

MARLBOROUGH HOUSE 54 OLD STEINE, BRIGHTON

*A Preliminary Analysis of the Building History and Fabric with
a Brief for Fuller Building Analysis and Recording*

by

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Summary

Richard Morrice, Historic Buildings Inspector in the London and South East Region of English Heritage, asked the Historical Analysis and Research Team to report on the fabric and history of Marlborough House, no. 54, Old Steine Brighton. It is listed grade II, in a Conservation Area, and currently vacant. The owner, Brighton and Hove Council, have entered into negotiations with a prospective purchaser who is seeking change of use to a public house/restaurant.*

Marlborough House is of two builds, the rear sections (Rooms 13-16, 27-29, 32, and 34 in Plates 5 and 6) belong to the 1765 house of Samuel Shergold, known locally as the prosperous owner of the Castle Inn. The L-plan structure of two stories (Rooms 10-12, and 20-24 in Plates 5 and 6) were built in 1786 for the Rt. Hon. William Gerard Hamilton (1729-1796), politician and chancellor of the exchequer of Ireland, by Robert Adam (1728-1792). The house is named for the third Duke of Marlborough, who owned Shergold's house between 1771 and 1786. Preliminary analysis of the surviving fabric suggests that more of the original house survives than has previously been realised. Essentially, Adam split the Shergold house -- a three-storey, double-pile plan house with central stair/entrance bay -- down the middle, razing the eastern half and fitting a two-storey, L-plan suite of rooms around the remaining core. The 1765 rooms were converted to servants's accommodation and guest bedrooms.

The art historical importance of Marlborough House is clear enough. The commission can be related to a small number of villas designed by Robert Adam late in his career. He intended to publish them as a group but never did. This group of small-scale works show beyond all doubt that the architect, by now nearing the end of an illustrious career, was not content merely to repeat the highly successful formulae of his first period of maturity. Adam seems to have turned to the villa form to focus his creative energies on primary issues: planning, circulation and massing. His reasons have not come down to us but it may be a case of the artist seeking refuge from the more worldly problems. By the mid 1780s Adam's fortunes were in a parlous state, the result of the financial collapse of William Adam and Company.

Marlborough House has not been widely discussed in relation to these developments largely because its plan does not strictly conform to the regularities of villas built on greenfield sites -- such as, most conspicuously, Sunnyside, on the outskirts of Edinburgh, 1785-1787, Plate 13. By contrast Marlborough House is a hybrid, where the villa ideal was grafted onto the stock of an earlier house of solid bourgeois proportions but no particular architectural interest. That was the first constraint of the design. The second was cost. Adam's drawings in the Soane Museum in London show that Hamilton's funds were not unlimited; cheaper alternatives were everywhere allowed for and the fabric itself bears clear evidence of this. True, the plaster work and carving are in places very fine, but expense was spared in others.

None of the skirting boards or dado rails are carved, nor are the enrichments to the shutter and door linings as grand as they might have been. The third constraint was the site itself. Hemmed in to the east by the Steine (then common land and not easily appropriated) and by densely built up plots on the other sides, there was not much room for manoeuvre.

The interest of Marlborough House, then, is twofold. It has intrinsic design merit; the principal elevation, the dining room (Room 12, Plate 5), hall (Room 11, Plate 5), and small study or library (Room 13, Plate 5) are outstanding examples of Adam's work. But the ensemble is an eloquent witness to Adam's ability to solve a complex architectural problem within a limited budget. It is complicated, sophisticated piece of urban intervention.

Finally, Marlborough House occupies an important position relative to the history of Brighton. Apart from Holland's almost exactly contemporary Marine Pavilion for the Prince -- long ago replaced by Nash's Royal Pavilion -- Marlborough House was the most distinguished piece of architecture in the late Georgian resort, unsurpassed until the great regency setpieces created by Thomas Read Kemp, Charles Augustin Busby, Amon and Henry Wilds. Prior to the arrival of Adam and Holland in 1786 and 1787, Brighton's architectural culture had been behind the times. Innovation had passed it by. The structure of landownership and the breakneck pace of the spa's development were to blame. Only towards the end of the century did local landowners trust enough in the place's rapidly rising fortunes to undertake high-quality developments of a speculative nature (the Royal Crescent was begun in 1796). Previously the tendency had been for small plots within, and on the fringe, of the town's historic core -- the area bounded by the Steine, West and North Streets -- to be subdivided into even smaller ones. The resulting tenements were heterogeneous, hodgepodge, too tall to have much in the way of elegance, and unpleasantly pinched. The primary building materials were largely vernacular, the ubiquitous flints abounding in surrounding fields, some brick, and roofs of local plain tiles. Brighton was for the most part a dull red and grey miscellany.

So in commissioning a relatively land-hungry design, one that was long not high, Hamilton was making a definite statement. In late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century views of Brighton, Marlborough House stands out from the general run of building (Plate 9). It was a metropolitan lounge lizard, a citified dandy at a village fete. With its gleaming white surface, green slate roof, and austere Palladian proportions, there was nothing else quite like it in the town.

This report concludes with recommendations for the way in which HART's initial researches on the house should be progressed. Building and architectural paint analyses are strongly advised.

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I. The Context: Brighton¹ and Its Architecture before the Eighteenth Century

In the early eighteenth century Brighton had fallen on very hard times. In the words of one contemporary observer the streets were 'deserted'. According to another there had been no new building for years, certainly nothing that could be described as architecture properly speaking. Existing houses were said to be much in need of repair and some on the verge of collapse. John Whalley, writing in 1735, at the very moment when Brighthelmstone's fortunes were about to turn, conjured up an image of a ghost town; 'the ruins of a large fishing town' was how he put it. Things had not always been so bleak. The town's population increased rapidly between 1570 and 1660, when, after Chichester, it was the largest town in Sussex besting both Lewes and Hastings. Fueling this growth was a thriving if not quite prosperous maritime economy, North-Sea fishing principally, ship-owning, and cargo carrying. Explaining its steep decline c1700 is not easy. The downturn may have been part and parcel of a pan-European decline in the fishing industry but it seems more likely that Brighton fell victim to the sea itself. The foreshore eroded. Wealth washed away apace, so that by the turn of the century the parish was barely able even to support its poor.²

Brighton's late medieval window of prosperity was too tenuous to produce a grand building culture to match its Sussex rivals. Pevsner's observation that the lack of significant remains from before the eighteenth century was a sign of the town's poverty may well be in need of revision.³ Still, the essence of what he was said remains broadly true. There is no evidence of any tradition of status timber-framed or stone construction, certainly nothing to match what can be found today in Lewes or even Hastings Old Town. The best clue to the style in which most people lived is contained in probate inventories from the first half of the eighteenth century, and from these it is possible to imagine the sort of house that was once common. A typical house had two stories and an attic. The width was modest, sixteen feet or so. The bulk of the ground floor was given over to one room; kitchen or hall would be the best way to call it. There were sometimes second smaller rooms to the rear opening into a yard. Entrance was directly into the hall and from there a simple stair to a first floor with two chambers. Very

¹ I must acknowledge a very great debt of thanks to Christopher Whittick at the East Sussex Record Office for so generously sharing his diligent archival researches with me. I am also very grateful to John Farrant of the Sussex University Continuing Education Department for commenting on an early draft of this piece and acquainting me further with his own writings on the history of Brighton.

² See J. and S. Farrant, *Brighton before Dr. Russell*, University of Sussex Continuing Centre for Education Occasional Papers, no. 5 (1976), pp. 2-3, 8 *et passim*. See the same author's *Aspects of Brighton, 1650-1800*, ed. by J. and S. Farrant, University of Sussex Centre for Continuing Education, Occasional Papers, no. 8 (1978), pp. 3-6 and 'Brighton, 1540-1820: From Tudor Town to Regency Resort', *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, vol. 118 (1980), pp. 331-50.

³ I. Nairn and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Sussex* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), p. 426.

few houses had inhabited second floors. The average number of hearths was small, even when measured against Hearth Tax returns from the previous century. Local trade was dominated by fishing and there was hardly any place to buy luxury goods such as clocks, curtains, prints and books. There were no coopers, saddlers, or tanners, all trades one would find in wealthier towns, nor any evidence of a professional class as such.⁴

The collapse in the local economy at the end of the seventeenth century meant that by the time that the fashionable set were beginning to make their way to Brighthelmstone for sea- and sunbathing in the 1740s, the town was still compressed within its medieval boundaries, the rough square formed by the sea, East, West and North Streets. The contrast between the locals and those newly arrived smart inhabitants of Lewes and then London must have been striking indeed. There would have been no local gentry to lodge or mingle with, no fine goods to enjoy. Everything would have to be carted down and then unceremoniously installed in mean, cramped cottages. It is extraordinary to think of Royalty ever resorting to the place and yet they did.

By the late eighteenth century the so-called 'Old Town' was intensively developed to service the new resort function. Butting up against an increasingly fashionable Brighton was farmland, much of it unenclosed and still retaining its medieval pattern of ownership. The latter, as is well known, influenced the layout of the speculatively built terraced housing north of North Street and east of the Steine after 1780. The Steine itself, an irregular piece of land opening towards the sea, was in effect the town common. The name is of Flemish origin and said traditionally to have been derived from the fact that the area along the seafront was 'skirted, or edged ... by chalk rocks', the remnants of a badly eroded beach and cliff area.⁵ Apart from the mending of nets and boat building, it was used for the sale and storage of 'coals, waggons ... wheels, carts, and lumber of every description'.⁶

II. Sea-Bathing to the Rescue

The change in the town's fortunes is thought to have been effected all of a sudden by the famed Dr. Richard Russell, a physician from Lewes, who in 1750 called attention to the medical benefits of sea water on the 'glands'. The effects of bathing were said to be augmented by drinking the water, and the more the better.⁷ John and Sue Farrant have shown

⁴ This description is taken from Farrant, *Brighton before Dr. Russell*, pp. 16-19, 21-22.

⁵ P. Dunvan, *Ancient and Modern. History of Lewes and Brighthelmstone* (Lewes, 1795), p. 526.

⁶ J. Bruce, *History of Brighton and Stranger's Guide* (Brighton: J. Bruce, 1827), p. 25.

⁷ A. Dale, *The History and Architecture of Brighton* (Brighton: Bredon and Heginbothom, 1950), pp. 18-9. Russell's famous treatise first appeared in Latin. In 1753 it was published under its more familiar English title, *A Dissertation concerning the Use of Sea Water in Diseases of the Glands*.

that Brighton was not quite an overnight sensation.⁸ People had been coming for the sea bathing probably as early as the 1730s and by the 1740s Dr. Russell was sending patients here. Certainly the records of land transactions from this decade show a marked increase in building activity. This fits the national picture as both Margate and Scarborough date their development as sea resorts to this time. Brighton's boom of the 'fifties and 'sixties was then a consolidation of these earlier trends, augmented by the newly established pastimes of hunting and racing.⁹ The town had the considerable advantage of being more accessible from London than Bath, Scarborough or Weymouth.

III. The Boom of the 1750s and 1760s

Later eighteenth-century commentators saw a marked improvement in the appearance of the town as local inhabitants capitalised on the desire of visitors for quality residences in season. In 1761 Dr. Anthony Rehlan, one of Russell's increasingly numerous successors, observed that

The merit of the situation of this town has within these few years attracted a great resort of the principal gentry of this kingdom, engaging them in summer residence here...

He continued

The town improves daily, as the inhabitants, encouraged by the late great resort of company, seem disposed to expend the whole of what they acquire in the erecting of new buildings, or the making of old ones more convenient. And should the increase of these, in the next seven years, be equal to what it has in the last, it is probable there will be but few towns in England that will excel this in commodious buildings.¹⁰

There is more than a little exaggeration in these observations, since, as Rehlan himself admitted, the use of roughly laid-up flints in new construction was still common and the application of the word Square (probably he was thinking of Castle Square) to the irregular spaces punctuating the six principal streets was more than a little pretentious, even hopeful. Grandeur on the scale of Bath did not come to Brighton until the mid 1820s, and even then Brighton architecture lacked gravitas. Among other things standards of construction were poor.

⁸ *Aspects*, p. 7, and pp. 47-8. See also S. Farrant, *Georgian Brighton, 1740-1820*, University of Sussex Centre for Continuing Education Occasional Papers, 13 (1980).

⁹ See the Farrant's *Aspects of Brighton* for a description of these transactions, pp. 8-9, 32-33, 47-8.

¹⁰ *A Short History of Brighthelmstone...* (London: W. Johnston, 1761), pp. 5 and 15 respectively.

The structure of landownership and the nature of this early resort trade militated against great, sweeping gestures or schemes for speculative buildings on even the most modest scale. Most of the tenements in the 'Old Town' were copyhold tenure divided among six manors. The Court Books -- which survive in the East Sussex County Record Office in Lewes -- show that the parties to land-transactions in the 1750s and 1760s were local people who bought plots of land contiguous to their residences, seeking to form larger building parcels for their own use (often this meant renting out the resulting extra rooms in season).¹¹ During the 1740s mortgages were largely granted by Brighton residents, tradesmen in Lewes and farmers in the nearby countryside. In the next decade the number of residents mortgagors increased and Sussex farmers from further afield were drawn into Brighton property. Only two locals, Thomas Kent and Richard Tidy, seem to have speculated in land, buying it for development and resale, though their endeavours were small-scale, in national terms at any rate. There are no instances from this period of building leases on the London model. And no one ventured to develop the strip fields bordering the town speculatively. But whereas the documentary record is rich in detail about the nature of the town's development, we have precious little detailed information about the sorts of houses being constructed.¹²

The tendency was for already small plots to be subdivided further, particularly along East Street (the backdrop for Marlborough House). By 1800 many of the dwellings here had become shops. A lower grade of housing and commercial premise, even more densely packed, was to be found in the centre, lining the aptly named Middle Street as well as Black Lion Street, North Street, and East Cliff. Prestige building was pushed to the fringes, particularly the Steine (see below). Without the guiding influence of an aggressive estate, a building speculator, or even local government (before 1773), the look of it all was hardly uniform. And as plots decreased in size tenements got taller and narrower, giving the principal streets, and especially East Street, the focus for this activity, a mean, pinched and hodgepodge appearance.¹³ The heterogeneity of East Street today, though it was largely rebuilt after 1790, gives a sense of the sort of messy vitality that would have greeted the Duke of Gloucester on the occasion of the first Royal visit to the resort in 1765.

There were, however, some individual bright spots amidst this jumble of building, first and foremost Dr. Russell's own house of c.1753. By 1760 there was a subscription library on the Steine. Run by Edward Baker of Tunbridge Wells, bookseller, it was a single-storey wooden building with an arched verandah. For years it was the only building on the east side of the Steine, located on what is now the south corner of St. James's Street. In 1767 Woodgate's set up in competition, on the south side of the Steine not far from Dr. Russell's House. It was a

¹¹ Farrant, *Aspects*, pp. 45-55. What follows is taken from this excellent study.

¹² The only building accounts which have come to light are those for Dr. Poole's House in East Street, built and furnished between 1762 and 1766. They are to be found in the East Sussex Record Office, HOOK 23/1/13.

¹³ For this analysis of land tenure and development see the Farrants, *Aspects*, pp. 8-9, 35-6, and, for East Street in particular, 44-53.

touch grander, having two storeys and a Doric colonnade.¹⁴ In that year the Old Ship Inn received an elegant suite of Assembly Rooms in the Adam style and designed by a London architect-surveyor, Robert Golden (c.1738-1809).¹⁵ Samuel Shergold (whose house was eventually adapted by Adam for Hamilton) added additional Assembly Rooms to his Castle Inn, which he had purchased in 1752. In 1766 John Crunden (c.1741-1835),¹⁶ another London builder, provided an impressive suite of rooms in a tall brick extension. The ballroom was said to be one of the grandest in the country and once more the design showed the influence of the capital's most fashionable architect.¹⁷ There was racing and hunting as well, and, if this were not enough, a regular packet service to Dieppe.¹⁸ Discussions on the formation of a turnpike trust to improve connections with London also got underway.¹⁹

IV. Grand Houses on the Steine and Samuel Shergold's House, Built c.1765

Unquestionably the grandest of the new generation of houses were to found lining the southern half of the Steine with its unobstructed view of the sea and the downs. The Manor House is thought to have been the first to be rebuilt (1750-54) on a scale commensurate with the resort's growing fortunes. Richard Scrace, one of the joint lords of the Manor, lived there until 1792.²⁰ Dr. Russell (1687-1759)²¹ purchased the southmost site of the Steine (now occupied by the Albion Hotel) in 1753 and shortly thereafter built a house for himself. The location was dramatic, closing the view at the bottom of the Steine and backing directly onto

¹⁴ T. Carder, *The Encyclopedia of Brighton* (Lewes: East Sussex County Libraries, 1990), no. 89.

¹⁵ They are listed grade II*. See Carder, no. 113.

