of a deeper Scottish Nationalism on a political level" (24).

Between the Wars, Mears' vernacular training bore fruit in the form of important architectural conservation projects such as Huntly House and Gladstone's Land in Edinburgh, the David Livingstone Memorial at Blantyre and the attempt to preserve the character of Stirling's historic old town. The ultimate realization of this last undertaking in the 1960s was actually savagely condemned in some quarters as a "betrayal" of the Scottish urban tradition, one architectural critic going so far as to claim that:

"... this pseudo-Scottishry, the dabbling of turrets, gables and patches of stone (often artificial stone) on to otherwise plain facades is probably even worse in its effects and even more a danger signal than the dreary anonymity of the new towns" (25).

However, as a more sympathetic assessment in the "Architects' Journal" acknowledged, the later phases of the Stirling scheme were completed in cheaper materials and to lower specifications because of severe budgetary constraints (26). The earlier and most visually important phases of the renewal project, with which Mears himself was directly involved, were completed to a much higher standard. The main problem with the scheme is that the business and administrative life of the burgh has moved from the old Medieval core to the Victorian commercial centre below, leaving the top of the town with only a residential function. Thus the restored area retains the physical form of a Medieval town centre without any of the activity one would normally associate with such a location. It is this that gives the scheme the curiously dead appearance of an empty film set. Nevertheless, in terms both of its scale and its sensitive, detailed civic design respecting traditional urban forms, the Stirling renewal scheme must rank as one of the most important early achievements in Scottish urban conservation.

While much of Mears' architectural work was strongly traditional in character, he was not afraid of employing modern materials and innovative construction methods and some of his designs, such as that for the proposed Lower North Water Bridge near Montrose, were overtly Modernist in style. Although often critical of the practical application of Modernist ideas, he well understood their aesthetic appeal. He rejected the notion that the best of the new architecture represented a radical break with the past, stressing instead the historical continuity implicit in a style which relied for its dramatic impact on something as basic as the interplay between light and mass. Writing in the "Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects", he argued that:

"Buildings from the earliest to the latest, especially when they were faced with rough stone, harled and whitewashed, have a certain monolithic character; they are definitely cubic if not cubist ... tall tenements which still rise like cliffs around the ridge of the Old Town of Edinburgh ... show the direct line of descent which passed through the work of Mackintosh ... to much of the adventurous architecture of the present day" (27).

## A Scottish Technocracy

Under Tom Johnston's Wartime administration, the coalition of forces which advocated planning solutions to Scotland's problems finally achieved ascendancy. Their attempts to establish an autonomous Scottish technocracy were founded on an almost Wellsian vision of the future in which benevolent science and rational planning would guarantee a healthier and more rewarding life for all. The new planning powers of central government were secured for the Scottish Office, Committees were established to determine the broad course of post-war industrial and housing development in line with the "decentralist" philosophy of the Barlow Commission, and the new regional planning apparatus established to facilitate this national strategy provided Mears with the opportunity to apply the approach and techniques which he had developed in Mid and East Lothian across a much wider canvass.

While the approach to survey which Mears had by this time evolved retained a distinctively historical and cultural emphasis, his increasingly sophisticated use of demographic, social and economic data reflected the growing technicism evident in planning ideology generally. Analysis of the statistics of rural depopulation and small burgh decline served to highlight the extent to which the "traditional Scottish way of life" which Mears so valued was being progressively undermined. Mears saw the problem as arising

from particular "financial and industrial methods" (28, 29) rather than any spatial or social inequalities inherent in the capitalist system itself. It was these "methods" which, by encouraging even greater concentrations of industry and labour, were favouring town at the expense of country and, increasingly, the prosperous and populous South-East of England at the expense of the rest of the U.K. As a disciple of Geddes, he tended to stress the geographical and historical influences on social and cultural development, and to neglect economic and political factors. He saw technological innovation as the principal agent of social change and believed that rational planning offered the best means of managing this change in a manner which kept faith with native culture. Despite his emphasis on the constancy of social change, there was no acknowledgement that the dynamics of evolutionary sociology tended to negate the notion of an archetypal or immutable "Scottish way of life".

