

**CALTON HILL WORKING PARTY : STEERING GROUP  
EDINBURGH'S ACROPOLIS : A FUTURE FOR CALTON HILL  
SKELETON DRAFT FOR PAPER OUTLINING FURTHER PROGRESS  
(incorporates parts of original briefing document)**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Formed 350 million years ago in the early Carboniferous period, Calton Hill is one of the group of dramatic volcanic heights which characterise Edinburgh's distinctive topography and have shaped the pattern of its growth.
- 1.2 Although the phrase 'Athens of the North' predates the development of the Georgian New Town, visually the Calton Hill symbolises it; the parallel with the Athenian Acropolis being reinforced by the columned silhouette of the uncompleted National Monument. Today the Hill is a city park, an outstanding vantage point, and a national shrine.
- 1.3 As a viewpoint, it commands dramatic vistas over a large part of the historic city north towards the Forth and Fife; south to the Pentland Hills, and east and west across the farmland of the Lothians. For 200 years it has been a favoured vantage for artists and photographers.
- 1.4 As a shrine, it forms, with the associated burial ground, a collection of elegant memorials to national heroes and, through the presence of the observatory, a reminder of the Scottish contribution to science.
- 1.5 Spiritually, it is the visual embodiment of Edinburgh's Enlightenment, the Golden Age when the city seized a 'window of opportunity' to become a major player on the international cultural and intellectual scene. Now, as national boundaries blur and the city-state is re-emerging worldwide as a primary politico-social unit, circumstances may be combining once more to offer a comparable opportunity. The proximity of the formal Royal High School as location for an intended Scottish Assembly, together with the philosophical concepts of democratic ideals suggested by the graeco-classical aesthetic, reinforce the importance of the hill as an icon for the future.

**2.0 DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The Hill comprises a large landscaped area of dramatic topography; 9.0 hectares (22.2 acres) of public open space with an additional 0.5ha (1.2ac) within the Observatory compound. It also adjoins Royal Terrace Gardens of 4.4ha (10.8ac) and the private Regent Gardens 4.7ha (11.7ac) and Regent Road Gardens of 1.3ha (3.2ac) . It therefore plays an important part in the city's existing green space provision and as a potential major node in the future network of linked parks and traffic-free routes; the 'city in the park' concept.
- 2.2 Although the various buildings and monuments now co-exist in a picturesque harmony, the Hill's development was piecemeal rather than to any grand design. Early constructions were in the Gothic style to blend with the perceived rusticity, but the bulk of the development coincided fortuitously with the height of the flowering of the Greek Revival in Scottish architecture.
- 2.3 The first building was the Old Observatory House and its associated Gothic Tower. Founded in 1776 by Thomas Short to exhibit telescopes to the public, it was designed by James Craig (winner of the competition layout for the first New Town) with advice from Robert Adam. A small adjacent observatory was demolished when the new City Observatory (3.4 below) was built.