¹⁶ He was Sussex-born but by this time was appointed surveyor to Paddington, St. Pancras and St. Luke's Chelsea. According to J. A. Erredge (*History of Brighthelmstone...*, 1862, p. 190) this was 80 X 40 ft with large recesses at either end. The walls were adorned with paintings depicting the story of Cupid and Psyche and arabesque decoration recalling the Vatican *Loggia* as well as a reproduction of the Aldobrandini Marriage. The ceiling was coved, rising to a height of 35 ft.

¹⁷ Dunvan, p. 528, and Carder, no. 31. The Inn was demolished in 1823 and Crunden's rooms converted into a Royal Chapel. In 1850 it was moved to a new building in Montpelier Place and survives as St. Stephen's Chapel and it grade II* listed.

¹⁸ J. Farrant, 'Passenger Travel between Sussex and France in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', *Sussex History*, vol. 1 (1980), pp. 8-13.

¹⁹ *Aspects*, p. 8 and S. Farrant, 'The Development of Coaching Services from Brighton to London, c.1750-1822', *Sussex Genealogist and Local Historian*, vol. 7 (1986), pp. 85-92.

²⁰ Dale, p. 34.

²¹ Carder, no. 164. See J. Farrant's entry on Russell in the new edition of the forthcoming *Dictionary of National Biography*.

the sea. Eleanor Ley's 1788 view of this southmost stretch of the Steine²² shows Russell's new house to have been symmetrical about a pedimented projection. The door had a classical surround, apparently rusticated, and on the eastern side was a canted bay. Interestingly, the plan seems to have been one room deep, which is unusual for a house of this date. This suggests either that Russell might have adapted an older group of tenements, refurbishing rather than building anew as so many others were doing.²³ Equally, if Russell's house was all of one build, the unusual plan may have been adopted to afford each room a view of the sea, which would have entirely appropriate to someone who had made his fortune promoting its healing properties. Russell is also known to have boarded patients, and they would undoubtedly have appreciated having a view of the Channel. The house of Thomas Philcox, occupying the site just south of Steine Lane, was built at about this time, as was that of Thomas Willard further along.

James Lambert's 1765 Perspective View of Brighthelmstone²⁴ records the early days of the town's first grand parade, which was in fact not particularly grand at least when measured against what other Georgian resorts had to offer. In any case Lambert recorded the site just then being acquired by Shergold and soon to be filled by Marlborough House as well as the newly built houses of Scrace and Willard. James Donowell's *Perspective View of the Steine* (Plate 8) published in 1778 shows the Steine as it was soon to appear from the vantage point of Russell's own house.²⁵ Behind this wall of middle-class pomp was the town proper. The new houses were suburban to the extent that, like all suburbs, they repudiated the town, turning their back on the increasingly overcrowded precincts of the Old Town. East of the Steine there was only the subscription library, though in the very year of this print's publication two terraces were being erected just south of it. These are shown on Budgen's plan of the town of 1788 (Plate 2). Mixed in amongst the Steine's new crop of private houses were lodging houses.

As for Marlborough House itself, this was built by Samuel Shergold, the noted innkeeper of the Castle. It dates very probably to 1765 and was certainly constructed by 1769.²⁶ Like many

²² See J. and J. Ford, *Images of Brighton. Gallery of Prints* (Richmond-upon-Thames: St. Helena Press, 1981), no. 337. See also Ford no. 336 of 1786.

²³ According to J. G. Bishop, "A Peep into the Past". *Brighton in Olden Time* (Brighton: *The Brighton Herald*, 1892), p. 152-3, the site was occupied in the early years of the eighteenth century by 'small, sundry tenements'.

²⁴ In the collection of the Barbican Museum at Lewes.

²⁵ D. Beevers, 'A Rare Watercolour by John Donowell at Preston Manor', *The Royal Pavilion, Libraries and Museum Review*, April 1997, pp. 6 and 7.

²⁶ This date is based on descriptions of the property in the Manor of Brighton Court Books. The firmest reference dates to 1769, when there is a reference to 'Mr. Shergold's large house'. Support for this date is provided by a notice in the *Sussex Weekly Advertiser*

Brightonians he seems to have let it to visitors from the beginning, seeking to capitalise on the lack of decent, high-class accommodation.²⁷ The likely date of construction, 1765, is that of the first Royal visit to Brighton and it may well be that Shergold was catering for the high end of the market. Before making his name in Brighton, Shergold had been a wine-merchant in Lewes. He was also one of the commissioners appointed following 1773 Brighton Town Act.²⁸ Donowell has left us a good impression of its form and genteel character (**Plate 8**). It had a double pile plan with an 'M-shaped' roof and three dormers. There were two stacks in each end wall.²⁹ There would, in all likelihood, have been an entrance lobby in the front half of the building with a stair bay to the rear. This structural division is still visible in the rear elevation. The tall first-floor windows might have marked a single ball room or perhaps a suite of entertaining rooms.

The property itself can be tracked through the manor of Brighton court-books.³⁰ Shergold bought the site from one Thomas Fuller, a butcher, who in turn had had it from Richard Tidy, who appears as party to many transactions of the previous decade.³¹ Shergold's house must have been started after Lambert's view as it is not shown. It was completed four years later, in 1769, when its existence is noted in connection with the acquisition of a small piece of property near the Pool on the south side of Shergold's house. Neither Tidy nor Fuller had succeeded in developing this parcel which was occupied by a barn until Shergold's house

and Lewes Journal for 9 September 1771 which reads: 'We are well informed that his Grace the Duke of Marlborough has bought the large house at Brighthelmstone, built by Mr. Samuel Shergold about two years since'. I am grateful to Mr. Henry Smith, FRICS, of Hove for sharing this information with me. Nevertheless, the evidence of the Court Books -- property transfers and descriptions -- suggest that this house was at least begun if not completed in 1765, when Shergold was buying measured plots. Sources discussed with Christopher Whittick, senior archivist, East Sussex County Record Office, July 1997.

²⁷ Carder, no. 114k. The scarcity of which c.1765 is attested to by Abraham Bailey's Letter Book, 1763-73, in the East Sussex Record Office, SAS/HA 310. Bailey was steward of the Pelham estate. Items dated 29 May 1763, 11 February, 9 April, and 23 July 1764 give some sense for the difficulties encountered in finding genteel apartments for the season. I am grateful to John Farrant for informing me of this document and sending me the relevant transcriptions.

²⁸ Carder, no. 183a.

²⁹ It is used in the basement room, northwest corner, and in the cross wall visible under the first-floor stair landing.

³⁰ East Sussex Record Office, Lewes, SAS/BRI 52-57 and ACC 4786, manor of Brighton, Kemp Moiety court-books. Christopher Whittick has reconstructed these transactions.

³¹ *Aspects*, p. 35.

appeared. We know from a court-book entry of 1774 that adjoining the property to the rear, in East Street, was a butcher shop.

V. The acquisition of Shergold's House in 1771-2 by the Duke of Marlborough and His Interest in Brighton

In 1771 the third Duke of Marlborough bought this 'capital messuage' and a piece of land near the Pool from Shergold, who soon after purchased the butcher's shop, slaughterhouse and land, in addition to a cottage and garden.³² Yeakell and Gardner's 1779 Map of Brighton (Plate 1) shows a small semi-circular forecourt of enclosed land to the Steine elevation of the house.

According to Bishop, the late Victorian chronicler of Brighton, the Duke of Marlborough caused something of a sensation, since his retinue, consisting of some 40 people, was larger and grander than any which had been seen in the town previously.³³ He had been coming regularly since 1767, following in the footsteps of that first Royal visitor, the Duke of Gloucester, younger brother of George III, who set foot in Brighton in 1765. In 1766 the Duke of York followed in his train, and, then, in 1771 came the Duke of Cumberland, who, ultimately, is responsible for attracting the Prince of Wales to the seaside resort.

At present very little is known about the house during the Duke's tenure (1771/2-1786). Further research in the Churchill papers (which are to be found in the British Library and still at Blenheim Palace) may well turn up interesting information on the Shergold House. In the meantime there are only scant references to his period of residence, though from them it is clear that he took an interest in the town's life and in the improvement of what was essentially his front yard, the Steine. In 1792-3 the Duke, by now residing at Grove House, and the Prince of Wales, his near neighbour, made an arched sewer along the Steine in order to prevent its periodic flooding, particularly in winter. At about this time they also paid for the Steine's levelling and turfing. In consideration of these works the Lords of the Manor allowed them to enclose a small part of the Steine adjoining their houses so long as they never built on or 'encumbered it with any thing that obstruct the prospect'.³⁴ The spirit of improvement had been on the march in the town since 1773, when a Commission was formed to oversee the lighting and cleansing of the Old Town, the removal of nuisances, the regulation of the

³² He had been the mortgagee of these since 1771. The cottage or tenement garden is described in 1786 as being on the east side of East Street and in the possession of one Mercer, before whom Fuller, and before whom Tidy. The date of 1771 is confirmed by a brief notice in *Sussex Weekly Advertiser and Lewes Journal* for 9 September 1771; information courtesy of Henry Smith, FRICS, of Hove.

³³ Bishop, p. 161.

³⁴ P. Dunvan, p. 527 and J. Bruce, p. 25.

market, and, importantly, the building and repair of the town groynes. Public works were paid for by tax on coal, which was at that time still being landed on the Steine.³⁵

The size of the Duke's retinue attracted a great deal of attention, as already noted, and of course represented a great deal of custom to the local tradesmen. He was, it seems, a lavish entertainer.

*'Tis incredible to think what a deal of money his Grace expends there, and the help he is to the poor. We are well assured that he buys half a bullock at a time, a whole calf, and his mutton by the carcass, so that, by the over-abundance of his tables the poor have joints given them hardly touch'd, which is prodigious relief to numbers who at this dear time cannot afford to purchase butcher's meat; a noble example and worthy of imitation.'*³⁶

VI. Adam's Commission to Rebuild Marlborough House for the Rt. Hon. William Gerard Hamilton, 1786-87

The Duke of Marlborough sold Shergold's house by a Woodstock solicitor to William Gerald Hamilton in 1786. The Duke himself then purchased Grove House to the north of Holland's new marine pavilion for the Prince.³⁷ It is unlikely that this was Hamilton's first visit to Brighton since it was normal for those who purchased or let substantial properties after they had formed an acquaintance with the place.³⁸ In any case we can be fairly sure that Hamilton (1729-1796) came to Brighton seeking retirement from a busy life in government. His unfortunate nickname -- 'Single Speech' -- is misleading and actually belies a career distinguished by hard work and engagement.³⁹ Indeed, Hamilton struck all who knew him as

³⁵ J. Bruce, p. 14. Apparently coal was still being sold on the Steine in the 1820s, see R. Sicklemore, *History of Brighton and Its Environs* (fifth ed., 1827), p. 32.

³⁶ During his absence the Duke is said to have let the rooms of the house separately to as many as 50 visitors at any one time. Quote and above information from D. Beevers, 'A Brief History of Marlborough House', undated, courtesy of the author, keeper, Preston Manor. The quote is taken from the *Lewes Journal* as reprinted by Bishop.

³⁷ On Holland's work see J. Dinkel, *The Royal Pavilion at Brighton* (London: Philip Wilson, 1983), pp. 19-23 *et passim*.

³⁸ Further research on Hamilton is needed to establish his earlier ties to Brighton. According to the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts there are two manuscript sources, correspondence with J. Hely-Hutchinson, 1762-88, in the manuscripts department of Trinity College, Dublin University, and 32 letters to Lord Pery now held by the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, USA, the latest firmly dated to 1781 although another may date to 1783. For what follows I have relied on the *DNB* entry on Hamilton.

³⁹ The 'Speech' was delivered on his first day in Parliament, 15 November 1755, and lasted fifteen hours. It was widely admired.

highly intelligent, cultivated and literary, and as many as five speeches are recorded in 1762 alone. He was born in London and admitted as a student to Lincoln's Inn in 1744, intending to take up the profession of his father, who was said to have been the first Scot ever to have pleaded at the English bar. When the esteemed elder Hamilton died in 1754, leaving William Gerard his not inconsiderable fortune, the son changed tack. In the following year he entered Parliament as Member for Petersfield. In 1761 he left for Ireland, becoming assistant to the Earl of Halifax, then lord lieutenant in Dublin. In April 1763 he was appointed Irish chancellor of the exchequer, at the same time serving as chief secretary to the lord-lieutenant. Interestingly he had been accompanied to Ireland by Edmund Burke, who served him as private secretary; Hamilton was also known to Dr. Johnson, who spoke favourably of him. Offered the post of secretary for war by Lord Shelburne in 1782, he declined, perhaps anticipating retirement which came in 1784. His reward was a pension of £2,000 annually. This taken together with his father's fortune might seem ample but Hamilton's wealth could well have been depleted, if not routed altogether, by the costs of a long parliamentary career. The point is worth making because Adam's drawings in the Soane Museum for this commission (discussed below) suggest that the client was seeking to cut costs wherever possible. Still, Hamilton would have done well out of Ireland,⁴⁰ nor did his appointment keep him from London. He lived in the bosom of metropolitan fashion and wealth for most of life, at least to judge from surviving letters. In 1762 and 1763 he writes from the Privy Garden at Hampton Court, suggesting he had an apartment there, in September 1763 from an unspecified house in St. James's Street, and in 1772 from another in Arlington Street.⁴¹ His entry in the *DNB* records that he died in a house in Upper Brook Street on 14 July 1796.

Hamilton's ties to Ireland might well explain how he came to Brighton. In his final years as exchequer he came into contact with Thomas Pelham, Earl of Chichester (1756-1826), who was chief secretary to the lord lieutenant in 1783-4, and whose family seat, Stanmer House, is close by Brighton. The two corresponded on at least one occasion in 1783⁴² and a letter from Hamilton to John Hely-Hutchinson (1724-1794) of the same date refers to their acquaintance.⁴³ How Hamilton came to employ Adam has also yet to be discovered. The connection may have been through the third Duke of Marlborough himself, who was in Rome

⁴⁰ On 9 August 1762 he wrote to Hely-Hutchinson from Hampton Court: 'Nothing is more evident to me than that my continuance in Ireland instead of retarding, will every essentially promote my progress in England'. Trinity College, Dublin, Donoughmore Papers, C 1/7, transcribed by Christopher Whittick. A letter dated 5 August 1783 (C 2/112) suggests that his position allowed him to profit in ways which today might be judged improper.

⁴¹ Trinity College, Dublin, Donoughmore Papers. The St. James's address is noted in the Historic Manuscripts Commission report on these papers. Arlington Street is noted in an unreferenced letter.

⁴² British Library, Add. Mss. 33,100, f. 346. Thanks to Christopher Whittick for this and the following reference.

⁴³ Donoughmore Papers, Trinity College, Dublin, C2/112.

when Adam was and moved in some of the same circles.⁴⁴ In a sense the decision seems natural enough. Hamilton's St. James's was bristling with works by the great Scots architect and with men who had used him to design their country houses.

The documentary evidence surrounding the commission is scarcely more fulsome. On 31 December 1786 Hamilton wrote Hely-Hutchinson from London, inviting him to stay with him at Brighton:

... a post-chaise and a pair of horses will convey you from Pall-Mall to Brighton between nine in the morning and four in the afternoon ... If you adopt the plan which I propose, and will give me early notice of it, I can make my escape from where I am now residing, under pretense of seeing the progress of a house which I am [now or new deleted] re-building at Brighthelmstone.⁴⁵

Clearly, the works were not far advanced. Had they, entertaining would have been out of the question. Hamilton's letter to Adam, dated 16 January and written from Brighton, strongly suggests that the final plan had only just been prepared but the details were still to be agreed.⁴⁶ A week later Hamilton returned to London.⁴⁷ It seems likely, therefore, that preliminary site works but probably not partial demolition of the Duke's 1765 house were getting underway by New Year 1787 and that soon after the heavier and dirtier side of the work commenced. All being well the better part of the work could have finished by late summer or autumn, although the finer bits of the interior would have taken a few more months at least, which means that the house was probably not fit to receive the best quality of visitor until winter 1787-88. The history of the property itself is less problematic. The court-book entry for 1786 notes that Hamilton had taken a mortgage for £1900 at 5% from one William Pitcairn, a physician at St. Bartholomew's in London. In 1787 Hamilton received a grant of waste land in front of the mansion, what would become his garden and is shown clearly on the excellent early nineteenth-century view of the house now hanging in the Pavilion and in the possession of the Brighton Art Gallery. (Plate 9). The dimensions of this grant were 84'6" north to south and 78'1" east to west. The appropriation excited some local opposition. Adam's solution to adapting the old house was to build out to the full length of

⁴⁴ J. Fleming, *Robert Adam and His Circle in Edinburgh and Rome* (London: Murray's, 1962), pp. 280, 289-90.

⁴⁵ Trinity College, Dublin, Donoughmore Papers, C 2/170, transcribed by Christopher Whittick.

⁴⁶ For full text see appendix.

