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# THE EDINBURGH VILLA

IAN GOW

IN EDINBURGH THERE HAS BEEN a long tradition of commemorating the homes of our famous citizens. John Knox's house is (allegedly) still with us, while in the New Town plaques mark the homes of great men such as Sir Walter Scott or Sir Henry Raeburn. If, however, you start to look a little more deeply into their lives, you will find, as often as not, that their affections were centred not on these town houses, but rather on their 'darling country seats' in the surrounding countryside.<sup>1</sup> With our intense pride in the New Town today, it is easy to forget that many of its original inhabitants possessed two houses. Recent research on the interiors of New Town houses has revealed that owners were in such thrall to the uniformity of social convention that William Trotter's estimate for furnishing No. 3 Moray Place not only matches up with the surviving furniture at No. 31, but also with a watercolour of a drawing room in a further unidentified house in the same square.<sup>2</sup> By contrast, however, the villas permitted an unrestricted display of personal taste, and they thus often reveal more about their owners' personalities than the elegant facades of their town houses.

This paper attempts to demonstrate the duality of housing in late eighteenth-century Edinburgh where an inner core of town houses was surrounded by concentric rings of villas, owned by the same citizens. The very popularity of these villas, and their proliferation, carried the seeds of their destruction as they gradually encroached on each other's rural charm. During the nineteenth century the town expanded, not into virgin country, but rather over abandoned villa properties. Thus although few survive, the villa plots have continued to condition the character of the suburbs. During the twentieth century unprecedented demands for development are in

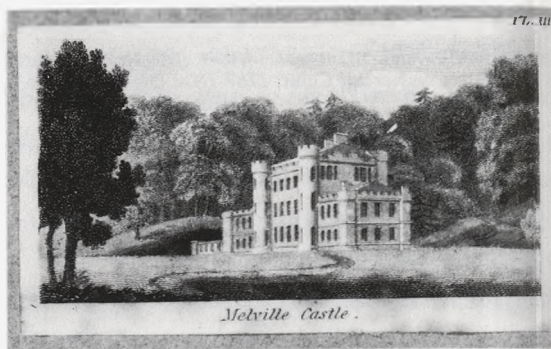


Fig. 1. Melville Castle, engraved by R. Scott. From J. Stark, *Picture of Edinburgh*, 3rd edn, Edinburgh, 1823. (RCAHMS.)

danger of destroying the last vestiges of the villadom and thus this paper is an urgent plea for the preservation of the few that still remain, and that are no less a memorial to the 'Athens of the North' than is the New Town itself.

In his *Life of Lord Jeffrey* Lord Cockburn writes of his friend's 'half town and half villa life'.<sup>3</sup> Most histories of Edinburgh concentrate on town-half, but in this paper we will take a trip out into villa-half which, as I hope to show, is worthy of greater consideration. The pursuit of the villa had a profound effect on the appearance of the immediate countryside, and the old name of 'Edinburghshire' for Midlothian was thus particularly appropriate.

In 1790 R. L. Willis wrote thus:

As you approach Edinburgh the scene wonderfully improves: it is a cultivated landscape all around, abundant in wood and every cheering view. We peeped into Mr Dundas' grounds at Melville Castle, which is altogether superb and beautiful. There are few more smiling or more desirable places to be met with, and my friend told me that here the owner dismissed his cares, and welcomed the unmixed pleasures of society. Here enjoyed

... the happy hour,  
Of social freedom ill exchanged for power,  
And here uncumber'd with the venal tribe,  
Smiled without art, and won without a bribe.

We passed many fine seats on either hand, and I am sure in no want of trees – Lord Somerville’s, the Duke of Buccleuch’s at Dalkeith, Lord Lothian’s, &c. As we neared the capital the villas of course crowded upon us.<sup>4</sup>

Near London and Glasgow villas were built along the navigable rivers, but in Edinburgh, because the entire county was so rich in natural beauties, the villas were scattered in profusion. Much of Edinburgh’s beauty still derives from its natural setting and when, in the late eighteenth century, it became fashionable to analyse the nature of the picturesque in landscape, one of the leading theorists, William Gilpin, wrote of Edinburgh that ‘the situation of Edinburgh, tho it cannot be called picturesque, is very peculiar’.<sup>5</sup>

The attraction of these rural charms was heightened by the city’s deficiencies. The dirt and squalor of Edinburgh was legendary. Defoe was kinder than many commentators:

... regarding immediate Safety, fix’d on [a hill] as a sure strength, form’d by Nature ... By this Means the City ... lies under such scandalous Inconveniencies as are, by its enemies, made a subject of Scorn and Reproach; as if the People ... delighted in Stench and Nastiness; whereas, were any other People to live under the same Unhappiness ... of a rocky and mountainous Situation, throng’d Buildings, from seven to ten or twelve Story high ... we should find a London or a Bristol as dirty as Edinburgh.<sup>6</sup>

Complaints by residents are frequent. For instance, October 1724 found Sir John Clerk suffering from a

cold at his house in the Cowgate, but by ‘keeping warm for a few days and a little Exercise’ he was well by November, ‘tho’ in the Aire of Edinburgh’.<sup>7</sup> Similarly Susan Ferrer, the novelist, wrote from East Morningside House: ‘We are once more settled here and glad I am to find myself out of the smoke and dirt of the town, which always disagrees with me at this season – the air of this place suits me particularly well’.<sup>8</sup>

The design of town houses everywhere, as architectural historians are quick to point out, is essentially the product of restrictions, but in Edinburgh light and space were precious to an exaggerated degree. Nineteenth-century historians were extremely enthusiastic about the democratic arrangements within these Old Town skyscrapers but, in summertime particularly, city life must have been rather trying. Conversely, however, the very concentration of the city on a tiny acreage of rock meant that the real countryside was conveniently on hand, and if you were sufficiently rich to have an element of choice, it was possible to have a house in its own grounds close to the city. The Canongate had developed as a street of at least partly self-contained houses linking Edinburgh to Holyrood. Because of their splendid setting with views outwards to the Calton Hill and Arthur’s Seat these town houses took on many villa characteristics.