### **Rural Planning**

In seeking solutions to contemporary Scottish problems, Mears was influenced by the Keynesian economics of Dr. James Bowie and the new scientific approach to agriculture, rural development and social welfare being advocated by men like Sir John Boyd Orr of the Rowett Research Institute in Aberdeen and the ecologist, Frank Fraser Darling, in his

West Highland Survey. In a chapter contributed to Alexander MacLehose's evangelistic endorsement of patriotic planning, "The Scotland of Our Sons", Boyd Orr wrote that:

"The Scotland of the future which Mr. MacLehose sees is a country in which every Scottish family will have a house in which a family can live in decency, and have sufficient of the right kind of food to rear children, who will attain their full inherited capacity for health and physical fitness. He wants to reverse the nineteenth century flow of the population from the country to the towns. He wants to see a much larger proportion of our people living in economic freedom, with a high standard of living in our country districts, in the lowlands and in our highland glens. He wants those who are left in the cities to have the high standard of living he demands for those on the land" (30).

It was a vision shared by Boyd Orr himself and by many other leaders of Scottish opinion during the 'thirties and 'forties, and one with which Mears would certainly have had no quarrel. In planning for the Lothians, Central and South-East Scotland and the County of Sutherland, he developed a strategy for revitalizing rural areas based on the improvement of housing and services, investment in agriculture, forestry and fishing, and the encouragement of small rural industries based on indigenous resources. With

its advocacy of radical decentralization and repopulation of the countryside, his philosophy had much in common with the "Small is Beautiful" ideology later elaborated by Ernst Schumacher and still an influence on elements within modern green and nationalist movements today.

### **A Scottish Settlement Structure**

Perhaps Mears' most distinctive contribution to regional planning lay in his application of community planning principles beyond a purely urban context to create a settlement model based on the upland valley unit, the consolidated village, the small burgh and the county town, each offering a progressively wider range of services and facilities to its dependent population.

While the relationship between these different sizes of settlement appears conventionally hierarchical, in his proposals for the Borders and the more populous and industrial Central Belt he introduced the more radical concept of constellations of similarly-sized settlements co-operating in the provision of community facilities to their wider hinterland on a federal basis. This, he believed, would be less disruptive of lowland Scotland's traditional pattern of small burgh settlement than the model based on large urban centres and dependent satellites which was generally in favour throughout the U.K. Yet his proposals

implied a major departure from the existing structure of local government in Scotland and, more particularly, some loss of that very independence which he considered to be such an admirable attribute of burgh administration. Mears considered that, where necessary, increased population should be accommodated by the expansion of existing small burghs and the development of moderately-sized new settlements within constellations, rather than by the creation of New Towns. He argued that the provision of the New Towns Act should be extended to cover co-operative development by groups of settlements, but he offered no suggestions as to how such a scheme might be administered.

### **Co-operation and Consultation**

Mears' conception of a "federal" relationship between settlements was consistent with Geddes' advocacy of a Greek rather than a Roman culture-model and reflected the reliance which he placed on co-operative and consensus planning generally. His philosophy did not admit of any irreconcilable conflicts within society, and he placed faith in the ability of men of sense and good will to resolve their differences in the interest of the wider community. Throughout his consultancy work, he emphasized the importance of close and continuous consultation between planning authorities, small burghs, prospective developers and government agencies, arguing that more could be achieved

by this means than by heavy-handed use of statutory powers. He recognized that the regulatory planning system which had emerged under U.K. legislation was primarily geared to mediating between competing claims on land under the conditions of urban expansion which prevailed in the South-East and Midlands of England. As Hague has expressed it in Marxian terms:

"The logic of uneven development meant that the relevance of the 1947 planning legislation was uneven too, both spatially and sectorally. Because of the nature of the class compromise that had defined the planning system, that system was more effective at arbitrating between demands generated by market forces than providing an alternative to market-led development" (31).

