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U N I V E R S I T Y O F E D I N B U R G H
M C M X C I V

VOLUME ONE

TEXT

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ADAM HOUSE
CHAMBERS STREET, EDINBURGH
AND ITS ARCHITECTURAL INFLUENCES



EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY EXAMINATION SCHOOL CHAMBERS STREET — STUDY FOR FACADE

In my view, no practising architect should allow preconceived doctrine to overcome his instinct towards what he believes to be a fitting solution for each particular problem. It therefore seems to me that criticism, based on a rigid preconception of architectural form, is valueless, and it is deplorable that architects, whether of the contemporary or traditional school of thought, allow themselves to be blinded in this way to the true greatness of their art.

William Kininmonth, letter to the editor of *The Builder*
vol. clxxxviii, no. 5842, 4 February 1955, p.204

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A NOTE ON THE TEXT

A complete citation of sources can be found in the bibliography. Wherever useful, however, references are given in full in the footnotes. The opening and closing dates of the Adam House Office files [see page 46 for a complete list], are given only in the first instance of quoting, and thereafter only the file number and title are given. Dates of the document in question are quoted immediately after the file reference. Within the footnotes William Kininmonth and Charles Stewart, the University Secretary, are referred to by initials, WHK and CHS respectively. Where I wish to cross reference with other footnotes in the *same* section, I quote the footnote only. If the reference is to a *different* section, both the footnote, section and page number are given. Bold figures in the text, thus, **18**, refer to illustrations which appear in the second volume. [A complete list of illustrations may be found on the following pages].

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank Richard Ewing, Kininmonth's son-in-law and architect in the Rowand Anderson Partnership, for his tolerance of my irregular visits to Rutland Square and for allowing me access to a great deal of original Adam House material, as well as for his help in determining biographical details. I thank Dr. David Howarth for suggesting a twentieth century building, and opening up a new field of study; John Lowrey for his ever-present help, Gavin Stamp for his interest, Alan Powers for some thoughtful suggestions and Ian Gow, Simon Green, Oliver Barratt, Caroline Macgregor, Caroline Lightburn, Charles Morris, Dr. John Martin Robinson, the RCAHMS and the RIBA for their kind assistance in the preparation of this paper.

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S Y N O P S I S

ADAM HOUSE, the University Examinations School in Chambers Street, Edinburgh, was built to the design of William Kininmonth (1904 - 1988) ¹ from 1951 to 1956. In the first instance, this paper records the history of Adam House and the circumstances in which it was built. But beyond this, even the briefest examination shows it to be one of the more unusual buildings to have risen in the city, and arguably in Britain, during the early post-war period. While architects were preparing, at the South Bank, to introduce a ready public to the 'life style of the new technological age': "Braced legs, indoor plants, colour-rinse concrete, aluminium lattices, flying staircases, blond wood, the thorn, the spike, the molecule",¹ its spare, neo-classical facade was rising to a chorus of disapproval and, from the Edinburgh architectural profession at least, some dismay.²

Despite this apparent traditionalism, the building demands (as I explain in the introduction) explanation beyond that which we might offer for those architects who continued, throughout the twentieth century, to practise in an English classic tradition. The second half of this paper, using Kininmonth's own writings as a basis for discussion, therefore assesses the building within the context of wider stylistic influences: both the International Style practised by Kininmonth during the 1930s, and, emerging from it, the 'Festival Style' characteristic of much of British Modernism during the 1950s; and set against these, those elements of the classic tradition - most obviously, the architecture of Adam - which inform the Examination School design.

Finally, in conclusion, I shall propose a framework by which we might best understand the apparently contradictory, and certainly complex, influences which run parallel in Adam House and which, I believe, properly examined, lead us to admire Kininmonth where previously he has received indifference and misunderstanding.

¹ Feaver, W., 'Festival Star', in *A Tonic to the Nation*, ed. Banham, M., and Hillier, B., London, 1976, p.54.

² Interview with Richard Ewing, 16 Rutland Square, Edinburgh, 20 February 1994.

INTRODUCTION

THE DECLINE in the perceived authority of the modern movement has allowed for a reappraisal of that school of architecture which, throughout the twentieth century, sought and claimed links with the English classic tradition. To some extent, this paper will seek to contribute to a body of work which elsewhere has examined the architecture of Raymond Erith, Donald McMorran, George Whitby, Vincent Harris, Albert Richardson, Steven Dykes-Brown, Francis Johnson and others.¹ But if it is possible to detect basic affinities between their work and Adam House, then I propose to demonstrate that Kininmonth's classicism is at once more complicated, more site-specific, and certainly more unexpected. The building is unusual not least for Kininmonth's previous (and, crucially, subsequent) commitment to modernist architecture in its various forms: with Spence, he was the leading Scottish exponent of International Modernism throughout the 1930s, while his Scottish Provident Building, built some forty years later, is one of Edinburgh's finer modern offices.² Adam House thus stands as an apparent stylistic oddity, which demands analysis and explanation beyond that which we might offer for the country house architecture of Erith or Johnson.

*

Kininmonth's work and life remain remarkably unresearched save for a few references (and these concentrating largely on the thirties' material)³ in the wider histories of twentieth century Scottish architecture. Deplorable though this situation is, it has proved impossible to correct, even to embark upon that task, within the bounds of this study. Indeed, if published references to Kininmonth's wider oeuvre remain scarce, then to my knowledge no research has been made into Adam House beyond that which I present here. John Gifford, in his guide to

- 1 In the last decade, a number of books and articles have been published which seek to re-evaluate the climate of English architecture during the twentieth century, and suggesting the survival of an alternative, classic tradition. See, for example, Archer, L., *Raymond Erith*, Burford, 1985; Stamp, G., 'McMorran and Whitby: A Progressive Classicism', in *Modern Painters*, vol. 4, no. 4, Winter 1991; Robinson, J. M., *The Latest Country Houses*, London, 1984.
- 2 But *n.b.* Kininmonth's ambiguous relationship with Modernism. See also footnote 2, Part Two, p.27, and arguments p.41-45.
- 3 For example, McKean, C., *The Scottish Thirties: An Architectural Introduction*, Edinburgh, 1987.

Edinburgh for the Buildings of Scotland, dismisses the building with a single, terse line - "the name", he writes, "is not a sick joke but [commemorates] Adam Square".⁴ It appears that Adam House was never illustrated in the architectural press, and the articles which appeared in the Edinburgh newspapers shortly after the Examination School was opened present little of architectural importance.⁵ In short, Kininmonth - and particularly Kininmonth, the architect of Adam House - has been ignored as a figure of interest, let alone as one of some importance.

As a result, much of my research has been made with original material. I have been fortunate in the survival of some fifteen files and 280 drawings which remain in the Rowand Anderson office. These have made for some exciting discoveries; central amongst them, an extensive account and analysis of the building in Kininmonth's hand. Tantalising gaps in our knowledge nonetheless remain. Kininmonth did not keep a diary and he discarded notebooks. Those family papers which survive were unavailable for research, but I understand that they contain little of architectural relevance and nothing pertaining to Adam House.⁶ Only forty years after its completion, many of the questions which we would ask of this building will remain unanswered.

4 Gifford, J., and McWilliam, C., Walker, D., *The Buildings of Scotland: Edinburgh*, Harmondsworth, 1984, p.223. Gifford has not understood that Adam Square was itself named after the Adam Townhouse and this alone suggests that his comments might be taken with some caution.

5 The *Edinburgh Evening News*, the *Evening Dispatch*, *The Scotsman* (18 - 19 May 1955) and the *Weekly Scotsman* (10 August 1955) all carried reports on the history of the site and the opening of Adam House.

6 Interview with Richard Ewing, 16 Rutland Square, Edinburgh, 20 February 1994.

PART ONE

ADAM HOUSE : CONTEXT & COMMISSION

THE CONVERSION OF THE OPERETTA HOUSE

OFFICE FILES for the earliest Chambers Street scheme, for the conversion of the Edinburgh Operetta House 2 into new Examination Rooms for the University, were opened by William Kininmonth in March 1949 and closed on 1 June that year.¹ The building which he was to convert had enjoyed a complicated, not altogether distinguished, but certainly popular history since its opening - in disastrous circumstances with the lead singer, Lady Don, suffering a difficult cold - as the Gaiety Theatre on 5 July 1875.² In the 1890s the building became the Operetta House, one of Edinburgh's earliest cinemas, and the last film was shown, at the outbreak of war, on the evening of 23 December 1939.³

If the Gaiety did not provide quite the distinguished site that the University would have expected for their first post-war building, then the Senate papers make no mention of the fact. The University authorities *were* keenly aware, however, of an urgent need for post-war construction, and from the late 1940s the Court and Senatus papers reveal the first impulses of the expansion programme which characterised the University's development throughout the 1960s: only three years after the completion of Adam House, Spence's plans for George Square were being feted in the pages of the architectural press.

The office file for this early programme is as unrevealing as it is slender, and, compounded by the disappearance of the drawings which Kininmonth sent to the University on 8 March 1949,⁴ our knowledge about the scheme will remain incomplete. In a letter to Charles Stewart, the University Secretary, which accompanied the drawings, Kininmonth details its elements,⁵ but without visual material the design

1 Rowand Anderson Partnership, 16 Rutland Square, Edinburgh, Office file EN, I, *Operetta House Scheme A*: 8 March 1949 - 1 June 1949.

2 Programme notes to *The Daughter of Dawn* by Jack Ronder, to open the University Theatre, Adam House, August 1955.

3 *ibid.*

4 Office file EN, I, *Operetta House Scheme A*: 8 March 1949, letter from WHK to CHS encloses plans for "conversion of Operetta House to Exam Rooms".