- 2.4 The Nelson Monument, a battlemented gothic tower reputedly based on the shape of a telescope, was designed Robert Burn in 1807. The time ball was added in 1853.
  - 2.5 The City Observatory was built to William Playfair's designs of 1818, in the plan of a cruciform Doric temple. The same architect also added the rectangular wall in 1827, and the monument to his uncle, Sir John Playfair, president of the Astronomical Institute in 1825.
  - 2.6 The City Dome at the north-east corner was designed in 1895 by the city architect Robert Morham, who was also responsible for the new Blackford Hill Observatory in the same year.
  - 2.7 The National Monument, promoted by such prominent citizens as Sir Walter Scott, Lord Cockburn and Lord Elgin, was intended as a monument to the dead of the Napoleonic wars, to take the form of a church over catacombs. In the event, only 12 columns were completed between 1826-9 before funds ran out, making the intention of replicating the Parthenon somewhat more literal than originally envisaged.
  - 2.8 Two further monuments are both based on the same classical original, the circular choragic temple of Lysicrates. The Burns Monument was designed by Thomas Hamilton in 1831, while Playfair contributed the Dugald Stewart Monument the following year.
  - 2.9 There are also other smaller structures, especially within the Observatory complex. The Crawford and Cox Domes both contained astronomical telescopes, but are now under-used; the Radio Astronomy Dome is used by radio 'hams'; and there is also a police aerial and associated equipment. Generally, these structures are of inferior quality to the main buildings and their removal could make a positive contribution.
  - 2.10 The setting of the hill is also influenced by the buildings which surround it; in particular the Royal High School; Waterloo Place and the Calton Burial Ground, as well as the more domestic terraces.
  - 2.11 The landscape qualities of the Hill, with its dramatic rock outcrops and steep topography, provides a superb setting for and a complement to the Grecian qualities of the buildings. This quality cannot be overstated and the study must give it full recognition to ensure that proposals do not diminish it in any way. However, as a prominent city park, it has shortcomings. For such a centrally located public space, access (both actual and perceived) is surprisingly difficult. The attraction for tourists is obvious, but is not yet fully exploited. Signage is inadequate and there is a lack of facilities and of any interpretative function. While excessive use can cause problems of erosion and management, current visitor numbers are far below any such concern at present. Other problems include the question of responsibility for the various operations and for overall management; security, especially after dark; and the generally run-down appearance of much of the landscape and structures.
- 3.0 PREVIOUS STUDIES RELATING TO CALTON HILL
- 3.1 Over the years a range of visions have been proposed for the development of the Hill. At one end of the range are the minimalist-intervention approaches, epitomised in this quote from the then-City Architect in 1983: *"So much that is already excellent and important in the landscape, the historical and the architectural that the emphasis is surely not on radical change but on*

*scrupulous restoration and sensitive adjustment, where success is heavily dependent on the actual design. [Rather than] make the Calton Hill into a different thing, the problem is to preserve, and fulfil what already is."* At the other extreme are suggestions for more radical change, such as the creation of a major visitor centre as proposed in the recent Consultants' report (para below). Some of the more important and relevant studies of, and proposals for, the Hill are noted here.

- 3.2 In June 1982 the City Architect presented a Report on future uses of the site. Recommendations included retaining the Astronomical Society's tenancy, but opening the observatory buildings to the public in the form of an exhibition or display; a possible planetarium in the City Dome; and improved public facilities such as toilets. Subsequent discussions however indicated that a conventional planetarium might have somewhat limited visitor appeal.
- 3.3 In November 1983 the Calton Conference looked at the history and future of the Hill, inspired originally by the 150th Anniversary of the RIBA. Organised by Desmond Hodges (then Director of the ENTCC), it was supported with exhibitions and other activities. Lecture topics included 'A Scottish Valhalla', astronomy in Edinburgh, and landscape and maintenance issues. An architectural and landscape ideas competition had been considered, but was subsequently rejected as unnecessary.
- 3.4 In 1984 the City Dome was used as an 80-seater auditorium for the 'Camera Lucida', a video version of the Camera Obscura. Since May 1990 it has housed the 'City Experience', an audio-visual presentation using polarised 3-dimensional slides.
- 3.5 In 1994 the Recreation Committee approved Calton Hill as a possible site for a monument to Robert Louis Stevenson, subject to consultation with the Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland, the Scottish Arts Council and the Cockburn Association.
- 3.6 The following year the City Council submitted an application to the Millennium Commissioners for funding for an ambitious city-wide environmentally-based proposal, the 'Dynamic City'. Part of the project included the regeneration of the Central Valley - Princes Street Gardens, Waverley Station and Calton Hill - to provide a continuous green swathe through the city centre. The Commissioners, while expressing interest in the scheme, considered it too vague and unfocused, suggesting instead to centre on such parts of it as were realistically deliverable within the Millennium time-frame. Accordingly, after examination this part of the bid was revised to concentrate on the enhancement of Calton Hill as a marker for the Millennium which could meet the Commissioners' objectives of "celebrating the past millennium and looking forward to the next".

#### 4.0 THE PRESENT STUDY

- 4.1 A Briefing Document was therefore prepared which set out the background and history of the Hill as outlined above, together with objectives for its development. The Brief also collated various potential uses and functions which had either been suggested over the years or which arose from an examination of the Hill's character and physical attributes. In preparing the Brief, use was made of the previous studies noted above, and in particular of material by David Cameron, Desmond Hodges, Ian Gow, the late Colin McWilliam, and James Shepherd.

