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## RAMSAY GARDEN: ‘PROFESSOR GEDDES’S NEW BUILDINGS’

R. J. MORRIS

THE BUILDINGS OF RAMSAY GARDEN are a key part of the Edinburgh townscape. Viewed from Princes Street they fit seamlessly between the Castle on one side and New College and the Bank of Scotland on the other. These buildings tell clear stories, of conflict and kingship, of the place of the Kirk and of banking in the history of Scotland. The story told by Ramsay Garden is less clear, but central to the creation of these buildings were the activities of Patrick Geddes, Professor of Botany at University College, Dundee. Geddes was a major contributor to the ideology and methodology of town planning and to the study of urbanism. In the 1890s, when Ramsay Garden was created, Geddes was an imaginative publisher and promoter of artistic and craft activity. He made important contributions to the urban improvement policies of Edinburgh City Corporation. As an intellectual and educationalist, he took an active part in topics lying on the boundaries of geography, biological sciences, sociology and what he called civics. In the twentieth century, links to Geddes became a consistent claim to virtue. Biographies and memoirs claimed that he countered the ‘aloofness’ between social classes and was a lone campaigner against the lack of interest shown by responsible authorities towards the decay of the old town of Edinburgh. He was a ‘solitary thinker’ with the ‘vision of a prophet’. Philip Boardman saw him as the ideas man who initiated projects and then ‘stepped out or aside leaving others to carry on.’ Such a mythical and almost mystical reputation can provide considerable inspiration but was also a barrier to an appreciation of his very real and material contribution to Edinburgh and to an understanding of Edinburgh society in the later nineteenth century. The story of Ramsay Garden allowed a re-assessment both of Geddes in Edinburgh and Edinburgh in the 1890s.

Patrick Geddes settled in Edinburgh in 1880. His active mind had been inspired by Ruskin and Darwin and disciplined by working with Huxley in London. His work was variously described as demonstrator or lecturer in Botany in the Faculty of Medicine in the University. He was active in extramural courses and the many discussion societies and lecture meetings in the city. In 1885 he was a co-founder of the Edinburgh Social Union (ESU). In 1887, newly married, he moved into James Court with his wife Anna. This was ESU territory, on the north side of the Lawnmarket. Many of the ‘houses’ were owned by David Douglas McLagan, stockbroker and member of a leading Edinburgh medical family. Others belonged to Peter McBryde, physician, and Alexander Barbour, gynaecologist and son of one of the wealthiest men in Edinburgh’s financial sector. These were managed by Helen Kerr, housing manager of the ESU. Others in the Court were owned by the Free Church.<sup>7</sup> The McLagan and McBryde wives were leading activists in the ESU. Between 1887 and 1889, there was a growing split between Geddes and the ESU. The ladies of the Social Union were insistent on the disciplined management of their properties. They were a generation of educated and privileged women determined to make a mark on public life. Geddes had more broadly based ambitions for an aesthetic intervention in the built environment.

James Court was an important learning experience for Geddes. He experienced the great variety of culture and well being amongst the working classes of Edinburgh. The Court was a perfect place for learning about the environment of the Lawnmarket and Castle Hill. Across the street was the Mechanics Library in Riddles Court. In Ramsay Garden there was a Japanner’s workshop and a studio occupied by George Clark Stanton, sculptor and member

of the Royal Scottish Academy. The existing row of houses in Ramsay Garden was occupied by a lawyer, an hotel-keeper and the minister of St Peter's Episcopal Church in the suburb of Newington.<sup>8</sup> The institutions which structured and disciplined urban society had already made an impact. The Free Church had considerable real estate in the area, as had the Edinburgh Savings Bank, the Ragged and Industrial Schools and the Tolbooth Church and Mission Hall. The area was ideal for the ambitions of a Patrick Geddes.

He began with a small student hall in Mound Place crammed in between the Free Church New College and the Soldiers and Sailors Home. He moved to his first purchase in Riddles Court in October 1890; plans for the refurbishment were sent to the Dean of Guild Court. He was able to hold an opening ceremony in time for the University term.<sup>9</sup> The ceremony was performed by Moir T. Stormont Darling, an Edinburgh advocate, recently appointed Solicitor-General for Scotland and the MP for the Universities of Edinburgh and St Andrews.<sup>10</sup> He was a leading if rather cautious unionist and admired the 'courage' of Professor Geddes.<sup>11</sup> Comments on the opening recognized the value of the 'preservation of fine old rooms' as well as 'the need and demand for students' rooms' and 'the physical comfort, the moral well being and the intellectual advancement of the students'.<sup>12</sup> The market for organized student accommodation was tested with considerable success. Riddles Court was developed with several adjustments over the next five years, but the major enterprise was the purchase of Ramsay Garden.

In February 1891 Geddes received an enthusiastic letter:<sup>13</sup>

I am delighted to hear that you have secured Ramsay Garden and Ramsay Lodge, and I hope they will form the nucleus of a grand University Hostel ... we ought to call a meeting of university men and philanthropic persons with a view to relieve you of all further responsibility (but not of the honour of having founded the institution). If workmen's cafés and temperance clubs attract thousands of pounds for which the shareholders are content to get 3 or 4 per cent of interest only ...

It was from John Kirkpatrick, Professor of History and Constitutional Law in Edinburgh University since 1881. He was one of a group of professors in the University who worked with Geddes on a variety of projects. Both were central to the formation of the Franco-Scottish Society in 1895.<sup>14</sup>

The letter celebrated the purchase of the Ramsay Garden site and buildings in 1891. The initial land assembly of the property had been undertaken by Allan Ramsay, bookseller and poet, in 1733, and completed, in the 1760s and 70s, by his son, Allan Ramsay of Kinkell, successful and ultimately wealthy, painter. The site was dominated by the 'goose-pie' house built by the poet and described by Robert Chambers in 1868 as a 'neat little villa ... surrounded by its miniature pleasure-ground'. Alongside this was a terrace of three substantial if plain houses built by his son in the 1760s.<sup>15</sup> The estate passed to General John Ramsay and then through a variety of marriage lines to the Murrays of Henderland. Geddes purchased from James Lamond, one of the trustees for Mrs Mary Murray, widow of Sir John Archibald Murray, senator of the College of Justice.<sup>16</sup> At one point the estate stretched down to the Nor Loch but land had been alienated to the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway Company in 1850. More recently, in 1891, ground north of the Goose-pie House had been sold to Edinburgh Corporation to become part of West Princes Street Gardens.<sup>17</sup>

The development of the site took place in four phases (fig. 1). The first involved a 'double tenement' in the south west corner bounded by Castlehill. The petition was approved by the Edinburgh Dean of Guild Court, 11 June 1892. Patrick Geddes, FRSE, Professor of Botany, University College Dundee, was granted permission.<sup>18</sup>

to erect upon the ground after referred to the buildings for dwelling houses (built of stone and brick, for the most part harled, and roofed with tiles or slates); immediately to the east of Princes Street Gardens; to be occupied by the Wardens and others in connection with University Hall Extension.

Stewart Henbest Capper was the architect. Capper worked with Geddes on several projects. Despite, or perhaps because of, ill health, he was widely travelled. He had trained at the *École des Beaux Arts* in Paris in 1884 and formed a brief partnership with fellow pupil Frank Simon back in Edinburgh. Simon worked on the Edinburgh International Exhibition in 1890.<sup>19</sup> France and a fascination with exhibitions linked Geddes with Capper. Both were members of the Edinburgh Architectural Association.<sup>20</sup>

The plans passed by the Dean of Guild provided for five stories and basement accommodation. It was a plan of interlocking privacies. The major dwelling



Fig. 1. Compiled from the block plans attached to the four Dean of Guild petitions for Ramsay Garden, dated 11 June 1892, 21 January 1893 and 22 June 1893. The final petition, for alterations to 1, 2 and 3 Ramsay Garden, the Georgian terrace built by Allan Ramsay the painter, was dated 14 June 1894. On the block plans Phase 1 was labeled 'Proposed new building'; Phase 2, 'Mr Grant Ogilvie's Feu'; Phase 3, 'Ramsay Lodge', with east and west blocks; and Phase 4, the existing terrace, was 'Ramsay Garden'. (Original Dean of Guild plans courtesy of Edinburgh City Archives.)

units were entered from the circular stair which still dominates the courtyard. Two of the dwelling houses were on two floors and had internal staircases. All seven had internal water closets and baths located by the house door. There were two other units. The one on an upper floor had its own door to the stair, two water closets and a large room partitioned as for dormitory accommodation (fig. 2). The basement contained a small dwelling house which had a separate entrance to the courtyard and was used by a number of caretakers and porters. A variety of utility areas suggested that Geddes and Capper thought of the tenement as integrated and sharing some facilities (fig. 3). There were seven dwelling houses, most with seven to eight rooms and one with 15 rooms. By the time the census takers arrived in 1901 there were nine 'houses' with 66 rooms. Some of this was

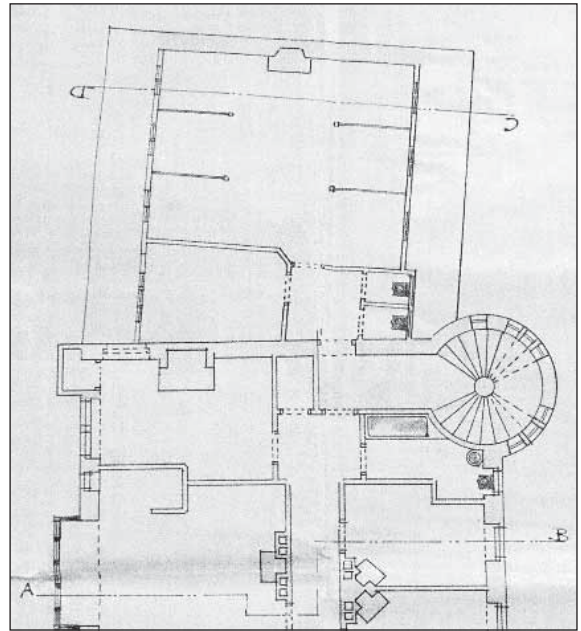


Fig. 2. Extract from fourth floor plan of 'double tenement' in south west corner of Ramsay Garden, showing original dormitory style accommodation. (ECA, Dean of Guild petition, 11 June 1892.)