Fig. 2. View of the Canongate. Etching by John Clerk of Eldin, c. 1770-82. (RCAHMS.)

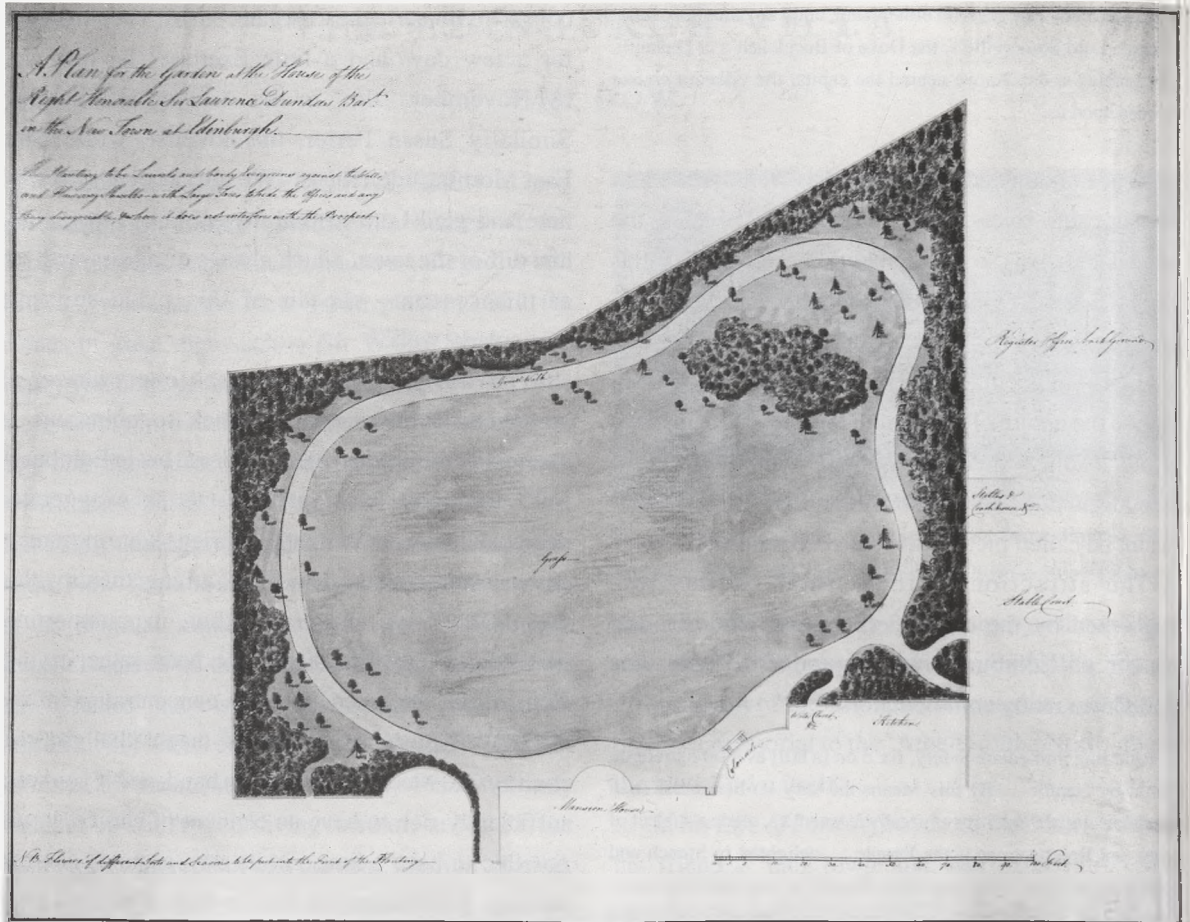


Fig. 3. Planting plan for the town house of Sir Laurence Dundas in St Andrew's Square. 'The planting to be Laurels and hardy Evergreens against the Walls, and Flowering Shrubs - with Large Trees to hide the Offices and any thing disagreeable where it does not interfere with the Prospect.' Designer not known, pen and watercolour, c. 1771. (RCAHMS: reproduced by courtesy of the Royal Bank of Scotland.)