5 Office file EN, I, *Operetta House Scheme A*: 8 March 1949, letter from WHK to CHS, details conversion of ground and first floors into examination rooms in a scheme providing 2 examination halls, 3 offices and storage space.

remains elusive. It is clear, however, that from an early stage this tentative, somewhat half-hearted programme to alter the ground and first floors of the old building was inadequate for a University intent on expansion and already chronically short of examination space. Thus, when in April 1949 the possibility arose of the University purchasing the whole site,⁶ Kininmonth was instructed to prepare plans for a wholesale demolition and rebuilding in a scheme five times as expensive as the first.⁷

⁶ Edinburgh University Court, *Signed Minutes*, vol. XX, 20 October 1947 - 17 July 1950: 21 March 1949, p.489. The Court authorized negotiations for the purchase of the whole Operetta House site at this meeting.

⁷ The cost of the initial conversion scheme was estimated at £35,000 [*loc. cit.* 6, p.489]. On 26 May 1949 [*loc. cit.* 6, p.539] an estimate for the new plans was received for £175,000. This gives some indication of the relatively modest nature of the first proposal.

THE FIRST MODERNIST PROPOSAL

"THE FOLLOWING conditions were observed as far as possible in design and planning", Kininmonth writes to Charles Stewart in a letter of 9 May 1949 accompanying these first proposals for a wholly new building:

Examination Rooms should be at the rear of the building with staircases at the front, thus minimising traffic noises. These rooms should have a maximum floor area.

Floor levels above the ground floor should approximate to floor levels of adjoining buildings with a view to possible future extensions.

Owing to the depth of the site, artificial lighting, heating and ventilation cannot be avoided but the maximum natural lighting should be contrived:⁸

in short, within the brief laid down by the University,⁹ exactly what we might expect. The arrangement of the accommodation as built seems largely fixed: five stories, including a basement, with entrance halls at the front and examination rooms to the rear, stairs to either side and a seating capacity for 1,007 students.¹⁰ Crucially, however, the letter continues:

The character of the building should be contemporary. The facade to Chambers Street should be simple and direct with a scale and breadth to correspond with the old University buildings opposite...

It is hoped that in order to offset the extreme simplicity of the design it may be possible to introduce a high quality finish in the Entrance Hall staircases and facade to Chambers Street.¹¹

The building was to be cast in steel reinforced concrete with hung ceilings. Externally, it would be finished with brick walls with stone and artificial stone facing; internally, with linoleum and 'accotile' flooring, plasterboard walls, hoptonwood stone and terazzo detailing, aluminium or bronze windows and internal metal folding screens.

The office drawings which accompanied this letter, like those for the early conversion scheme, appear no longer to exist.¹² We may only speculate as to their

⁸ Office file EN, 1, *Examination Halls, University*, 5 April 1949 - 5 April 1951: 9 May 1949, letter from WHK to CHS.

⁹ Their over-riding concern expressed in the Court Minutes [*loc. cit.* 6] was for an increase in space to house the Examination Rooms. On 5 April 1949 Kininmonth received a letter from the Clerk of Examinations detailing the University's full requirements and it is this brief that he met in proposing the new, larger scheme.

¹⁰ Office file EN, 1, *Examination Halls, University*: 9 May 1949, letter from WHK to CHS.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Extensive searches at 16 Rutland Square failed to reveal any drawings of the scheme. These were not, however, exhaustive, and if any drawings do still exist this is where they might be uncovered. When the Rowand Anderson, Kininmonth and Paul partnership broke up, a large amount of Adam House material was gifted to the

degree of finish, as, indeed, to their fate. The "sketch plans" for a building costing £175,000 referred to in the Court Papers of 16 May 1949¹³ must be those which Kininmonth dispatched, with the accompanying letter, one week earlier. No mention is made of the architectural nature of the scheme, though it is recorded that "the Committee were strongly in favour of this proposal but felt that no definite decision could be made until the whole property was in the possession of the University",¹⁴ and that on the 18 July the scheme was approved.¹⁵ In the absence of other evidence we may conclude that the drawings were sketch proposals, subsequently discarded not only because the scheme was abandoned, but also because - undeveloped - they could serve no useful purpose in the office. Notwithstanding its importance, therefore, it seems unlikely that the architectural form of this early modernist scheme will come to light.¹⁶

Within a study of context, however, it is possible to determine the essential qualities of the design. First, of course, Kininmonth makes plain the basic architectural nature of the building when he describes the 'extreme simplicity' that he seeks.¹⁷ Second, the materials which he proposes place the building firmly within a well-established modernist architectural vocabulary.¹⁸ Third, it is easy to place such a scheme within the wider body of Kininmonth's own work. In this context, the rear elevation, discussed in greater detail below [see page 25], provides a highly important model. Aside this there are other schemes contemporary with Adam House, such as the Renfrew Airport buildings 3 illustrated in *The Builder* on 7 January 1955,¹⁹ which, with their clear debt to Perret and Le Corbusier,²⁰ demonstrate how a modernist rubric might have been applied to Chambers Street.

(continued from page 13) University, but it appears that in the last four years this was 'mistakenly discarded' from the Architecture Department in Chambers Street.

13 Edinburgh University Court, *Signed Minutes*, vol. XX: 21 March 1949, p.489.

14 *ibid.*

15 *ibid.*: 18 July 1949, p.630.

16 See footnote 12, page 13.

17 Office file EN, 1, *Examination Halls, University*: 9 May 1949, letter from WHK to CHS.

18 See Powers, A., 'The Reconditioned Eye': Architects and Artists in English Modernism', in *AA files*, Number 25, 1993.

19 *The Builder*, vol. clxxxviii, No. 5838, 7 January 1955, pp.10-16.

By late November 1949, with Kininmonth already working on four projects for the University,²¹ the negotiations to purchase the Operetta House site were completed,²² and on the 23rd of that month he wrote to the Court:

I have to thank you for your letter instructing me to proceed with plans for the Examination Halls at No.3 Chambers Street, and would like to take this opportunity of thanking the University Court for [your] continued confidence in me.

At the same time I think it would be wise to ask the City Planning department for approval of the new scheme in principle.... I am fairly confident that approval will be given although we may experience some difficulty in the initial stages...²³

He began working on plans for submission to the Town Authorities, and in the spring of 1950 submitted a sketch elevation whose roof was to be of copper, walls constructed with a steel framed structure faced with stone slabs and a granite plinth and with window surrounds in bronze.²⁴

In the event, the confidence that Kininmonth had earlier so willingly expressed was unjustified. On 15 May he wrote to the Town Planning Officer that "it is most unlikely that the final design of the elevation will correspond with the perspective sketch sent to you recently, as the latter was not fully considered and was submitted *merely to show that the new building might rise above existing cornice level*"²⁵ [my highlight]: hardly the language of a confident planning application; and the next day, in a letter to the University Secretary, he writes that though the Town Planning Committee "does not object to the design of the proposed new Examination Halls, it is extremely concerned that the architectural unity of the block... will be destroyed without any guarantee that another comprehensive unit will take its place".²⁶ At some stage in the following two weeks the modernist proposal was

20 The hyperbolic arch of the Renfrew Airport building (1951-53), for example, was based on the Corbusier competition entry for the Palace of the Soviets, Moscow, 1931. Kininmonth also expressed admiration for Auguste Perret, and especially for the Church of Notre Dame at Le Raincy, 1922-23. [see Lawrence Wodehouse, 'Old Guard, Avant-Guarde', *Building Design*, 23 February 1979, p.29].

21 Office file EN, 1, *Examination Halls, University*: 17 November 1949, letter from WHK to CHS. Details four schemes (other than Adam House) underway in the Rutland Square Office for the University: Abden House, the Reid School of Music and the Chemistry and Anatomy departments.

22 Edinburgh University Court, *Signed Minutes*, vol. XX: 21 November 1949, p.704.

23 Office file EN, 1, *Examination Halls, University*: 23 November 1949, letter from WHK to Assistant Secretary.

24 *ibid.*: 4 April 1950, letter from WHK to Town Planning Department.

25 *ibid.*: 15 May 1950, letter from WHK to D. M. Plumstead, Town Planning Officer.

26 *ibid.*: 16 May 1950, letter from WHK to CHS.

abandoned. On 30 May Kininmonth received a message from the Principal, Sir Edward Appleton, commending a new scheme,²⁷ and the next day he submitted these proposals to the Town Planning department.

²⁷ Office file EN, 1, *Examination Halls, University*: 16 May 1950, letter from WHK to CHS.

THE SECOND CLASSICAL SCHEME

TO ACCOMPANY the new plans, Kininmonth wrote the following letter to the Planning Officer:

If the site is examined in relation to its surroundings it will be seen that the architectural atmosphere of the street as a whole is overpoweringly classic and it is extremely doubtful if on this particular site with the University Buildings opposite any other form of architecture would look comfortable and in scale with its surroundings, and I was forced to the conclusion that the new building should:

Conform in its architecture to the architecture of the street in which every other building is in the classic tradition

It should link with the buildings on either side and so retain the architectural unity of the existing block

It should be an obvious part of the Old University, and

It should be designed as far as possible as part of a "Gateway" to the East End of Chambers Street with the projecting and pedimented portion of the Old University forming the other part and together framing the street scene.

The facade has accordingly been designed with a view to meeting these conditions as far as possible.²⁸

Both the language and basic architectural concerns now being expressed are new. But if, as such, it is important to understand how the change took place, I am unable to present any conclusive evidence as to what induced the change of heart. The office files are reticent as to who was responsible, the Senate and Court papers are typically silent and the city Planning department destroy all correspondence concerning rejected applications. Objections from the planning committee or from University patrons - both potential conservative critics of a modernist scheme - seem less likely in the light of the confidence which both, apparently, had already expressed in the Modernist proposal.²⁹ The Cockburn Association may have objected but there is no evidence in the Rowand Anderson or Cockburn office files to suggest this. Elsewhere,³⁰ it has been proposed that Robert Matthew, Kininmonth's contemporary and friend, found the modernist design unsuitable for the Chambers Street site, but "given [Matthew's] later determination to destroy George Square, and his uncompromising Midlothian County offices, which are surely in a much

²⁸ Office file EN, 1, *Examination Halls, University*: 31 May 1950, letter from WHK to Town Planning Clerk.