⁴⁷ Trinity College, Dublin, Donoughmore Papers, C 2/172. 'I returned to town on Saturday', he wrote on 22 January.

the property and so Hamilton also acquired a slip or small piece of land of two-and-a-half feet wide on the south side of the Duke of Marlborough's parcel.⁴⁸

VII. Adam's Adaptation of the Older House, 1787

A. The relationship between Shergold's house of 1765 and Adam's designs of 1786-7

The relationship between Shergold's house of 1765 and Adam's additions of 1786-7 has never been worked out properly. Some sources describe it as a refronting or remodelling, Hamilton himself, as seen above, as a rebuilding but it was none of these. In effect Adam sliced off the eastern half of Shergold's double-pile plan house, razing it, as well as the entirety of the original stair. The rear basement rooms of the earlier house also appear to have been kept. Adam then fitted an L-plan suite consisting of dining room, hall, and drawing room (Rooms 10-12, **Plate 5**) around the core of the house and its south side, inserting a new stair (Rooms 14, 28, 33, **Plates 5 and 6**) into the old stair-bay and providing an enclosed serving stair (Rooms 15, 31, 35 and 44, **Plates 5 and 6**) beside the dining room, that is, perpendicular to the principal, open-well stair and running on a roughly north-south axis. He very likely added the closet-wing to the south of the rear entrance and of course he gave the new structure an entirely new roof. His ground-floor rooms were much taller than the old ones, with a correspondingly taller suite of first-floor rooms. This explains the unusual stair arrangement which had to effect the joining of an older, three-storey structure at the rear with a new two-storey one at the front.

With one exception the rooms in the older house were used for the servants or as guest bed- or sitting rooms, that is, the present study or library (Room 13, **Plate 5**), a semi-private room with entrances from the drawing room and hall. The structure and overall dimensions date to 1765 but the surface ornaments are all Adam. (**Plates 11 and 12**). The design of the ceiling is unusual in Adam's work since it features two pairs of broad, deep 'beams'. One pair, I believe that running on an east-west axis, are timbers from the earlier house; the other pair are purely ornamental, included to create a symmetrical composition. The scale of this small, intimate room offers a striking contrast with Adam's more public spaces. It is not the only instance of Adam modernising an earlier room (the room at Audley end painted by Biaggio Rebecca and featuring a scaled-down suite of Adam furniture is of higher quality and earlier, 1763-5), and there are other examples of the architect reusing an older house as the servant's quarters for a new one.⁴⁹ Nevertheless reconciling the two phases of construction tested Adam's skills as a practical planner and is a significant aspect of Marlborough House's character and interest.

⁴⁸ ESRO, SAS/BRI 52-73, manor of Brighton court-books and ACC 4786, manor of Brighton, Kemp moiety court-books. Thanks to Christopher Whittick at the East Sussex County Record Office in Lewes.

⁴⁹ Similar proposals were made for the rebuilding of Rosebank early in 1789. See A. Rowan, 'Sunnyside and Rosebank -- Suburban Villas by the Adam Brothers', *AA Files*, vol. 4 (July 1983), pp. 39-39, at p. 31. This scheme was, however, not carried out.

It may well be asked why Adam went to all this trouble when there was enough room on the site to start from scratch. It may simply have been a question of timing. Hamilton was clearly wanting a retirement home for the summer season and adapting an existing structure would have been quicker, not least because this course would not disturb the East Street side of the property, an area which was heavily built over and with a complicated pattern of land tenure. Retaining part of the old house was also cheaper.

B. Adam's drawings for this project in the Soane Museum: the client's attempts to cut costs

Adam's drawings in the Soane Museum (See also section G below) in London suggest that Hamilton's budget was not unlimited. Three of them show that the architect was requested to prepare cheaper alternatives. This is most strikingly apparent in his main elevation which shows different levels of finish, from grandiloquent (and expensive) on the north projecting bay to the relatively plain (and cheaper) finish on the south, which was eventually built.⁵⁰ (Plate 7) This is true for the ceiling in the dining room as well (Room 12, Plate 5 and drawing Plate 11). The drawing for the dining parlour has a flap for the shallow half dome to the recess at its south end, offering the choice of something plain or more ornate.⁵¹ The options are carefully costed on the drawing of the chimney piece for the octagonal study (Room 13, Plate 12), where the price for the overmirror is broken down ornament by ornament.⁵² Hamilton chose the least expensive option. The client's cost-consciousness is apparent in several parts of the fabric as well. None of the skirting boards or dado rails are carved and the enrichment to the ground floor shutters is shallow, so shallow in fact that it is now no longer possible to determine whether the moulding is waterleaf or egg and dart. Another tell-tale sign of the desire for economy is the use of wood where otherwise one might expect stone, most notably in the study fireplace (Room 13, Plate 5 and Plate 12)⁵³, the entrance porch, and the balustrading to the ground-floor Diocletian windows. The decision to use artificial stone was also in part motivated by economy, since there was no local building stone of high quality. Surface render was also easier to keep looking smart, provided that it was done properly and did not fail.

C. Hamilton's critique of the plan; more concerns over the cost

The 1787 letter from Hamilton to Adam (see Appendix 2) shows the client debating the merits of the proposed scheme with his architect on the grounds, as he put it, of 'convenience'; the effect of his comments, however, would have been to cut the cost still further. Having informed Adam that he was about to commence building, Hamilton added:

⁵⁰ Soane Museum, Adam 42 (39).

⁵¹ Soane Museum, Adam 14 (89).

⁵² Soane Museum, Adam 23 (173).

⁵³ Soane Museum, Adam 23 (173); discussed above.

But if a Door or two could be dispens'd with in the Hall [Room 11] I own I should be pleas'd. I am sensible that no door can be taken away with some Inconvenience. But Warmth and Comfort are the principal Objects, and Elegance though a desirable, is only a secondary concern. I sometimes think that the Door from the Hall to the Back Parlour [or study, Room 13, Plate 5] might be parted with. At others that the Recess part of the Dining Parlour [Room 12, Plate 5] instead of being circular might be made strait [sic], and that in that Case the Door in the Centre of the Dining Parlour might be shut up, and the entrance into it be made rather at the side, exactly opposite to the Door through which you go out of the Hall into the Drawing Room [Room 10, Plate 5]. I am not pleas'd with my own thoughts, and therefore beg you would think for me...

And it is just as well the architect did, as the changes Hamilton proposed would have robbed the entrance of monumentality entirely.

D. The stable block, kitchen wing and rear courtyard

Adam's plans did not stop at the house. He was asked to consider the entrance from East Street and produced a splendid and sophisticated design for a stable block and kitchen wing. The north block or kitchen was to take the form of long shallow bay which was to be answered exactly in a concave recess. This extraordinary conceit was adopted probably to offset the asymmetry of the courtyard elevation which at this stage in the project was meant to be treated in a fully architectural way, with a square entrance porch having pilasters. It is not clear whether this porch ever was constructed, and as for the service wings and stables these seem to have been abandoned as well, another case of Hamilton's budget not quite measuring up to his architect's imagination.⁵⁴

E. The site in early maps

There are several maps of Brighton from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, though few of them do more than show buildings in block plan. Yeakell and Gardner's of 1779 (Plate 1) as already noted is most useful for showing the small semicircular garden to the Steine which dates either to Shergold's brief period of tenure or to Marlborough's. Budgen's *New and Correct Plan of Brighton* of 1788 (Plate 2) is useful again only for showing the railed garden to the east or principal facade, and it seems likely, in view of Hamilton obtaining title to this substantial piece of waste ground, that he replanted this area, improving on the Duke's arrangements. Piggot and Smith's *Brighton and Its Environs* of 1824 (Plate 3) gives us the earliest representation of the courtyard to the rear of Marlborough House which is entered, then as now, from East Street. From this it is clear that Adam's grandiose and exciting scheme was not executed. Although the map is difficult to read, it seems to show a single brick range returning to the north of the yard only. At the southeast corner of the site are two shops (one of them was a butcher's) and since these are the only

⁵⁴ The plan is at Soane Museum, Adam 42 (40).

features one finds on Adam's 1786-87 site plan in the Soane it seems likely they were pre-existing.

F. The 1873 Ordnance Survey

The 1873 Ordnance Survey (**Plate 4**) shows the forecourt arrangements in detail, which, if one compares it with the anonymous watercolour of c1800 in the Brighton Art Gallery (**Plate 9**), seems to be more or less how Hamilton had planned it. The 1873 Ordnance Survey shows the two East Street shops in some detail with their skewed backgardens, and a motley assortment of sheds and other structures, the purpose of which can only be guessed at. There appear to have been two ranges to the north of the yard at this time; the longer of the two was perhaps a stable block. This plan also provides a *terminus post quem* for the present single-story brick structure (identified on the architect's plans as Room 17 -- **Plate 5**). The present balustrading to the forecourt was erected after this and is not in its original position, having been moved west as part of the present traffic scheme.

G. The quality of the interiors

But where Adam did have his way it must be said that the quality of work is good and in places outstanding. This is particularly true of the plasterwork scheme for the hall (Room 11, **Plate 5**) and the dining parlour (Room 12, **Plate 5**) both of which can be attributed to the great master of the medium Joseph Rose, who worked not only for Adam but for his great rival William Chambers.⁵⁵ The triglyph and patera frieze adorning the Ionic entablature in the hall is to be found in Rose's 'Designs for Ornamental Friezes...' and so is the frieze to the Corinthian entablature in the dining room.⁵⁶ The design of the plaster ornament is not what one normally associates with Adam. There is a leanness to it which is consistent with the need to economise that marks this commission overall but this is not to say that Adam was simply implementing cuts without thinking. The interior has integrity and coherence. Here again is proof of the architect's consummate skill and artistry, a thorough-going approach which is consistent with his late design practice as this has been analyzed by Dr. Rowan.⁵⁷ This is particularly true of the hall, where the positioning and scale is perfectly adjusted to the amount of plain wall surface. The same judgment is manifest in the dining parlour and the study, where, despite the small scale of the room and its low ceiling, the sensation is one of balance. The drawing room is almost bereft of relief ornament and such as there is is most unusual. The room cornice is of the Corinthian (or possibly Composite) order, which normally calls for a run of vegetation in the frieze band, a palmyra motif, perhaps, or some

⁵⁵ Rose's father worked at Stanmer House for the Pelhams. This house was remodelled in the early eighteenth century by the translator of Palladio into English, Giacomo Leoni. Rose worked with Adam on his first important commission, the decoration of Mersham-le-Hatch, Kent, of 1762. We went on to be associated with some of the architect's best known works, such as the Library at Kenwood House (c1767), Home House (1773-76) in Westminster.

⁵⁶ Soane Museum, 53 (40 and 41).

⁵⁷ Rowan, 1983, pp. 33-8.

acanthus scroll. But here Cupids astride dolphins alternate with a frozen fountain, each motif set clearly apart from the adjacent. This is the only specifically Marine reference in the principal interiors. The richness in this room would have come from a splendid carpet of a verdigris hue. The drawing for it survives in the Soane Museum.⁵⁸ A 1788 description of the house (quote below) confirms one's suspicions about the walls, namely that they would have been hung with silk, probably damask; we can be fairly sure there were many pictures as well though no reference to these as survived. The Soane Museum also has the drawings for the ceiling in the small private study, sometimes called the library,⁵⁹ as well as drawings for a dining room sideboard and wine cistern or cooler.⁶⁰ Adam's designs for the pair of lozenge-shaped pier tables -- which are at the time of writing (August 1997) in pieces in the basement -- have not yet been identified. They were positioned in opposite niches in the octagonal saloon, the northwest and southeast, and are shown thus in drawings published in 1931 (Plate 12).⁶¹

VIII. An Early Description of Marlborough House, 1788

A description of the house published in 1788 provides the best *terminus ante quem* for the completion of the principle interiors.

Upon the Steyne ... is an elegant Mansion built upon the site of Marlboro' [sic] House by the Rt. Hon. W. G. Hamilton, Esq., M.P. This building consists of an elegant hall ... 20 feet by 18. On the right side of the hall is a superb dining room, 34 feet by 20: on the left a handsome drawing room, 34 feet 6 inches, by 24 feet 6 inches. The hall and dining room are beautifully stuccoed, and painted. The drawing room is hung with an exceedingly elegant paper, and has a chimney piece on which is represented a Venus drawn by Cupids ... The front is finished with Adam's artificial stone, and looks extremely handsome.

⁵⁸ Soane Museum, Adam 17 (211).

⁵⁹ Soane Museum, Adam 14 (89).

⁶⁰ Soane Museum, Adam 6 (116 and 118) and 17 (225). The wine cistern shown in the former passed through Christie's in London in the winter of 1994-5. It has a band of strigilation and lion-mask handles of a common type. I am grateful to Mr. Henry Smith, FRICS, of Hove for pointing this out to me. The sideboard shown in these drawings is again typical of Adam's late work but are here rather unusually ornamented with tiny Ionic capitals. The vine leaf frieze and grape meander resemble those in a sideboard executed at Newby Hall to Adam's designs possibly by Thomas Chippendale. Adam was at work here from 1767 to 1774.

⁶¹ Supplement to *The Architects's Journal*, 11 February 1931.

*The whole building is, indeed, justly admired for its elegance of architecture, as uniting simplicity with true grandeur.*⁶²

In 1892 Bishop added that

*It was long after considered even 'in point of exterior beauty, the first house in Brighton'; the enclosed green plat and garden in front with trees at each side doubtless tending to add to its then elegant appearance.*⁶³

This 'green plat and garden' to the east side of the house is shown clearly in the anonymous watercolour of the house of c1800 and now hanging in the Pavilion. (Plate 9) The arrangement of plants seems to have been carefully considered as if a segment of Reptonian landscape garden had been sliced out of a larger park.

IX. The use of Liardet's Patent Cement on Marlborough House

The reference in this description to 'Adam's artificial stone' is tantalising, since it suggests that here the architect was using Liardet's patent stone, an oil and sand mastic which Adam first used on the south front of Kenwood House in 1767 and of which the brothers Adam were exclusive licensees. However, by 1785 or so the recipe was not much used by the Adams because it had failed spectacularly on several occasions (most famously on the bravura south front of Kenwood House, 1767), though by the date of the Marlborough House commission the brothers were willing to extend their exclusive license on the product to other architects, for a fee of course. The fault with Liardet's was less the formula than the method of its application. If the sand used was not fully dry or if there were too many hygroscopic salts present in it, then the preparation went horribly wrong.⁶⁴ That Adam should try it on a building so near to the sea is to be wondered and although no record of its being refaced has yet been unearthed it would not be surprising if this had to be done in the nineteenth century. Still, it is not outside the realm of possibility to think that the present facing material is in fact Liardet's cement, which, if it were proved true by microscopic analysis, would make this surface a very rare survival indeed and worthy of careful conservation.⁶⁵

⁶² From *A Description of Brighthelmstone* as quoted in the short historical note on the house written by David Beevers, keeper at Preston Park, 30 November 1994.

⁶³ Bishop, pp. 161-2.

⁶⁴ Discussion with Peter Hood, August 1997. Mr. Hood is currently preparing a study of stuccos in Brighton and Hove for the Council.

⁶⁵ On Liardet's cement see F. Kelsall, 'Liardet versus Adam', *Architectural History*, vol. 27 (1984), pp. 118-26. No. 9 Conduit Street, Westminster, is another instance, though it was faced in Higgins's patent cement, whose exclusive licensee was James Wyatt, the architect of this building. The likely date of construction is 1778-9. See Andrew Saint's report on the building in the files of Historical Analysis and Research Team (formerly the London Region Historians's Team), English Heritage, WM 822.

X. Adam's Marlborough House and the Architecture of Brighton

To contemporary observers Marlborough House would have stood out, its gleaming whiteness setting it apart from a town where most buildings of any status were constructed of brick or flint, perhaps limewashed to reduce the textured appearance.⁶⁶ The roof shown in the anonymous watercolour view of Marlborough House now hanging in the Pavilion (**Plate 9**) was very clearly of green Westmoreland slate laid in diminishing courses, not the typical Sussex plain tile which was then ubiquitous in Brighton. Last, but far from least, were the proportions. Land in Brighton since the 1750s was, it will be remembered, increasingly sold off into smaller and smaller lots, particularly in East Street. The houses tended to be high not broad and the older streets had a pinched and mean quality, not unlike the character that the older stretches of East Street wear today (although the oldest surviving buildings date to c.1800 and after). Hamilton's Marlborough House was a land-hungry design. By refusing to build high he and his architect were making a statement. Once more Hamilton's letter of 16 January 1787 is revealing.

I can't forebear saying how exceedingly I am pleased with the additions of the Bread[th] at each extremity of the House; it gives a Character and an expression which the great length of the House much wanted, and which it has got very advantageously...

... Among the many obligations I have confer'd on Brighthelmstone ... [it is] a principal one that I had brought one of the first Architects in the world to ornament their Fishing Town.⁶⁷

For all these reasons Marlborough House would have had something of the character of a foreign import, an exotic city dandy lounging, languidly, at the centre of a rustic fete. And it was the grandest work of architecture in the town, after, that is, the almost exactly contemporary Marine Pavilion built by Holland for the Prince.⁶⁸ A letter Hamilton wrote in 1788 suggests that he, like his house, stood somewhat aloof from Brighton life.