- 4.2 An essential component of any option was seen as the refurbishment of the existing fabric of the Hill, and the consolidation and enhancement of its present functions through the provision of necessary new facilities. Particular areas of concern included:
- the management and improvement of the viewpoint function, including interpretation;
  - upgrading of the landscape within a realistic and practical maintenance regime, including regard for wildlife potential;
  - management of vehicular traffic, particularly control of and parking for cars and tour buses. Total removal is unlikely to be feasible unless alternative transport is provided;
  - improvement of pedestrian access, possibly using mechanical methods (eg travelators, funicular, tramway), and reducing the perception of apparent remoteness from the city centre by strengthening links;
  - improved signage and interpretation, possibly through a visitor centre;
  - development of facilities currently inadequate or lacking, such as toilets, shop and tea room / refreshment facilities.
- 4.3 Proposals depending on the evolution of new or augmented functions for the Hill were not ruled out, but it was recognised that these generally imply the provision of additional accommodation. This is clearly a sensitive area for townscape and conservation reasons, and the Brief stipulated that such schemes must be thoroughly tested with massing studies, computer visualisations and other suitable aids. Two approaches were considered possible, neither being necessarily mutually exclusive:
- 4.4 Firstly, identifying locations for unobtrusive buildings which did not noticeably alter the historic skyline or detract from the existing structures. Possible sites might include, for instance, within the Observatory's walled compound, such as along the north wall; or behind the National Monument, completing its base plinth to provide a terraced public area and performance space over an extensive single-storey structure.
- 4.5 More ambitious architectural statements might also be possible, but these would undoubtedly attract controversy from both a conservationist viewpoint and generally for the effect on the existing silhouette. Given the debate and the degree of consultation required, there was likely to be a considerable delay penalty in resolving such solutions, which would create difficulty in meeting timescale targets such as the deadlines of potential funding institutions.
- 4.6 Whatever the finally adopted solution, the existing monuments and buildings were recognised as being of the highest quality in material, detailing and construction. The brief therefore required new proposals to be of equal quality, and complementary to (although not necessarily imitative of) their massing and aesthetic.
- 4.7 In terms of function, there are various potential scenarios for the future of Calton Hill, and a number of themes were suggested in the Appendix. To be acceptable such proposals should, when defining a new role for the future, respect the past even if they did not simply reflect it. Acceptable themes were those which grew from and reflected the particular nature of Calton Hill itself. Clearly the choice must also reflect feasibility, the criteria of potential funding bodies, and the need to achieve popular support for any proposals.

PORTION FOR FURTHER EXPANSION

**THE CONSULTANT'S REPORT - Description, Content, Reaction**

**MILLENNIUM RE-SUBMISSION - Commissioners' comments**

**BACKGROUND TO NEXT STEPS - Effect of LA Reorganisation. Misgivings on Consultants' report (bold for hooking Commissioners, but poss. too ambitious / costly). Draw up more modest (realistic?) scheme. Public Consultation**

**RE-EVALUATION OF OBJECTIVES - Question need for major new 'synthetic heritage' experience (although note that must still be popular enough to keep Commission interested). Question assumption that most of the 350,000 visitors p.a. would use it (mostly bus tours, require toilets, cafe etc but unlikely/unable to stay long enough). More modest throughput + requirement of para4.7 above suggest that [1] main visitor experience could be based on existing complex, together with [2] (possibly separate) improved facilities for bulk tourists (shop, cafe / restaurant, toilets etc) and [3] facilities for special events / festivals - auditorium, bonfire / beacon site etc. Also renovation of natural environment.**

**[1] VISITOR EXPERIENCE ; OBSERVATORY BUILDINGS**

**Theme: 'Scottish Greenwich'; time and space. History of astronomical observation; time calculation. Linear experience (start in auditorium, eg City Dome; through Playfair Building; finish in new purpose-built area replacing disused domes etc at rear).**