²⁹ See Edinburgh University Court, *Signed Minutes*, vol. XX: p.539: "the committee were strongly in favour of this proposal". See also the letter of 23 November 1949 from WHK to CHS [footnote 23 and accompanying text]. Office file EN, 1, *Examination Halls, University*: 16 May 1950, letter from WHK to CHS: "Mr. Plumstead telephoned me this morning when he explained that the committee does not object to the *design* of the proposed Exam. Halls" [but. *n.b.* footnote 27 and accompanying text].

³⁰ Interview with Richard Ewing, 16 Rutland Square, Edinburgh, 20 February 1994.

more important position in relation to other historic buildings than is Chambers Street",³¹ this is unlikely. In short, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, we must conclude that the decision was Kininmonth's, and that it was made to address his stated concerns for harmony and propriety within the streetscape, qualities perhaps lacking in the 'direct simplicity' of the earlier programme.

On 15 July 1950 the new Examination Halls were granted planning consent³² and drawings were sent to tender. Throughout the summer and autumn schedules were finalised and legal rights of possession to the Chambers Street site confirmed; there was particular difficulty in establishing rights to the common entrance with the neighbouring police department.³³ By late 1950, however, more serious difficulties were emerging, as demonstrated in a letter from the London-based University Grants Committee [U.G.C.]³⁴

Fibrous plaster decorations are indicated on the drawings: this finish is expensive and it is suggested that it should be reconsidered.

The amount of softwood timber required amounts to approximately 8.15 standards. This is a large quantity and with the prevailing shortage we must ask you to reduce this wherever possible. For example is it possible to use T-irons as a substitute for the wood ceiling joints? This could provide a saving of about 5 standards. A further saving might be achieved if suitable de-controlled hardwoods were used wherever feasible...³⁵

Post-war shortages and the financial stringency of the U.G.C., their effects compounded by a chronic labour shortage in the Edinburgh building trade,³⁶ figure

31 My thanks to Oliver Barratt for his thoughts on the likelihood of Robert Matthew as a influence in the change of design [quoted from a letter to the author, 27 February 1994].

32 Office file EN, 1, *Examination Halls, University*: 15 July 1950, letter from Town Clerk to WHK advises that "the committee resolved to grant general consent to the proposed development subject to the later submission of a final application with detailed plans".

33 *ibid.* See general correspondence of October 1950.

34 I have been unable, within the limits of this study, to research the role of the University Grants Committee further. Based at 30 Belgrave Square, London, they financed the major part of the Examination Halls project.

35 Office file EN, 1, *Examination Halls, University*: 14 December 1950, letter from U.G.C. to WHK.

36 e.g. Office file EN, 6, *Exam Halls*, 1 May 1953 - 31 December 1953: 16 May 1953, letter from Wm Gerrard & Sons and Co. to WHK: "There is a large programme of work in front of the building trade with the consequence that operatives are fully employed and thus can pick and choose their jobs. This applies especially to the mason craft, which as you are aware is very short in personnel. The fact that a large amount of reconstruction work is now opening up in the central areas of Edinburgh means still further demands for mason operatives and, moreover, these contracts being in the nature of housing work carry a 'ten hours per week' overtime allowance. (continued from page 19) In view of the foregoing it makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to retain a labour

in equal measure throughout the building programm; and it is important to appreciate the difficult circumstances which characterized much of the building's construction.

Work began in July 1951.³⁷ By the summer of 1953 Kininmonth was proceeding with the design of the tympanum in the central arch,³⁸ towards the end of 1954 the decorative schemes for the interior were established.³⁹ In November of that year, the University decided to call the new Halls 'Adam House',⁴⁰ and on 18 May 1955 Sir Edward Appleton opened the building,⁴¹ not yet completed and some eight months behind schedule. Progress thereafter was smooth, though problems did occur, as the University secretary noted on 30 September 1955,

During the past weeks several people have walked into the plate glass panels in the partitions, but until now we have had no accident. Yesterday afternoon, however, a student walked through one panel and was very badly cut.

I should be grateful, therefore, if you would give some thought to any method we can adopt to avoid such accidents in the future...⁴²

and, on the 18 November,

force on any contract where the bare four hour week is being worked. The men naturally go to those jobs where the rewards are greater".

Despite this problem the University refused to sanction any overtime allowance, increasingly a point of contention between architect and client, especially after the failure, in 1954, to complete the building on time.

³⁷ Office file EN, 2, *Edinburgh University Examination Halls*, 6 April 1951 - 31 October 1951: 2 July 1951, letter from L. D. Macmillan (Department of Works) to WHK.

³⁸ Office file EN, 6, *Exam Halls*: 7 May 1953, letter from WHK to CHS, detailing changes in the sculptural programme for the Chambers Street facade. Kininmonth had initially proposed a design of "The Four Winds" for the arch, with equally rich cherubs holding torches within the niches at ground floor level. This is the scheme employed in the paper model of the facade [see footnote 50, p.22-23, and accompanying text] and which appears in the drawing illustrating Kininmonth's 1955 letter to the editor of the builder [see Frontispiece, p.1]. The Court, however, was unhappy with these proposals and established a committee in April 1953 to consider other possible schemes. When, in July 1953, they chose the present formal heraldic design, and Kininmonth was therefore forced to redesign the niches to contain the vases that we see today, he wrote to the Court [WHK to CHS, 10 July 1953]: "I may say, I regret the committee's preference for this design, rather than the earlier one of the 'Four Winds' which to my mind has equal significance and greater decorative possibilities. However, further discussion would now be prejudicial to building progress, and since the new design will be effective in work, and being stone carving rather than sculpture, much less costly to prepare, I think the 'four winds' had better be forgotten".

The sculptor C. d'O Pilkington Jackson carried out the scheme, together with the Grecian shields in the picture gallery and theatre. He was the leading sculptor in Scotland, an indication of the high prestige of the building.

³⁹ Office file EN, 8, *Examination Halls*, 1 July 1954 - 31 November 1954: 25 October 1954, letter from WHK to CHS. See page 33 for a description of the decorative scheme for the theatre.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*: 24 November 1949, letter from WHK to CHS.

⁴¹ See press contemporary press reports [*loc. cit.* 7, Introduction, p.8].

⁴² Office file EN, 10, *Adam House*, 1 April 1955 - 31 August 1955: 30 September 1955, letter from L. D. Macmillan (Department of Works) to WHK.

We have recently been allowing choirs to practise in the top floor of Adam House and at the same time the theatre has been in use in the basement. We are rather perturbed to find that the choir can be distinctly heard in the theatre, except during very noisy scenes.

I should be grateful if you would let me have your views on how we may get round this difficulty.⁴³

*

The University, Adam House completed, moved on to consider larger projects, and against which the building appears almost anachronistic. There can be no doubt that the circumstances in which the Examination Halls were conceived rapidly altered during the 1950s. In October 1955, for example, McIntosh & Co - Kircaldy Furniture Manufacturers - wrote to Kininmonth concerning furniture 4 for the building:⁴⁴

The furniture which you have designed is, of course, very beautiful and exclusive but it will have little in common with machine made furniture. Today, in all the western countries, machinery is so essential that it is very difficult to get craftsmen who can produced the fine designs which you have sent us. The sections and profiles will necessitate a great deal of hand work, and while it still could be done in this factory, it would so greatly impair productivity that even should the prices be available, it would not be right for us to undertake the small number of pieces in exchange for the great quantity of furniture which can, by machinery, be made.⁴⁵

43 Office file EN, 11, *Adam House*, 1 September 1955 - 24 July 1959: 18 November 1955, letter from L. D. Macmillan to WHK.

44 The majority of Adam House furniture is now contained within the Talbot Rice Collection, and only the semi-circular apse sofas remain (see fig. 5). The chairs are of a high quality, not least, perhaps, because the staircase halls in which they originally stood were designed to contain many paintings from the Torrie collection (now also in the Talbot Rice).

45 *ibid.*: 14 October 1955, letter from H. H. McIntosh & Co. to WHK.

ADAM HOUSE: ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY

THE SECOND, classical scheme proposed by Kininmonth dramatically changed the character of the new examination halls. In internal configuration, however, the guiding principle which he had established for the first scheme⁴⁶ [see above, page 13] was maintained throughout the project. Kininmonth was later to write that

The building was intended primarily for examination purposes, but consideration was also given to the University's need for a Cultural Centre for Conferences, Lectures, Receptions, Dinners, Dances, Theatrical and Cinema Performances and an Art Gallery. These various needs and requirements are necessarily reflected in the planning and design since all rooms have several uses.

There are six floors, two below and three above the ground floor and with the exception of the lower basement each has its own Examination Hall. Quietness in these rooms was essential and for this reason they are placed at the back of the building and baffled against sound from the street by a series of crush spaces, lifts and staircases.⁴⁷

We enter a large hall, with examination hall ahead and stairs rising to left and right. Semicircular apses, 4, set into the side walls and surmounted by half-domes, reflect a circular, balustraded opening in the ceiling, through which the floor above is revealed. The large, metal-framed glass wall separating examination room and entrance hall further dissolves spatial divisions, and, coupled with the distinct use of indirect light sources, the eye is drawn beyond its immediate surroundings and through the building. Linoleum floor patterns establish a basic geometry of square and circle 6; mouldings and fittings are spare, furnishings tonally reduced. Stairs lead down to a richly-coloured foyer and to the basement theatre; and up to a further series of landing halls and examination rooms towards the third storey. Here, an oculus - with a startling view to the dome of Old College 7 - mirrors a gently spherical dome pierced with radiating circular lights 8. The hall leads into the final examination room, which, doubling as a picture-gallery, is similarly top-lit by a series of hidden roof-lights 9.

⁴⁶ Office file EN, 1, *Examination Halls, University*: 9 May 1949, letter from WHK to CHS.

⁴⁷ William Kininmonth, notes on *Adam House*, 1955, contained within Office files at 16 Rutland Square, Edinburgh.

Thus in a simple design, Kininmonth provided the university with a multi-purpose: the examination rooms, which together accommodate eight hundred students (1,900 for lectures), were each equally designed for Parties (on the ground, first, second and top floors), Theatre and Cinema (in the Basement), and, on the third floor, the Picture Gallery.