I conceive that my manner of living here will suit you [Hely-Hutchinson] admirably; it is something between society and solitude. I see many people, and associate with few -- you will find company enough to raise, and not overwhelm your spirits.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Though Scrace's Manor House may also have had a mastic facing scored to imitate ashlar, at least according to Donowell's 1778 print.

⁶⁷ Soane Museum, Marlborough House file.

⁶⁸ On which see D. Stroud, *Henry Holland. His Life and Architecture* (London: Country Life, 1966), pp. 87-9, and Dinkel, pp. 19-23, *et passim*.

⁶⁹ Trinity College, Dublin, Donoughmore Papers, C 2/181, 20 August 1787, transcribed by Christopher Whittick.

The exalted status of Marlborough House relative to its neighbours is reflected in its rateable value. One of the few to survive, that for 1791, puts Hamilton's house above all but a few. By this measure the other outstanding buildings were Scrase's manor house to the south and the Duke of Marlborough's new house, Grove House, to the north.⁷⁰

XI. The Position of Marlborough House in the *Oeuvre* of Robert Adam

In the 1780s, after a successful design career, Robert Adam turned his attention to the problem of the classical villa and Gothick houses, the latter for Scottish clients. He intended to publish them in a single volume but never got around to it. Had he, this suite of designs would have formed a definite category of work and different in feeling to the grandiloquent houses that had made his fame during the previous twenty years. These late, modest works show a love of pattern-making, a willingness to experiment with axes, and a restrained approach to ornament.⁷¹ The villa ideal had exercised a strong influence on house-design throughout the eighteenth-century, and there was nothing in itself unusual about Adam focusing his attention on it. One has the impression, though, that late in his career he was seeking new inspiration, perhaps even refuge from the financial failure of his William Adam and Co. In any case these late villas show that Adam, far from repeating successful formulae from the past, was still developing as an architect, and this renewal of energy led to his great, late works, in particular the University of Edinburgh.

These late villas divide into two categories. On the one hand are designs like Brasted Place in Kent (1786), which belong to an older tradition that traces its roots back to Roger Morris's Marble Hill House in Twickenham and having a cubic form. The rest tend to be organised as Palladian great houses in miniature with projecting end pavilions of great, almost Greek austerity of the type found at Marlborough House. There are strong points of comparison between it and Lubomirski villa design of 1787, which makes use of a central pavilion that recalls the end units of Hamilton's house as does an undated design for an unidentified suburban villa.⁷² Kirkdale House in Creetown (1787-8) for Samuel Hannay, Bt., is strongly suggestive of the Steine-side elevation and like Marlborough House was conceived as a marine pavilion, in this case overlooking Wigtown Bay. But by far the nearest parallel is Adam's imaginative and justly celebrated design for Sunnyside, a villa meant for Sir Patrick Inglis, Bt., for a site on the outskirts of Edinburgh and dating to 1790-91.⁷³ (Plate 12) In all of these one finds the more-or-less standard circuit of four principal rooms, with dining parlour and drawing room flanking a roughly square entrance hall, behind which is a saloon of

⁷⁰ Brighton Central Reference Library, Mss., SB.352.1, labelled 2nd Book of Tax, Easter to 17 August, 1791. Holland's Marine Pavilion for the Prince does not appear in the Rate Book.

⁷¹ A. Rowan, *Designs for Castles and Country Villas by Robert and James Adam* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1985), pp. 12-13, 15-17.

⁷² Plate 25 in Rowan (1985).

⁷³ The evolution of this design is discussed at length by Rowan (1983). See also D. King, *The Complete Works of Robert and James Adam* (Edinburgh, 1991), pp. 106, 135-7.

slightly more complex plan. The ground floor plan of Marlborough House is an obvious variation on this type.⁷⁴

What has not previously attracted comment is the seminal position of the Steine-side elevation of Marlborough House (1786) in the genealogy of the final version of Sunnyside's principle front (1790-91).⁷⁵ Sunnyside went through endless revisions but in the end the architect, almost, one senses, in exasperation, broke with his earlier design paradigms and revisited the earlier elevation for Hamilton at Brighton. (Compare **Plates 9 and 13.**) There are of course obvious differences. Marlborough House is longer and, furthermore, has a tripartite, flat-arched window above each of the Diocletian windows on the ground floor. The configuration of this flat-arched is uncommon for the date but was not unknown in Brighton. Another obvious difference is treatment of the entrance porches. At Sunnyside it is robust and bolder; indeed the oversized proportions teeter on the brink of Mannerist distortion but at the same time the sheer size of the porch reasserts the primacy of the centre and thus fixes the house in the Palladian tradition. In this sense the Marlborough House elevation is more radical, for by reducing the porch to a bare minimum (**Plate 9**) Adam was left a void where conventional taste would have called for a clear point of emphasis, an assertive and definitive statement.

Against this claim it might reasonably be asserted that Adam's design strategy was not exceptional since a parallel for it can be found in the work of a lesser architect, John Crunden, who illustrates a villa elevation roughly comparable to Marlborough House's (compare **Plates 9 and 14**) in his 1767 *Convenient and Ornamental Architecture* (an edition of which was published in 1788) but in fact the resemblance is purely superficial. Adam's entrance porch almost disappears against the sheet of whiteness that is the Steine elevation, the appearance of length enhanced by those end pavilions with their long low pediments. In contrast to this 'stretch-limo' of a house, the spacing of the openings in Crunden's design are as regular, and uninspiring, as clockwork. And as for the notion that Adam might have reduced the size of his porch in order to save money for his client - in line with what he did elsewhere in this commission -- this does not stand up to scrutiny. The cost of giving the entrance more bulk would not have been significant especially when measured against the symbolic importance of the principle entrance and Hamilton was most definitely concerned with appearances. The marvellous watercolour view of the house in the collection of the Brighton Art Gallery (**Plate 9**) shows just how much. He took care to secure extra land as an encroachment on the Steine, rail it off, and then lay it out as a Reptonian landscape in miniature. There can be no doubt, I think, that Hamilton went to Adam to get something with style and equally no doubt that Adam answered this need within a fairly constrained budget. It should then come as no

⁷⁴ A similarity between the Steine-side elevation of Marlborough House and plate 16 in the 1787 edition of John Crunden's *Convenient and Ornamental Architecture, consisting of original designs for plans, elevations and sections;...* has been noted; however, the parallels with Adam's work are so strong, particularly with regard to plan, that this resemblance must be seen as fortuitous. I am grateful to Mr. Henry Smith, FRICS, of Hove for pointing out this information.

⁷⁵ This date according to Rowan, 1983, p. 37.

surprise that the Prince of Wales, that avatar of style, chose to stay at Marlborough House not once but twice, and on the second occasion for three weeks after his marriage to Caroline of Brunswick in 1795.

XII. The Later History of Marlborough House

Hamilton died in 1796, four years after his architect. The property was sold at auction on 10 September of that year by Messrs. Skinner and Dyke in three lots. The sale particulars mention stabling for six horses, suitable servants's chambers and numerous domestic offices. All three fetched 4,000 guineas but the name of the purchaser was not made public. It subsequently emerged that there was a mortgage of £7,575 upon the house to David Pitcairn. That was settled by 1801, when Lady Anne Murray purchased the property. She was said to have run a popular and fashionable establishment during the season. When she died in 1818, aged 90, the house passed to her niece, Lady Elizabeth Mary Finch Hatton, who sold it to Thomas Harrington, Esq., for £9,500. He lived in it, with occasional intervals, until his death in 1843, when his widow, Martha, purchased it (she did not inherit because of a trust arrangement) for £6,900.

In 1849 she bequeathed it to her nephew, Charles George Taylor, a leading Sussex cricketer, who died suddenly in 1869. Taylor had let the property from 1850 to 1863 to one Captain Charles Thelluson, the grandson of Peter Thelluson, whose eccentric will has earned him a place in British legal history and resulted in the Thelluson Act.⁷⁶ When the difficulties of the bequest (which sparked the idea for Dickens's *Bleak House*) were resolved, Charles commissioned Brodsworth Hall (completed in 1863) from an Italian architect. In January 1868 Mr. Taylor sold the property to Francis Henry Beidenbach, a perfumer in Bond Street, for £9,500, and he and his family were the last private residents.

In the second half of the 1870s the property was purchased by John Beal, a well known stationer of East Street, who used the basement rooms for storage. Between 1876 and 1879 he entered into an agreement with the Brighton School Board, which let the ground and upper floors as offices. The School Board purchased the house outright on 29 September 1891 for £7,000, which is how, ultimately, the property came into the ownership of the local authority.⁷⁷ The education offices of the borough were located here until 1974, when the county assumed control of this function. From then until the early 1990s Marlborough House was home to the Tourism and Resort Services Department of Brighton Borough Council, housing, for a time, the town's main tourist information centre.⁷⁸

XIII. Recommendations for Further Research

⁷⁶ This prevented property was being inherited to as yet unborn descendants.

⁷⁷ Bishop, pp. 163-4.

⁷⁸ Carder, no. 114k.

The architectural importance of Marlborough House merits a more careful analysis of the building fabric (see Site Notes section below), particularly because more of the eighteenth century fabrics survive than has previously been realised. Architectural paint analysis is essential to recover the original scheme and is also strongly advised. Analysis of the facing cement/mastic should also be carried out; if this material turns out to be an oil mastic it is an unusual survival requiring a scheme of careful conservation. Further documentary research is required, particularly in the official records of education and tourist authorities in order to understand more recent additions to the eighteenth-century fabric; however, preliminary analysis suggests that a great deal of the two eighteenth-century fabrics survives.

All of this material should be incorporated into a single document -- a conservation and management plan -- which should be used as the basis for making decisions about the building's future.

Professional staff within English Heritage can offer the following advice services:

1. **Building Analysis:** A HART building archaeologist to visit the site in order to draw up specifications for building analysis which can be put out to tender.

2. **Architectural Paint Analysis:** A member of staff from EH Conservation Studios to visit and draw up a similar specification for architectural paint analysis.

3. HART member of staff to arrange for samples of the **cement/oil mastic surfacing** to be sent to a specialist consultant carrying out a survey of stuccos in Brighton and Hove. Samples to be provided by the architect in consultation with Brighton and Hove Council.

4. HART to consider carrying out further documentary research. If resources do not permit this, then this research to be built into the building analysis specification.

These further resources include:

A. Duke of Marlborough Manuscripts, which are split between the British Library Manuscripts Collection and those at Blenheim.

B. Hamilton correspondence, Huntingdon Library, San Marino, California, USA, and Trinity College Manuscripts Collection, Dublin University. There will be official correspondence relating to Hamilton's role as Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer, at the Public Record Office at Kew.

C. East Sussex Record Office for records of the Brighton School Board and other miscellaneous items relating to Brighton's tenure.

D. Tithe Map, East Sussex Record Office or Public Record Office at Kew.

E. Later edition Ordnance Surveys, British Library, Maps Collection.

F. Papers relating to the tenure of private individuals in the nineteenth century, which will be useful for notes on alterations or may even contain information on the original scheme of furnishing (for example, Captain Charles Thelluson).

Actions Arising from the Above:

- EH HART building analyst to visit Marlborough House and draw up specification building analysis and recording project.
- EH HART to liaise with EH Painting Conservation Studio to draw up the same for paint analysis.
- Architects to contact local authority in order to obtain pieces of surface coat of Marlborough house for analysis by consultant. EH HART to pass these along to specialist consultant already engaged in survey of cement and stucco in Brighton and Hove.
- HART to consider whether resources available for further documentary research, points A through E above.

Dr Chris Miele
English Heritage
August 1997

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9. Anon., English School, View of Marlborough House on the Steine, watercolour. Before 1804. Source: Brighton Art Gallery and Museum, Royal Pavilion.
10. Dining Parlour, elevations and ceiling to scale, published in supplement to *The Architects' Journal*, 11 February 1931.
11. Ceiling to Study or Library, to scale, published in supplement to *The Architects' Journal*, 11 February 1931.
12. North wall of Study or Library, to scale, published in supplement to *The Architects' Journal*, 11 February 1931.
13. Adam's designs for the villa Sunnyside, for Sir Patrick Inglis, Bt., to be built on the outskirts of Edinburgh, 1785-6. Source: A. Rowan, *Designs for Castles and Country Villas by Robert and James Adam* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1985).
14. Plate 16 from 1788 edition of John Crunden's *Convenient and Ornamental Architecture, consisting of Original Designs for Plans, Elevations, and Sections, beginning with the Farmhouse, and regularly ascending to the most grand and Magnificent Villa*.

Appendix 1: Notes on the fabric of the building made during inspection on 30 July 1997

The following room numbers refer to plans drawn up by Gale Stephen Steiner Architects, 9 Curtain Road, LONDON, EC2A 3LT. The plans are reproduced in this report, courtesy of the architects, as **Plates 5 and 6**.

Ground Floor: ROOMS 10-19.

ROOM 11: Entrance Hall. The door to study (ROOM 13) not centred either on line of entrance door nor in the middle of the cross wall; this done to centre on axis of study.

Stone chimney piece to match architraves (brackets) of three status doors. Rather austere architectural character appropriate to hall, which in many houses of the period given a stone colouring and floor in recognition of proximity to outside. Proportions small, but use of concave, ribbed ceiling introduces a sense of 'lift': all in all very successful.

Doors: Current hard-wood (?) varnished doors with curved butt ends are Victorian vintage, introduced either by private owner/tenant or by the Brighton School Board. Original door between 13 and ROOM 14 (stair hall); six panel type, enriched with egg and dart/beaded quark.

Shutters: Original, enriched by shallow delicate ornament, detail hard to establish due to overpainting.

No door linings to thin wall between this room and ROOM 13 (study), suggesting not commonly used and door included in ROOM 11 for symmetry and effect primarily.

Skirtings and dado rails are original: uncarved.

Drawing for the entablature in Rose's book, Soane Museum.

ROOM 10: Drawing Room. Mouldings here are the only ones to have a specifically marine theme, principally with Cupid standing astride a dolphin; motifs picked up in chimney piece, architraves, and room frieze. The mouldings have been seriously compromised by paint clogging.

Enriched door linings between 10 and 11.

Double door, now mirrored, linking this room with ROOM 13 (study) appears to be original, one of few on the ground floor.

The remainder of the joinery appears complete, including skirting and dado, which are, as in the Hall (ROOM 11) not enriched.

Serlian window to Steine very effective in lighting the room; only light source. Is the wall between ROOM 10 and ROOMS 13 and 11, in its entirety, of original, that is, 1765 build? Further analysis needed, opening up.

ROOM 13: Study or Library.⁷⁹ After grand suite of rooms, feeling and proportions of room in the earlier, more modest house, and yet overlaid with Adam ornament. Pairs of beams, crossed; those spanning spine wall with ROOM 11 and rear wall appear to be structural beams of the 1765 house; the pair spanning cross walls between this room and ROOMS 10 and 14 are decorative; further analysis required. Impression of a space jammed together with features, the sheer busy-ness of it draws attention away from the ill-fitting areas.

Hinges to original double door (with ROOM 10) are not cranked originals. Door to ROOM 11 (hall) very plain and unlined, suggesting that this axis not formally used, but that the only proper access to the ROOM 10 (Drawing Room) was via ROOM 11 (hall).

Most of joinery appears original; again plain dado and skirting. Drawings for the chimneypiece and mirror and the ceiling in the Soane Museum.

Weather clock in north wall shown in outline on drawing in Soane Museum, suggesting it was pre-existing; the position is right for it have been retained from Shergold's house.

ROOM 12: Dining Room or Parlour. East curve of recess to south has been removed, forming passage to an area that was probably a storage cupboard. Overlight to ROOM 14 is original.

Only one status entrance to Dining Room, via Hall (ROOM 11). Door to ROOM 14 (stair hall) would have been used by guests staying in the house and servants. Service stair in ROOM 15, ground to top floor to west of this room.

ROOM 14: Stair hall and rear entrance hall. Entrance to rear very low and cramped, which is hard to square with Adam plan in the Soane Museum which suggests that this entrance was meant to have status. Open well stair with Vitruvian scroll to tread ends. Hand rails and newels in the form of columns are in varnished hard wood: original. Plain softwood (?) bannisters, square in section, through the rest, also of original design. Open well stair lit on landing by round-arched window, also original opening, although glazing looks 1830-1860.

ROOM 16: back parlour, servant's room. Pair of structural timbers spanning end and cross wall with ROOM 14. Survival of original fabric here.

ROOM 19: In all probability an earth closet wing, now fitted with a safe, probably installed by Brighton School Board.

⁷⁹ Measured drawings and photographs of this interior were published in *The Architects' Journal* for 4 February, 1931, Special Supplement. These are important for showing the pair of lozenge-shaped pier tables, which was in pieces in ROOM 7, basement, during my visit on 30 July.