Clerk of Eldin's etching of the Canongate shows how the garden facades of its southern houses had large areas of glass to the prospect (fig.2). The Scottish aristocracy, in fact, seem to have had a preference when they came to town for such self-contained houses set in large gardens. In 1769 'the very best house about Edinburgh' was Ross Park House, set in no less than 24 acres of park near what is now George Square.<sup>9</sup> Even if your means could not extend to this, it was still possible to have a 'country house' without going very far, as the poet Allan Ramsay proved with his famous 'goose-pie' house on Castle Hill, with its spectacular views to the Firth of Forth (though his

genteel son Allan Ramsay the painter was equally determined that the same property should be an elegant town studio).<sup>10</sup>

Today we tend to call these houses 'suburban' and are used to seeing them in nineteenth-century topographical drawings when the city had engulfed them, but in the eighteenth century the word 'suburban' was reserved for low, mean, straggling streets at the city's boundaries.<sup>11</sup> The countryside seen from Ramsay's windows was 'real' enough, dotted with farms and peopled with rustics. Interestingly enough, the continuing popularity of this kind of 'town house' caused havoc with the New Town. It is well

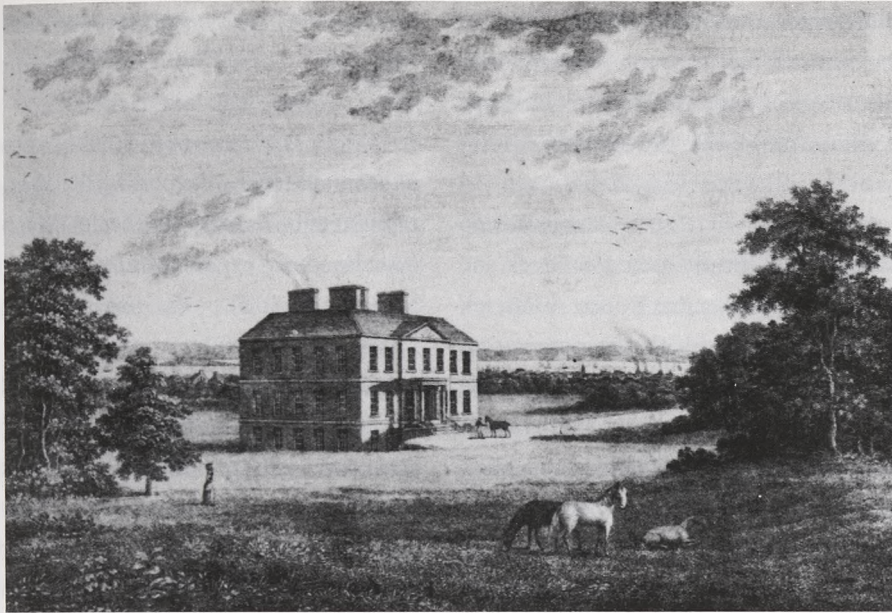


Fig. 4. Bellevue, designed by Robert Adam. Drawn by A. Carse, engraved by R. Scott, 1796. (RCAHMS.)

known that the influential Sir Laurence Dundas dealt a heavy blow to James Craig's design when he annexed the site intended for a church in St Andrew's Square for his own house, but perhaps less well known that he already owned much of the land which became its gardens in the pre-existing adjacent villa quarter. His gardeners skilfully planted trees to conceal the more urban features of the neighbourhood (fig. 3). Similarly, historians have been puzzled by Robert Adam's designs in the Soane Museum labelled as 'General Scott's house in the New Town', but in fact General Scott's house was the villa of Bellevue which stood in a large park, and as can be seen in a contemporary print, enjoyed splendid views out to sea (fig. 4). Bellevue's park was soon destroyed to provide the site for the second New Town. The influence of former villas on the New Town is also well illustrated in the Moray Estate. This was created on the grounds of Lord Moray's villa which, like its successor Moray Place, was sited on the ridge with the ravine of the Water of Leith below.

It should be clear by now that my definition of a villa is a very simple one, since it is merely a house in

a garden, which may graduate by degrees through garden plus field, to garden and farm, and ultimately extend to what in Scotland are called 'policies'. Many architectural historians have confused the issue by trying to pin down 'the villa' as an architectural type. Such an approach is doomed to failure because the paramount part of the equation is the garden, which is the essential element. Obviously your plot has to be rather larger than a window box, although a window box merging into a spectacular view over someone else's acres, as in Allan Ramsay's case, might just qualify. The building can take any form that fashion and your taste and means require. If you happen to be a millionaire, like the Earl of Abercorn at Duddingston, with a fashionable London architect, the results are bound to be impressive. If you are an impecunious lawyer, like the young Walter Scott at the start of his career, you can derive much the same sort of pleasure by renting a labourer's cottage at Lasswade during the summer months. It is much more a question of attitude than form or scale, and thus it was within reach of many people's pockets. As a capital city, Edinburgh was teeming with politicians, lawyers, teachers, civil

servants and tradesmen, confined by their affairs to the city, but as soon as this necessity relented they naturally gravitated elsewhere. Before we look at the diversity of villas they built, we should briefly consider some of the influences they shared.