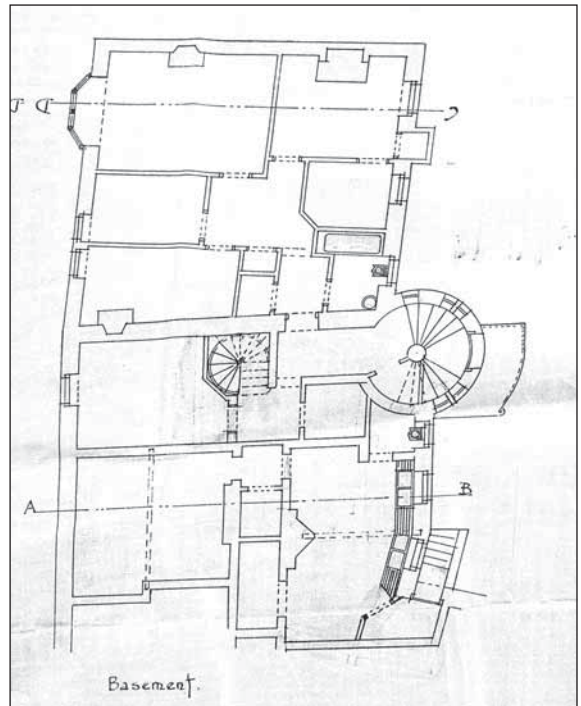


Fig. 3. Basement plan of 'double tenement' in south west corner showing a small domestic dwelling and a utility area. These were shared between Pittodrie House and a small caretaker's dwelling. (ECA, Dean of Guild Plans, 11 June 1892.)



due to changes made between plan and building but the indications were that the south west double tenement was planned with a combination of student accommodation and family dwellings in mind.

The largest unit had some 16 rooms and an equivocal relationship with the rest of the Garden. It was purchased by Rev. Henry Flower for £2000 and named Pittodrie House, a compliment to his wife's family, Erskine of Pittodrie in Aberdeenshire. The address was Castle Esplanade or Castlehill in the *Post Office Directory* and the front door pointed south giving direct access to the Esplanade, convenient for Rev. Flower, who was minister of St Columba's Episcopal Church, a short walk away. The 1901 census showed a substantial family home with four children, six servants and a boarder. Later documents named Henry Flower as having charge of a 'tutorial house' and the boarder may have been an aspect of this.<sup>21</sup> By 1901, all the students were located in the University Hall on the northern edge of the site. Geddes remained at no. 14 with twelve rooms. On the same stair was James Cadenhead, artist, with eight rooms.<sup>22</sup> The Dean of Guild plans provided a glimpse of Geddes's original thinking with the variety of sizes of dwelling houses and the close integration of students and domestic accommodation. Reading the initial plans along with the Census manuscript of 1901 and comparing the plans with recent photographs showed variations in exterior detail and internal organization of space (figs 4 and 5).

The next phase of development involved a small but distinctive section referred to as the southern part of the double tenement in the north west corner of the Ramsay Garden. One hint of the financial stress which began to hinder Geddes's plans was the manner in which Francis Grant Ogilvie, principal of the Heriot-Watt College, became involved. Geddes and Ogilvie were both involved in campaigns to promote Secondary and Technical Education in Scotland and with the British Association Meeting in Edinburgh in 1892.<sup>23</sup> On 21 January 1893, the Dean of Guild Court gave Ogilvie permission to:<sup>24</sup>

erect a tenement of houses, forming the south portion of proposed double tenement at Ramsay Garden, Edinburgh, constructed of stone and brick, and for the most part harled, and roofed with tiles or slates.

On 13 March 1893, a disposition by Patrick Geddes to Francis Grant Ogilvie was entered into the Register of

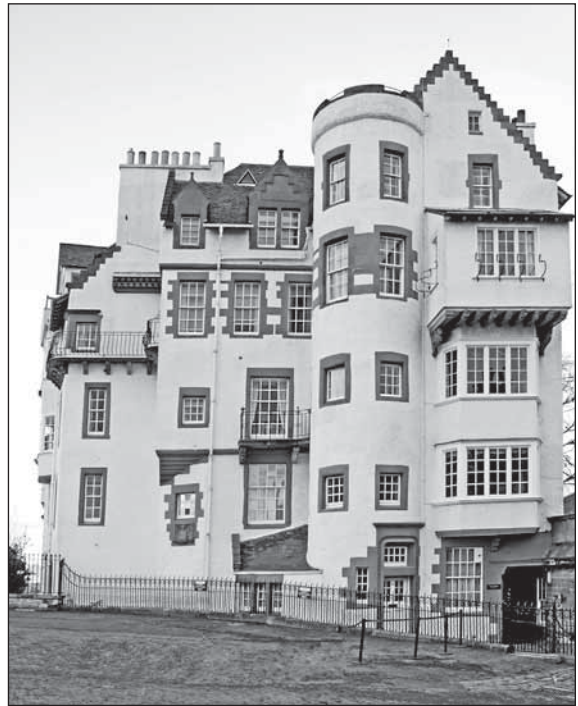


Fig. 4. South elevation of the 'double tenement' in the south west corner of Ramsay Garden. January 2013. Henry Flower's door to Castlehill is middle right, as is the small enclosure belonging to Pittodrie House. The pend between Castlehill and the courtyard is still used by residents. (Photo R. J. Morris.)

Sasines. The terms of the disposition showed the skill with which Geddes ensured that his friend's finance would sustain the momentum of development in Ramsay Garden and be linked to a structure of governance with which Geddes ensured control over the built environment of the Garden. Ogilvie was to erect:

the southmost part of a tenement which will contain a main door house of three flats and a sunk flat entering off the Court yard of Ramsay Garden and of another house consisting of the two upper most flats the same entering by the said common stair from the said Court yard.

The elegant middle class life style which Ogilvie envisaged was described in the labels which Henbest Capper provided in the architectural plans. The ground floor had a separate laundry, coal store and kitchen as well as a wine cellar with a lift leading to the pantry, dining and drawing room above. The second floor contained a study and two bedrooms, one of which was provided with a dressing room, which not only preserved intra-marital privacy but enabled servants to lay out clothing without intruding on the



Fig. 5. South elevation of the 'double tenement' in the south west corner, Ramsay Garden: Comparison with the 2013 photograph (fig. 4) showed a host of minor variations. (ECA, *Dean of Guild Plans*, 11 June 1892.)

spaces of the family (figs 6 to 10). By the time of the 1901 Census, Ogilvie, now Director of the Museum of Science and Art in nearby Chambers Street, was in residence with his wife, his eight year old son and three servants, a housemaid, a sewing maid domestic, and a cook. This was a top of the range middle class residence. Ogilvie had moved from the elite gated suburb of Blacket in south Edinburgh, to be part of Ramsay Garden. Above him lived his tenant Miss Clara Capper. Possibly a relative of the architect, Capper, 'living on own means', with her domestic servant, had eight rooms. She had replaced the Misses Haig, Florence Eliza, Celia Wolsley and Louisa Evelyn Cotton, who were recorded in the Valuation roll of 1895. The Haig sisters were daughters of a Berwickshire barrister. Two were members of the Edinburgh Ladies Debating Society, an organisation which introduced many women to public life.<sup>25</sup> Two were artists. All became members of the Women's Social and Political Union. Cecilia was to die in 1911 as a result of injuries sustained in the Parliament

Square demonstration in London.<sup>26</sup> Edinburgh in the late nineteenth century provided a comfortable environment for ladies of independent means and Ramsay Garden was no exception. In the two rooms of the basement lived John Lawrie, a shoemaker who had become the Ramsay Garden porter.

Ogilvie got an excellent deal. 'No price was paid' for the land allocated to his half tenement although he undertook to pay £15 of the £250 ground annuals due on the site and to share 2/5ths of the cost of the common stair with the northern part of the tenement. His real obligation was that 'the southmost part of said tenement and which [*sic*] common stair shall all be erected roofed in and finished ... by the term of Whitsunday Eighteen hundred and ninety four'. The experience of the southern double tenement and the apparent internal re-organisation which took place between Dean of Guild Court plans and 1901

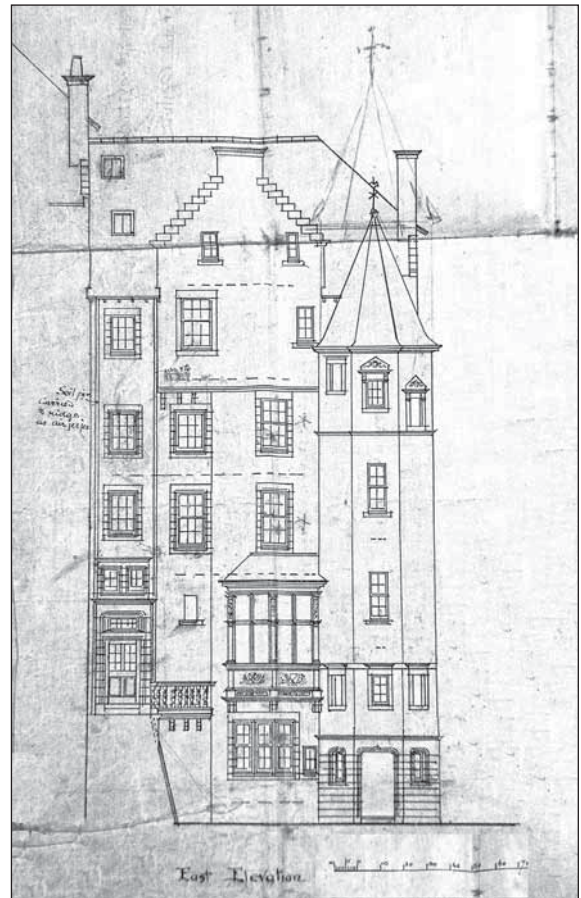


Fig. 6. East elevation of Francis Ogilvie's tenement. (ECA, *Dean of Guild petition*, 21 January 1893.)