The building is symmetrical **10**, and when viewed in conjunction with such details as the bronze balcony balustrading, radiator casings **11**, or the decorative programme of the theatre and picture gallery, where the walls are adorned with a series of 'shields' loosely based on antique Grecian prototypes **12**,⁴⁸ we might conclude that the interior of the building, like its facade, is 'classical'. This is not, however, the first impression given by contemporary newspaper photographs which, in showing the interior uncluttered by later unsympathetic alterations, demonstrate an architectural language largely typical of the early 1950s **13**. Crittal screens, etched glass details **14**, hoptonwood panels, terazzo and 'korkoid' flooring belong equally to the language of the 1951 Festival as they do to Adam House.

This stylistic dichotomy provides a similar key to the exterior of the building. The Chambers Street facade **15**, of Hewarthburn Stone,

is designed on the modular principles of classical architecture where each part is in direct mathematical relationship to the whole and the design is based on a hidden system of proportion controlled by the geometric relationship between the circle, square and triangle. So far as practical considerations would permit this system was carried through the design as a whole.⁴⁹

A large paper model of Adam House **16**, signed by Kininmonth⁵⁰ and now in the Edinburgh University Library makes plain the subtle qualities of the facade. It is

⁴⁸ The shields each symbolise a virtue or idea, such as health, wisdom, courage, and friendship. Their derivation from Greek classical vases is self-evident.

⁴⁹ William Kininmonth, notes on *Adam House*, 1955. See also Appendix Two. Such an approach to describing the proportional system of a facade may owe its origin to the attempt by Lutyens' son, Robert Lutyens, to explain his father's language of classical architecture in a set of written principles. See Lutyens, R., *Sir Edwin Lutyens: An Appreciation in Perspective*, London, 1943; Hussey, C., *The Life of Sir Edwin Lutyens*, London, 1950, p.164; and Butler, A. S. G., *The Lutyens Memorial: The Architecture*, vol. 1, ch. 1; vol. 3, ch. 2.

⁵⁰ The model would appear to be by Kininmonth himself. His skill as a draughtsman was renowned, and its detailed and fine execution would appear to indicate his dedication to the project. The model depicts the first scheme for the tympanum and niche sculpture, in which Kininmonth proposed a design for the four winds **16a** and for two cherubs **16c** holding torches. It can thus be related to the facade drawing [see Frontispiece] which

divided into three elements; a tall, pedimented, three-bay central block flanked by shallow, advanced, narrow bays with tall parapets to either side 17. To the left is a further three-storey single bay, which provides the common entrance with the police department. The vertical emphasis which these side blocks provide is counterbalanced by strongly expressed horizontal members at first-floor, attic and pediment level. The ground floor is severe and reductive. Tuscan pilasters, possibly derived from those at Old College opposite, support a strong entablature which runs from buildings to left and right. The two side windows are unadorned save for single block keystones 18. To either side of the monumental bronze doorway 19, with eight sharply defined panels relieved only by a covering of small circular studs 20, are two semi-circular niches containing smoothly-modelled, classical vases 21; above the door, a sharply-cut keystone casts a crisp shadow 22. But such severity is softened by small details: the delicate architrave return at the steps of the front door 23 and, below the niches, two spherical shell motifs.

The central Serlian-derived window 24 clearly denotes a *piano nobile*. Ground floor pilasters become first-floor half-columns, in turn supporting a richer entablature than that below. The architrave of the central, pedimented window is enlivened with further shell motifs, and the heraldic display above is enriched with ribbons, palms and a gold-leafed Greek inscription 25. The side bays taper toward the upper storey, their planes activated by slightly recessed panels set above the second storey windows. The pediment mirrors that of Old College opposite.

While the decoration is spare in detail, the effect of recession and advance, of the pilasters and half-columns to ground and first floors and of the sculptural crest within the tympanum, nonetheless combine to rich result, emphasised by the sharp side-lighting which Chambers Street receives during the afternoon.

(continued from page 22) accompanied Kininmonth's letter to *The Builder*, 4 February 1955. See footnote 38, p.20, for a further discussion of the tympanum sculpture.

Floor levels are established, as Kininmonth proposed of the modernist design⁵¹ [see above, page 13], by the neighbouring buildings to east and west, and significantly both ground-floor entablature and the second-storey cornice are derived from those to left and right 26. Nine- and twelve-pane timber sash windows similarly reflect the fenestration of Old College and of the neighbouring buildings to east and west. To this extent alone, the facade successfully addresses the concerns for harmony of streetscape which Kininmonth stressed as a determining quality of the design⁵² [see above, page 18].

The rear elevation 27, visible only from the narrow Close which connects Guthrie Street with the Cowgate, introduces a different set of architectural concerns. The ground falls away some thirty feet from the facade to the back of the building, and here, in a design clearly expressive of the internal arrangement of the building, the materials include glass bricks, concrete panels, and metal-framed floor to ceiling windows with slender aluminium balconies and pre-cast concrete sills and surrounds that stand proud from the flush surface of the walls 28.

*

There is no simple explanation for the different materials and forms which run parallel through the building. Clearly, both post-war material shortages and the financial pressure under which Kininmonth was required to work [see above, page 19] are an important factor,⁵³ but they explain neither the stylistic dichotomy as a whole, nor such apparent solecisms as a floor running straight across the top of the first-floor stair windows 29. Facade and interior, let alone the facade and rear elevation, appear disjointed, even ill-articulated; in short, we may conclude that

51 Office file EN, 1, *Examination Hall, University*: 9 May 1949, letter from WHK to CHS.

52 Office file EN, 1, *Examination Hall, University*: 31 May 1950, letter from WHK to Town Planning Clerk.

53 In reply to the University Grants Committee letter, 14 December 1950, [see footnote 35 and accompanying text], Kininmonth wrote to Charles Stewart on 22 December 1950 that "we do feel strongly that a certain richness of treatment is called for in a building of this class". This would imply that Kininmonth, as far as the interior is concerned, was denied the possibility of a rich treatment equal to that of the facade. We might argue that this creates the sense of disunity between facade and interior which I identify elsewhere; but even were this the case, such problems alone cannot explain the dichotomy of styles running through Adam House. I must thank Gavin Stamp for his help in the consideration of this particular aspect of the building.

two different architectural systems - the one modern, the other traditional - are purposefully employed to run alongside one another. The following chapters will discuss the implications of this dichotomy.

PART TWO

ADAM HOUSE : STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

MODERNIST INFLUENCES

i. *International Modernists: Kininmonth, Spence and the Thirties' villas*^{1,2}

I HAVE mentioned [see above, p.6] Kininmonth's position, with Basil Spence, as one of the principle exponents of the International Movement in Scotland. In 1931-32, returning from London, Kininmonth set up in a loose association with Spence, and a year later, according to McKean, he "was glad to accept a partnership from A. F. Balfour Paul, the inheritor of Rowand Anderson's office, but [only] on condition that Spence could come too. Balfour Paul agreed provided they used one drawing board in rotation".³

To a greater or lesser extent, the office functioned as three distinct practices, with Paul, for example, working on Pollock House alongside Spence at Dr. King's House in Easter Belmont 30 and Kininmonth on his own house at Dick Place; and, moreover, there can be no doubt that of the two younger practitioners, Spence was considered by contemporaries to be the more brilliant: "here", they were led to believe, "could be Scotland's leading modernist".⁴ The partnership nonetheless indicates Kininmonth's facility as a modernist. His own house at 46a Dick Place 31 shows a skilful assimilation of the vocabulary of white rendered walls, of contrast between the curve and the rectangle and of flat, interconnecting roof terraces that characterises international style architecture in England⁵ 32. Two years later the

1 I must acknowledge my debt to Charles McKean in the preparation of this chapter. It is my belief, nonetheless, that he tends to seek for examples of Scottish International Modernism where it may or may not exist.

2 While my argument in this chapter is concerned with Spence's and Kininmonth's modernism, it should be remembered, as I explain more extensively in the concluding pages of this paper, that throughout the 1930s they worked in a variety of styles, traditional as well as modern. This chapter should be read, therefore, in conjunction with the arguments presented in pp.41-44.

See also Macgregor, A., C., *Griboch, The evolution, architecture and interior design of a 1930s Scottish Country House*, M. A. (Hons). Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1991 [unpublished]. Caroline Macgregor identifies Classicism, and in particular Nash and the Regency, as a crucial influence in the apparently 'modernist' country house. Anthony Blee, Basil Spence's son-in-law, is recorded as having confirmed Spence's admiration for Nash. These influences must be taken alongside those of International Modernist houses such as Joldwynds, by Oliver Hill for the Rt. Hon. Wilfred Greene, Surrey (1933) which Caroline Macgregor also identifies.

3 McKean, C., *The Scottish Thirties: An Architectural Introduction*, Edinburgh, 1987, p.34.

4 *ibid.*, p. 36.

5 Wodehouse, L., in 'Old Guard, Avant-Garde', in *Building Design*, 23 February 1979, argues that Kininmonth's use of the dominant semi-circular drawing room window may, indeed, have influenced English international style developments, such as the Connel, Ward and Lucas House at Moor Park, Hertfordshire (1936-37). Nonetheless,

same themes were re-interpreted on a larger scale at Lismhor, on the Easter Belmont Road, where Kininmonth worked in partnership with Spence. Together, according to Gifford, the two buildings introduce the Modern Movement to Scotland.⁶

If this is the case, then Adam House, particularly its interior and to some extent its rear elevation, can be placed within the tradition established by Kininmonth at Dick Place and Lismhor. Though the three buildings have very different functional concerns, the Adam House interior shares an architectural vocabulary, concerned with qualities of space, light and the interplay of geometric form, with the 1930s villas. On a formal level, there is an affinity between the contrast of 'curve and rectangle' which McKean recognises at Dick Place⁷ and the relationship between circle and square which characterises the architectural language at Adam House. When, in 1927, Frederick Etchells translated Le Corbusier's *Vers Une Architecture*, with its "hymning of the great primary forms of cube, cone, sphere, cylinder and pyramid, and... its memorable dicta 'Architecture is the masterly, correct and magnificent play of masses brought together in light'",⁸ he introduced many of the themes that in a different context, and albeit in a changed architectural language, were to be touched upon in the interior configuration of Adam House.