Mezzanine and First-Floor Landing

ROOMS 14, 28 and 33. Very complicated spatial arrangement to negotiate the level changes between half of Shergold's 1765 house to the rear and Adam's additions of 1786-7. Very spartan; no understair embellishment; only Vitruvian scroll treads noted before.

Un-numbered space (marked A on first-floor plan -- technically on mezzanine floor, under stair landing, ROOM 28, accessible by plain, unpanelled door; at the rear a join in builds, it seems, between brick older house and mixed construction Adam addition. Further analysis needed in this area.

First-Floor Suite.

ROOMS 20, 24, and 25. All joinery and some chimney pieces look authentic to 1786-7 build; perhaps even mirror in ROOM 27. Considerable survivals. Originally ROOMS 20, 24, and 21, bedrooms (according to Adam plan in Soane Museum). ROOM 22, unheated originally, a dressing room. ROOM 23, the largest, probably a reception room of some kind. All have wood chimneypieces of eighteenth-century vintage. Some tile insets of good quality as well, dating, probably to Brighton School Board's period of ownership. The chimneypiece of wood to ROOM 23 especially good.

ROOM 20: scars to north wall suggest a removed stack. ROOM 25 technically outside the south wall of the old Shergold House.

Door from ROOM 20 into ROOM 21, on south side, is original to Adam build; that to ROOM 21 is not. Eighteenth-century doors from ROOM 25 to ROOMS 24, 20, and 26. Overlight above door from ROOM 25 to 26 is authentic to Adam build.

ROOM 27, entered from ROOM 28 via an eighteenth-century door. Reasons for the presence of two windows in ROOM 27 unclear. Further building analysis required. Most important, however, in ROOM 27 are pair of boxed structural timbers which indicate this portion of the house a survival of Shergold House. Similar pair, though set at slightly different centres, to ROOM 29. ROOM 27 has, in addition, a wood eighteenth-century chimneypiece.

Mezzanine

ROOMS 34 and 32. ROOM 32 has only architectural fragment of Shergold House in the form of an eared, wood chimneypiece with fretted dentil cornice. Style completely wrong for Adam, more at home in the middle of the century. This almost certainly not its first position. Both rooms have paired structural timbers which, once again, indicate that this is part of the older house.

Top Floor

Building analysis needed to determine date of the present arrangement. ROOM 40 may well date to late nineteenth century; best Victorian fireplace in the building. Service stair to this level is original. No access to ROOMS 36 and 37.

Basement

No Access to ROOM 4 (accessible from rear courtyard) or the west half of ROOM 1, which has a partition not shown in the attached plans. Blocked door from ROOM 5 to ROOM 4, plastered over but cracking makes it plainly visible. ROOM 1 seems all of Adam's build; note level change from ROOM 3. Pair of cast-iron columns Regency or early Victorian.

Brick to lateral walls between ROOMS 3 and 2 suggest these have their original, late eighteenth-century form. ROOM 5, central hall area to service level, equally seems to have retained its original form. The same is true for ROOMS 6 to 9, although 8 and 9 seems to belong to the Shergold House. It seems, in conclusion, that the basement areas of the Shergold-Hamilton House retain in large measure their original plan form, which is noteworthy. The possible exception may be wall between present 6 and 7.

ROOMS 7 and 8 retain original bin arrangements, brick and stone to 7 and brick and wood to 8. Some timber-framed and pegged cross walling to both. ROOM 9 (Boiler room): brick walls exposed; flint footings.

Rear Elevation

To service areas there is some evidence of building joins which suggests that Adam added to Shergold's basement. The present fenestration pattern seems largely to be the result of Adam's work, perhaps making use of some earlier openings; building analysis required. 6 x 6 sash to mezzanine opening seems late eighteenth century, as do the 8 x 8 sashes. ROOM 40 higher, perhaps an eighteenth-century feature.

Building analysis required of rear entrance porch; vintage uncertain. Single-storey range to left, or north, of rear elevation (ROOMS 17 and 18) were almost certainly added by the Brighton School Board (for storage), as they are not shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey (1873). The scroll acanthus bracket to the hipped porch roof is probably an eighteenth-century fragment, though not from Adam's design. There are many such features 'floating' around Brighton's building stock, and it is likely its origins will never be discovered.

Appendix 2: Text of letter from William Hamilton to Robert Adam, 16 January 1787.

Whereabouts of original unknown. Copy in the Soane Museum, Marlborough House file.

Jany. 16 -- 87. Brighton

Dear Sir

I trouble you today with a very short Letter, because I hope we shall meet very soon and very often, and discuss various matters frequently over a good Soupe. I have given directions that your Plans should in ev'ry respect be followed minutely, and that there might be no delay whatsoever. But if a Door or two could be dispensed with in the Hall I own I should be pleas'd. I am sensible that no door can be taken away without some Inconvenience. But warmth and Comfort are the principal Objects, and Elegance tho' a desirable, is only a secondary one. I sometimes think that the Door from the Hall to the Back Parlour might be parted with. At others that the Recess part of the Dining Room instead of being Circular might be made strait, and that in that Case the Door in the Centre of the Dining Parlour might be shut up, and the entrance in to it be made rather at the side, exactly opposite to the Door through which you go out of the Hall in to the Dining Room. I own I am not pleased with my own thoughts, and therefore I beg you would think for me. I can't forbear saying how exceedingly I am pleased with the additions of the Bread[th] at each extremity of the House; it gives a Character and an expression which the great length of the House much wanted, and which it has got very advantageously.

I have been detain'd here much longer than I intended by an opposition from some of the Inhabitants to my taking in more Ground towards the Steine, and on each side of my House. There was a very numerous meeting of them last Night. Two Questions were proposed, first, that my taking in 100 feet of Ground to which I had no Right, was an Encroachment. But this was determined in the Negative by a large Majority.

2^{ndly} that my blocking up the Coach way to Philcox's [to the north -- the future site of Mrs. Fitzherbert's Steine House] was a Nuisance. But Philcox was the only person in the Room of that opinion. What would Mr. Pitt give for such a Parliament! To this L^d Mansfield would probably answer, nothing, for that he already had such a one. Stiles [?] I was told was exceedingly Eloquent. Amongst the many obligations I have confer'd on Brighthelmstone He considered it a principal one that I had brought one of the first Architects in the world to ornament their Fishing Town.

Yrs most Sincerely
WGH

Appendix 3: A Sample Brief for Fabric Analysis and Recording

MARLBOROUGH HOUSE, 54 OLD STEINE, BRIGHTON

A BRIEF FOR A FABRIC ANALYSIS AND RECORDING PROJECT

BACKGROUND

Marlborough House is an eighteenth-century building of two distinct phases, 1765 and 1786-7. Minor alterations were made in the nineteenth century, particularly by the Brighton School Board. Subsequent works carried out by the local authority do not appear to have been extensive.

Preliminary analysis and research suggests that the earlier building was constructed of brick and had a double-pile plan. It had three stories and a central stair bay, and, possibly a secondary stair bay perpendicular to the principal stair. In 1786 Robert Adam was retained by the new owner, the Rt. Hon. William Hamilton, former chancellor of the exchequer of Ireland, to modernise the house. Adam retained the rear half of the house more or less intact, razed the eastmost half, and designed an L-shaped extension of two stories to wrap around the remnants of the 1765 structure. The ground-floor suite of rooms features fine original decoration that can be firmly attributed to him, some of it the work of the renowned plasterworker Joseph Rose. A fuller account of this can be found in the Preliminary Report on the building written by Chris Miele of the Historical Analysis and Research Team of English Heritage.

Outline planning permission is currently being sought for conversion of the building -- until recently the headquarters of the Tourist Board of Brighton Borough Council -- into a pub/wine bar. The new authority of Brighton and Hove is currently the owner.

Dr. Miele's preliminary report (attached) was prepared at the request of the English Heritage Inspector, Dr. Richard Morrice, in order to inform discussions about these proposals as they developed. This report showed that considerably more eighteenth-century fabric survived than originally realised and in order to ensure the survival of this work further building analysis and research has been deemed to be necessary.

AIM

The overall aim of the project is to undertake a programme of building analysis and recording in order to inform any programme of repair and refurbishment. The preliminary report prepared by English Heritage also identifies the need for further documentary research.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective is to provide a detailed, illustrated account of the historical development of the house based on a detailed study of the surviving fabric combined with historical research.

This will require:

- A. The identification of surviving fabric from the two major eighteenth-century building phases (1765 and 1787).
- B. The definition of the relationship between these two phases.
- C. The identification of earlier (if any) and later work, and its relationship to the two major eighteenth-century phases.

Listed building consent will be required for the works of opening up. The responsibility for obtaining this will fall to the project architect.

The project will be divided into three stages. It is vital that the first stage of analysis is completed prior to the start of the repair and refurbishment contract and, furthermore, that its results be fed into the repair and refurbishment process. The analyst should also, as part of the second stage of the project, be available for consultation during the course of the works. The third stage will entail the completion of a detailed report (see below) which describes the historical development of the house up to and including the proposed scheme of alteration.

METHODOLOGY

D. To undertake a drawn survey using CAD of the building to produce plans and sections for reproduction at 1:50 scale. Moulding details are to be drawn at 1:1 scale (with enriched mouldings drawn in elevation). In reproduction these may be reduced.

E. A room by room photographic survey showing ornaments, details of construction, reconstruction, et cet.

F. Reconstruction drawings: a ground plan and elevation (putative) of the 1765 house as well as a three-dimensional drawing showing the relationship between the two principal eighteenth-century builds (this need not be to scale).

G. Detail drawings of the roof, floor, and wall construction.

H. Paint analysis particularly of the Adam interiors. English Heritage Conservation Studios to advise on a brief for this analysis. This should extend to wallpaper research; contemporary descriptions record that the drawing room (the largest room on the ground floor; located to the south of the entrance hall)

was papered. This analysis should be done archaeologically, using stratigraphic methods.

I. Discussion of the two principal phases with reference to historical/art historical parallels.

J. Further documentary research (see Dr. Miele's report).

K. A record to be made of the surviving furniture, and an catalogue assembled of known designs for the project in the Soane Museum. Photographs of the wine cistern to be obtained from Christie's in London for incorporation into the final report.

L. Dendrochronological dating, possibly funded by English Heritage, of structural timbers from the two principal eighteenth-century phases.

Timing of analysis and recording works

It is vital for the building analyst to understand the timetable of the proposed programme of repair and refurbishment in order to make his/her results available in good time to inform the work. As noted above this may be done by a phased programme of investigation or, alternately, the entire work of analysis should be completed (and a draft of the final report presented -- see below) before the start of the contract for repair and refurbishment. In this event the analyst must agree to be available for consultation during the course of the works should any new evidence come to light or should points in the draft report require clarification. The prior filing of the draft final report should be made a condition of listing building consent.

REPORTING OF THE RESULTS

This information should be presented in the form of a bound, illustrated report. Should the entire work of analysis be undertaken prior to the start of the repair and refurbishment contract a draft final report is acceptable; however, a full final report must be filed within six months of the start of the repair and refurbishment contract. Copies to be provided for the architect and his client, relevant parties in the local authority, members of English Heritage staff (Drs. Morrice and Miele or colleagues), as well as the National Monuments Record in Swindon and the relevant Sites and Monuments Record. These reports should contain reproductions of a selection of the commissioned photographs. Reduced scale copies of every drawing (composite drawings on A3 fold-out sheets) should also be included. The complete set of drawings and photographs to be provided for the architect and the local authority, and then deposited with the NMR and SMR pending approval of the work by Dr. Miele or another member of HART.

Given Adam's association with the commission, consideration may be given to publishing some of the results. A separate cost may therefore be sought for bringing certain drawings to a level of finish and quality sufficient for publication. The analyst to agree in advance to granting permission to reproduce drawings and photographs and to waive any fees.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The client for the work is ????. The project will be managed by the project architect, who will be the single point of contact for the building analyst. This architect will be responsible for ensuring that the results of the building analysis are made available in good time to influence the course of works by coordinating the timetable for the repair and refurbishment programme with the analyst's work. The building analyst will be responsible for buying in specialist skills, such as photography and historical research.

The analyst should also discuss with the architect what areas are to be opened up; the architect should be responsible for obtaining the necessary consents for this work.

English Heritage staff should be given the opportunity to comment on the results of the work, particularly on the standard of drawings whether these are of the record variety, made for the inventory, or for explanation.

PROCUREMENT

The building analysis and recording will be procured by obtaining three costed project designs from practices or groups of specialists who demonstrate expertise in and familiarity with

- eighteenth and nineteenth-century architecture
- the survey of standing buildings
- the history of construction
- the archaeological analysis of fabric

The architect will submit project designs to English Heritage for approval prior to appointing the analyst.

The project design for the building recording and analysis should include the following:

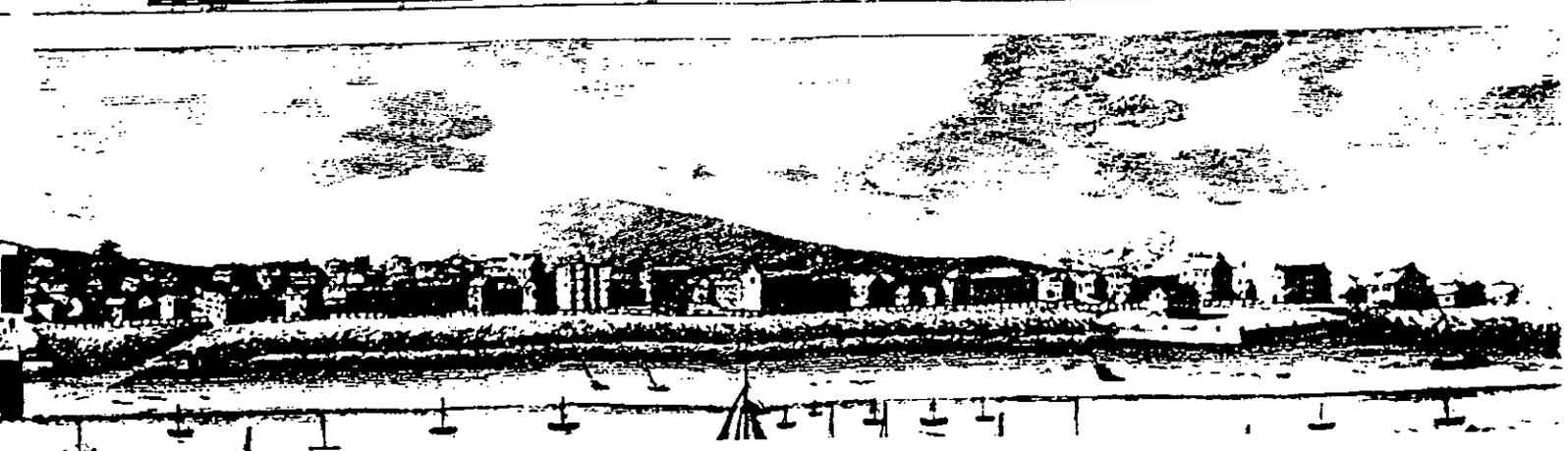
- strategy for documentary research
- strategy for the fieldwork, including the methods proposed
- list of drawings to be provided

- project personnel with their qualifications/experience
- timetable for the work
- timetable for the delivery of the information
- arrangements for archiving
- breakdown of costs
- samples of previous work on a comparable building

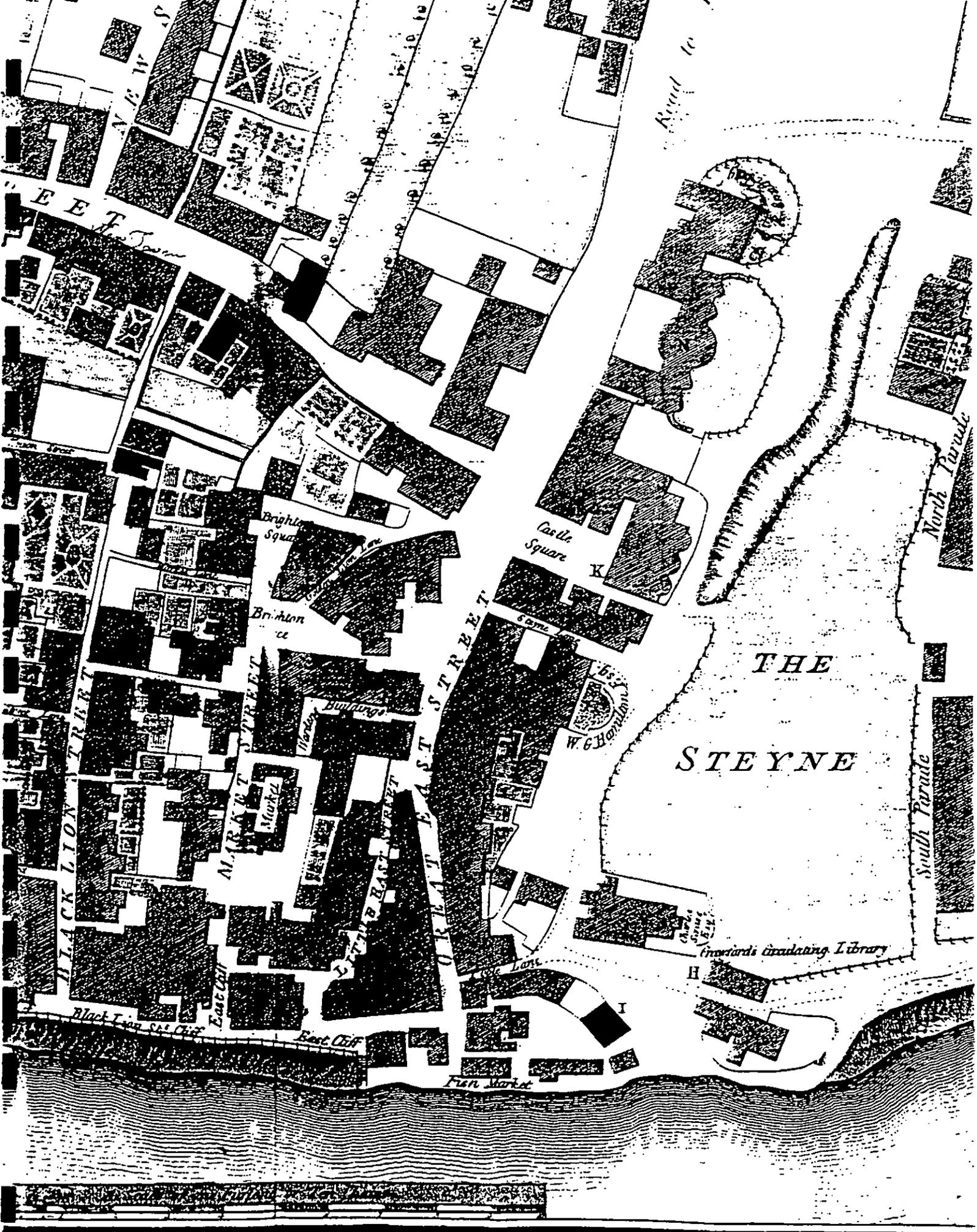
Copies of Dr. Miele's preliminary report on the house to be made available to all potential contractors.