Fig. 7. East elevation of Francis Ogilvie's tenement in November 2012. (Photo R. J. Morris.)

census, was reflected in the manner in which Ogilvie retained the right to split the upper two flats into separate dwellings.

Equally important for the future of Ramsay Garden was the manner in which the disposition between Geddes and Ogilvie set out the terms for the future governance of the property. Ogilvie agreed that if he wanted to sell his property he must first offer it, at an agreed, and if necessary arbitrated, valuation, to Geddes or to the Warden or Principal of University Hall Edinburgh. Those who bought into the development had to agree to be members of a Board of Proprietors. This was to hold regular meetings and to appoint a secretary and treasurer. Decisions were to be taken by majority vote. Proprietors had one vote for every £10 of the annual value of their property. The main task of the Board was to maintain the integrity and value of the design. They were able to enforce 'the harling and whitewashing of any of the buildings' when this was

deemed necessary. Moreover:

no proprietor shall be entitled to alter the exterior of his building or buildings or extend same beyond the limits shewn on said block plan and on the elevations applicable thereto without the approval and sanction of the Board.

The Board also had the power:

to pay such salary to the Secretary and Treasurer to employ such Gardeners or other workmen or servants caretakers cleaners as they think necessary to maintain the gardens, paths, roads and pavement in proper and orderly condition to purchase whatever plants gravel and other materials and appliances may be necessary.

The Treasurer was empowered to levy an assessment of up to 2% of annual value on the proprietors to sustain all this. Finally, in a provision familiar in many middle class residential areas limits were placed on the use of the buildings. They:<sup>27</sup>

shall not be used for any other purposes than those of dwelling houses or studios including the residential scientific educational and public operations of University Hall or other similar and kindred purposes and objects and shall not be used for purposes of trade or manufacture of any kind and in particular no shops or warehouses shall be allowed in any of the buildings.

These terms were agreed to by all who purchased property in the Garden. They had much in common with the feu charters and covenants involved with many middle class property developments. They

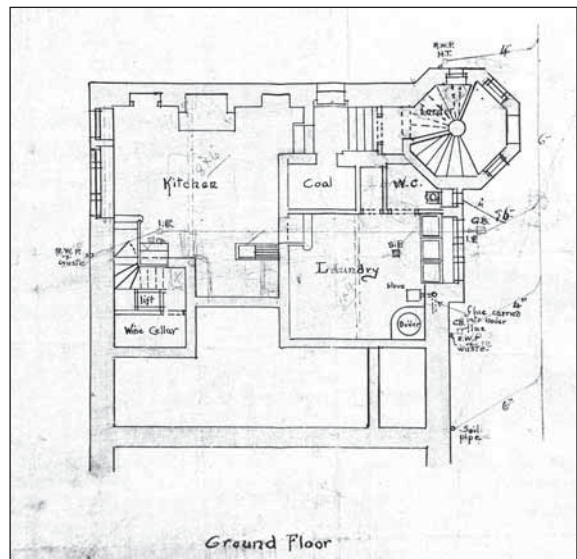


Fig. 8. Ground floor plan of the Ogilvie house with wine cellar, kitchen and laundry. (ECA, Dean of Guild petition, 21 January 1893.)

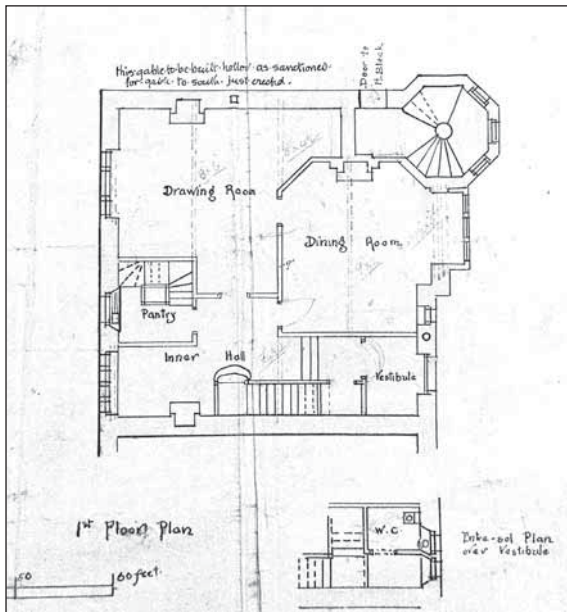


Fig. 9. First floor of Ogilvie house with the principal entrance to the courtyard. (ECA, Dean of Guild petition, 21 January 1893.)

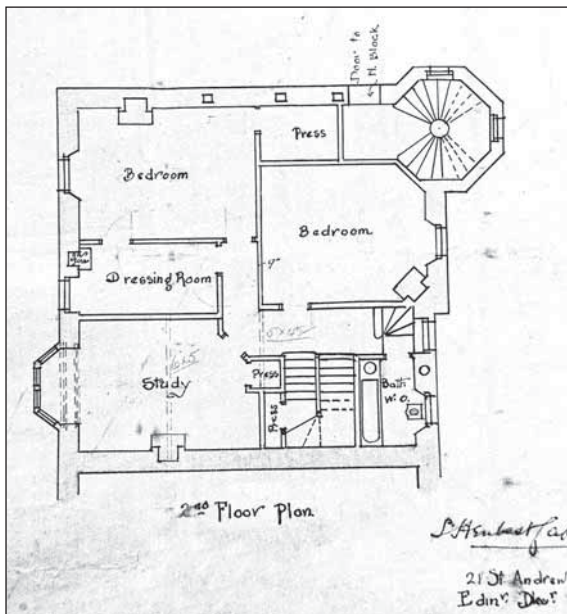


Fig. 10. Second floor of the Ogilvie house with bedrooms, study, dressing room, bath and water closet. The study window is clearly for looking out over West Princes Street Gardens. (ECA, Dean of Guild petition, 11 January 1893.)

do not imply any sense of Ramsay Garden as a collective. It was a set of individual private properties with a high degree of mutual control. The property

owners accepted this control, which initially came from Geddes himself in order to protect the very special nature of the built environment they were buying into. The initial leadership of the Board of Proprietors was given by Francis Ogilvie. In the years leading up to the 1914–18 war, the Board regulated the relationships of those living in close proximity in a dense urban environment. Coal deliveries and carpet beating was to take place before 10 a.m. when the court would be cleaned. Gardens were laid out, doors numbered, woodwork painted, paths repaired and dogs complained about. Miss Capper worried about chimney fires but the tranquillity of the early years was encapsulated in the minute of January 14 1899: 'Nothing done of importance'. Ironically, it was the University Hall which demonstrated the need for some form of overall control for the site. In 1909, Canon Dawson:<sup>28</sup>

expressed the feeling of the Proprietors that the brickwork erection at the new outside stair at no 3 was unworthy of the situation and that something needed to be done to lighten its appearance ... It was remitted to Professor Geddes to arrange with the architect to have mouldings and panels added to the brick work.

The next two phases involved substantial alteration and addition to existing buildings as well as new building. The designs by Sydney Mitchell passed the Dean of Guild Court, 22 June 1893 and 14 June 1894. Mitchell was a leading Edinburgh architect. His involvement was a sign of the quality and prestige which Geddes gained for his work. Mitchell had already completed working class housing at Well Court in the Dean Village for John Findlay, owner of the *Scotsman* newspaper, and designed the restoration of Edinburgh's Mercat Cross as well as the 'Old Edinburgh' section of the Edinburgh Exhibition of 1886. These developments had impressed and inspired Geddes.

The result was a complex building. The 'goose-pie' house was enveloped, leaving reminders of its previous existence, an example of Geddes's belief in the need for a sense of historical continuity. New wings were placed at each side of the old Allan Ramsay terrace. Mitchell gave the whole north face a sense of architectural unity with its great gables and barge boards. There was a gap near the western corner as Ogilvie had been promised that the view north from his tenement would not be blocked. 'Arts and Crafts'



and ‘Picturesque’ were the best labels the architectural historians have provided. Andrew Wright points to sketches of demolished Edinburgh buildings which Mitchell had celebrated in the 1886 exhibition. Many of the Ramsay Garden details would be at home in the new English suburbs but they also hint at a lost Scottish urban vernacular (fig. 11).<sup>29</sup>

The west wing and the Ramsay Garden terrace provided a variety of domestic family accommodation. The east wing and expanded goose-pie house involved ambitious provision for the University Hall. Central to the life of the Hall were the common room and dining room in the east wing. They were surrounded by a complex of bedrooms, servant’s rooms and kitchens as well as baths and water closets. It was a high quality environment, which reproduced, around the communal life envisaged for the students, many of the features of the middle class dwellings in the rest of Ramsay Garden. The ground floor of Ramsay’s old house had a sitting room and above that was the guest bedroom (figs 12 and 13).