The 1930s work is equally indicative of the stylistic *ambivalence* which we have identified at Adam House. Lismhor was among the last of the emphatically 'modern' houses carried out by the Kininmonth-Spence practice, and though this has given rise to the notion of Spence as "an unfulfilled modern genius suffocated between the slump and World War II",⁹ McKean is right to suggest¹⁰ alternative reasons for the

(continued from page 27) a building such as Mendelsohn and Chermayeff's De La Warr Pavilion at Bexhill-on-Sea (1934-35) [see fig. 32], which employs a similar motif, did prefigure the publication of the Kininmonth and King Houses in the architectural press in 1935.

⁶ Gifford *et al*, *op. cit.*, 1984, p.65.

⁷ McKean, C., *Edinburgh: An Illustrated Architectural Guide*, Edinburgh, 1983, cat. 314.

⁸ Dean, D., *The Thirties: Recalling the English Architectural Scene*, London, 1983, p.14.

⁹ McKean, C., *The Scottish Thirties*, 1987, p.36.

break. On the one hand, "of the many houses designed by Spence in the 1930s, only the first (that is, Lismhor) had a flat roof, and it failed";¹¹ and on the other, both Kininmonth and Spence display a notable adherence to vernacular forms: though "modern in the sense of planning and detail", writes McKean, "these houses are nonetheless very Scots: great pitched roofs, white harling, and horizontal glazing... Spence shared some of that seeking after native roots for modernism that was motivating Hurd, Reiach, Mears, Lindsay, Mansfield Forbes, Sir John Stirling Maxwell *et al*".¹² Thus Spence's belief that

our tradition is really a sensitive reaction to existing conditions, and the production of a building that is fitted for its purpose, direct and simple in its conception, with an eye for proportion, and the understanding use of materials... the judicious selection of forms during the Renaissance and Regency periods prove that old forms adapted to conditions that are suitable for their use is a sound policy¹³

can be related not only to his neo-vernacular modernist experiments but, in a different context, to Kininmonth's language at Adam House: concern for streetscape, harmony, propriety, and the adaption of 'old forms to conditions suitable for their use'.

ii. *Festival Style*

BOTH THE formal architectural concerns and the concurrent *lack* of modernist dogma inherent in the 1930s villas provide a useful contextual background against which to examine Adam House as a modern building. In assessing the nature of the *style* of the building, however, it is necessary to look beyond merely formal qualities and within this context, the Festival of Britain provides an invaluable point of reference.

10 Having said this, we should remember, as Wodehouse argues, that Spence was searching for clients who would commission a modern building throughout the 1930s. Dr. John King, who commissioned Lismhor, was without doubt an unusual client in Edinburgh of the early 1930s.

11 McKean, C., *op. cit.*, 1987, p.36.

12 *ibid.*

13 Spence, B., *Building Industries*, April 1938.

At once, it should be recognised that when the Festival opened in May 1951, the design for Adam House was established and that preparations were being made to erect the concrete frame of the building. For this reason alone, the Festival should not be emphasised as a direct influence. Nonetheless, on 24 May, three weeks after the exhibition was opened by the King and Queen, Kininmonth wrote to the University Factor that "I have to be away from Edinburgh for about a week";¹⁴ and thereafter a number of sketches, in particular of the Festival Hall and of a distinctly Eamesesque chair and desk, appear on the back of Adam House correspondence 33.

More important, and as all those involved with the Festival have subsequently stressed, is the fact that 'the life style of the new technological age'¹⁵ introduced to the public at the South Bank was far from being either new or original. Threat of war during the 1930s, and the requirement for cheap, rapid and efficient construction after 1945, set against the nature of state patronage (via local authority departments), had combined to deny any serious architectural possibilities in the public realm for well over a decade. But this, and the years of austerity that preceded the Labour Government's decision to give "the younger architects and designers, men in their early forties, a chance to show what they could achieve when freed from the constraints of building houses and schools and designing New Towns",¹⁶ has tended to over-inflate the architectural importance of the Festival as a *turning point* in British design history. On the contrary, the South Bank architects, led by Hugh Casson, were almost all members of the MARS Group¹⁷ and to that extent the Festival was 'new' only insofar as it gave them the opportunity to

¹⁴ Office file, EN, II, *Edinburgh University Examination Halls*, 6 April 1951 - 31 October 1951: 24 May 1951, letter from WHK to the University Factor, Mr. Cook.

¹⁵ Strong, R., Prologue to *A Tonic to the Nation*, ed. Banham, M., and Hillier, B., London, 1976, p.31.

¹⁶ Ebong, *The origins, organisation and significance of the Festival of Britain 1951*, Edinburgh, 1986, p.309-10.

¹⁷ *The Modern Architecture Research Group*. Its members included Maxwell Fry, H. T. Cadbury Brown, Misha Black, Hugh Casson, Wells Coates, Erno Goldfinger, Ove Arup, M. Hartland-Thomas, Ralph Tubbs and Peter Moro.

introduce to the public ideas that had been current in architectural circles for more than a decade 34.

It is clearly valid, therefore, to discuss Adam House in the light of a 'Festival Style' which has been traced back, at the Stockholm International Exhibition of 1930,¹⁸ to the very modernism that Kininmonth had practised during that decade. He would have been clearly aware of its architectural implications, not least owing to his relationship with Spence who, from 1949, was designing the South Bank 'Sea and Ships' Pavilion, and who later, at Coventry 35, was to provide the very 'Apotheosis'¹⁹ of the Festival style.

It is important to recognise that by their very nature, the South Bank buildings encouraged the 'Flimsy....Effeminate' qualities identified by Reyner Banham in his retrospective appraisal of Festival style.²⁰ Temporary structures, designed not only to delight and surprise but also to stand for less than a year - and displaying, as Osbert Lancaster noted, "much ingenuity in the employment of such materials as chicken wire and asbestos sheeting for purposes for which they had never been intended"²¹ - inevitably feel and look distinctly different from a permanent, stone building on a gap site 36. Nonetheless, and bearing this qualification in mind, I turn first to the rear elevation.

Like the early modernist proposal, this is never mentioned by Kininmonth in his notes on the building and so, in contrast to the Chambers Street facade, we cannot be certain of his architectural intentions. Clearly, however, they do not seem to coincide with the impulses which determined the facade: a reflection on the one hand, perhaps, of standard eighteenth-century building practice,²² an example, on the other, of Lutyens' "Queen Anne in front, Mary-Anne behind";²³ but also, surely,

18 See, for example, Ebong, *op. cit.*, 1986, Ch. 6, 'The Origins of Modernism'.

19 Feaver, W., 'Festival Star', in Banham, M., and Hillier, B., London, 1976, p.54.

20 Banham, R., 'The Style: 'Flimsy....Effeminate'?', in Banham, M., and Hillier, B., London, 1976.

21 Lancaster, O., *Here, of all Places: The Pocket Lamp of Architecture*, London, 1959, p.176.

22 The Edinburgh New Town provides example enough of this.

23 Quoted in Gradidge, R., *Edwin Lutyens, Architect Laureate*, London, 1981, p.80.

an intentional and necessary use of 1950s forms and methods introduced in order to bring light into the examination rooms *in a contemporary way*. Thus the floor-to-ceiling, metal-framed windows can be compared in intention and effect to those of a South Bank building such as *The Lion and the Unicorn Pavilion* 37, where the whole south wall was given over to glass. The relationship is not direct, but serves to demonstrate that common mood which informed not only Adam House but almost every other building illustrated in the pages of the architectural press during the early 1950s.

'Festival style' runs through the building in detail as in larger conception. In October 1954 Kininmonth established the decorative scheme for the theatre, with the side walls in yellow vianide, the Proscenium in a smoke green, the ceiling painted grey or smoke blue with spot lights in white and seating in deep plum²⁴. The next year he specified thirty 'tubular steel hat and coat stands [in] stove-enamelled poly-bronze'²⁵ for the entrance hall, of which one remains today, a clearly Festival-derived, Ernest Race inspired design. The Chambers Street facade, moreover, displays details characteristic of 1951: the smooth, circular 'tongues' of the central window volute mouldings, the round, gently spherical discs decorating the tympanum arch, and the simplified, curiously insubstantial vases in the entrance niches 38. Indeed, we might wonder, do the tiny incised patterns on the uppermost entablature 39 reflect that *leitmotif* of 1951, the Festival Star?

²⁴ Office file EN, 8, *Examination Halls*: 27 October 1954, letter from WHK to CHS.

²⁵ Office file EN, 10, *Adam House*: 5 April 1955, letter from WHK to James Grant & Co.

i. *The Adam Brothers: Old College and Adam Square*

THE FACADE of Hewarthburn Stone is designed to harmonise with the street scene, where all buildings are classical in conception, as an obvious part of the old university opposite 40 and as a tribute to Robert Adam and his family.²⁶

With these words, Kininmonth introduces the three basic concerns which went to inform the second, classical design of Adam House. Evidently, beyond the notions of harmony and propriety that I have established, Adam architecture proved crucial in formulating the design. Not only were the new Examination Halls to stand directly opposite Old College, but, as Kininmonth wrote to Charles Stewart on 24 November 1954:

I have been able to verify my information that the family home of the brothers Adam stood on the site of the new buildings. The print in the University Library, illustrating the ceremony at the laying of the Foundation Stone of the University, shows that it was a fairly large villa standing in its own grounds and fronting on to Adam Square, an open space at the east end of what is now Chamber [*sic.*] Street. I understood the building once housed the Watt Institution, now the Heriot-Watt College, and was probably taken down when Chamber Street was built.