Mears considered that Scotland's declining rural and industrial areas required a more positive, interventionist "combined operations" planning in which public agencies and private enterprise would co-operate in the implementation of a co-ordinated programme of investment. Along with Tom Johnston and much of the rest of Scottish middle opinion, he appears to have believed that the wartime spirit of national solidarity could be harnessed in support of an ambitious peacetime programme of social and economic reconstruction. At first he hoped that Scottish local authorities would themselves play a leading part in this process through the

implementation of their own collaborative regional planning schemes, but the precipitate disbanding of the Central and South-East Scotland Regional Planning Advisory Committee in 1946 helped to persuade him of the need for more active intervention by central government (32). Thus, to some extent, he anticipated the trend towards the Scottish Office and agency-based economic planning which was to assume such a key role in the promotion of development in Scotland in the second half of the Twentieth Century.

### **The Triumph of British Orthodoxy**

In 1945, the election of a Labour Government committed to centralized social and economic management and the departure of Tom Johnston from the Scottish Office combined to create a climate far less conducive to the acceptance of the distinctive approach to Scottish planning advocated by Mears in the Central and South-East Scotland Plan. The emphasis in the immediate post-war period was on alleviating the housing problems of the large conurbations by means of overspill programmes and the construction of large New Towns, and, in 1951, the Labour Secretary of State, Sir Hector McNeil, took Mears to task over his reluctance to include plans and models of Glenrothes and East Kilbride in the "Living Traditions" exhibition at the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh (33). Within the Scottish Office, influential officials such as Robert H. Matthew, T.A. Jeffryes, G. Hawley and James McGuinness were broadly

sympathetic to Mears' planning philosophy (34, 35, 36), but, as the post-war administration became increasingly preoccupied with the massive housing problems of West Central Scotland, it was the more conventional planning prescriptions offered in Abercrombie and Matthew's Clyde Valley Plan which came to dominate Scottish theory and practice. Indeed, it is a singular testimony to this triumph of U.K. planning orthodoxy in Scotland that, in a recent article, Urian Wannop should feel secure in arguing that only in the area now encompassed by Strathclyde Region, "amongst all the British conurbations, has a form of regional administration emerged directly from the progressive line of regional analysis, planning thought and debate on public administration and central-local relations which had prevailed over the preceding 40 years" (37).

Although it was not accepted by the City of Glasgow until the early fifties, the broad overspill strategy outlined in the Clyde Valley Plan was eventually reflected in both the development plans of constituent authorities and the New Town designations of central government. In contrast, the population distribution strategy of the Central and South-East Scotland Plan was seriously undermined by the failure of the newly-nationalized coal industry to develop on the scale and in the manner envisaged by the Scottish Coalfields Committee. Some elements of the Plan did have lasting influence. The constellation concept and proposal for a regional service centre at St. Boswells survived to be

incorporated in the settlement strategy of the Central Borders Plan of 1968 (38), and certain of Mears' major roads proposals were eventually realized. However, Robert Grieve has suggested that the main significance of both the Central and South-East Scotland Plan and the East Central Scotland Plan lay not in the extent of their concrete implementation which was minimal, but rather in their role as "shadowy policemen", since the problems which both they and the Clyde Valley Plan identified, and the solutions which all three proposed, established the overall context within which subsequent planning policies were developed (39). It may be true, as Grieve has argued, that each of the regional plans in its own way reflected "a very Scottish preoccupation" with the problems of rural depopulation (40), and in the late 'forties an attempt was made to draw together the main elements of all three plans as the basis of a national planning strategy for Scotland (41, 42). Yet there can be no doubt that in the long term it was Abercrombie's Clyde Valley Plan with its conventional British package of urban-oriented prescriptions which was to exert by far the most profound influence on post-war Scottish planning practice.