Ramsay Garden was a massive investment of material and energy. Despite his later reputation for being careless and disorganised, evidence showed Ramsay Garden as the product of a plan, much debated and thought about. Surviving correspondence hinted at many conversations. As early as 1885, his friend John Robertson wrote:<sup>30</sup>

I hear that you are planning making a fortune by base commerce – that you too are going to join the great army of exploitation and live on royalties and profits. Well, go in and win dear boy. But what will Ruskin say to dyed stones?!?



Fig. 11. North face of Ramsay Lodge and the Ramsay Garden terrace with extensions and alterations. November 2012. (Photo R. J. Morris.)

A few months later a letter from Frank Deas showed the direction of his thinking. Ideas of organisation and community led to talk of the need for a common room and the regular payment of rent.<sup>31</sup> By 1891, as the opportunity of Ramsay Garden appeared, Geddes identified his target market. He was seeking a loan of £3000 on numbers 1, 1a, 2 and 3 Ramsay Garden, the old Allan Ramsay terrace. His loan proposal noted that he had spent over £1000 on the terrace including fitting electric light. The houses were now valued at £4500. His buildings had an.<sup>32</sup>

unrivalled view of Edinburgh and the Firth of Forth from the windows and combining all the advantages from their central situation, of town houses as well as those of suburban residences lying as they do among the trees of West Princes Street Gardens.

Added to the middle class liking for a ‘view’, there was the ill served market for student accommodation: ‘The large demand for rooms by Students having made it expedient to increase the accommodation of Ramsay Lodge and the house is full for the winter.’

Despite the willingness of friends and supporters to provide easy finance Geddes wanted loans to be business like. In 1886, Martin White wrote from Dundee:<sup>33</sup>

Regarding the £200 loan, as you say it is to be in a business way ... for interest as I mentioned I will not take more than 5% though I take money from what yields me more ... I have a compunction about charging you interest, but I do so as a matter of principle ...

One sub-text of Ramsay Garden was the desire to show what could be done by people of good will acting within the market system. A long letter from James Macdonald in Linlithgow showed the care with which plans were discussed.<sup>34</sup>

You ask how you can make use of friendly offers in the furtherance of your Schemes for the acquisition of House property in Edinburgh, and the turning of the same, thereafter, to better and more public spirited purposes than achieved by present owners, whilst, on the one hand, you safeguard your friends’ money; and on the other, maintain your independence. Out of a variety of ways that suggest, I lay before you one or two. You can hardly make a mistake by buying anywhere in the Lawnmarket quarter if you buy plenty and buy in blocks. Well then to begin. You buy wisely as hitherto. You look out your house or tenement, get it carefully and thoroughly examined by skilled tradesmen and architects, get the title seen to and then buy at fair price.

There was no suggestion that Geddes was being irresponsible or unrealistic. Macdonald told him that he could borrow half to three quarters of the value

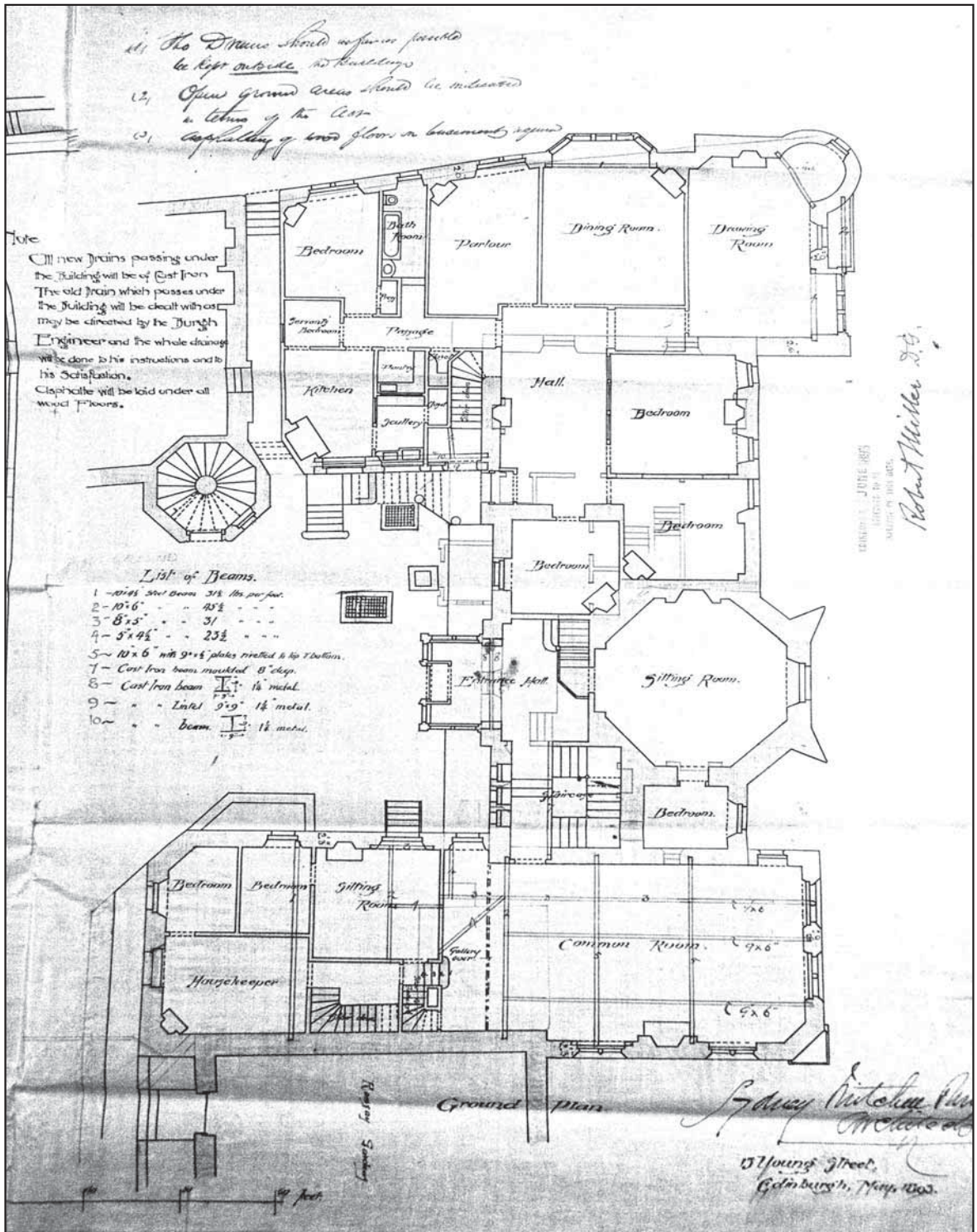


Fig. 12. Ramsay Lodge alterations and extensions. ground floor plan. (ECA, Dean of Guild court, 20 May 1893).



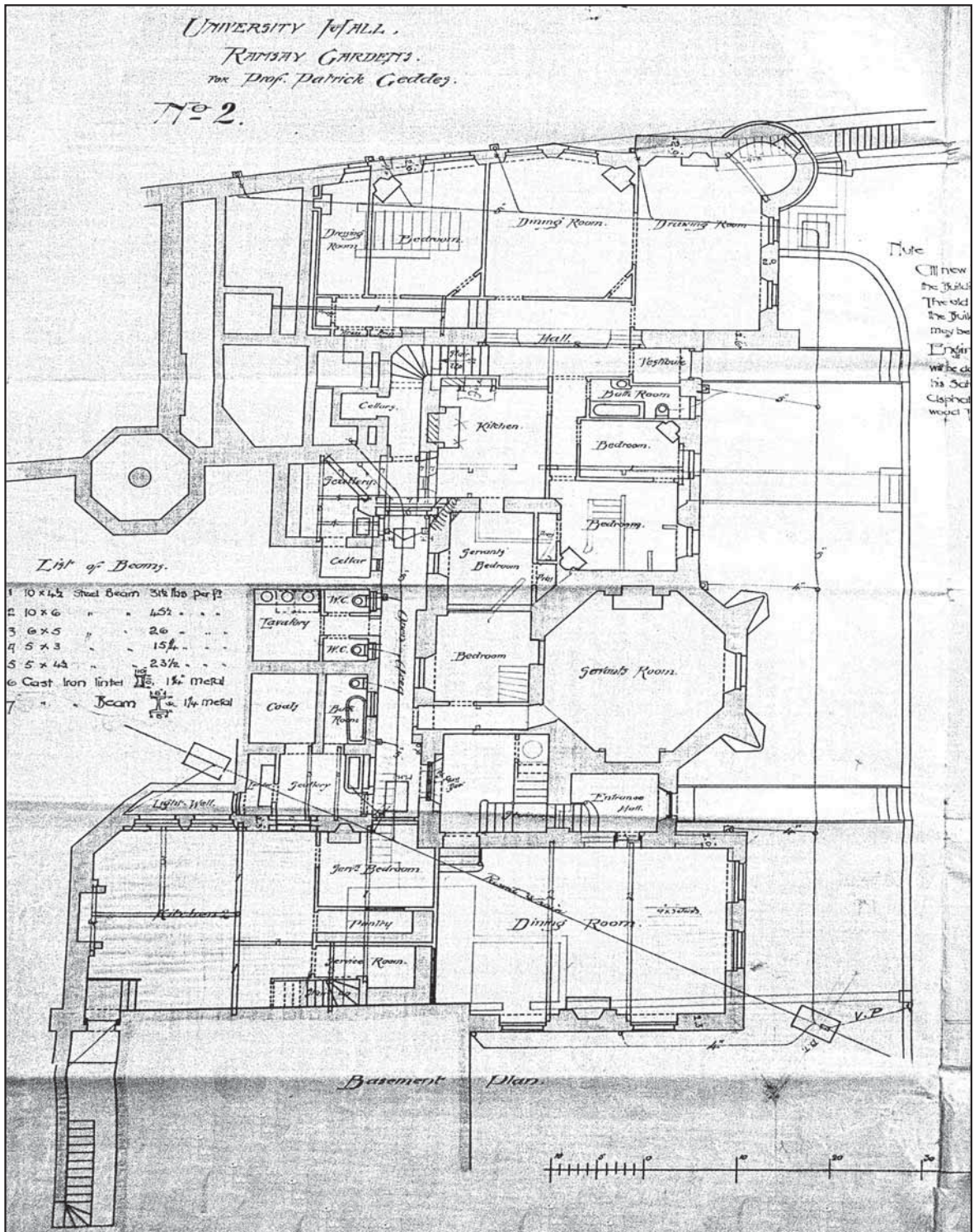


Fig. 13. Ramsay Lodge alterations and extensions. basement plan. (ECA, Dean of Guild court, 20 May 1893.)