I think, therefore, that it would be a very happy inspiration to call the new buildings "Adam House", and if this has been finally agreed I shall have the inscription cut when I hear from you.²⁷

Notwithstanding these sentiments, it is important that nowhere in the early stages of the design does Kininmonth refer to the Adams or to Adam Square. In the first Modernist proposal, he talks only of "the old University buildings opposite,"²⁸ and even in the letter [see above, p.18] accompanying the traditional scheme of 1950, Adam is not mentioned. A letter of 23 June 1950 explaining this design to the Assistant Secretary of the University (where we might especially expect to find reference to Old College and its architect) repeats his concerns for harmony and conformity, but similarly does not mention the Adams. Indeed, within the files, Kininmonth's first reference to the connection is made as late as 25 October 1954. Earlier that month, Charles Stewart had written to Kininmonth:

²⁶ William Kininmonth, notes on *Adam House*, 1955.

²⁷ Office file EN, 8, *Examination Halls*: 24 November 1954, letter from WHK to CHS.

²⁸ Office file EN, 1, *Examination Halls, University*: 23 November 1949, letter from WHK to University vice-Secretary.

Various people in the Faculty of Divinity have called our attention to the fact that Dr. Kelman used the old Operetta House around about the turn of the century for a famous series of services for students. They want is to commemorate this by a plaque somewhere on the outside of your exam Halls. Between ourselves, I am not over-enthusiastic about the suggestion, but I can't see how we can refuse...²⁹

and in reply Kininmonth sent him proposals for three bronze plaques:³⁰ the first commemorating Dr. Kelman, the second, the site of the Adam Family House, which he describes as "*historically, a much more important record than [the first]*"[my highlight], and a third to read 'University of Edinburgh Examination School'.³¹ The letter is illuminating not least because it confirms, even at this late date, that a name for the new halls had not been established. In this absence of archival evidence to the contrary, it may be asked whether Kininmonth's specific references to Adam are retrospective, used only to give the building meaning after the event.

Such a conclusion ignores, however, the weight of visual evidence suggesting a vital Adam influence. Kininmonth describes [above] the print of the Old College foundation stone ceremony 41, and this, with a nineteenth century wood-engraving of the *Watt Institution and School of Arts, Adam Square* 42, makes plain the architectural character of the building. Central - both in position and importance - is a large Serlian window, and when it reappears at the Examination Halls, transfigured, certainly, but in the same central position, we must conclude that Kininmonth is making a direct quotation. His belief that the new Examination Halls stood on the site of the Adam Townhouse was confirmed as early as July 1950, several months before building work was started (and before, therefore, the design was concluded), when demolition of the Operetta House revealed the stone well which stood in the garden and provided the original water supply of the old villa.³²

29 Office file EN, 8, *Examination Halls*: 4 September 1954, letter from CHS to WHK.

30 The plaques commemorating Dr. Kelman and the Adam connection were finally placed to either side of the main door in the entrance hall.

31 *ibid.*: 25 October 1954, letter from WHK to CHS.

32 *ibid.*: 24 November 1954, letter from WHK to CHS.

In a subsequent analysis of the principles governing the proportions of the facade [Appendix Two], Kininmonth introduced a further reference to Adam architecture when he wrote that

Some attempt was also made within the purer theory [of] mathematical proportion to include a more emotional symbolism. The general conception is that of a triumphal arch through which all students pass to success or failure. The pedimented treatment of the facade was adopted in the first instance to echo the pediment of the Old University on the opposite side of Chambers Street and thus create a visual "gateway" within the street, while the arch was intended to provide a mutual association with the "Old Quad" 43 in the minds of Students and the general public.³³

We might question the extent to which the passing public or the soon-to-be-examined student notice the finer points of such emotive symbolism, but the evidence is of a clearly-stated architectural debt. It is interesting to note that the three volume Thezard edition of *The Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam* was amongst Kininmonth's collection of books sold at his death.³⁴ As regards the facade at least, we may conclude that the Adam influence, and particularly the example of the villa itself, played strongly in the creation of Adam House.

ii. *The Neo-Classical Idea: Soane and Lutyens*

I HAVE suggested above that it was a *modernist* approach that determined Adam House interior. But to understand fully its architectural parentage, Kininmonth's statement that "the design of the interior is based on similar classical principles [to those which determined the facade], expanded to meet new functions and contemporary building methods"³⁵ is important. It confirms, on the one hand, the contemporary aesthetic which we have already examined; but introduces on the other the notion that the interior, in principle, is as classical as the facade itself.

By this, we must assume that Kininmonth refers to the symmetry of plan identified above [p.23]. To this might be added that hierarchy of parts which informs the external - and hence, to some extent, the internal - arrangement of the

33 William Kininmonth, notes to *Adam House*, 1957.

34 Phillips, George Street, Edinburgh, catalogue of *Printed Books, Architectural Books. Maps, Postcards and Prints*, for sale at Auction 7 June 1989, cat. no. 35. Kininmonth's library was disposed of in this sale.

35 William Kininmonth, notes to *Adam House*, 1955.

building. Given, however, the distinct quality of 'separation' between facade and the body of the building identified earlier (and exemplified by floor-lines running across first floor windows), the relationship should not be over-emphasised. Equally, in plan and section none of the examination rooms display tendencies towards ideal proportions of length and breadth to height that might be expected in a building professing 'classical' principles. In short, beyond a basic symmetry of plan, which does little more than to respond to the essential demands of the building and may not necessarily be taken as a conscious design statement, we have to look elsewhere in order to identify Kininmonth's classical principles of planning.

In this context, it may be relevant that as a young man, Kininmonth had worked with Spence as an assistant in Lutyens' Apple Tree Yard office on the designs for New Delhi. There is a danger in over-emphasising the relationship between Lutyens and his progeny, and in so doing to seek qualities which may or may not exist in the work of later classical architects. Given Kininmonth's basic identity as a Modernist, it is impossible to determine that *direct* influence which we find, for example, via Horace Farquharson and Vincent Harris, in the work of McMorran and Whitby: Kininmonth, we feel, would not have asked like Whitby 'what would Lutyens have done?', when faced with a particular difficulty.³⁶ Indeed, Lawrence Wodehouse has written that "Kininmonth did not particularly admire the work of Lutyens but had worked for him in order to live in London.... As students in Edinburgh and later in London, Kininmonth and Spence first heard of le Corbusier and searched through magazines and other publications for examples of modern architecture";³⁷ and Spence later recalled that it was "when we were both in London [that] I read *Towards a New Architecture*, subversive literature in the [Lutyens] office.... I was greatly influenced by the contemporary philosophy".³⁸

³⁶ Stamp, G., *op. cit.*, 1991, p.57.

³⁷ Wodehouse, L., *op. cit.*, 1979, p.28.

³⁸ Spence, B., letter to Jeremy Gould, 1972, quoted in Wodehouse, L., *op. cit.*, 1979, p.28.

Nonetheless, Kininmonth, like Spence, subsequently expressed pride in having worked for Lutyens,³⁹ and Valentine Morocco (an assistant in the Kininmonth office for many years) later said that its 'gentlemanly atmosphere was based upon that of the Lutyens office where architectural theory took precedence over the mechanics of getting things built'.⁴⁰ It appears, moreover, that Kininmonth was amongst the subscribers to the Country Life *Lutyens Memorial*,⁴¹ published in 1950 at the very moment when the classical scheme for Adam House was being determined. Do we detect at Adam House, therefore, the faintest echo of Lutyens, Herbert Baker,⁴² and the New Delhi rooms⁴⁴ upon which Kininmonth had worked as a young man; tempered, perhaps, by the constraints of site, by thirty years' experience as a modernist and by the limitations of a less remarkable imagination?

A further, perhaps more obvious, parallel lies in the architecture of Soane, or at least with the Regency in general.⁴³ We cannot trace the direct affinities with the Soanian vision which characterise, for example, the work of Raymond Erith, who, when he said that "Soane's aim was to make classical architecture progress and absorb in itself the needs of a new age"⁴⁴ expressed above all his own ambitions as a (classical) architect. But if Kininmonth was not concerned with the theoretical implications of Soane's example, then we nonetheless detect many of the archetypal motifs of Lincoln's Inn Fields and the Bank of England interiors: concern for spare,

39 Interview with Richard Ewing, 16 Rutland Square, Edinburgh, 20 February 1994.

40 Quoted in Wodehouse, L., *op. cit.*, 1979, p.29.

41 *loc. cit.* 34, *cat. no.* 28: the entry lists the four volumes of the Memorial and the Prospectus Folio Pamphlet. Kininmonth's name, however, does not appear amongst the list of subscribers, but this does not preclude the possibility of a late subscription.

42 It has proved impossible, within the bounds of this paper, to discuss Baker's influence extensively: nonetheless, given Baker's important role at New Delhi, some form of relationship may be likely. Baker's alterations to the rear of the Royal Bank of Scotland building, 14 George Street, Edinburgh (c.1930), for example, shares a distinct architectural language with the upper portion of the Adam House facade.

43 It may be that we over-emphasise specifically *Sonian* qualities of the design in light of a relatively recent revival in the fortunes of the architect. During the early decades of the century he was [Ian Gow] little known. In a broader sense, therefore, it may be wise to limit our discussion to notions of Regency architecture in general. 'Vogue Regency' was, of course, a popular style during the 1930s, informing not least Gribloch [see footnote 2]. It may be possible, in this context, that rooms such as Playfair's Library and Museum in Old College provide an influence on the Adam House interiors.

44 Quoted in Archer, L., *op. cit.*, 1985, p.34.

reduced geometric forms, volumes and mouldings, the use of long elliptical arches and an over-riding interest in the effects of top-lit, diffused and hidden light sources⁴⁵.