**[2] GENERAL FACILITIES**

**Cafe, could become restaurant at night; lookout / observation point; interpretation of what's seen; souvenir shop; toilets. Possible location in extended Parthenon base.**

**[3] SPECIAL EVENTS AND FESTIVALS**

**Possible auditorium linked to [2] above; bonfire site; use for major venue at Hogmanay and Festival time; problems of weather protection. Link to Greenwich.**

**NATURAL ENVIRONMENT: Possibility of natural environment being part of the visitor experience. Calton Hill is rich in natural flora and, with correct conservation management, visitors could experience native flora first hand simply by walking through or by observing by way of interpretative plaques. Appropriate planting of indigenous species of trees on the lower slopes would also form part of the experience. Any landscaping within the Observatory complex could be linked in some way to the theme of Time by focusing on a collection of the world's oldest plants (subject to hardiness) or link planting to plants found at certain meridian lines.**

**SPECIAL LANDSCAPE FEATURES** of Hill derived from functions, eg meridian line, water-clock, sundial etc linked to time theme.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ART** Experience based on the volcanic origin of Calton Hill should be part of the overall design concept. Possibly sited on the perimeter paths which could be on tram route. Pre-recorded interpretative story to be part of tram experience.

**ACCESS** issue; further examination of objective of car-free access by introducing Tram and/or Funicular, including route round hill.

**FINANCIAL APPRAISAL**; more modest scheme likely to be more readily affordable while still keeping attraction for Commissioners. Also for Council & partners to find match-funding. Running costs; must be self-financing. Split into various lottery elements, eg Heritage (75% funds). Possible partners. Nature of control (eg Trust). Wider implications (City's Tourism market, employment, economic regeneration)

**NEXT STEPS**: Major consultation programme with significant organisations. Presentation on ideas to date, followed by round-table forum. Establish sense of participation / ownership. Timescale important. Possible limited architectural / design competition; define extent / limitations. Links / Complementarity to other initiatives (eg Dynamic Earth, Camera Obscura, Blackford Hill Visitor Centre etc)

#### APPENDIX : POTENTIAL THEMES FOR EVALUATION

**A: THEME: ASTRONOMICAL LINKS**

- A1** For more than 200 years Calton Hill has been associated with astronomical observations. Thomas Short's original observatory, in James Craig's Old Observatory House, has already been mentioned. Short's plans to build a larger complex failed through lack of funds. After his death in 1788, a family feud over the ownership of his effects culminated in an armed siege on the Gothic tower by rival groups of disgruntled relatives.
- A2** 1811 saw the foundation of the Astronomical Institute of Edinburgh, to provide a time service to the shipping in Leith Docks. Money was raised for a new observatory; the Treasury funded instruments and also, in 1834, a full-time 'observer': Thomas Henderson, the first Astronomer-Royal. Henderson was the first astronomer, in 1839, to accurately calculate the distance to a selected star, Alpha Centauri. By 1847, the Observatory was completely under the administration of the Treasury.
- A3** In 1853 the time-ball was placed on Nelson's monument to give a visible signal to Leith docks, and eight years later the time gun was installed at the Castle. Both were operated by electricity carried by steel wires from the Observatory.
- A4** In 1844 Henderson was succeeded by Charles Piazzzi-Smyth. In 1856 he journeyed to Tenerife, pioneering the modern practice of placing observatory 'out-stations' in the clear air of high altitudes.