of his property at 3¾ to 5% interest. This could be secured by bond and disposition. He was advised that a 'cash credit bond' was a good way to work with the banks as interest was only paid on the amount actually drawn. 'To my own knowledge', Geddes was told, 'you have a margin upon the value of your Riddles Court Property. Your other properties will probably show equal if not larger margins.' Friends could lend on the security of that margin. The long letter was a tutorial in ethical property investment within the existing market system:

But won't the thing overburden *you*? Why should you individually wear yourself out and always have the heavy end of the stick to boot? If friends have a real wish to aid you then let them enter into a partnership. You supply more than your share in technical knowledge, organising capacity and the zeal that begets zeal; whilst they contribute the cash. That mode could be worked by a regular Copartnery Agreement, by Trust Deed, by a Joint Stock Company or Corporation or Society Contract.

This looked remarkably like the business relationships Geddes was to develop in the next two or three years. Macdonald told Geddes he was in need of around £1000, 'to pay recent purchases and leave your mind free to make new acquisitions.' Macdonald, himself a manager of a small building society, finished with the judgement:

This I will say you are most distinctly to be congratulated upon all your purchases, as yet made, for I am sure you could sell over again at considerable profit even now, and all are calculated to yield handsome percentages on cost price.

Ramsay Garden was a major achievement. It was a coherent and disciplined development in an area which had the potential for chaos. Geddes produced a high quality environment, aesthetically pleasing, designed by some of the top architects in Edinburgh. He not only responded to the expanding market for student accommodation but also to the built environment needs of a middle class elite. There were servants' rooms, bathrooms and water closets, attention to drainage, gas fires and electricity, and, as his loan application pointed out 'the view' with the trees, flowers and grass of Princes Street Gardens. Ramsay Garden showed a concern for the aesthetic and for the development of university education. There was little here to benefit the poor and working class population of Edinburgh. In fact, the associated development of Riddles Court pushed the Mechanics Library and a number of labouring families out of the

area.<sup>35</sup> This was quite different from the Edinburgh Social Union strategy which ensured improved housing for selected working class families. The Geddes strategy was one which a later century would call 'gentrification'. He succeeded in bringing a select group of middle class families back into the old centre of Edinburgh but with little evidence of restorative relationships with the poorer population round about. His aim was to create a cultural quarter in one of Edinburgh's most prominent locations.

The evidence of the Valuation Rolls and Census Manuscripts showed that within a few years Ramsay Garden had gathered a very distinctive population. There were four professors; Geddes himself; Ogilvie, one-time professor of physics and electrical engineering, then in 1886 Principal at Heriot-Watt College; Gibson Bailey, professor of electrical engineering and John Mackenzie professor of Chemistry, whilst William Peddie was recorded as a university lecturer. Amongst the early purchasers of property in Ramsay Garden was John Arthur Thompson, long term collaborator with Geddes and destined, in 1899, to be Professor of Biology at Aberdeen. Next door was Andrew John Herbertson, demonstrator for Geddes at Dundee, lecturer in Geography at Owens College Manchester and from 1899 a leading figure in the development of the School of Geography in Oxford.<sup>36</sup> Three others were teachers, the two Oliphants and Alexander Mackenzie, retired inspector of schools. The Episcopal Church connexion involved three clergymen, including Henry Flower and Edwin Collas Dawson, minister of St Peter's in Newington and long term resident of the Garden. He had lived in the original terrace since the mid 1880s and bought an apartment in the north-west tenement in 1894.<sup>37</sup> Three households were military related, an army captain, a captain Royal Engineers and a retired Admiralty dockyard officer. Henry Flower's 20 year old son was a Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery. Three manufacturing employers were all related to knowledge based industries, printing, electrical light and power and artificial fertiliser and animal feedstuffs. The modern scientific knowledges were a powerful presence in the Garden as was the Empire. The wife of George Henry Ward, he of the Admiralty dockyard, was born in Bermuda. Alexander Bell, Episcopalian clergymen took as a boarder Charles Maxwell Hall, medical student, born

Jamaica, almost certainly the son of a government meteorologist based at Montego Bay and brother of a minor poet.<sup>38</sup>

Equally powerful in the culture of the Garden were the artists. It was a place of science, empire and painting. James Cadenhead lived on the same stair as Geddes and two of the Misses Haig, early tenants of Francis Ogilvie, were artists. William Gordon Burn Murdoch purchased 1A in the original terrace. He produced a variety of portraits and genre paintings but his most important work derived from his participation in the Dundee based expedition to the Antarctic in 1892. He was an early inhabitant of the student houses on Mound Place and Riddle's Court and later contributed to the *Evergreen*. The asides in his writing give a flavour of the relationship between Geddes and those who joined him in the active and creative environment of Edinburgh in the 1880s and 1890s. Burn Murdoch talked of 'the house and studio Geddes had induced me to burden myself with'.<sup>39</sup> The early chapters of his account of the expedition gave the impression he went to the Antarctic to get away from the activities generated around Geddes:<sup>40</sup>

The writer ought to be drawing in Edinburgh, but that became impossible last August: for the British Association met there, and the people of the University Summer Session gathered from the four corners of the world and brought with them a fever of intellectual life. Even in its outward aspect the town became affected by the influx of wise men and women, and the lonely men in the club windows looked down on a strange and unfamiliar people: blue-veiled Americans, dainty French ladies, festive professors, and blue-stockings crowded the streets where were wont to pace tall Edinburgh beauties and impressive advocates. Up the Castle Hill the intellectual contagion spread, till the artists and students in the highest, quietest rooms of University Hall were infected, and could no longer do their own work, but went foolishly listening to others.

Burn Murdoch later admitted his appreciation of Geddes who had introduced him to William Bruce who in turn gained him his place on the expedition. 'We gained little materially' he wrote later, but we were raised 'to the dreamland of science.'<sup>41</sup> Burn Murdoch provided his readers with a sketch of one of the rooms in the Hall to provide a contrast with the Antarctic ice. 'The ladies in the sketch ... are students who come in August to sit at the feet of Professor Geddes, and who turn us poor men out of Riddles Court to find shelter in some of the other Halls'. It was a world of elite male companionship, the smell of tobacco, of club meals with 'gleaming white linen and silver, and the harvest moon peeping over

the Castle.'<sup>42</sup> This air of gentle irony was common to many of those who worked with and around Geddes. James Geikie, younger of two brothers, both eminent geologists, slightly older than Geddes, a calming influence in the turbulent years of the 1880s, addressed Geddes as 'my dear iconoclast' and 'my dear political economist'.<sup>43</sup>

Building Ramsay Garden and populating it with scientists, students and artists was central to plans for a cultural quarter at the head of Edinburgh's Lawnmarket. Assessments of Geddes underestimate the extraordinary nature of this concentration of modern scientific knowledge and aesthetic endeavour. The Outlook Tower and the associated exhibitions and summer meetings were part of the expansion of creative and intellectual activity around the Garden.

The impact of the Ramsay Garden buildings turned Geddes from a minor to a major celebrity and public figure in Edinburgh. As early as the royal visit of 1893, the new buildings were picked out for praise, but it was the opening of the Ramsay Lodge branch of the University Hall which confirmed his enhanced status.<sup>44</sup> The opening was attended by leaders of town and university, Lord Provost Russell and Principal Sir William Muir. The first division of civic and academic society attended, including the much loved elderly Professor John Stuart Blackie, classical scholar, supporter of women's entry to University education and exponent of Gaelic language and history. Also noted was Dr Henry Littlejohn, veteran medical officer of health and campaigner for regulation of the built environment. Professor Gerard Baldwin Brown, supporter and collaborator of Geddes, came as did Councillor Pollard, Dr Irving and Dr Stewart Watson. The Geddes sense of theatre was in overdrive. Geddes and Anna showed 'a large number of ladies and gentlemen' around the hall in the afternoon whilst fifty 'gentlemen' were entertained to dinner in the dining hall in the evening. There were two performances of Allan Ramsay's pastoral drama 'The Gentle Shepherd' and Blackie was 'conducted to his carriage by an escort of torch bearers'.<sup>45</sup>

Geddes was now part of the public life of Edinburgh. In the years that followed he was everywhere. His lectures were reported. He received that subtle accolade of status, he was included in the lists of those present in newspaper reports of a wide variety of events. He was at Principal Robert Rainy's

'at home' at the time of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in 1894.<sup>46</sup> He was there at the opening of the Crudelius Hall for women in the Lawnmarket building erected in association with the City Corporation. He heard John Kirkpatrick, friend and supporter, praise Mrs E. C. Dawson for her initiative in founding the hall.<sup>47</sup> She was married to Edwin Collas Dawson, Rector of St Peter's Episcopal Church and purchaser of one of the houses in the north west tenement. He was there at the opening of New Craig Asylum for the insane along with the Lord Provost, Principals Muir and Ogilvie, members of the mighty Mclagan clan of financiers and medical men as well as Lord Justices and countless professors.<sup>48</sup> He gave lectures on 'Scotland Past and Present' to the Royal Scottish Geographical Society to be followed by a course of lectures on 'social geography'.<sup>49</sup> He was noticed attending the annual meeting of the Edinburgh Architectural Association. He spoke to the Glasgow Ruskin Society and offered a course of lectures to the Old Edinburgh School of Art on 'The Place of Art in Town and Country'.<sup>50</sup> In the next few years he was seen on the same platform as Baldwin Brown and Flora Stevenson in causes as varied as the Franco-Scottish Society, the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and the Scottish Association for the Promotion of Technical and Secondary Education. He found time to open the annual Fine Art Exhibition in the Albert Institute in Dundee and present the prizes at the Edinburgh Working Men's Flower Show.<sup>51</sup> The list could be extended but it demonstrated a double interest in promoting a wide variety of aesthetic values and promoting many of the educational reforms in progress in Scotland. Geddes was working in a creative and supportive environment amongst the networks and associations of Edinburgh.