The villa attitude is a revival of a classical ideal. Scottish education was so firmly rooted in Greek and Latin that it is hardly surprising that Robert Adam felt such an instant familiarity with the monuments of Rome. The most celebrated descriptions of antique villas occur in Pliny's letters and this source must certainly have inspired Sir John Clerk of Penicuik's activities at Mavisbank, whose purpose is expressed in the Latin texts cut into its facade.<sup>12</sup> One of these includes what is possibly the earliest usage of the word 'villa' in eighteenth-century Britain. Such pagan influences must be countered by a host of deeply pious Scots whose ideal was formed on Paradise rather than Herculaneum. Sir John Clerk's second wife kept a diary which is a deeply moving record of private devotion,<sup>13</sup> as is that of her husband's friend Provost George Drummond. In June 1738, Drummond wrote of his villa at Hailes:

This place has so many natural beauties and sweet solitary retirements, that if I was so disposed to take pleasure in anything, in

time it would very much delight me. But although I was easy in my circumstances I habitually view myself as not at home in this world.<sup>14</sup>

On a less gloomy note, villas had obvious practical advantages. Many favourite villa sites were actually thought to be beneficial to health. Much of this can be dismissed as estate agent's exaggeration, but at Inveresk (fig. 5) – the finest surviving village of villas – you can still see how its popularity resulted in a very dense settlement where each villa dodged its neighbours in a typical ribbon-like arrangement to admit the view (now obscured by the heightening of the walls in the nineteenth century). Science suggested that Inveresk might have its own micro-climate.<sup>15</sup> The siting of the city's Lunatic Asylum at Susan Ferrier's Morningside, in a fashionable villa quarter, reflects the same concern. The late eighteenth-century health-craze for sea-bathing gave rise in a single generation to a resort called Portobello, which became an independent town. Children could be left in the care of their nurses at villas (as the young Clerks were at Cammo) while their gardens provided produce for the town house. For instance in 1810 nectarines were growing in many gardens, as Nicol's *Villa Gardens Directory* shows. Their glasshouses raised the dozens

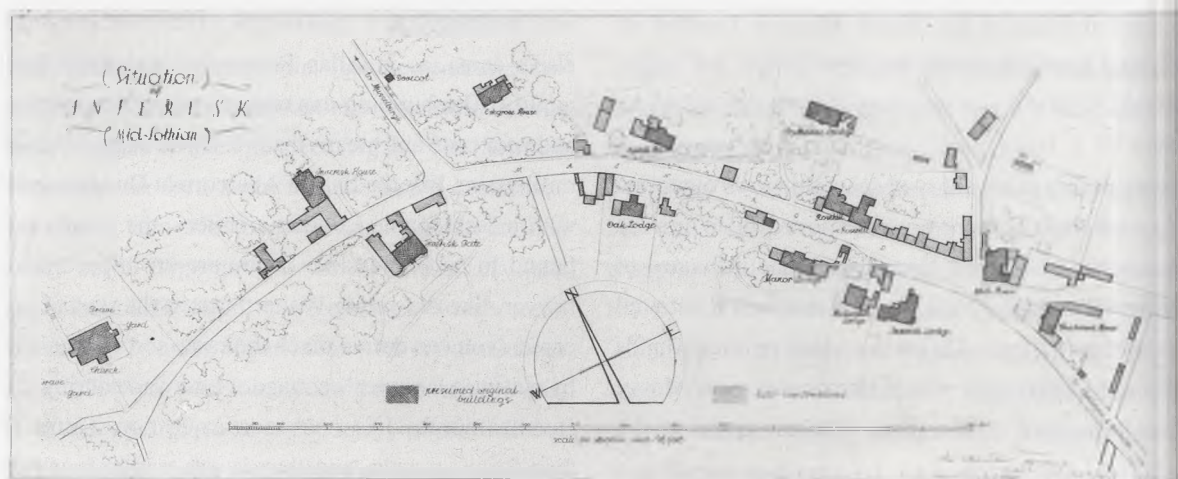


Fig. 5. Survey of Inveresk by the Scottish National Buildings Record, 1945, showing a ribbon development, typical of the villadom, and the way in which the villas 'dodge' each other to preserve integrity of individual prospect. (RCAHMS.)

of potted flowers without which no New Town hostess could contemplate an evening party. Our entire knowledge of Trinity, one of the villa quarters, in the mid-eighteenth century is due to the fact that a Mr Allan cut some grass reserved by his neighbour Pierre de la Motte (a dancing master whose address was Lillyput) for his cow. A spectacular series of legal cases with dozens of witnesses – a veritable feast of villa trivia – resulted.<sup>16</sup>

It should now have become evident that nothing could more clearly reflect the manner in which a villa strikes an 'attitude' than the names with which they were christened by doting owners. In the vicinity of Edinburgh could be found all the top ten favourite villa names including 'Bellvue', 'Belvidere' and 'Belmont'. Prefixes often commemorate spouses or

flowers. Bucolic suffixes include 'parks', 'banks', 'fields' and 'groves', while 'huts', of which there are several, commemorate their use as temporary dwellings rather than their construction, and are joined by many 'cottages' and 'cots'. 'Mavisbank' (i.e. thrushbank) is in the same category.

Alongside these excellent reasons for owning a villa as the 'architecture of leisure for pleasure', they naturally attracted the empty-headed. Mere pretentiousness can be represented by the self-mocking Cockburn who, having begun with a farmhouse at Bonaly, ended with a castle: 'Realizing the profanations of Auburn, I have destroyed a village, and erected a tower, and reached the dignity of a twenty-acred laird.'<sup>17</sup> Our spokeswoman for the world of fashion is Susan Clerk. Speaking of a family

Ross Folly Tower      Inverleith      Trinity Villas      East Warriston      St Bernard's Well



Fig. 6. View on the Water of Leith from a sketch by Alexander Campbell in his *Journey from Edinburgh*. Aquatint by F. Jukes, 1802. (RCAHMS.)

party at Sunnyside which, in spite of its name, was a most stylish, almost Parisian, pavilion designed by her brother Robert Adam, she writes:

Tis vulgar to be seen in town,  
The Beau Monde to the Country flown,  
Betake themselves for want of betters,  
To rural sports and fetes champetres.<sup>18</sup>

By about 1815, generations of effort had produced a villadom encircling the city. Unfortunately, most artists literally tended to turn their backs on it, but there is an aquatint of 1802 from Alexander Campbell's *Journey from Edinburgh through Parts of North Britain* which must serve our purpose (fig. 6). From a viewpoint where the city is behind us to the right, he sketched a 'scene replete with such objects as characterize the lovely landscapes of Claude Loraine'.<sup>19</sup> This was no happy accident since the temple over a mineral well in the foreground was designed by the painter Alexander Nasmyth to this end, but the villas on the horizon represent private enterprise (which of us now could trust our neighbours without benefit of planning controls to produce a 'Claude' from their home improvements?). The villas are thinly scattered and never dominant, so that the overall impression was of open country. This aspect of the 'villa aesthetic' was encapsulated in the 1795 *View of the Agriculture of Midlothian*:

Numberless villas in the vicinity of Edinburgh, and Gentlemen's seats, all over the county, are seen beautiful and distinct, each in the midst of its own plantations. These add still more to the embellishment of the scene from the manner in which they are disposed; not in extended and thick plantations, which turn a country into a forest, and throw a gloom upon the prospect; but in clear and diversified lines, in clumps and hedge-rows.<sup>20</sup>

Nearest to the viewer in Campbell's sketch is Inverleith House where in 1774 the Rocheads pulled down an ancestral tower and erected a villa on a more elevated site whose garden door is axially aligned on the corona of St Giles. Inverleith House happily survives in the Royal Botanic Garden, but the

neighbouring West Warriston for the banker George Ramsay does not. It had, as photographs show (fig. 7), a severe entrance front to the north, criticised by Robert Mylne as 'cold and seldom used',<sup>21</sup> while the south front, with its views to the city, is almost all window. Ramsay was an extremely successful banker who kept a diary exactly like a ledger, at the back of which he casually noted down what everyone was worth, and he later built a much grander villa on his Barnton properties.<sup>22</sup> Further out, and seen obliquely, is the 'villa village' of Trinity, which had a range of more modest houses. This general picture was repeated through all the 360 degrees round Edinburgh.

Because villas tended to be tailored to the needs of individual owners, it is difficult to speak of a 'typical villa plan'. West Warriston House, however, does demonstrate an increasing taste for architectural effect, with its polished ashlar and general air of sophistication. It was thus very different in spirit from the earlier tradition of more modest villas like 'William's Hut', which seems closer in spirit to the rustic ideal of a little house in a field.<sup>23</sup> The unknown architect of Warriston, however, was still able to achieve a compact effect because social customs made no greater demands than a pair of public rooms comprising a drawing room and a larger dining room. It was relatively simple to place them side by side on the many-windowed garden front overlooking the prospect. The most sophisticated version of this plan is the architect John Adam's design for Hawkhill (fig. 8), which was also a synthesis of some of his father William's planning experiments in houses like Minto.<sup>24</sup> The jewel-box-like intricacy and compactness of Hawkhill (recalling the spirit of Gabriel's pavilions near Paris) must also have been promoted by the patron's bachelor status. During the late eighteenth century, architects had to contend with a demand for larger rooms to hold larger receptions with numerous guests. To meet this demand many early villas sprouted wings, like Murrayfield House. The villas of



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Fig. 7. West Warriston House. NMRS photographic survey prior to demolition, 1964. *Above*: North or entrance front (the wings are later additions). *Below*: South front. (RCAHMS.)