- A5 By the end of the 19th century, the Observatory's instruments were obsolete for serious research and there were rumours that the Government intended abandoning the complex. The Earl of Crawford therefore bequeathed his extensive astronomical library and telescopes to found the new Observatory on Blackford Hill in 1896. Thereafter the Calton Hill buildings passed to the Town Council and thrived as a popular observatory under Sir William Peck until his death in 1925.
- A6 Today the complex is leased to the Astronomical Society of Edinburgh. Under the terms of their lease, the tenants are obliged to give reasonable facilities without charge to members of the public to view the buildings and contents, and to use the instruments under the supervision of the tenants.
- A7 The domestic scale of the Observatory buildings and their historic nature preclude major alterations to form large-scale auditoria or exhibition space. However, there is potential to develop the complex as more of a tourist attraction, including for local interest. Such development should not compete with the Royal Scottish Museum's collection of scientific instruments, nor with the presentation of modern astronomy at the Blackford Hill visitor centre; neither should it compete with the Camera Obscura. Rather it should complement these by providing a restoration of a working example of early astronomical studies, interpreting origins and history and retaining its instruments - including the transit instrument, the 6inch refractor telescope, and the altazimuth - in situ. The City Architect's report suggested retaining the Astronomical Society's tenancy, although possibly with some relocation; this was confirmed by a 1983 Working Party, which stated that the Society's interests should be borne in mind and could be complementary to enhanced use, but must remain secondary to the needs of the main development. The City Dome could be further developed (the semicircular space above the present auditorium is not used at present), for instance with a planetarium or other audio-visual type presentation.
- B: THEME: TIME
- B1 The original basis of the astronomical use of Calton Hill was to define accurate timings for mariners' chronometers, essential for calculating longitude before radio and satellite location-finding. The time-ball on Nelson's Monument is a reminder. An expression of the theme of time could relate well to the forthcoming Millennium, particularly when overlaid with the Hill's overtones of space and, through the classical aesthetic of its architecture, to distant epochs of the past. This linkage to a pagan prehistory is reinforced by the annual Beltane fire, marking the passage of seasons and time.
- B2 An appropriate manifestation of the theme could be in the form of a 'time garden', making use of planting, sculpture and artworks. The concept of time-as-defined-by space to link with the Observatory might, for instance, take the form of a large sundial, perhaps with the observer as shadow-caster; and time-related-to-landscape could be symbolised by an outdoor version of a water-clock. Many other comparable representations are possible.
- B3 In this regard, the work of Ian Hamilton Finlay is instructive; and the interest of the Edinburgh Sculpture Trust can be noted. A large-scale artwork was undertaken by Jane Brettel on the Hill ('Allegorical Blueprint') as part of Fotofeis 95 ; this is a response at different sites around the city to the one-o'clock time gun, and indicates how art and time could relate.