Dr Chris Miele
Historical Analysis and Research Team
for the London and South East Team, English Heritage

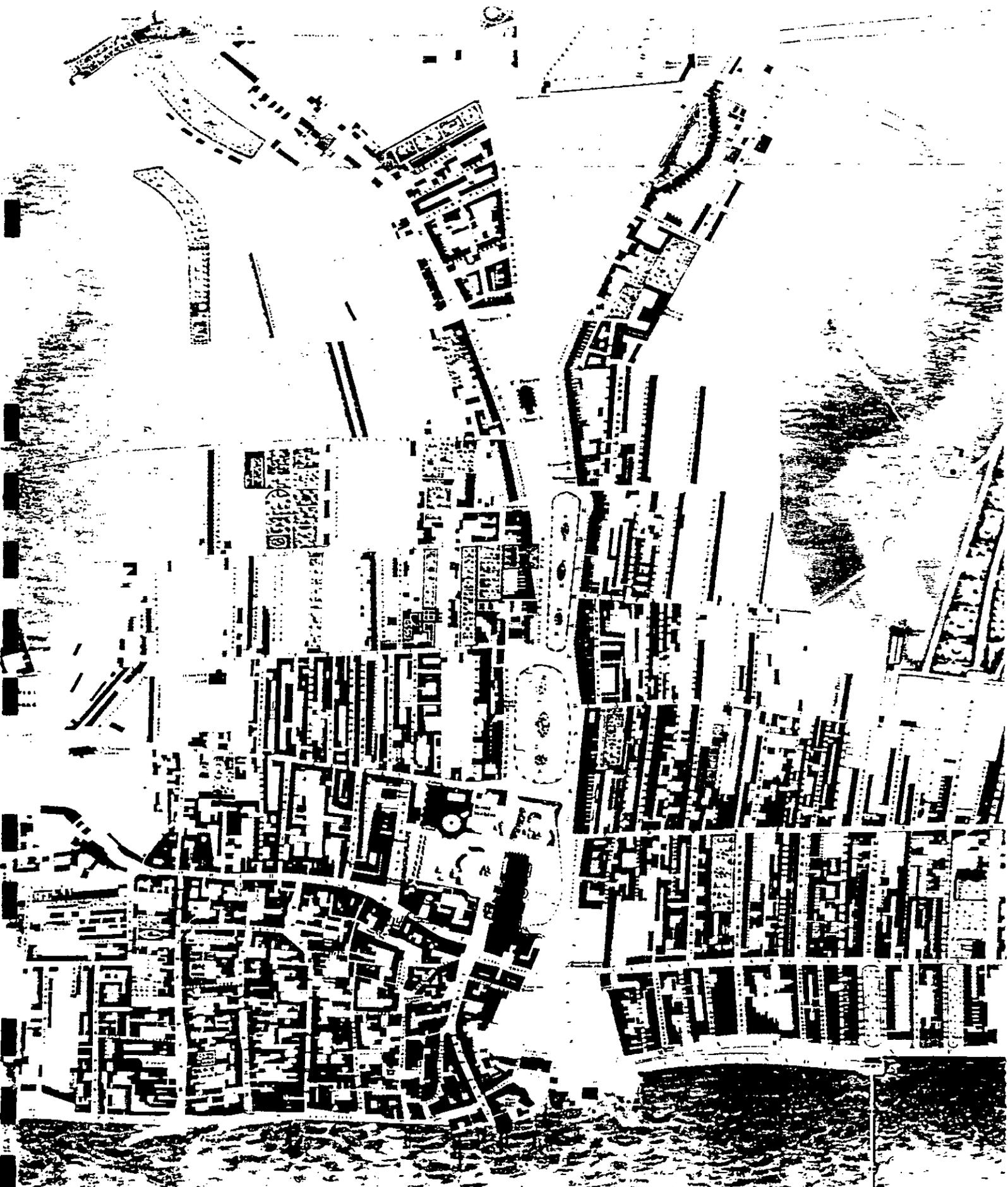
Room 210, 23 Savile Row
0171 973 3729



1. Yeakell and Gardner's, Brighton, 1779. Source: Brighton Reference Library.

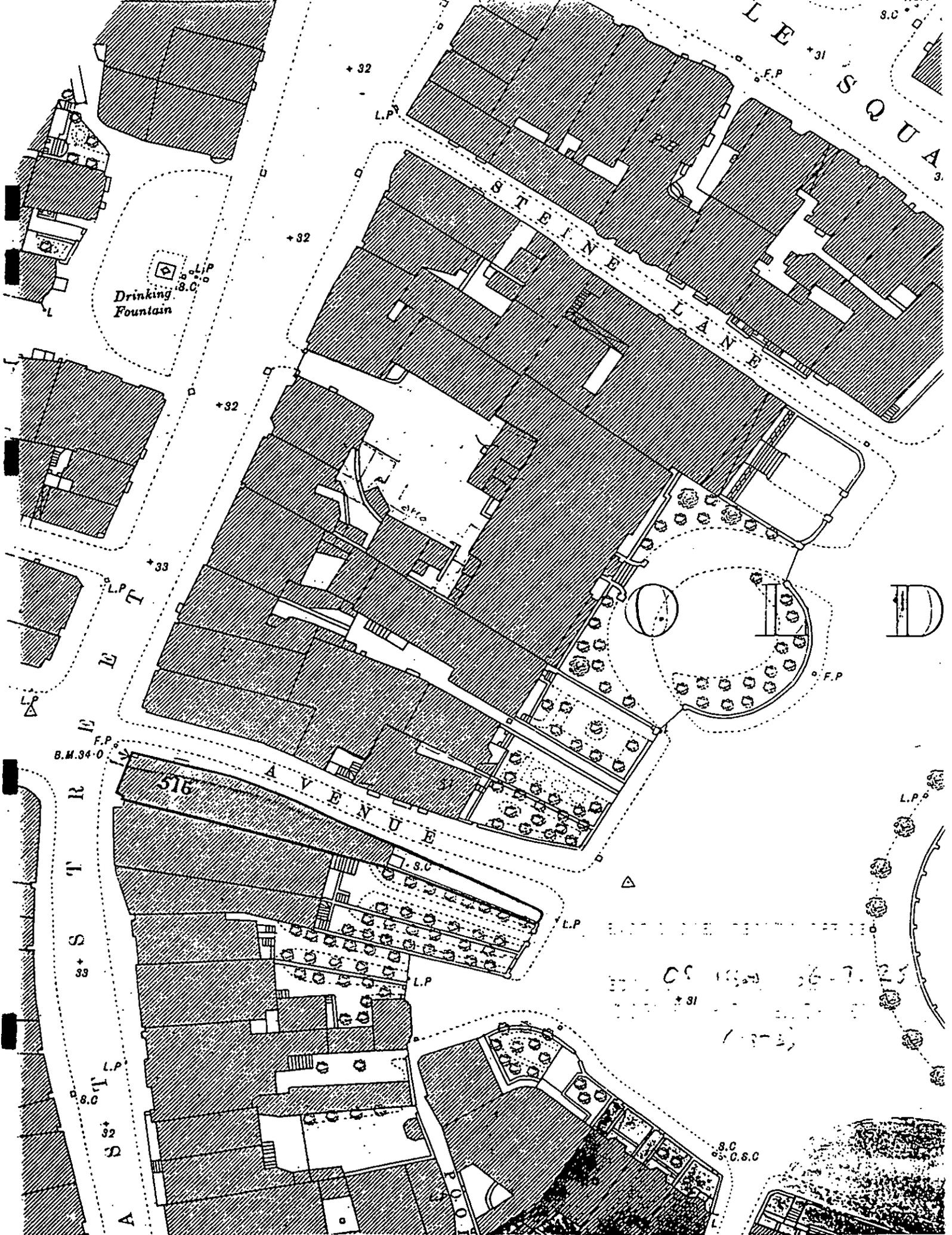


2. T. Budgen, *The New Plan ... of Brighton*, 1788. Source: Brighton Reference Library.

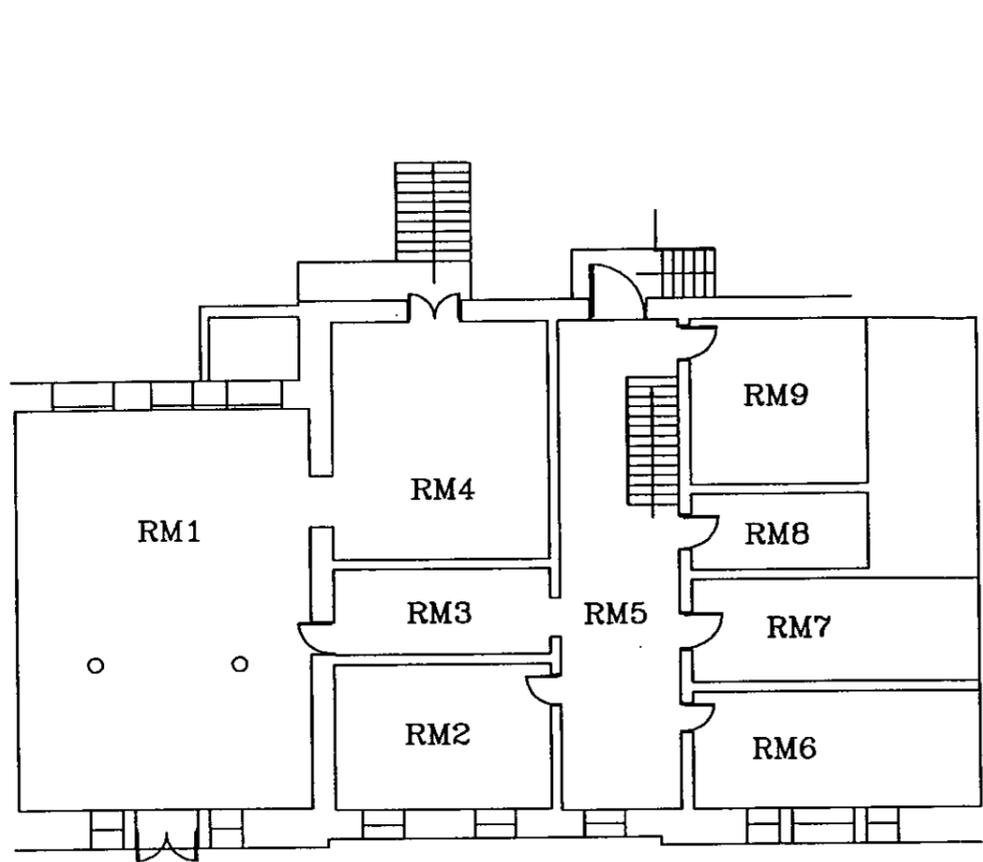


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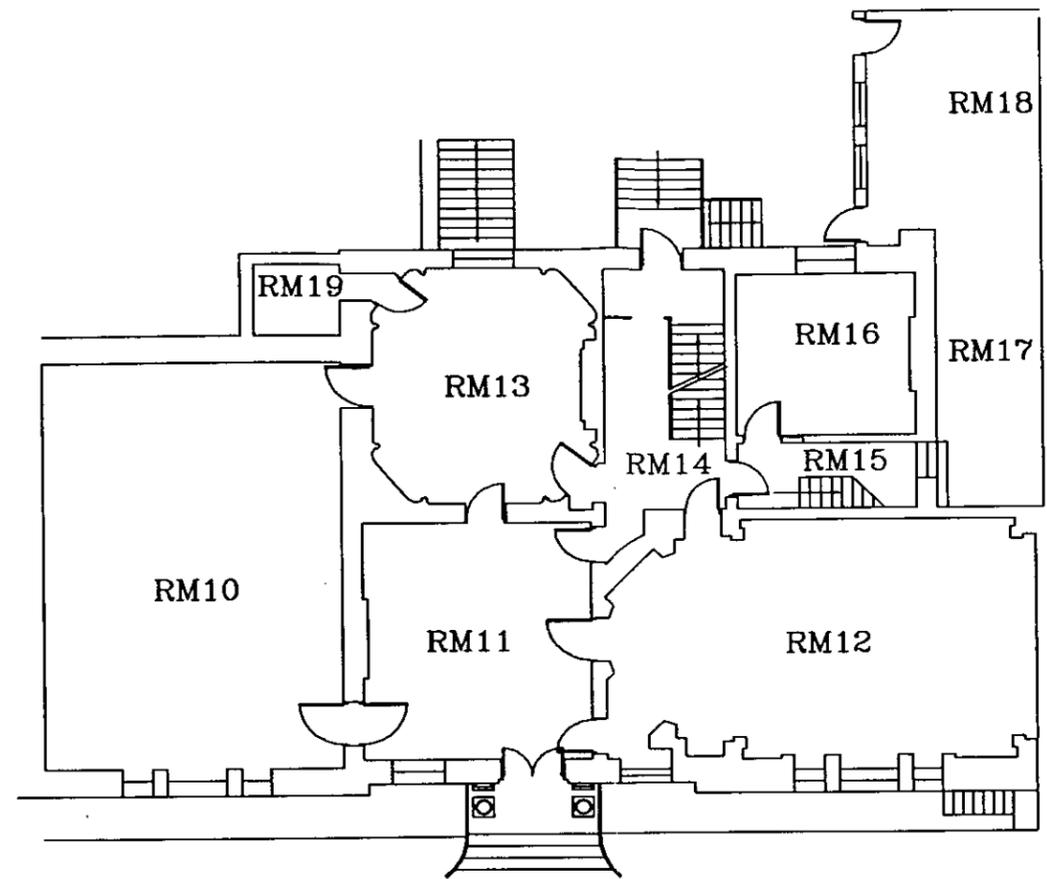
3. Pigott and Smith, *Brighton and Its Environs*, 1824. Source: Brighton Reference Library.