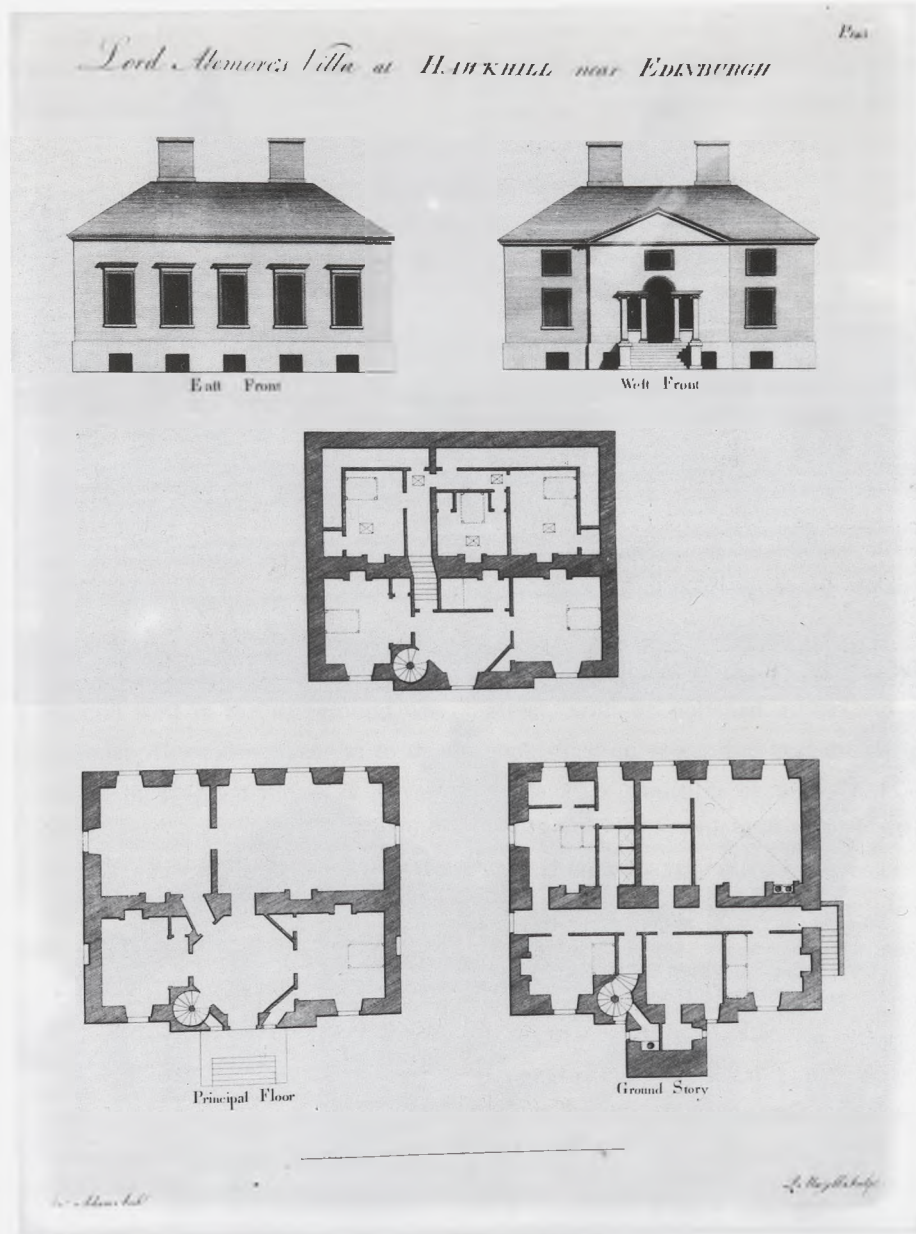


Fig. 8. Design for Lord Alemeer's villa at Hawkhill by John Adam. 1757. Engraving from *Vitruvius Scoticus*, 1811. (RCAHMS.)

wealthy patrons, such as Colinton, built for Sir William Forbes the banker, are by the early nineteenth century really indistinguishable from substantial country houses.

The tension between retreat and entertainment is further demonstrated by the villas of the leading politicians who managed Scotland during this period.

Although built privately by individuals their needs were broadly similar. The Earl of Lauderdale's Hatton House with its formal gardens was recorded in a late seventeenth-century engraving by Slezer (fig. 9; in its decline a century later Lord Jeffrey rented the house as a private retreat). Lord Tarbat, Secretary of State at the end of the seventeenth century, whose own estates

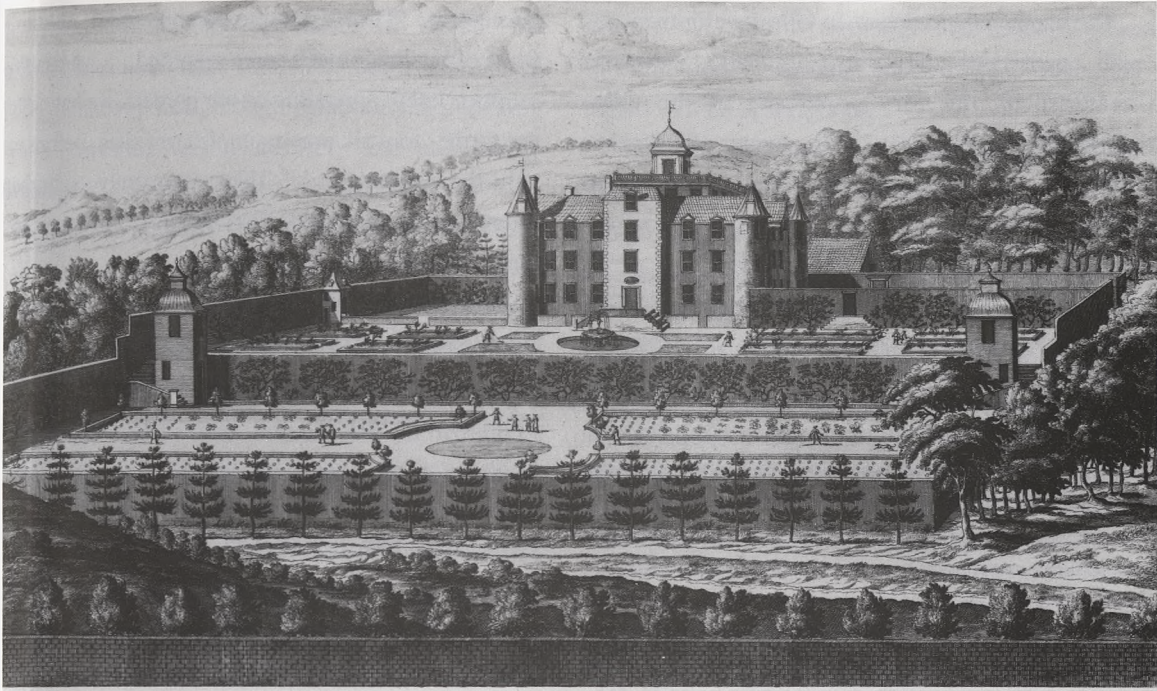


Fig. 9. View of Hatton House by John Slezer. Engraving (incorrectly titled Argyll House) from *Theatrum Scotiae*, 1693. (RCAHMS.)

were inconveniently sited in Ross & Cromarty, countered with Royston, now Caroline Park. One of the purest revivals of Pliny's seaside villa, it is frivolously dismissed, in spite of its great size, in a Latin inscription above the sea door as a *turgulum* or shepherd's cottage. At Melville in 1786 James Playfair, the architect, provided Henry Dundas, later Viscount Melville, with a huge drawing room above a dining room in one half of the house and connected them with the largest staircase in Scotland, occupying the other half, to awe his courtiers suitably at the end of the eighteenth century.