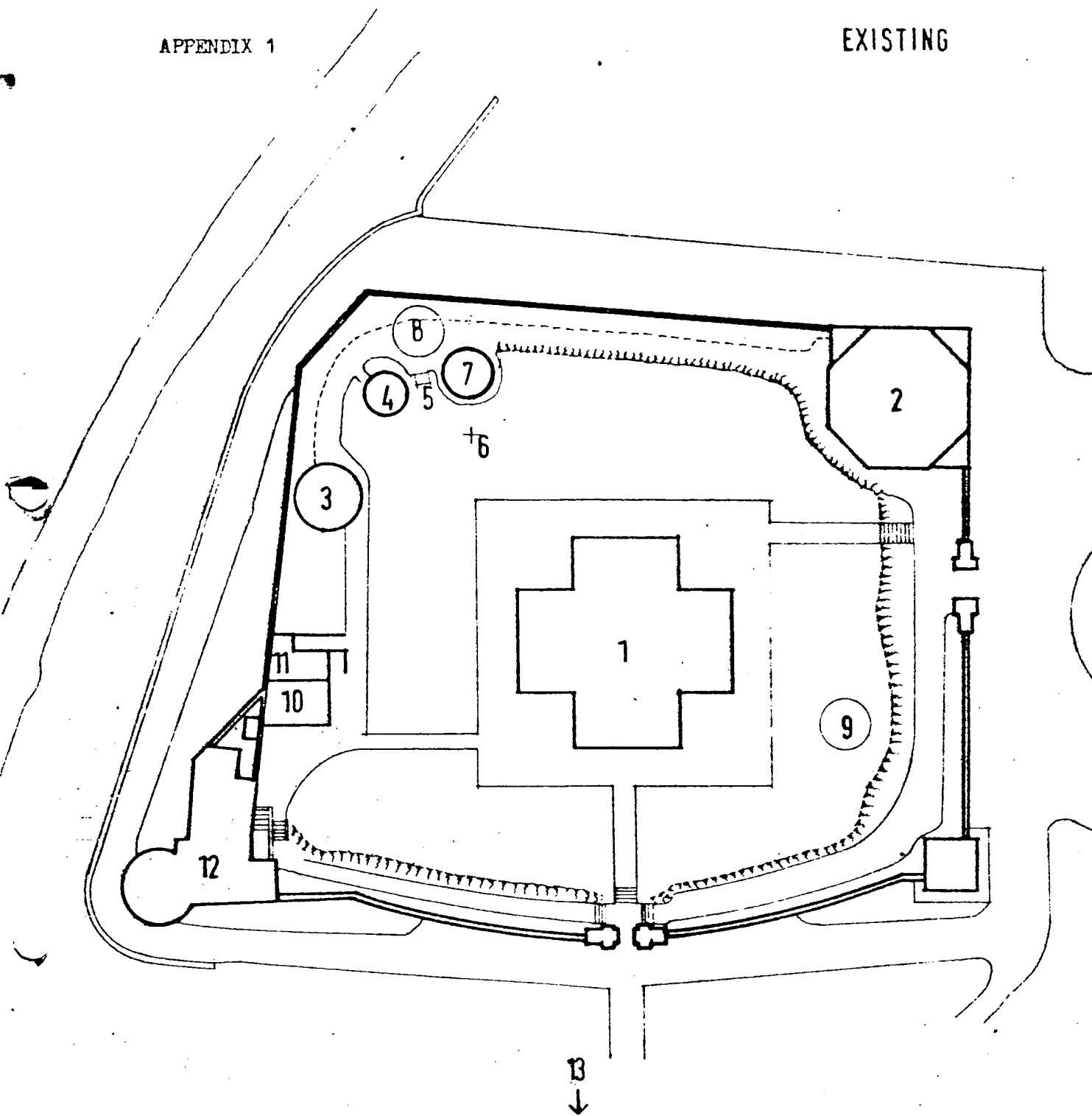
C: THEME: IMAGERY AND PHOTOGRAPHY

- C1 The Calton Hill has many associations with early work in representational imagery. In 1798 Robert Barker, a Scots-born painter and inventor, opened the world's first Panorama on the Mound, Edinburgh. A circular roof-lit building housed a huge 360 degree panoramic painting of the city as seen from Calton Hill, giving patrons a lifelike impression. The Panorama was a great success, spawning others in London and elsewhere - a restored version exists in Rome. In time it evolved into the Diorama (large scale paintings 'animated' by light effects) and, in its ingredients of a large illuminated lifelike image in a darkened auditorium, is the direct forerunner of the cinema. A development of this theme might also refer to the centenary of the city's first film show (at the Empire Theatre) in 1896.
- C2 100 years later Patrick Geddes, planner and visionary, opened the Outlook Tower on Castle Hill as an 'index-museum of the universe'; in fact, the world's first visitor centre. One of the tools he used in this presentation was the camera obscura which had originally been housed in the Gothic Tower of the old Observatory House.
- C3 From June to September 1984 there was a presentation of a so-called 'Camera Lucida', intended to focus on and interpret the panorama of the city as seen from the Hill. Television cameras with remote-control zoom lenses and anamorphic (wide-screen) lenses were mounted at the top of Nelson's monument; the images were then sent by cable to the City Dome to give the audience a live large-screen picture of the city. In its original form, the Camera Lucida was effectively an electronic version of the Outlook Tower and as such attracted objection from that operator both for the similarity of the name and the nature of the presentation. However, a development of the concept could be based on international satellite linkages to give world-wide live images which would complement, rather than compete with, the original Camera Obscura.
- C4 Although the whereabouts of the original is unknown, copies of Barker's panoramic views still exist, as do several other representations of the view from the Hill over two centuries. Electronic imaging techniques could be used to blend these into a continuously changing view of the city right through to present day video technology.
- C5 The hill is also associated with several Scottish pioneers of photography. Hill and Adamson operated from Rock House immediately beside the pedestrian steps at the west end of the hill, while Piazzzi-Smyth, Astronomer Royal, was also an accomplished photographer specialising in astronomical and stereoscopic pictures. The recent RSA exhibition *Light from the Dark Room* demonstrated the public interest in early photography; there is scope for a permanent exhibition mixing educational 'hands-on' practice with a commemoration of the significant place Scots have in its development. These include Brewster, inventor of the stereoscope, born in Kelso; Clerk-Maxwell who exhibited the world's first colour photograph; and early pioneers of television, Logie Baird and Edinburgh's Campbell Swinton.
- C6 The Hill has associations with the artistic side of photography also; eg the Jane Brettel installation for Fotofeis 95; and previous proposals for incorporating it within a laser light sculpture.