4. First edition Ordnance Survey, 1873. 1 : 500. Source: East Sussex Record Office.

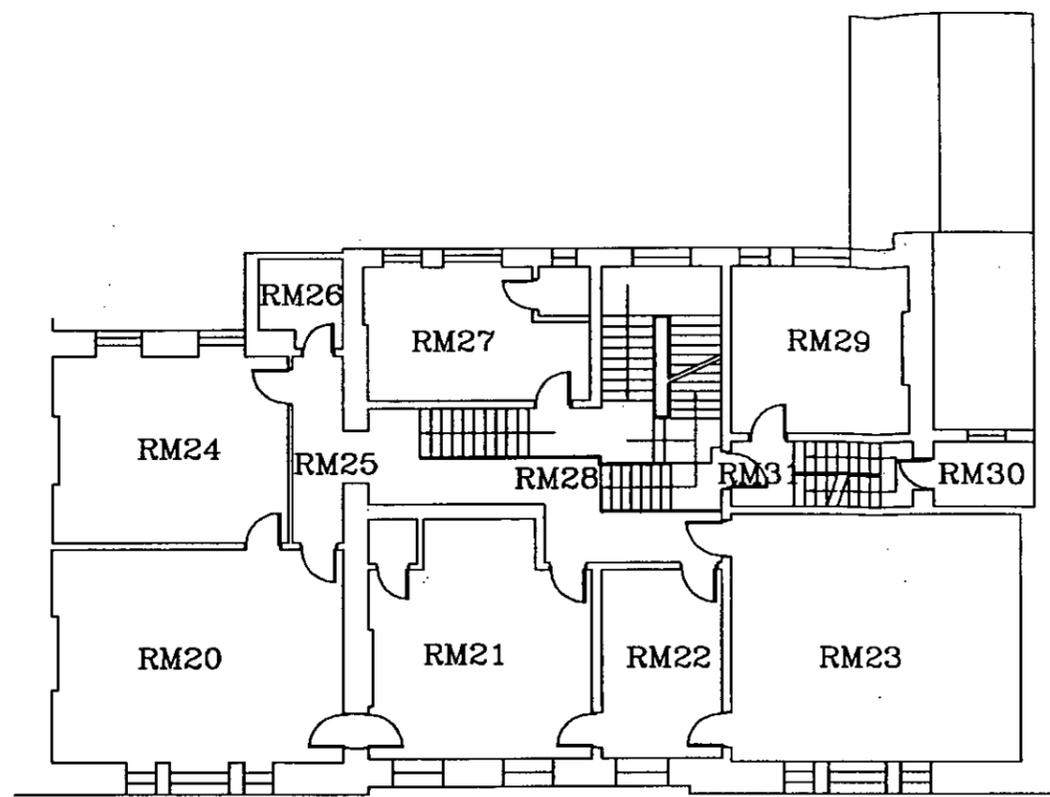


BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

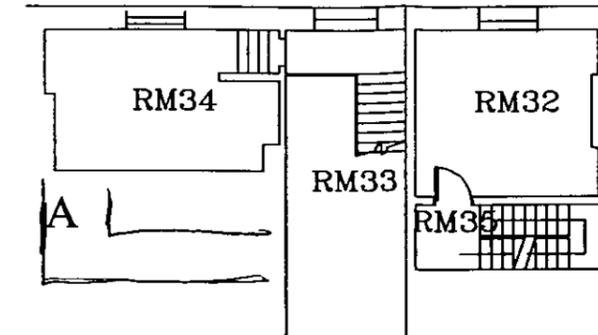


GROUND FLOOR PLAN

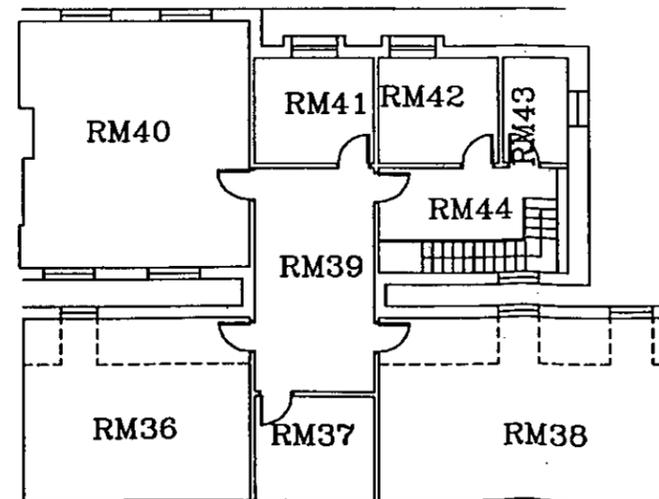
GALE • STEPHEN • STEINER ARCHITECTS PLANNERS DESIGNERS 9 CURTAIN ROAD LONDON EC2A 3LT		drawing title FLOOR PLANS	
project title 54 OLD STEINE BRIGHTON		date AUG 1996	drawn RS
		drawing no 96452 L (---)01	scale NTS
			revision



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

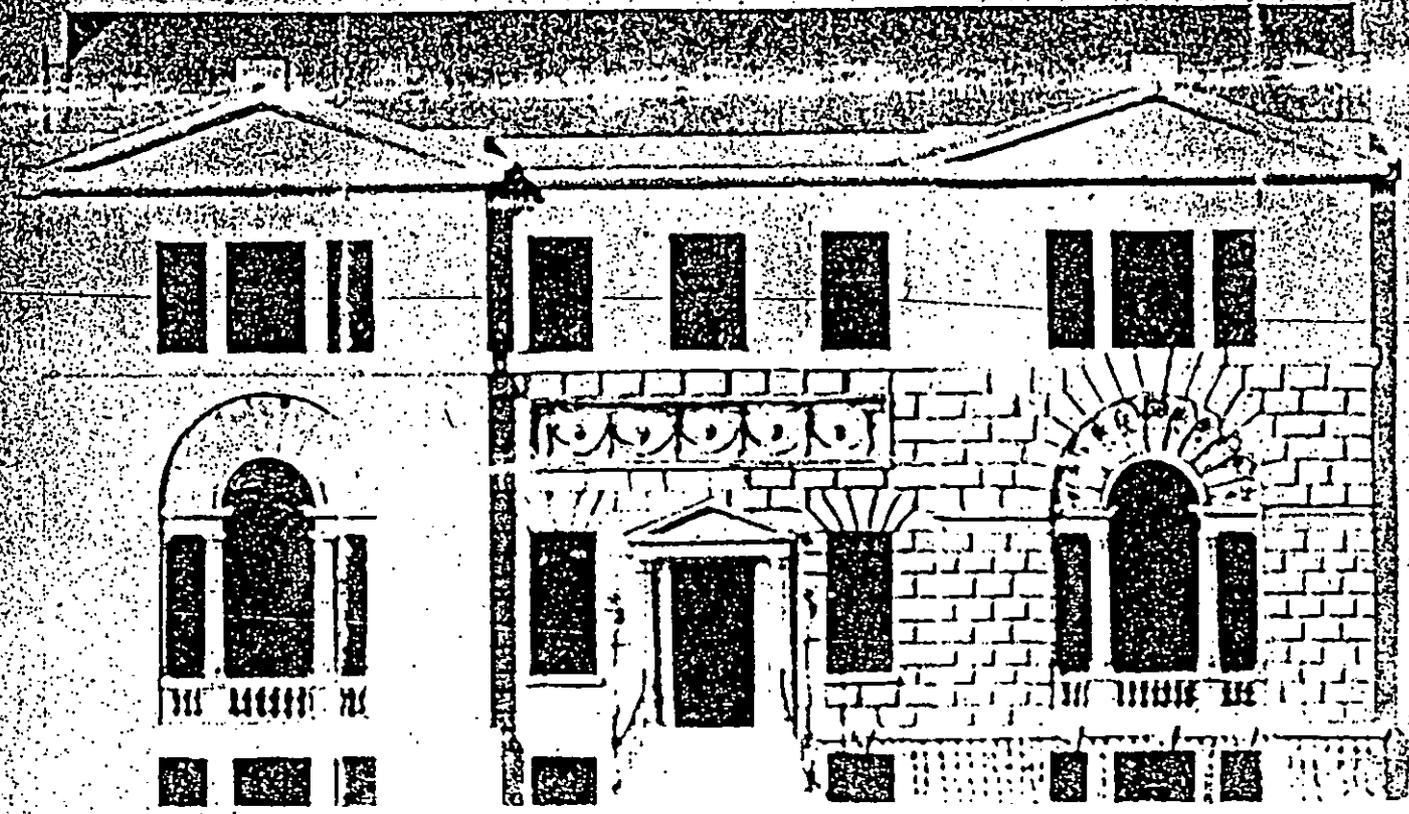


MEZZANINE FLOOR PLAN



TOP FLOOR PLAN

GALE • STEPHEN • STEINER ARCHITECTS PLANNERS DESIGNERS 9 CURTAIN ROAD LONDON E2A 3LT		Telephone 071 377 9944 Facsimile 071 377 6367		drawing title FLOOR PLANS	
project title 54 OLD STEINE BRIGHTON		date AUG 1996	drawn RS	scale MTS	revision
		drawing no 96452 L (---)02			



7. Elevation of Marlborough House, 1786-7, Robert Adam. Shows the different options for finishes. Source: Soane Museum, London.

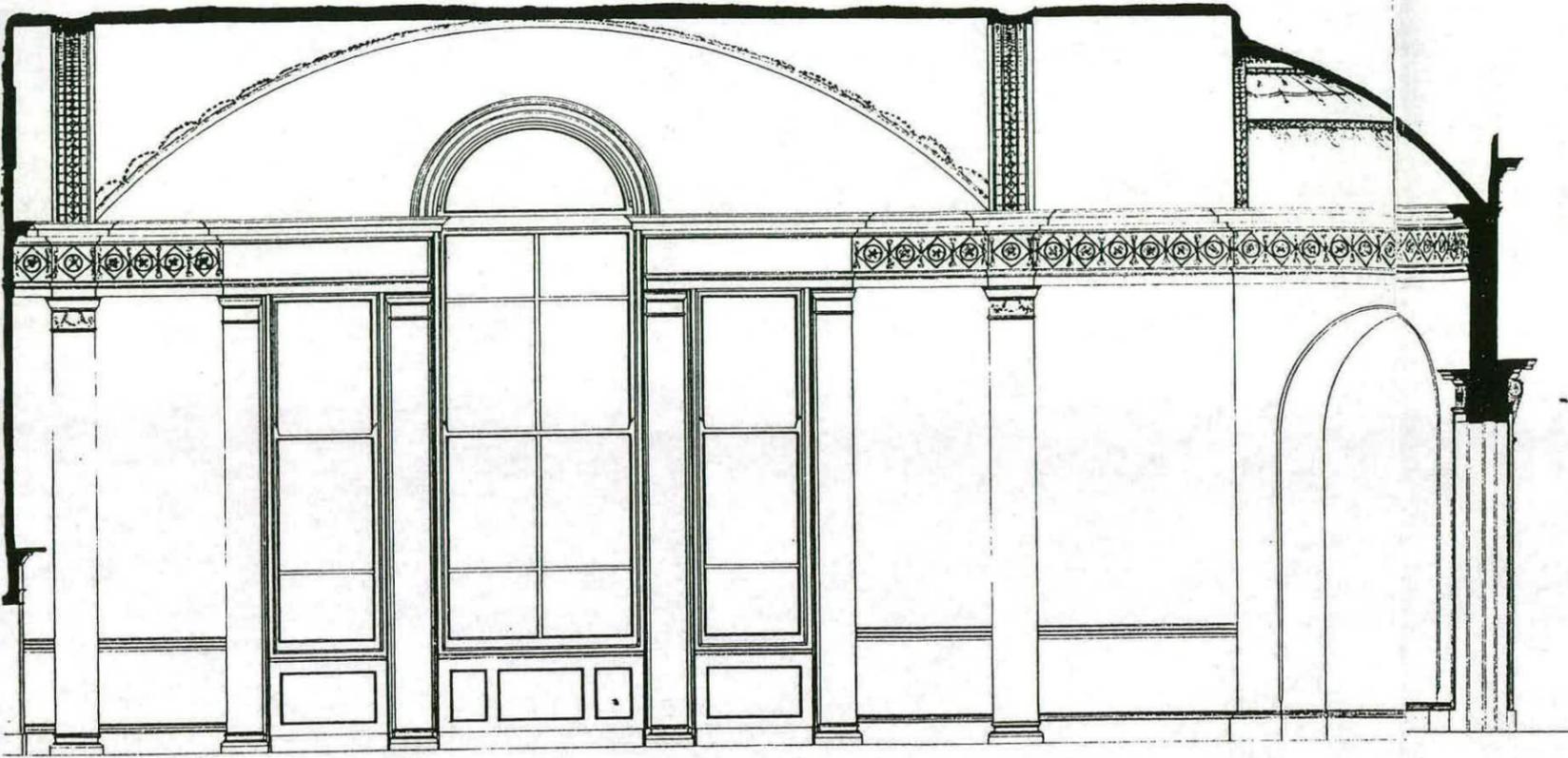


8. John Donowell, *Perspective View of the Steyne at Brighthelmston, 1778*. Original in pen, ink and wash. Reproduction from original in the possession of Brighton Art Gallery and Museum, Preston Manor.

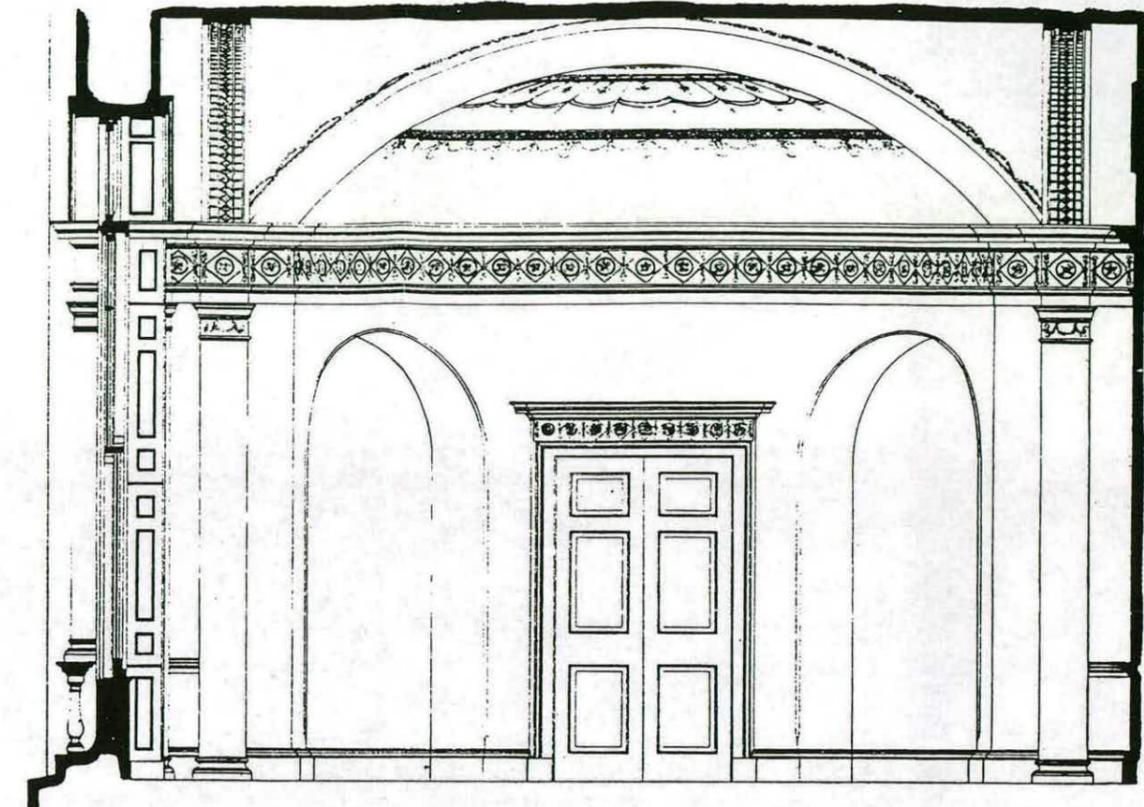


9. Anon., English School, View of Marlborough House on the Steine, watercolour. Before 1804. Source: Brighton Art Gallery and Museum, Royal Pavilion.