In both cases, as indeed with the example of Adam, too emphatic a comparison with the original model might serve to highlight certain architectural deficiencies at Adam House. Be that as it may, the classical influence is still evident, as Kininmonth reflected when he wrote, in concluding his notes describing the classical formulation of the facade, that

The design... was an attempt to recapture some of the principles which underly all the masterpieces of classical architecture and which are now largely forgotten or ignored by architects,⁴⁵

and elsewhere, that

as far as practical considerations would permit, this system was carried through the design [of the building] as a whole... It was hoped that, in this way, a building might result which would be a permanent visual reminder to all that the University is... a storehouse of ancient and often forgotten learning, much of which is valuable in any age.⁴⁶

iii. *Harmony within the street: facadism?*

The evidence examined within the context of the second scheme for Adam House suggests that Kininmonth's over-riding concern was to preserve the harmony of a stone street of classical architecture⁴⁷ 46. It is these notions, as we have seen, which he quoted in May 1950⁴⁸ to introduce the second proposal, and which, I have concluded,⁴⁹ originally determined the change of design from modern to traditional facade quite before the influence of Adam, Lutyens, Soane, or, indeed, of Le Corbusier might be discussed. Elsewhere, as we have seen, the visual evidence suggests an underlying dichotomy of styles running throughout the building. Finally, when in a letter of 14 May 1951 Kininmonth provides the single piece of archival evidence in which he mentions both modern and classical scheme together:

⁴⁵ William Kininmonth, notes to *Adam House*, 1955.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ We may, of course, question the extent to which Chambers Street *is* architecturally harmonious.

⁴⁸ Office file EN, 1, *Examination Hall, University*: 31 May 1950, letter from WHK to Town Planning Office.

⁴⁹ See p.18, above.

9 May 1949 Sketch plans submitted to University (*contemporary elevational treatment*) approximate cost £175,000

31 May 1951 Scheme redesigned and submitted to Planning Officer (*elevational treatment in the classic tradition*). [my highlights]⁵⁰

he suggests, crucially, that it is the *elevational treatments*, and not the internal conception of the building, which distinguish the one scheme from the other.

It is vital, if we argue at an interval of fifty years and from a perspective which has witnessed an altered architectural mood, not to misinterpret a building like Adam House in the light of subsequent experience. However, it is clear that Kininmonth's examination halls display highly unusual, and indeed (for this period and from this architect) unexpected concerns, which run parallel to so-called 'facadist' notions characteristic of the last two decades of British architectural thinking. In that time, the Edinburgh New Town (in common with all our historic cities) has seen a number of new buildings which, in attempting sensitively to fill gap sites in stone streets of classical architecture 47, overtly express many of the concerns which Kininmonth sought to allay at Adam House. Is there something special about Edinburgh, and people's feelings for it that allows a consensus for buildings of this kind?⁵¹ The question is important, but in so saying we move beyond the remit of this paper; I will simply state it and stop.

⁵⁰ Office file EN, 2, *Edinburgh University Examination Halls*, 6 April 1951 - 31 October 1951: 14 May 1951, letter from WHK to CHS, detailing works to date.

⁵¹ Having said this, it must be remembered that Adam House was not welcomed, either by public or the architectural profession, when it was unveiled in 1954. See footnote 2, and text, Synopsis, p.6.

PART THREE

THE RECONDITIONED EYE :
A PLURALIST PERSPECTIVE ?

I AM NOT given to theorising about architecture, but it seems to me to be a truism that architecture begins when building ends - that, in addition to functional competence, a building to be wholly successful must have style, whether the medium is stone, brick, concrete, timber or any other material, and that each demands its own form of architectural expression. I believe, too that successful buildings either result from a happy series of accidents or from the working of a creative mind, *open to influences derived from past memories and present experiences* [my highlight].

If, therefore, we are foolish enough, because of dogma, to deny ourselves access to one set of influences or the other, we are so much the poorer and I would suggest to my critic and to other self-appointed critics that the key to the Treasure House of our Art is neither to be found in the works of the past nor the present, but in an open mind and generous spirit.¹

These words, which conclude the letter which introduced this paper, are particularly valuable both in demonstrating Kininmonth's underlying approach to architecture and in indicating the framework by which we might best understand the University Examination Halls.

The argument which I have presented makes plain that we can describe neither facade nor interior of Adam House as exclusively 'classical' or exclusively 'modern'; and that equally, it is not useful to ask whether the building is more traditional than modern or vice versa. We should not, therefore, seek to perceive the stylistic influences which I have examined earlier [see above, Part Two] as belonging to two mutually polarised schools of thought: the sensibilities which informed Kininmonth's *modernist* architecture at Dick Place or Easter Belmont, for instance, show a clear predilection for those ideal forms of cube, sphere and pyramid that have formed the root of *classical* architecture from Antiquity to the present day.

Adam House, therefore, might loosely be described as a work of 'progressive Classicism'; at least insofar as Kininmonth wrote that "the underlying intention of the architecture was to attempt the integration of contemporary materials and methods of construction into traditional principles of proportion".² But it is equally clear that Kininmonth does *not* attempt (or at least does not achieve) that more

1 William Kininmonth, letter to the editor of *The Builder*, vol. clxxxviii, No. 5842, 4 February 1955, p.204. This letter was made in reply to a highly critical attack on the Renfrew Airport buildings made by Kenneth Groves, FRIBA, *The Builder*, vol. clxxxviii, No. 5840, 21 January 1955, p.128.

2 William Kininmonth, notes to *Adam House*, 1955.

fundamental synthesis of the modern and traditional sought, for example, by McMorran and Whitby or in some of Erith's designs. If the facade belongs to its period, then it does so through detail: the vases, discs, sunburst and Festival stars. Kininmonth attempts a witty reinterpretation of the Adam style: the *motifs* of Adam's architecture are brought up-to-date, but not, perhaps, its theoretical implications.

As such, Kininmonth's reflection on his work with Spence that "I suppose we rather prided ourselves on being able to work in any style"³ is of fundamental importance.⁴ Trained at the Edinburgh College of Art during the mid-1920s, Kininmonth received, with a generation of architects, a thorough grounding in the principles of Classical architecture; but if, like many of his contemporaries, he subsequently felt the need to work as a modernist, then the "moral commitment to modern architecture as a means of changing society, worn on the sleeves of the London pioneers, was absent in Scotland".⁵ It is significant that his first house on returning to Edinburgh in 1931, for Dr. Allan at Craigmillar,⁶ was in a Georgian Lutyensesque mode, while the next year Spence completed a long low traditional house for his mother at Comiston Rise 48.⁷ At Broughton Place, near Peebles, and Quothquhar, near Biggar, they went on to provide two large country houses firmly within a seventeenth century Scots language, while Spence's Glasgow Empire Exhibition Country House reverted to a vernacular style: these three buildings running unashamedly alongside the Easter Belmont, Dick Place and Gribloch modernist experiments. Kininmonth wore his conviction to international modernism lightly, and, like Marshall Sisson or Oliver Hill, he was perfectly able to switch to other styles. In 1935 (albeit a "cynical reponse to the likely preference of

3 William Kininmonth, in interview with Charles McKean, quoted in McKean, C., *op. cit.*, 1987, p.36.

4 But *n.b.* footnote 2 and accompanying text, Part Two, p.27.

5 McKean, C., *op. cit.*, 1987, p.36.

6 I have been unable to discover any visual material relating to this building. I understand, however, that Ian Gow has identified photographs of the Craigmillar house under construction.

7 Wodehouse, L., *op. cit.*, 1979, p.28.

the competition assessor"⁸) he was able to turn out a slickly-finished competition entry for Falkirk Town Hall - where he proposed nothing less than a Baroque building with a Swedish campanile.

*

MUCH OF our surprise at Adam House arises from the implicit dichotomy of styles running through the building. But if, to this extent, we must look beyond those English classicists mentioned in the introduction to this paper, alternative exemplars nonetheless exist. On the one hand, Kininmonth's deeply-expressed admiration for the architecture of Erik Gunnar Asplund⁹ is important, confirming the debt owed by his wider oeuvre to Asplund's neo-romantic, vernacular, classical and modernist experiments ⁴⁹, and to Scandanavian architecture, with its notions of pluralism, in general. On the other, so too is that wider movement in post-war *British* architecture which sought the re-invigoration of modernism through a new relationship with art, popular culture and with the past. "It is only for the re-conditioned eye that the past becomes contemporary",¹⁰ declared the *Architectural Review* in 1947 in a statement marking its fiftieth anniversary. This manifesto, if it may be called that, illustrated Welsh Nonconformist chapels, High Victorian tombstones, roundabout horses, quayside bollards, medieval baptistry fonts, a cruise - liner and the Gothick Revival alongside the monuments of twentieth century modernism as objects worthy of concern ⁵⁰. It introduces, as such, the quasi-surreal, traditional-modernist world expressed by John Piper on the one hand or by John Betjeman on the other; and while certainly reflecting the eccentric tendencies of the editor-proprietor, H. de Cronin Hastings (who installed a Victorian Public House, *The Bride of Denmark*, in the basement of the *AR* offices as if to demonstrate his agenda), the article nonetheless contains wider and more serious implications.

⁸ McKean, C., *op. cit.*, 1987, p.28.

⁹ see Wodehouse, L., *op. cit.*, 1979, p.29.

¹⁰ 'The Second Half Century' *Architectural Review*, vol CI, no.601, January 1947, p.33. See fig. 50, Vol. II, p.62.

Central is the belief that the battle for modernism has been won,¹¹ thus permitting "a more relaxed attitude to the past, although one which now recognised an irreversible change in the way history was viewed".¹² Powers, examining the relationship between 'Artists and Architects in English Modernism',¹³ and discussing the implications of the *AR* approach, has identified the technique of *collage* which it fostered and which reached its zenith, perhaps, at the South Bank in 1951 **51a**. Though evidently less concerned with the effects of surface texture and colour which occupied many of the South Bank designers, Adam House nonetheless presents a 'collage' of *styles*, traditional and modern, which we might relate in a different context to a painting by Piper **51b** or, indeed, to a page from the *AR* itself **52**.