The incomplete evidence for the economic history of Ramsay Garden showed that the project was viable, controlled and well thought out. Geddes was able and willing to use a wide repertoire of financial strategies. Most were common to all property developers, both ethical and profit seeking. Geddes was both. Geddes paid £1500 and undertook a ground annual charge of £250 when he purchased the Garden from Lamond in 1891. At the opening of the Ramsay Lodge University Hall in 1894, the overall cost of the development was announced as £25,000.<sup>52</sup> The initial finance for this came by a familiar route. He went to the lawyers of Edinburgh who had a variety of clients anxious to

lend money at interest on reasonable security. This meant a bond secured on specified real estate. In July 1891 he borrowed £500 from Millicent Flora Louisa Macleay of Rutland Square in Edinburgh together with £1000 from Fanny Macrae of 6 Baker Street, London. In early 1893 Millicent Macrae was repaid and £2400 borrowed from Agnes Hogg of Rhymer's Cottage in Earlston. The going rate was 5%.<sup>53</sup> An anticipated sale to Mrs Jean Cunningham never materialised and the Cunninghams remained tenants in the south west tenement. In March another £600 was required from Agnes Hogg. The transfer of land rights to Francis Ogilvie maintained the momentum of development but provided no cash.<sup>54</sup> The pressure was relieved in June 1893, when Henry Flower and his wife purchased Pittodrie House for £700 cash and agreed to pay £1300 on the bonds to Agnes Hogg and Fanny Macrae. In November, his friend James Oliphant purchased the ground flat in the north west tenement, 'now in course of construction', and the cash began to flow. James paid £500 cash and £855 the next Whitsuntide.<sup>55</sup> Within 18 months the whole of the north west tenement had been sold. It was the one with the best views of the city and the hills of Fife. John Oliphant paid a modest £890 for his dwelling in the south west tenement, which proved very rentable but seven dwelling houses remained unsold. One was the caretaker's tiny house. One was the Geddes family home. Five remained burdens on his capital in addition to the Ramsay Lodge University Hall. The 1895 survey of his finances estimated his Ramsay Garden properties to be £13,750 at cost price, with an estimated value of £14,350. The properties are shown in table 1. There was also a building site in Ramsay Lane valued at £1738.

The Sasines, the Valuation Roll of 1895–96 and the Census manuscript of 1901 showed sales had been made but substantial properties remained (table 2). The total sales were £11,040 leaving Geddes with property valued at £13,750 cost price, including the £7000 for University Hall. Together the value of property held and the price of property sold amounted to £24,740 suggesting he had at worst covered his costs.

At this point he decided to refinance the business following some of the suggestions made earlier by his Linlithgow friend, solicitor James Macdonald. With a group of friends and supporters he did what many builders and developers had done before and since, he established a property company, the Town and Gown



Table 1. Cost and valuation of Ramsay Garden properties held by Patrick Geddes in 1895.

| Property                    | Cost (£) | Value (£) |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----------|
| 13 Ramsay Garden            | 150      |           |
| 14 Ramsay Garden            | 4300     |           |
| 15 Ramsay Garden            | 100      | 5000      |
| Students House Ramsay Lodge | 7000     | 7000      |
| 2 Ramsay Garden             | 1600     | 1800      |
| 1 Ramsay Garden             | 600      | 550       |
| Total                       | 13,750   | 14,350    |

Table 2. Properties of Ramsay Garden in 1895 and 1901 together with sale prices and rateable valuations.

|                          | Proprietor                              | Total price (£) | Rooms with windows | Rateable valuation 1895 |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1a                       | Burn Murdoch                            | 900             | 5                  | 60                      |
| 1&2                      | Patrick Geddes                          |                 | 16                 | 80                      |
| 3,4,5,6 and Ramsay Lodge | Patrick Geddes                          |                 | 54                 | 345                     |
| 7                        | William Mackenzie                       | 1350            | 5                  | 70                      |
| 8                        | William Hearsay Salmon                  | 1135            | 8                  | 60                      |
| 9                        | Edwin Collas Dawson                     | 1405            | 10                 | 80                      |
| 11                       | John Arthur Thompson                    | 1155            | 10                 | 70                      |
| 11                       | James Oliphant                          | 1355            | 8                  | 80                      |
| 11                       | A J Herbertson                          | 850             | 7                  | 55                      |
| 11                       | Francis Grant Ogilvie                   |                 | 8                  | 40                      |
| 11                       | Francis Grant Ogilvie                   |                 | 8                  | 85                      |
| 13                       | Patrick Geddes                          |                 | 2                  | 11                      |
| 14                       | Patrick Geddes                          |                 | 8                  | 55                      |
| 14                       | Patrick Geddes (Geddes family dwelling) |                 | 12                 | 65                      |
| 14                       | Patrick Geddes                          |                 | 9                  | 63                      |
| 14                       | J C Oliphant                            | 890             | 7                  | 42                      |
| 14                       | Patrick Geddes                          |                 | 6                  | 25                      |
| 14                       | Patrick Geddes                          |                 | 6                  | 22                      |
| 14                       | Patrick Geddes                          |                 | 2                  | 7                       |
| 14                       | Henry Herbert Flower                    | 2000            | 14                 | 110                     |

Association Limited.<sup>56</sup> Although the Town and Gown Association appeared in many accounts of Geddes and his activities, it is often forgotten that it was a limited company. The Town and Gown Association Limited was registered under the Companies Acts 1862–90 on 5 May 1896. Its primary stated purpose was:

To carry on the business of providing house accommodation for students, and other parties, in Residential Halls, Colleges, or otherwise, and for that purpose to purchase from Professor Patrick Geddes certain lands, houses and buildings.

In addition the company took a wide variety of powers to purchase, develop and manage property. The *Prospectus* gave fuller details of the ambition and philosophy of the Company. Its objectives were 'civic and academic, architectural and educational'. There was an account of existing activity in Mound Place, Riddles Court, Ramsay Garden and St Giles Street. They admitted that the bulk of the work benefitted students and middle class families, but claimed that the larger family dwellings allowed 'a "move-up" of population' and pointed out that a small number of working class dwellings had been created. The Directors of the Association saw this as part of a wider effort to change the built environment of the Old Town involving the Edinburgh Social Union and the City Corporation, especially the Burgh Engineer's department, as well as the Town and Gown.

The emphasis of the *Prospectus* was the business nature of the Company:

Its undertakings are by no means of a "philanthropic" or eleemosynary nature. Its financial basis is simply to utilize and develop openings for Home Investments ... The civic and academic aims of the Town and Gown Association are thus capable of strict business statement, that of supplying economic demands from University and City.

The company promised a dividend of 4½%. Evidence was produced that Ramsay Lodge had shown a profit of 6% on capital since it was opened in 1894 whilst Mound Place had paid 5% of capital and 5% depreciation.<sup>57</sup> In their first annual report the directors announced the payment of the full dividend of 4½% but admitted a variety of difficulties from delay in filling some of the student halls and the completion of building work. More serious was the rate at which the share capital was being taken up. The Company had a nominal capital of £100,000 in £5 shares. The initial

issue in 1896 was for 12,500 shares amounting to £62,500. Although the initial call on shareholders was limited to £2.10s, most paid the full £5 immediately. This was some compensation for the fact that only 6081 shares were taken up in the first year, thus placing serious limitations on the ambitions of the Association.<sup>58</sup>

The Geddesian mythology suggested he was not only reckless but in the habit of starting great schemes then walking away and leaving others to finish the task and that he worked amidst an uncaring Edinburgh middle class. The development of Ramsay Garden and the Town and Gown showed that this was far from the case. From the start he worked with the support and advice of people as varied as James MacDonald, Thomas Whitson and Francis Ogilvie. One result of the transfer to the Town and Gown was the addition of Whitson, with his expertise in property management, to the active members of the Board of Proprietors. The Geddes plans were carefully thought out. The refinancing of the new Company was not a walking away. He remained on the Board and was appointed managing director for a ten year period. The success of his Ramsay Garden project was held up as one reason for subscribing to the shares.