The journal of another banker's daughter, Jessy Allan, whose family lived in Queen Street, provides the best guide to the villadom.<sup>25</sup> Consisting of a series of letters written to her sister in India, her journal chronicles the day-to-day doings of a large family in minute detail in the first years of the nineteenth century. The Allans' villa Leithmount – on the site of the present Leith Town Hall – was convenient for sea-bathing, and they often went down for the day and

occasionally stopped the night. From Leithmount ('it is really a snug place') she visited friends and relations in neighbouring villas, and she often had a horse saddled and rode out to call unannounced on friends in retreat at Inveresk. From published tours one can see how it became the custom to add a tour of the villas to a visit to Edinburgh. The villas' role as a group as well as the pursuit of individualism is demonstrated by the case of the villadom's anti-hero Walter Ross, who converted a quite ordinary house at Stockbridge into a sort of Scottish Strawberry Hill, where a real Gothic tracery of antiquarian fragments was balanced by a gimcrack painted one. Having created an outstanding tourist attraction he then chose to feign annoyance when it drew visitors. Polite advertisements were followed by higher walls, then spring-guns and even mantraps, to no avail. In exasperation, a human leg was obtained from the Infirmary and after being carefully dressed was carried to Edinburgh clenched in the mantrap as a warning to the curious.<sup>26</sup>

The happy balance between villa development and 'real' countryside shown in Campbell's view was threatened by the very popularity of the villas themselves. As early as 1778 the owner of Eskgrove at Inveresk was resorting to camouflage to preserve his rural amenity:

[We] went on invitation to dine with Mr. D. Rae the advocate. His house is on the North West end of the elevated ground on which the highest and pleasantest part of this Town stands, and is entered to by a gate on the left hand or North East side ... Mr. Rae has a very pleasant neat house, with a semi-circular green plot of a moderate size before it, skirted with young thriving trees which partly conceal the houses of the town, that are too near, but Mr. Rae purposes, after getting a certain high and unseemly one pulled down, to open or at least to cut and crop the trees in the front of the house beyond the green in such a manner as to have a view of the beautiful cultivated country which is on the left or east of the vale that runs up the River Esk to Dalkeith etc. I thought this view might be opened without regard to the abovesaid house which is on the right hand and will be soon concealed by the trees ... The beauties of these grounds of Mr. Rae's depend chiefly upon the skirtings of wood and flowering shrubs with which he has inclosed some of his fields.<sup>27</sup>

By the 1820s actual streets were being developed with villas instead of terrace houses, like those in Inverleith Row. On Leith Links or at Bruntsfield such streets at least preserved an open outlook on one side but elsewhere they could not. Robert Louis Stevenson particularly detested their mid-nineteenth-century

successors: 'They belong to no style of art, only to a form of business much to be regretted ... And as this eruption keeps spreading on our borders, we have ever the farther to walk among unpleasant sites, before we gain the country air.'<sup>28</sup> These were truly 'suburban villas', more town-like than country. To Stevenson the only solution was 'arson'.

But this urbanisation was a gradual process. George Ramsay purchased five fields near Barnton to keep his prospect, and a visitor observed of Lord Moray's villa in 1790:

We breakfasted at Lord Moray's at Drumsheugh, a delightful house and garden on the edge of the new town, commanding a noble view down a woody bank of Leith Water, the Firth of Forth, and the County of Fife beyond it. The new buildings begin to elbow his lordship, but as he is the proprietor of the grounds around he can always keep them at a proper distance. This is literally *rus in urbe*.<sup>29</sup>

Arguably, the climax of the Edinburgh villa is reached with Abbotsford – the apotheosis of self-dramatisation, and in its day the most famous house in Europe. And yet how equally odd, and as much a portrait of its owner, is Mavisbank, from a century earlier but belonging in the same villadom (fig. 10). It was the outcome of so many and often mutually contradictory requirements that it is difficult not to feel sympathy for its architect, William Adam.