## A Technocentric Profession

In the final years of his life, Mears showed evidence of increasing disillusionment with the planning system which had emerged under post-war legislation and criticised it publicly as excessively bureaucratic and restrictive (43). He had rarely involved himself in debates over the detailed mechanics of planning legislation, being more concerned with broader questions of philosophy semiotics, and aesthetics. What interested him were the spiritual and creative possibilities of planning, not its regulatory aspects. He was possessed of a strongly romantic, anti-urban-industrial ideology and, like much of middle opinion in the 'thirties and 'forties, he looked to a rational technocracy, rather than any fundamental change in economic relationships, to undo the physical and spiritual damage which he believed to have been wrought by the industrial revolution and recreate a healthier and more fulfilling society based on small communities and skilled craftsmanship. He was inspired by an idealized vision of the Medieval Scottish burgh and, in developing community planning models in the course of his consultancy work, he sought to keep faith with the historic patterns and structures of Scottish settlement. Underlying the apparent vagueness of such declared objectives as restoring "balance" and "harmony" and preserving "the traditional Scottish way of life" was a consistent commitment to a Geddesian concept of planning as a means of

guiding cultural evolution towards a more serene and ordered society. Such planning could not rely on grandiose and inflexible Master Plans or wholesale clearance schemes, but must proceed incrementally by a continuous process of consultation, co-operation and sensitive adaptation. Mears believed that, at the national or regional level, social, economic and environmental objectives could only be achieved by co-ordinating the activities of central government, local authorities and private interests in an interventionist approach to development which he described as "combined operations" planning. In stressing the importance of "the human factor", the need to view planning as "a process", and the necessity of "a much closer relationship" between physical, social and economic planning, Lord Flowers has presented today's generation of planners with a very similar viewpoint in his recent report to the Nuffield Foundation (44).

The popular, participatory planning which Mears espoused during his early work at the Outlook Tower gave way to a pragmatic acceptance of the advantages of professionalization. His more mature view that development plans should serve to inspire and educate the communities for which they were prepared may seem unfashionably paternalistic in comparison with modern ideas concerning public participation in the plan-making process, but he was quick to recognize that a bureaucratic and technocentric planning profession was in danger of alienating the public

it was supposed to serve (45). Robert Grieve's experience of the post-war statutory planning system led him to similar conclusions. In his review of regional planning in Scotland he has lamented the absence of any inspirational quality in modern development plans, commenting that:

"It is certainly this last element that is now missing in our regional planning exercises. It is as though the whole thing could be encompassed by figures and analysis, and a collection of debatable policy alternatives; and so presented in this era of participation of the common man, the customer. Unless the nature of man has changed, it is certain that he will not be moved sufficiently to undertake the pain and drudgery of the changes necessary unless he is inspired, that is "filled with what animates and exalts". In the most realistic sense, the process still requires to have that quality, because the inponderables including the quality of those who run the process, are so great that the process must be carried by more than figures, techniques and a competent professionalism" (46).

As Grieve acknowledges, in the years since Mears' death, the emphasis which he and others of his generation placed on the particularity of local culture and the need to inspire the public to a more informed and active involvement in the improvement of their social environment has perhaps been too

readily ignored by a profession largely content to consolidate the achievement of a regulatory planning apparatus through the development of standardized systems and procedures, and technical expertise. Today, in an age more sceptical of scientism and in which the consensus of support for the statutory planning system has been seriously eroded, planners might do well to abandon the luxury of such complacent detachment by re-examining their social and cultural commitment and rekindling the visionary spark. It is not too fanciful to suggest that the current crisis of confidence in planning has in part been responsible for the recent upsurge of interest in the origins of the profession and the ideologies which have sustained it. Within this context, it is to be hoped that the opportunity will be taken to accord wider recognition to Sir Frank Mears as the planner whose work most faithfully reflected the evolutionary planning philosophy of Sir Patrick Geddes and offered a distinctively Scottish planning ideology attuned to the emergent cultural nationalism of the first half of the twentieth century.

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