Analysis of the early shareholder lists showed that the support was extensive but specific. There were 142 names, 124 men and 18 women. There were 70 Edinburgh shareholders, 44 from the rest of Scotland and 28 from England. Over 60% [86] were professionals. Of these 21 were medical men and 13 lawyers. There was prominent support from the University: eleven professors included Alexander Crum-Brown (chemistry), John Kirkpatrick (history and civil law), Joseph Nicholson (political economy) and Halford Mackinder (geography in Oxford). Many came from the newer professions, architects, chartered accountants, analytical chemists, engineers and surveyors. There were comparatively few merchants and industrialists, although some, 19 of them, came from Fife and a broadly defined north east Scotland. 28 shareholders overall came from Fife, Stirling, Perthshire and Aberdeenshire. This was the Geddes's place of origin and was one of many places in which the potential for the family geographical network appeared in his activities. Finally there were twelve ministers of religion, four from the Free Church but only two from Edinburgh.

The transfer of Geddes's interest in the Ramsay

Garden property to the Town and Gown Association Limited was registered in Sasines on 3 February 1897. Geddes was to receive £4944 in cash and the Town and Gown were to take responsibility for debts secured against the property amounting to £8800. These involved £1700 from Agnes Hogg, £1000 from the Macraes in London, £2400 to the trustees of a marriage settlement and £3700 from his friend and supporter, Henry Beveridge, a Fife industrialist. Adding the cash payment and debt transfer to revenue from sales between 1893 and 94, Geddes gained £29,728. There is no record of rents received, taxes, repairs and interest paid but on capital account Ramsay Garden showed a reasonable surplus.

Geddes sustained his involvement, indeed the fact that he was to continue as manager for up to ten years was regarded as a selling point for the shares.<sup>59</sup> In 1898, Martin White, friend and financial backer, told him.<sup>60</sup>

You have pulled through big things in the past and one has gained confidence, otherwise I should have listened to nothing – It would not in my judgment have been in your interest to do anything now if you had not been pretty successful – I must leave this matter in the hands of the lawyers to do what seems best. Note I am not driving a bargain to squeeze anything out of you – I am getting absolutely nothing out of this & am only doing it to help a good old friend & the College scheme ...

The impact of the success of Ramsay Garden meant that Geddes was much sought after as a partner in projects which combined property development and civic purpose. He worked with the Burgh Engineer and City Corporation for a variety of projects under the City Improvement Schemes of 1893.<sup>61</sup> He worked with Lord John McLaren to develop working class housing in the lower Canongate. The new company gave Geddes a more formal relationship with people who had been friends and advisors over several years. Thomas Whitson was company secretary. Geddes was a director as were Henry Beveridge, James Macdonald and the medical men, Francis Caird, George Gibson and Professor Crum Brown. Geddes was an active member of the Board, debating the use of various properties and drafting the 1897 annual report. He suggested a 'country house club' for the property at Lasswade, and an art shop for Burns House, the Lawnmarket rebuild. He suggested a list of 'south side' associations which would use the Outlook Tower for their meetings.<sup>62</sup> Whitson's role was to impose financial discipline on Geddes and the

Board. In May 1898 Whitson wrote.<sup>63</sup>

I have your note and as requested have handed on to Duncan a cheque for ten guineas – But when is all this to stop – Personally I quite understand that this the last panel for Ramsay Lodge had been paid for; it seems like the other day since we sent him £26 or something like that. ... This sort of thing won't do. It can only have one ending and it has gone far enough already if not too far – There is no-one in charge.

The warning was effective. Within a few weeks they had agreed compromises.<sup>64</sup> All those involved in the launch of the Town and Gown made a massive over-estimate of the cash flow the Company would bring. As they made plans in 1895, Whitson told Geddes:<sup>65</sup>

We must wait till after the press of term is over and then must set about issuing the shares. This should be done gradually when the amount of Capital required has been gauged ... the net return for the past half year will be more than sufficient to pay 4% Interest which we understand is the minimum dividend you propose to give, moreover now that the houses are so fully let for the coming winter you need have no fear but that the next half year will show a larger return still.

The improvement of the whole neighbourhood is only now beginning to tell and this combined with the fall in interest will enable us to renew the existing loans at a cheaper rate when they fall due, a matter which will again tell in favour of the Dividend.

The returns made under the Companies Acts showed this optimism was initially justified. For the first two years there was a steady increase in paid up shareholder capital. In 1896, 6018 shares sold produced £19,556; in 1897, 6417 shares produced £21,198 whilst in 1898 6851 produced £23,333, where matters stagnated until 1911 when an issue of debenture shares refreshed the Company's capital with £3250 sold. The main source of capital remained heritable bonds totaling £30,550. The Company Act of 1908 was more demanding in the accounting required by the Registrar of Companies. There was a brief period of surplus, 1903–06, but never enough to pay a dividend.<sup>66</sup> The optimism of the late 1890s was reflected in many aspects of Edinburgh property as was the major decline in activity in the 1900s.<sup>67</sup> The Company focused on its core business of providing student accommodation and associated residential housing. It survived the 1930s, invested in war bonds and was liquidated in 1948–51.<sup>68</sup> It would be easy to blame the stagnation and limited achievements of Town and Gown on Geddes's over-ambitious plans but far from operating in an environment of a disinterested Edinburgh middle class, he was



operating in an environment of intense competition for funding enlightened civic activity, notably from the Edinburgh Social Union.<sup>69</sup>

Others found it difficult to identify with the Geddes aim of operating within commercial constraints. This view was represented by Andrew Carnegie who liked to keep philanthropy and profit firmly apart. Carnegie wrote from Cannes, 'The Professor sets a rare task for himself – making anything pay which is purely philanthropic. He deserves success and I hope he will succeed.'<sup>70</sup> Closer to home was Jane Whyte, close friend of Anna Geddes, and wife of the minister of an elite Free Church congregation. Jane was sister of Alexander Barbour and inheritor of substantial financial sector wealth. She was happy to provide direct support but preferred to avoid the mixed motives of companies like the Town and Gown. She wrote:<sup>71</sup>

We agree that you keep the £2000 for one more year as before, but prefer it to be to you personally, and to be repaid in May 1896, and not with a view to taking shares in the company. This I prefer for various reasons and chiefly because I shall certainly require the money then either for the Mound scheme or for Fountain Bridge.

By May 96 I hope you will have got the thing well floated ...

Jane Whyte.

The launch of the Town and Gown brought a burst of optimism which revealed several dimensions of Geddes's thinking. John Duncan was being commissioned for murals in Ramsay Lodge although by 1898 he was finding it hard to get payment for this. Duncan wrote from Dundee, 'In return for my advancing his [the Admirable Crichton's] fame by painting a flattering portrait of him I look to his paying my rent.'<sup>72</sup> There were intense discussions over the furnishing of the Outlook Tower and the creation of a Geographical Institute, in both cases guided by the caution and practical wisdom of Whitson and John George Bartholomew.<sup>73</sup> Plans for the 'tower block' were discussed for the site east of Ramsay Lane.

Ramsay Garden was not the only element of Geddes's property enterprises. The student halls were expanded, notably in St Giles Street. In partnership with Lord John McLaren, son of radical politician Duncan McLaren, briefly Lord Advocate, and then judge of the Court of Session, Geddes developed a working class tenement at the foot of the Canongate. He dreamt of 'a "Holyrood Hall" which ere long may balance University Hall'.<sup>74</sup> Geddes was fascinated by

the English Garden City movement and promoted a financially draining development at Coltbridge on the outskirts of the City. He also co-operated with the municipal authorities in a variety of clearances and new builds in the Old Town.<sup>75</sup> Ramsay Garden may have been the most sustained of his enterprises but it was part of a balanced series of interventions in the city.

How did a young field biologist come to be involved in such extensive property development? The answers lay in his positive theories of human evolution developed in the 1880s as he responded to the ideas of Darwin and Ruskin:<sup>76</sup>

Man, if he is to remain healthy and remain civilized, must not only aim at the highest standard of cerebral as well as non cerebral excellence ... but must take especial heed of his environment ... since the belly and members are dominated by a brain developed and maintained through the constant and varied stimulus of the senses ... our theory of production culminates in the Rehabilitation of Beauty.

He warned that 'excessive multiplication' threatened 'the degeneration of our city population.'<sup>77</sup> This Malthusian threat could not be countered by simple material improvements. Positive evolution was a matter of attending to 'the supreme needs of the brain.'<sup>78</sup> Ramsay Garden was full of attempts to feed the 'needs of the brain'. The countless carvings and sculptured panels were a series of eye catching intellectual puzzles. Further aesthetic and intellectual stimulus came from the murals painted by John Duncan and others. The importance of historical continuity was represented by the 'Goose-pie' house embedded in the new buildings and by celebrations of Allan Ramsay.