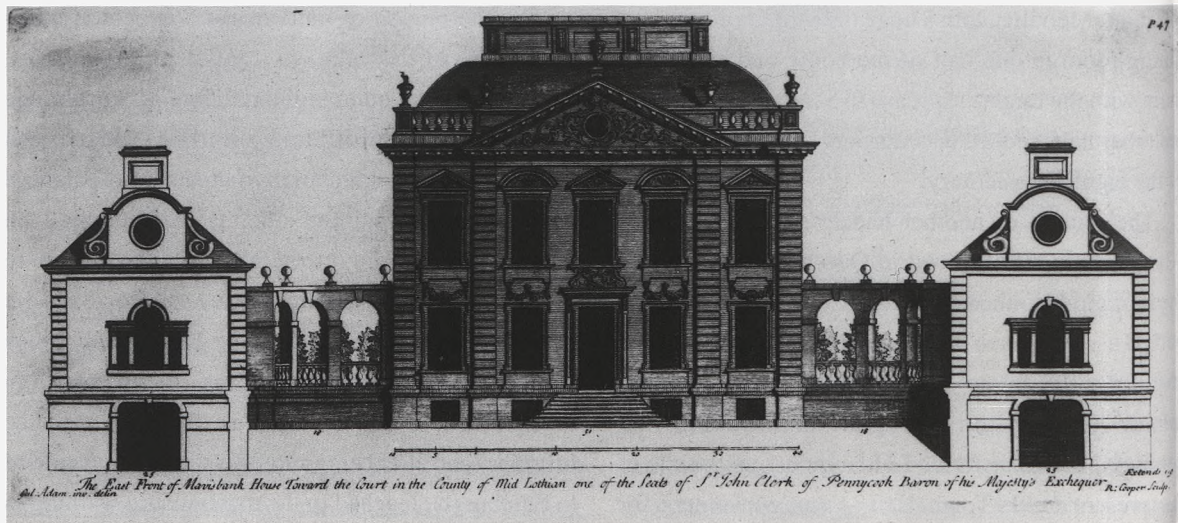


Fig. 10. Design for Mavisbank by William Adam, 1723. Engraving from *Vitruvius Scoticus*, 1811. (RCAHMS.)

It was its owner's only opportunity to display his architectural ideas from scratch on home ground; an extravagance spoiled through parsimony; a plaything whose finishing was indefinitely and pleasurably prolonged; a dower house; a manager's house for a coal mine; an art gallery; and a retreat, actually used (almost in reverse) by its owner to commute from, to the law courts in town, during the Edinburgh summer.<sup>30</sup> Adam had to give expression to these functions. If we look at its plan we see in its outline the tiny box which Clerk initially held in his mind's eye (the wings were an afterthought). Since, however, it was also an architectural 'model', poor Adam had to find space within these limits for all the trappings of a larger seat including, on the first floor, a complete state apartment such as can also be found at Chatsworth. This was used, like that at Chiswick, as a picture gallery and never received a state bed. The Clerks' own rooms and little dining room were on the ground floor and before the wings were added (to spoil it, in Adam's opinion) it was like a lantern. The rooms were coiled round the central chimney stack with windows on every side. We approach both Abbotsford and Mavisbank with our critical faculties disarmed on

account of careful tutoring – in modern jargon 'presentation' – through their owners' favourably edited written descriptions.

In conclusion, therefore, I hope that now when you picture the Edinburgh Enlightenment you will no longer think of Princes Street but rather of hundreds of sunny gardens out in the countryside. We must end with Lord Jeffrey at Craigcrook – an old tower house converted to a villa (though perhaps it is really a sixteenth-century villa). Although on Sundays its drawbridge was raised and the Jeffrey family were in solitary retreat, as Cockburn writes:

Saturday, during the summer session of the courts, was always a day of festivity; chiefly, but by no means exclusively, for his friends at the bar, many of whom were under general invitations ... Our legal practitioners ... are liberated earlier on Saturday; and the Craigcrook party began to assemble about three, each taking to his own enjoyment. The bowling-green was sure to have its matches, in which the host joined with skill and keenness; the garden had its loiterers; the flowers, not forgetting the wall of glorious yellow roses, their worshippers; the hill its prospect seekers. The banquet that followed was generous; the wines never spared, but rather too various; mirth unrestrained, except by propriety; the talk always good, but never ambitious; and mere listeners in no disrepute. What can efface these days, or indeed any Craigcrook day, from the recollection of those who had the happiness of enjoying them.<sup>31</sup>

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> This paper originated as a lecture delivered at the Robert Smith Symposium held at Newbattle Abbey College on 29 July 1982. The lecture was in turn based on my undergraduate thesis presented to the History of Art Faculty at Cambridge in 1975, in which I analysed the usefulness of the terminology devised for the study of Italian Renaissance villas by substituting Edinburgh exemplars. The original thesis is now deposited in the library of the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS).

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase is that of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, and occurs in

his manuscript poem 'The Country Seat'; Scottish Record Office (SRO), Clerk of Penicuik Muniments, GD18/4404.

- 2 See Ian Gow, 'The Northern Athenian House', unpublished typescript, NMRS library.
- 3 [Henry] Lord Cockburn, *Life of Lord Jeffrey*, 2 vols (Edinburgh 1852), I, p. 213.
- 4 R. L. Willis, *Journal of a Tour from London to Elgin made about 1790* (Edinburgh 1897), p. 46.
- 5 William Gilpin, *Observations on Several Parts of Great Britain, particularly the Highlands of Scotland, relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, made in the Year 1776*, 2 vols (London 1789), I, p. 60.
- 6 Daniel Defoe, *A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*, 3 vols (London 1724-27), III, letter 11.
- 7 John M. Gray (ed.), *Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, Baronet*, Scottish History Society, Vol. XIII (Edinburgh 1892), p. 116.

- 8 John A. Doyle (ed.), *Memoir and Correspondence of Susan Ferrier, 1782-1854* (London 1898).
- 9 *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 14 February 1769.
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