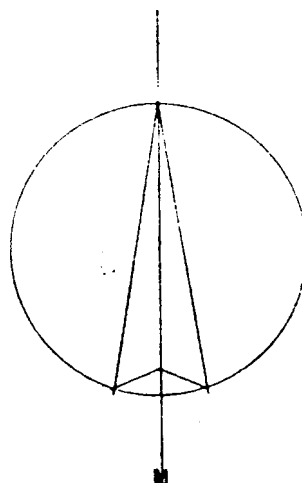
D: **THEME: ARCHITECTURE, LANDSCAPE AND PLANNING**

- D1 The important historical and aesthetic qualities of Calton Hill's buildings suggest the possibility of an architectural theme within its future development. The Hill was chosen as the focus of the Conference in 1983 to mark the 150th anniversary of the RIBA because it epitomised the interest in Greek culture and architecture which was at its height at the time of that body's foundation. Now, the city is supporting Manifesto, a two-week international festival of architecture building and design which the organisers intend as an annual event, and has stated its commitment to design quality in its conservation work and in new buildings.
- D2 In town planning terms, the area round the Hill was a departure from the previous classical planning approach of disregarding the topography when laying out the street grid. Instead, surrounding roads flow with the natural contours, and have much greater emphasis on landscaping and tree planting than before - Lord Cockburn's particular criticism of the earlier New Town. Noteworthy here was the influence of eminent botanists Prof Robert Graham and Dr Patrick Neill.
- D3 The connection with Patrick Geddes and the Castle Hill Outlook Tower has already been noted. Although his ideas, with their strong emphasis on sustainability issues and strengthening the links between city dwellers and their natural environment, are rapidly becoming part of mainstream thought, Geddes is a considerably underrated figure in the history of town planning. It would therefore be appropriate to consider a commemorative and interpretative facility, perhaps making use of the new computer model of the city and other interactive and visual aids to explain how the city operates and how it relates to its environment and to the rest of the world.



SITE PLAN scale 1:500

- |    |                           |                    |
|----|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1  | new observatory           | exhibits & viewing |
| 2  | city dome                 | lecture hall       |
| 3  | crawford dome             | viewing            |
| 4  | radio astronomy dome      | radio 'hams'       |
| 5  | police radio box          | own aerial         |
| 6  | aerial mast               | to '4'             |
| 7  | cox dome                  | viewing            |
| 8  | dome                      | to be moved        |
| 9  | stone base                |                    |
| 10 | old transit house         | workshop & store   |
| 11 | toilets                   | inadequate         |
| 12 | old observatory and house |                    |
| 13 | water pump house          | inadequate         |



## NEW OBSERVATORY

A classical building designed by W H Playfair and built in 1818. It was used by the Royal Observatory until this removed to Blackford Hill in 1896.