Colour was central to his theory of stimulus and the city. Geddes admitted to liking advertisements and tram cars. 'They are playing for us the game of colour, these ugly cars; and with the artist we may daily find them beguile us for the dismalness of our formal street.'<sup>79</sup> And 'Colour must be not only true but beautiful, rich in harmony and contrast; light and shade must be at once broad and subtle, contrasted and graduated; line must be not only faithful, but flowing and rhythmical'.<sup>80</sup>

This combination of colour and line were exactly what Ramsay Garden provided. Colour was a violent intrusion into the grey of the Edinburgh skyline but the respect for the line and scale of the surrounding

buildings made the north face of Ramsay Garden look as if it belonged. We know that the Proprietors were empowered to order the harling and whitewashing of Ramsay Garden. Nora Geddes recalled that colour washing was important to her father's ideas of improvement. Riddles Court was 'harled bright yellow'.<sup>81</sup> His initial colouring of James Court had been inspired by the colouring of 'Old Edinburgh' in the International Exhibition. A mixture of 'science and art criticism' led him to conclude that colouring led to an increase 'in public peace and safety' and a decrease in 'nervous diseases'.<sup>82</sup> By 1902, Burn Murdoch was suggesting that a coat of Duresco would improve the appearance of the building, indicating that the smoke of Edinburgh had already degraded the harling.<sup>83</sup> This may even have been self colouring grey harling.<sup>84</sup> Other colouring came from the red sandstone, probably Moat stone from Cumberland, popular in Edinburgh in the 1890s and used by Geddes in his Watergate development.<sup>85</sup>

The story of Ramsay Garden in the 1890s was a complex one. It certainly was not the story of a lone pioneer against an uncaring city. Nor was it the story of the man of ideas who started things and walked away. It was the story of a man responding to the powerful and disturbing ideas of Darwin and Ruskin. Any concern for class relationships and working class welfare was part of a larger concern for the direction of human evolution. Ramsay Garden represented

the aesthetic and intellectual stimulus that would ensure positive evolution. Geddes took care with the practical details. The advice of men like James Macdonald and Thomas Whitson enabled him to use all available strategies of finance and property management. Macdonald's letters were lessons in gentrification and ethical property management, late Victorian style. Nor was Edinburgh an uncaring city. Geddes had the support of friends like Ogilvie and the Oliphants. He had the support of an active professorial network in the University. If anything Edinburgh was rather too caring. Geddes faced intense competition for limited time and resources. Very often the ladies of the Edinburgh Social Union were better than he was at gaining access to those resources, just as the technocratic regulatory discipline of people like Henry Littlejohn, medical officer of health, was better at harnessing the energies of the City Corporation.

At the end of the day, Edinburgh was a relatively small place to contain these competing ambitions. In the early 1900s, Geddes began to recognize this and turned more and more attention to London and to Atlantic, European and Imperial worlds. In July 1903, he wrote sadly to John George Bartholomew, 'I have exhausted my soil. My limited flower pot.'<sup>86</sup> It was a suitable metaphor for the man who entered public life with the window box committee of the Edinburgh Social Union and who still inspires community gardening in Edinburgh.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

Many people, debates, seminars and arguments have contributed to this paper. I would like especially to thank Simon Bolam who showed me the records of the Ramsay Garden Proprietors Association.

- 1 The title quotation is from *Scotsman*, 3 October 1893. The report noted they 'looked exceedingly well under padella and other lights'.
- 2 Helen Meller, *Patrick Geddes. Social Evolutionist and City Planner* (London 1990), pp. 68-78; Volker M. Welter, *Biopolis. Patrick Geddes and the City of Life* (London 2002).
- 3 Murdo Macdonald, 'Celticism and Internationalism in the circle of Patrick Geddes', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 6.2 (2005), pp. 69-83; Megan C. Ferguson, 'Patrick Geddes and the Celtic Renaissance of the 1890s', University of Dundee, PhD (2011) provides a full survey of this development; for further context, Elizabeth Cumming, *Hand, Heart and Soul. The Arts and Crafts Movement in Scotland* (Edinburgh 2006), pp. 9-10, 31-32 and 40-43; Murdo Macdonald, *Scottish Art* (London 2000), pp. 151-157; Jim Johnson and Lou Rosenberg, *Renewing Old Edinburgh. The Enduring Legacy of Patrick Geddes* (Glendaruel 2010).
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- 6 Philip Boardman, *The Worlds of Patrick Geddes. Biologist, Town Planner, Re-educator, Peace-warrior* (London 1978), pp. 24 and 23; Philip Mairet, *Pioneer of Sociology. The Life and Letters of Patrick Geddes* (London 1957), p. 44; Jaquelin Tyrwitt, *Patrick Geddes in India* (London 1947); Paddy Kitchen, *A Most Unsettling Person. An Introduction to the Ideas and Life of Patrick Geddes* (London 1975); Amelia Defries, *The Interpreter Geddes. The Man and his Gospel* (London 1927); Lewis Mumford and Patrick Geddes, *The Correspondence*, edited with an introduction by Frank G. Novak jnr (London 1995).
- 7 National Archives of Scotland (NAS), Valuation Roll of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1886-87, VR100/134.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 Edinburgh City Archives (ECA), Dean of Guild Court Records, 9 October 1890; *Scotsman*, 16 October 1890.

- 10 *Scotsman*, 4 January 1889, 23 May 1890 and obituary 3 June 1912.
- 11 'Unionist' referred here to the Irish Union of 1801 and opposition to Gladstone's Home Rule policies.
- 12 *Scotsman*, 16 October 1890.
- 13 National Library of Scotland (NLS), MS 10525, f.91.
- 14 *Scotsman*, 30 October 1895; Sian Reynolds, *Paris-Edinburgh: Cultural connections in the Belle Epoque* (Aldershot 2007), pp. 104-113; History of the Faculty of Law, www.law.ed.ac.uk [accessed 31 January 2013].
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- 20 Andrew P. K. Wright, *14 Ramsay Garden. Conservation Plan* (National Trust for Scotland, January 2006).
- 21 The Town and Gown Association Limited, *Prospectus of the Association* (Edinburgh 1896), p. 6.
- 22 NAS, Disposition by Patrick Geddes to Rev. Henry Flower and Mary A. G. K. Erskine or Flower, 22 June 1893, RS108/2695/42; Roll for the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1895-96, VR 100/172/457; Alan Harding, *A Victorian Church in Edinburgh's Old Town. St Columba's Episcopalian Church in context* (Edinburgh 2005).
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- 24 ECA, Dean Of Guild Court, 21 January 1893.
- 25 Lettice Milne Rae (ed.), *Ladies in Debate. Being a history of the Edinburgh Ladies Debating Society* (Edinburgh 1936).
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- 27 NAS, Disposition by Patrick Geddes to Francis Grant Ogilvie, 13 March 1893, RS108/2626/11-20.
- 28 Minutes of the Proprietors of Ramsay Garden, 1894 to 1965. My thanks to Mr Simon Bolam, current secretary of the Proprietors Association who kindly showed me the minutes.
- 29 Wright, *14 Ramsay Garden* (note 20), p. 14.
- 30 NLS, J. Robertson to Patrick Geddes, 22 January 1885, Geddes Papers, MS 10524 f.1.
- 31 *Ibid.*, Frank Deas, Berrywell, Duns to Patrick Geddes, 17 July 1885, MS 10524, f.85.
- 32 *Ibid.*, MS 10650, f.12.
- 33 NLS, J. Martin White, Spring Grove, Dundee to Patrick Geddes, 27 Jan 1886, MS 10524, f.71. White, a long term supporter of Geddes, inherited Fife jute merchant wealth. His philandering disrupted his political career as a liberal unionist. His philanthropic support for the development of British sociology included the chair at London School of Economics (LSE): Christopher T. Husbans, 'James Martin White (1857-1928) as the godfather of British sociology?' *LSE Research News. Sociology*, 3.2, April 2005, pp. 1-2; Scott and Bromley, *Envisioning Sociology* (note 4), pp. 30-31.
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- 40 W. G. Burn-Murdoch, *From Edinburgh to the Antarctic. An artist's notes and sketches during the Dundee Antarctic Expedition, 1892-93* (London 1894), p. 3.
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- 42 Burn Murdoch, *From Edinburgh to the Antarctic*, pp. 12-13.
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- 50 *Ibid.*, 25 March 1895.
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- 52 *Ibid.*, 14 April 1894.
- 53 NAS, Bond to Patrick Geddes from Millicent Flora Louisa Macleay, 8 Rutland Square, Edinburgh, 16 July 1891, RS108/2382/55; Bond by Fanny Macrae, 6 Baker St, London, 16 July 1891, RS108/2446/33; Disburden Bond from Millicent Flora Louisa Macleay, 10 January 1893, RS108/2613/153; Bond by Agnes Hogg, Rhymer's Cottage, Earlston, 9 March 1893, RS108/2625/589.
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- 56 Richard Rodger, *The Transformation of Edinburgh: Land, property and trust in the nineteenth century* (Cambridge 2001).
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- 58 *Ibid.*, *Report by the Directors and Shareholders for the year ending 15 May 1897*.
- 59 *Ibid.*, *Prospectus*, p. 10.
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- 62 NLS, MS 10529, f.33; MS 10530, f.130.
- 63 *Ibid.*, MS 10530, f.133.
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- 79 *Ibid.*, *Everyman his own art critic (Glasgow Exhibition, 1888). An Introduction to the study of Pictures* (Edinburgh 1888), p. 25.
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- 81 NLS, Nora Geddes Memoir, MS 19266. Although this confirms much circumstantial evidence, Nora's claims, like all memory of childhood, need to be treated with caution.
- 82 *Ibid.*, Draft letter from Geddes, 5 April 1889, MS 10508A.
- 83 Minutes of the Proprietors of Ramsay Garden, 24 January 1902. Duresco was a widely used paint for exteriors. It was water based but contained a petrifying liquid which hardened to form a moisture resistant surface: [chestofbooks.com/crafts/mechanics/Cyclopaedia/Duresco-And-Petrifying-Liquid.html#UfDlehwmzBZ](http://chestofbooks.com/crafts/mechanics/Cyclopaedia/Duresco-And-Petrifying-Liquid.html#UfDlehwmzBZ), and [patrickbaty.co.uk/2011/11/07/duresco-king-of-water-paints/](http://patrickbaty.co.uk/2011/11/07/duresco-king-of-water-paints/) [accessed July 2013].
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- 85 NAS, Register of Sasines, Feu Contract by the Honorable John McLaren to Patrick Geddes, 7 September 1894; I. T. Bunyan, J. A. Fairhurst, A. Mackie and A. A. McMillan, *Building Stones of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh Geological Society 1987).
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