Within the traditional scheme of British architectural history, which has perhaps sought to identify a series of steadily-changing, but, within themselves, unified architectural styles,¹⁴ Kininmonth might be seen as something of a *suspect* for employing different languages, modern and traditional, alongside one another at Adam House. Interpreted, however, from this standpoint of pluralism, which adopts the *rejection* of 'a one style at a time' approach as the basis of good design, our understanding of the building changes. The very meaning of Adam House was contradictory, or at least complex:

Architecturally, the building is intended as a visual reminder, that, in addition to its principal function which is to equip its graduates for their life in the contemporary world, the University is also a storehouse of ancient learning, much of which is valuable in any age,¹⁵

and thus, as we have seen, "contemporary building methods and materials are used, although the underlying principles are founded on the classical tradition of

11 but *n.b.* Caroline Macgregor's argument, in *Griboch...*, 1991, that Spence and Kininmonth were already, in the 1930s, displaying freedom from the rigorous approach of the English Modernists.

12 Powers, A., 'The Reconditioned Eye: Architects and Artists in English Modernism', in *AA files*, No. 25, 1993, p.58.

13 *ibid.*

14 See, for example, Summerson, J., *Architecture in Britain 1530 - 1830*, Harmondsworth, 1953: Ch. 21, 'The individual contribution of James Gibbs', pp.209-214.

15 William Kininmonth, notes to *Adam House*, 1955.

architecture".¹⁶ Only when Kininmonth had embraced this stylistic dichotomy was he able to develop the language of the building to such ends. Adam House, though lingering in a state of semi-permanent neglect, is a fine building: for the historian, one of tremendous interest, and, I believe, some importance. Its architect, we may conclude, "should be *celebrated* for his honesty in recognising the limits of a one-style-at-a-time approach",¹⁷ although so far he has received only misunderstanding, and relegation to the second rate.

¹⁶ William Kininmonth, notes to *Adam House*, 1957.

¹⁷ I must thank Alan Powers for his thoughtful suggestions regarding Kininmonth [quoted from a letter to the author, 27 February 1994].

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To avoid confusion, file numbers and titles have been listed exactly as they appear on the covers of each folder. This system of numbering and description is used in the text.

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APPENDIX ONE

Notes on Adam House by William Kininmoth, 1955, contained within Adam House Office files, Rowand Anderson Partnership, 16 Rutland Square, Edinburgh.

The new Examination Halls for Edinburgh University stand on the site of the old Operetta House in Chambers Street. It is believed that this was also the original site of the town house belonging to the Adam family situated in Adam Square, which was demolished to make way for the Old University [*sic.*] and later for Chambers Street. After demolition of the Operetta House late in 1951, rebuilding has taken about three and a half years to complete.

The new building which enters from Chambers Street is designed on six floors to accommodate five Examination Halls which can be adapted for various University purposes. In addition to their normal use for examinations, the rooms will be used for dinners and functions, for theatrical and cinema performances, displays of pictures and for lectures.

Architecturally, the building is intended as a visual reminder, that, in addition to its principle function which is to equip its graduates for their life in the contemporary world, the University is also a storehouse of ancient learning, much of which is valuable in any age. For this reason contemporary building methods and materials are used, although the underlying principles are founded on the classical tradition of architecture.

The facade of Hewarthburn stone is designed to harmonise with the street scene, where all the buildings are classical in conception, as an obvious part of the old University opposite and as a tribute to Robert Adam its designer and his family.

The design of the interior is based on similar principles expanded to meet new functions and contemporary building methods.

APPENDIX TWO

Notes on the proportional system employed for the facade of Adam House by William Kininmoth, 1957, contained within Adam House Office files, Rowand Anderson Partnership, 16 Rutland Square, Edinburgh. [The diagram which clearly accompanies this description seems no longer to exist. Nonetheless, the detail with which Kininmonth addresses the proportioning of the facade acts as a useful demonstration of his approach: see footnote 49, Part One, p.22].

The front elevation is a direct expression of the plan and is subdivided into the main facade A.B. the width of which is governed by the breadth of the site at the back and the link C.A. over the West Common Stair.

Within the width A.B. are contained the Foyers, Staircases and Passenger lifts at the front and the Examination Halls at the back. In order to prevent the transmission of sound the front portion is separated from the back by means of an open vertical expansion joint, which extends through the full height of the building. The separation is expressed on section.

The principles of proportioning governing the design of the facade are shown on the elevational drawing.

It was desirable that the new building should harmonise with existing buildings on either side and in order to achieve continuity of treatment the lines of the lower entablature and parapet and the upper entablature and parapet are carried through from the adjoining buildings and are axiomatic to the design as are the centre line and floor levels.

Given these factors of width and height the problem was to find a satisfactory geometrical relationship in which the various parts could be related to each other and to the whole in a mathematical system of proportion.

1. The total height from the Ground Floor to the apex of the Pediment is controlled in a circle, the radius being the distance from the centre line of the facade to the West boundary of the site. This circle also determines the height of the two side pavilions containing the staircases and the slope of the pediment.

2. The width of each staircase pavilion is one quarter of the total width of the main facade and the central part containing the foyers is one half.
3. The large containing circle (see 1 above) is divided into three equal circles superimposed vertically above one another which determine the height and proportion of the main "triumphal arch"; the radius being one quarter of the distance from ground floor level to the crown of the arch.
4. The vertical and horizontal "axes" of the large containing circle are again sub-divided into 7 parts which determine the diameter of the small inner arch containing the University Crest. It will be seen that in turn these smaller circles (one third of the whole) determine the centre lines of the columns and staircase pavilions and that the height of the upper "order" from which the inner arch springs is in a proportion of 3 to 1 (i.e. 1 part for the radius and 3 parts for the height of the "order").
5. The Orders - i.e. columns and entablatures are proportioned in the following way.
 - a The Lower Order - the entablature and pilaster are in the proportion of 1 to 5 and the diameter of each pilaster is one eighth of its height (a standard classical proportion).
 - b The Upper Order - the entablature and columns are in the proportion of 1 to 4 and the diameter of their columns is again one eighth of their height.
6. The outer ring of the main triumphal arch is determined by the width of the side pavilions and its crown touches the apex of an isosceles triangle, the base of which is the width of the main facade at floor level. Smaller isosceles triangles each with its apex at a point where the centre line of the side pavilions cut the lower edge of the (lower) entablature determine the width of the side pavilions at ground floor levels.
7. The position and proportion of windows.
 - a the lintel level of the first floor windows was determined by the height of the windows of the adjoining buildings their height - twice the width.
 - b the width of the all other windows corresponds to that of the first floor windows, but their height is determined in the following way. First a quadrant is struck with its radius equal to the width of the window. The length of the subtended chord is then taken as a second radius and a larger quadrant is struck from the same centre.
 - c the width of the Entrance door is equal to the width of the first floor window above plus the width of its architraves - i.e. plus one third of the window width.
The height of the door is twice its width.
8. The proportions of all other parts except the subdivision of height within the two entablatures which were predetermined by the dimensions of the adjoining buildings were established in a similar manner, but it was found in execution that the foregoing proportions could not be carried out exactly as designed. The discrepancies in execution, however, are sufficiently small to ensure that the eye does not detect variations from the geometric system of proportion on which the design is based.

n.b. The ancients and the architects of the High Renaissance in Italy used a somewhat similar system of harmonic proportion which they related to the musical harmonic scale, and the design of this facade was an attempt to recapture some of the principles which underly all the early masterpieces of classical architecture and which are now largely forgotten or ignored by architects.

APPENDIX THREE

The Daily Telegraph, 20 August 1988; Sir William Kininmonth's obituary notice.

Sir William Kininmonth, the distinguished Scottish architect and past president of the Royal Scottish Academy who has died aged 83, was responsible for the design of airports and naval air stations at Renfrew and Lossiemouth, as well as many civic, commercial and residential buildings.

He was at ease designing in a variety of styles: his pre-war country houses were variously modern, Dutch, or Scotch Baronial, according to the clients' wishes, while his immediately post-war Renfrew Airport (later replaced by the new Glasgow Airport at Abbotsinch) was frankly modern and mildly futuristic.

The main terminal building - straddled by a huge parabolic arch from which cables helped to suspend a daring cantilevered roof oversailing all the concourse, which had an all-glass frontage to the runways - was supposed to create a positive, forward-looking image in keeping with the spirit of the period of post-war reconstruction.

In 1933, the year before his marriage, Kininmonth built himself a house in Edinburgh, in Dick Place, and he lived in The Lane House until shortly before his death - long enough to see his Scandinavian-modern home designated a "listed building" and treated as something of an architectural showpiece.

William Hardie Kininmonth was born 1904, and was educated at George Watson's College, and Edinburgh College of Art, with a brief spell at the Slade School. He gained practical experience in the Edinburgh office of Sir Rowand Anderson, and thereafter worked as an assistant with Sir Edwin Lutyens, helping him with the Government House project at New Delhi.

In 1932 Kininmonth entered into an informal association with Basil Spence, producing some of the best known inter-war architecture in Scotland, notably terrace houses in Dunbar. The following year he was invited to join Rowand Anderson & Paul as a partner, and he took Spence with him.

In 1938 Kininmonth won the competition for a new Falkirk Nurses' Home, shortly after he had completed the Deaconess Hospital, Edinburgh. During the 1939-45 War he served as a captain in the Royal Engineers in North Africa, Sicily and Italy.

Afterwards Kininmonth designed the ultra-modern Renfrew Airport, and several houses in historical revival styles. The Pollock Halls of Residence, Edinburgh University, reveal a Swedish influence.

A stream of substantial Edinburgh commissions followed in the 1950s and 1960s, several of which won Civic Trust awards - Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh; Edinburgh Dental Hospital; and the Scottish Provident Life Assurance Building, St. Andrew's Square, all in Edinburgh. Kininmonth also prepared designs for an Edinburgh Festival Opera House, but the ambitious project did not proceed.

In 1964, Kininmonth was appointed to the Princes Street panel, a body set up by Edinburgh town council in 1955 to review and report on development proposals and planning applications affecting buildings on Princes Street and in the adjacent New Town areas.

Kininmonth also served on the Royal Fine Art Commission (Scotland), as president of the Edinburgh Architectural Association, and as a governor of the Edinburgh College of Art for many years.

In 1934 he married Caroline Sutherland, the artist, who died in 1978. He is survived by a daughter.