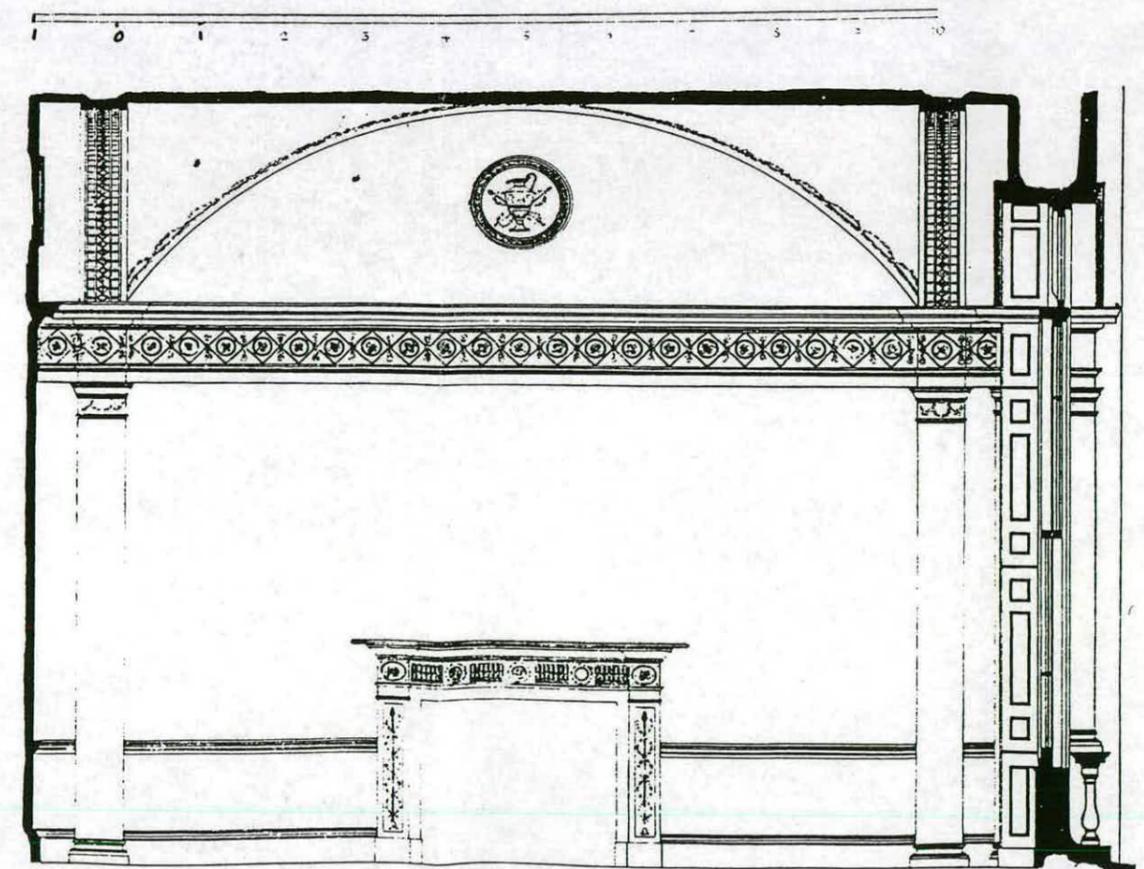
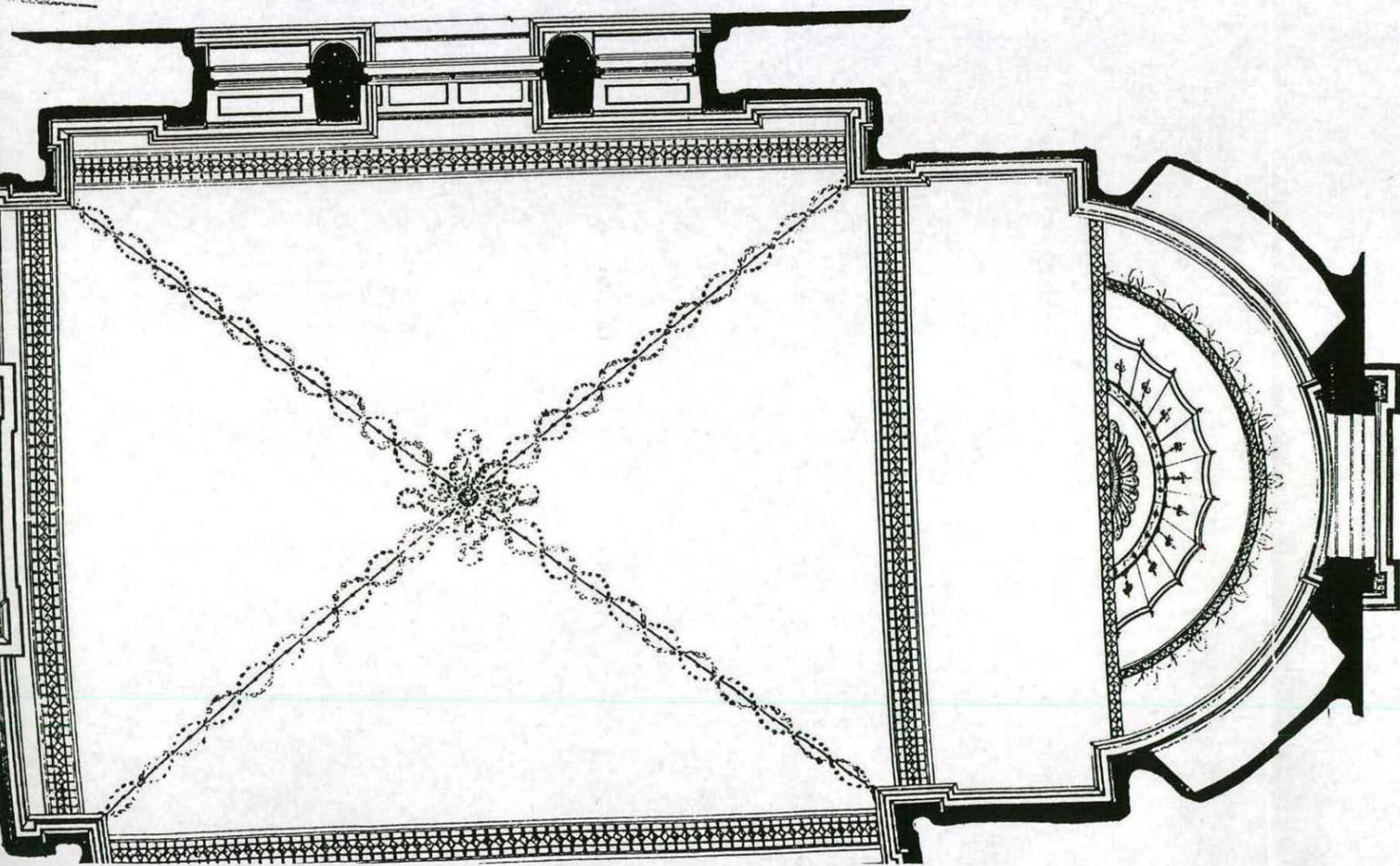
VASE, BRIGHTON DINING ROOM



ELEVATION OF EAST WALL



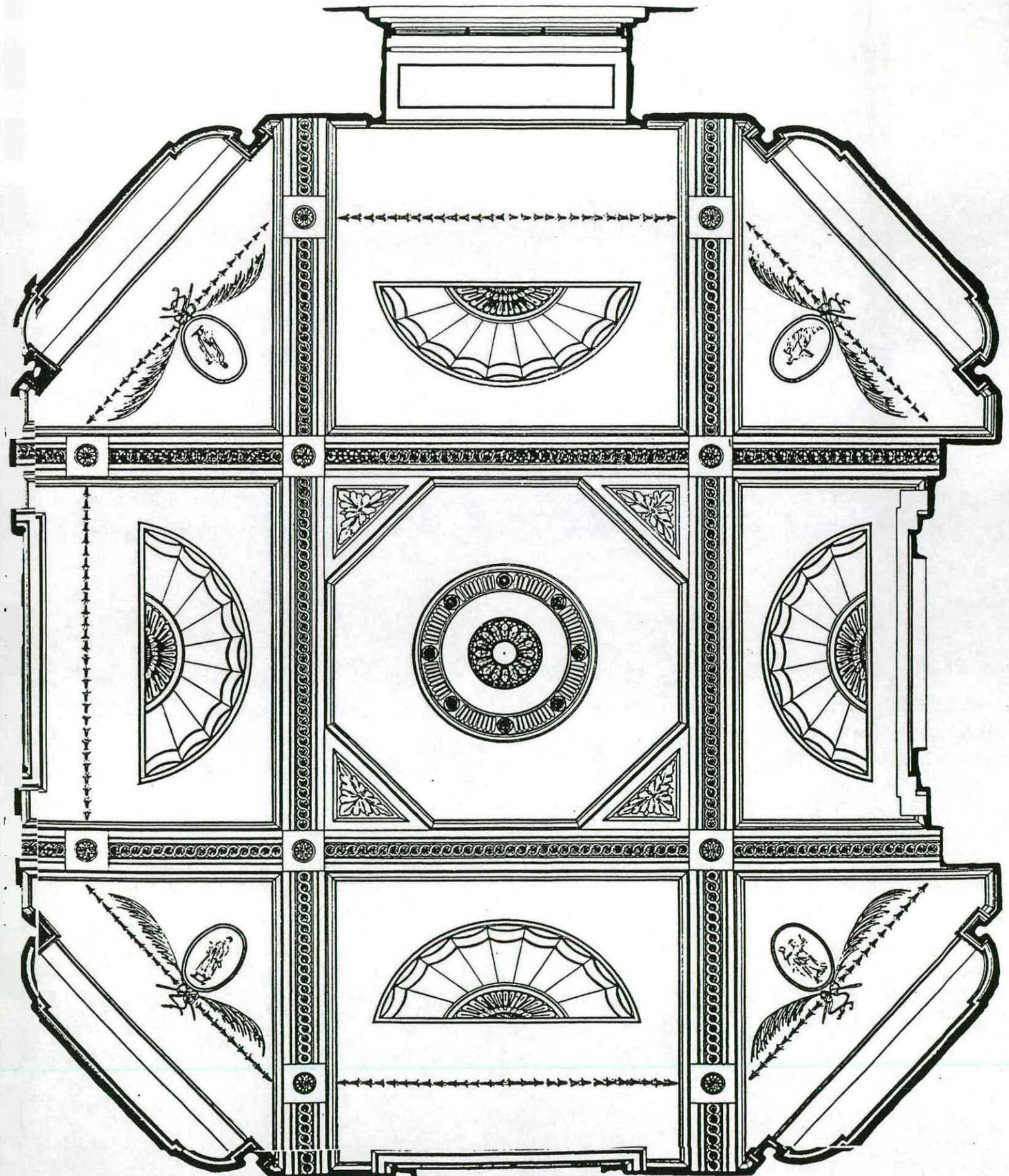
ELEVATION OF SOUTH WALL

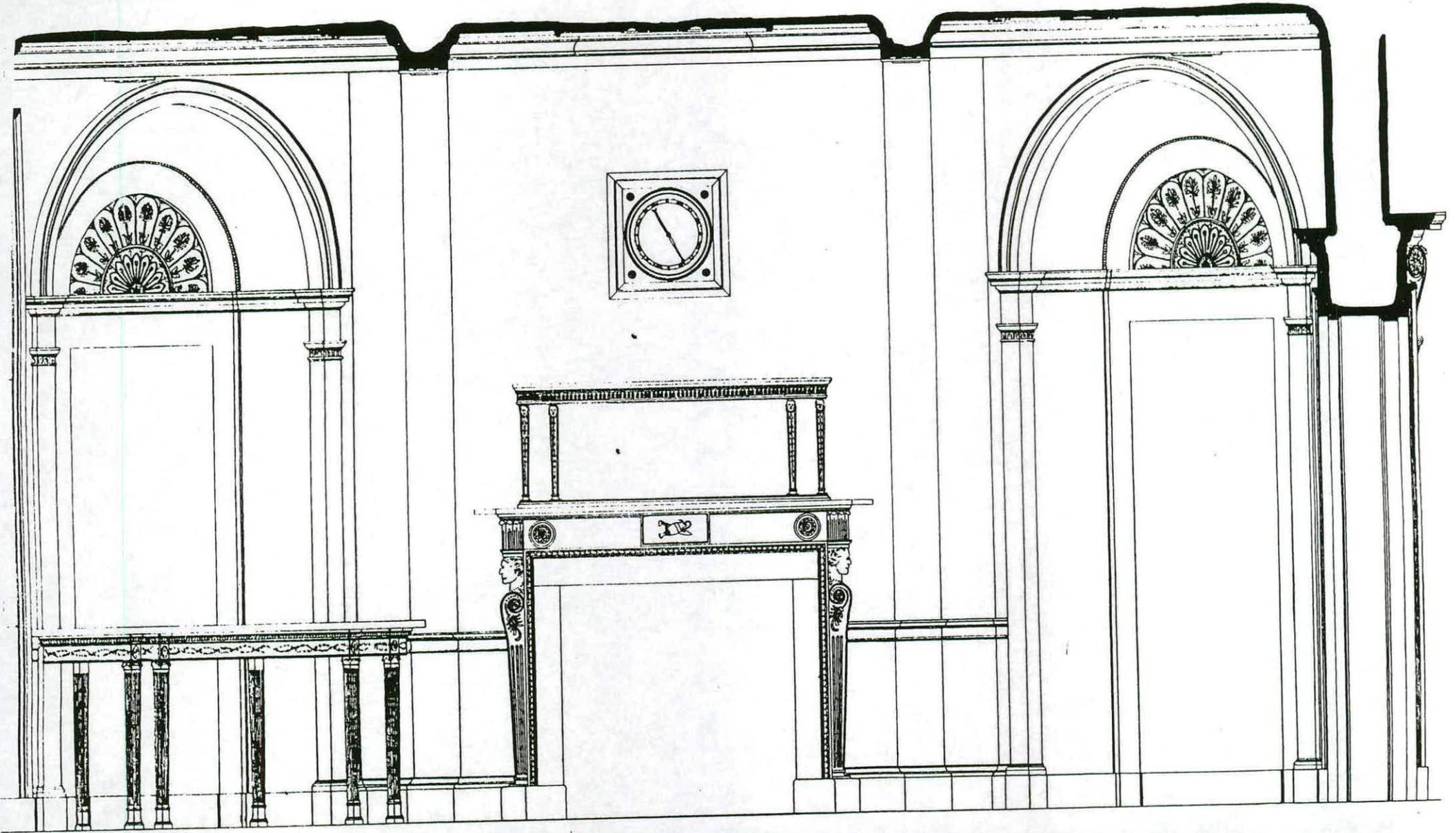


ELEVATION OF NORTH WALL

11. Ceiling to Study or Library, to scale, published in supplement to *The Architects' Journal*, 11 February 1931.

NOW THE EDUCATION OFFICES SCALE DETAIL OF LIBRARY

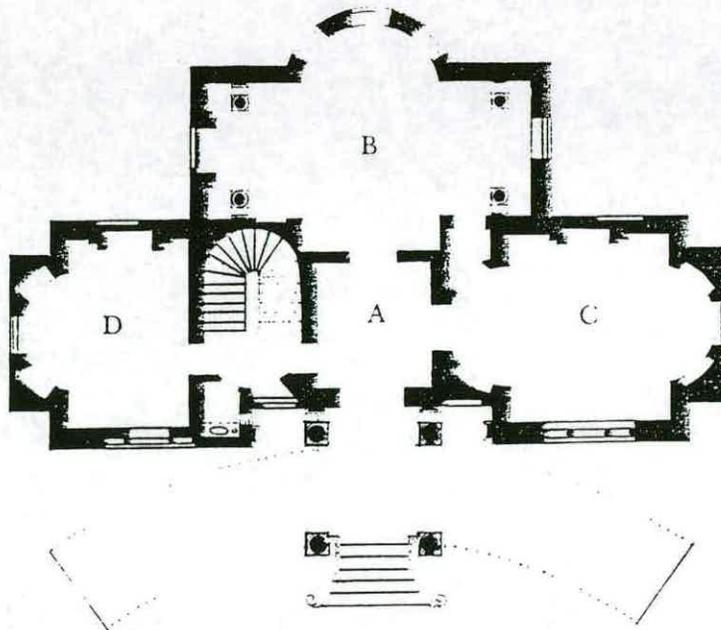
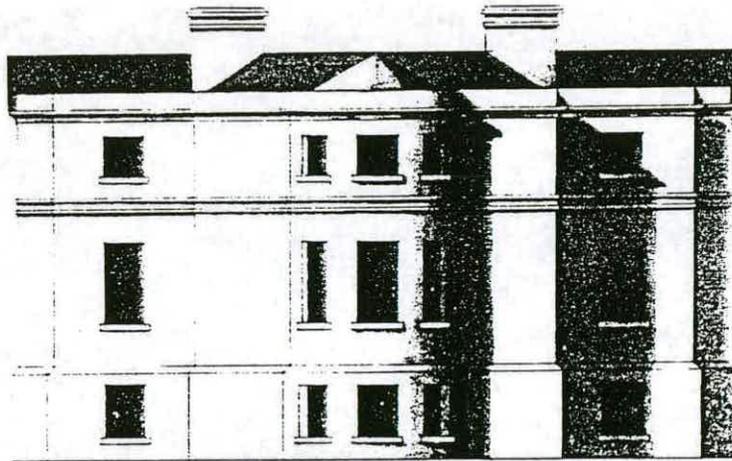
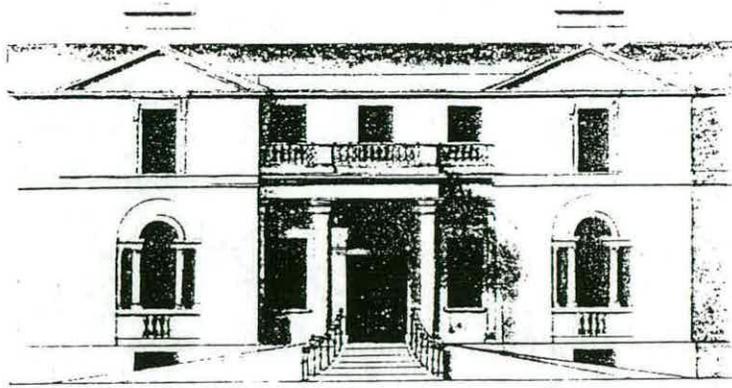




ELEVATION OF NORTH WALL



MEASURED & DRAWN BY
ERNEST LASSETTER



13. Adam's designs for the villa Sunnyside, for Sir Patrick Inglis, Bt., to be built on the outskirts of Edinburgh, 1785-6. Source: A. Rowan, *Designs for Castles and Country Villas* by Robert and James Adam (Oxford: Phaidon, 1985).