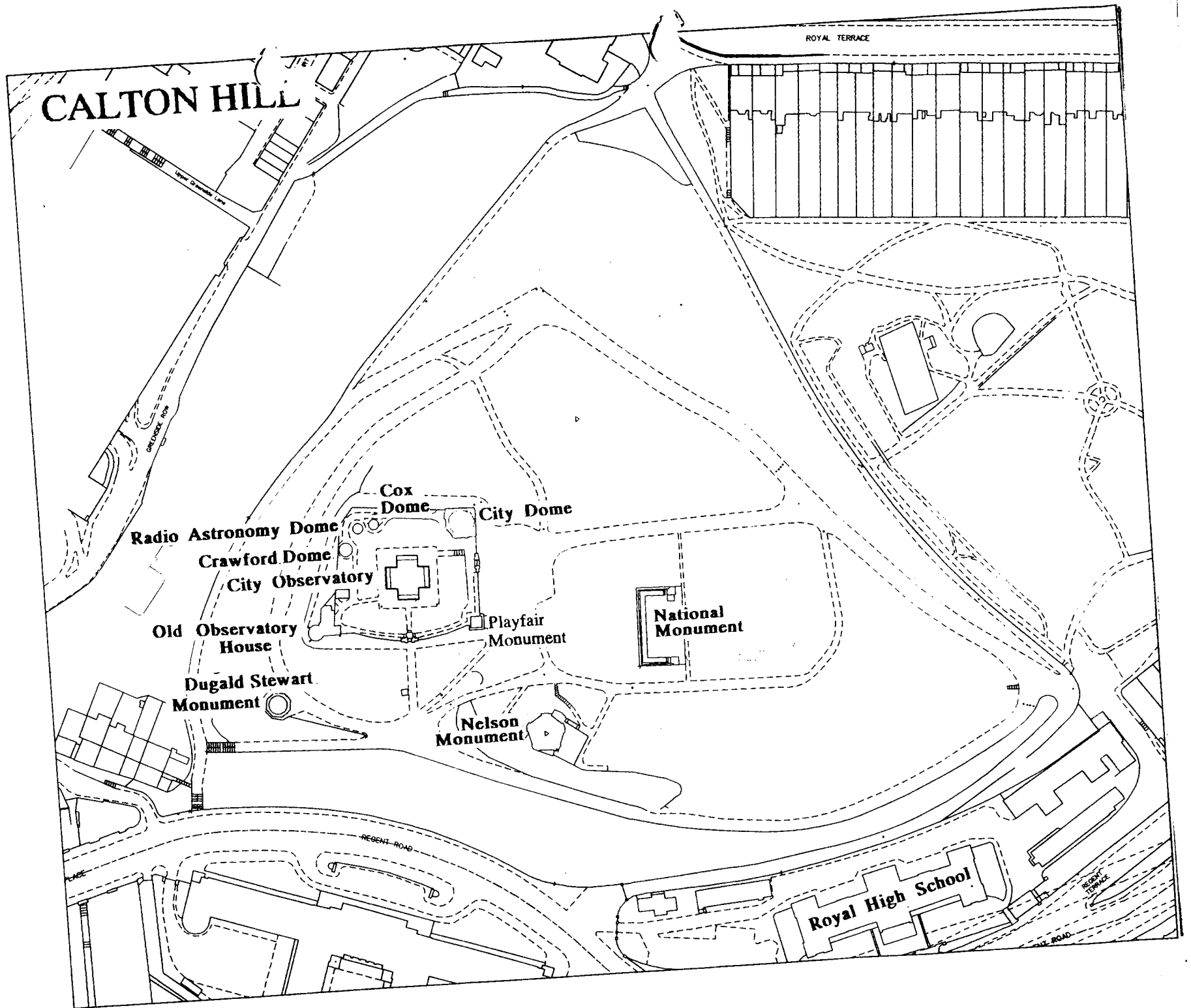
Stonework generally is in good condition and it was re-roofed in lead in 1978. The original wall and roof viewing slits in the west wing have been filled in with stone panels. Lighting externally is by insensitively positioned bulkhead fittings, and the building could be more subtly lit from within the colonnades. Whilst floodlighting of the building would be very attractive it would have to be arranged to avoid adverse effects on viewing conditions from the telescopes, already hampered by city lights.

Internally the original long central room has been clumsily partitioned into three, on the lines of its original Doric pillars. Whilst the cornices and friezes remain untouched in the central and east sections, in the west section they have been covered or removed by the construction of a false ceiling. The east section retains its attractive open roof and slits in the roof and walls to allow readings to be taken by the transit telescope. Similar slits in the west section have been covered over and the Mural Circle instrument originally sited here is now at the Royal Scottish Museum where it is being restored and put on show. The central massive stone pillar supports the McEwan telescope housed in the upstairs dome. The north wing houses the library, a pleasant if rather shabby room which was the original computer room of the observatory. Services are all antiquated and in need of upgrading.

The attached plans are copies of the original working drawings, signed by Playfair.

The chief instruments remaining in the building are as follows:

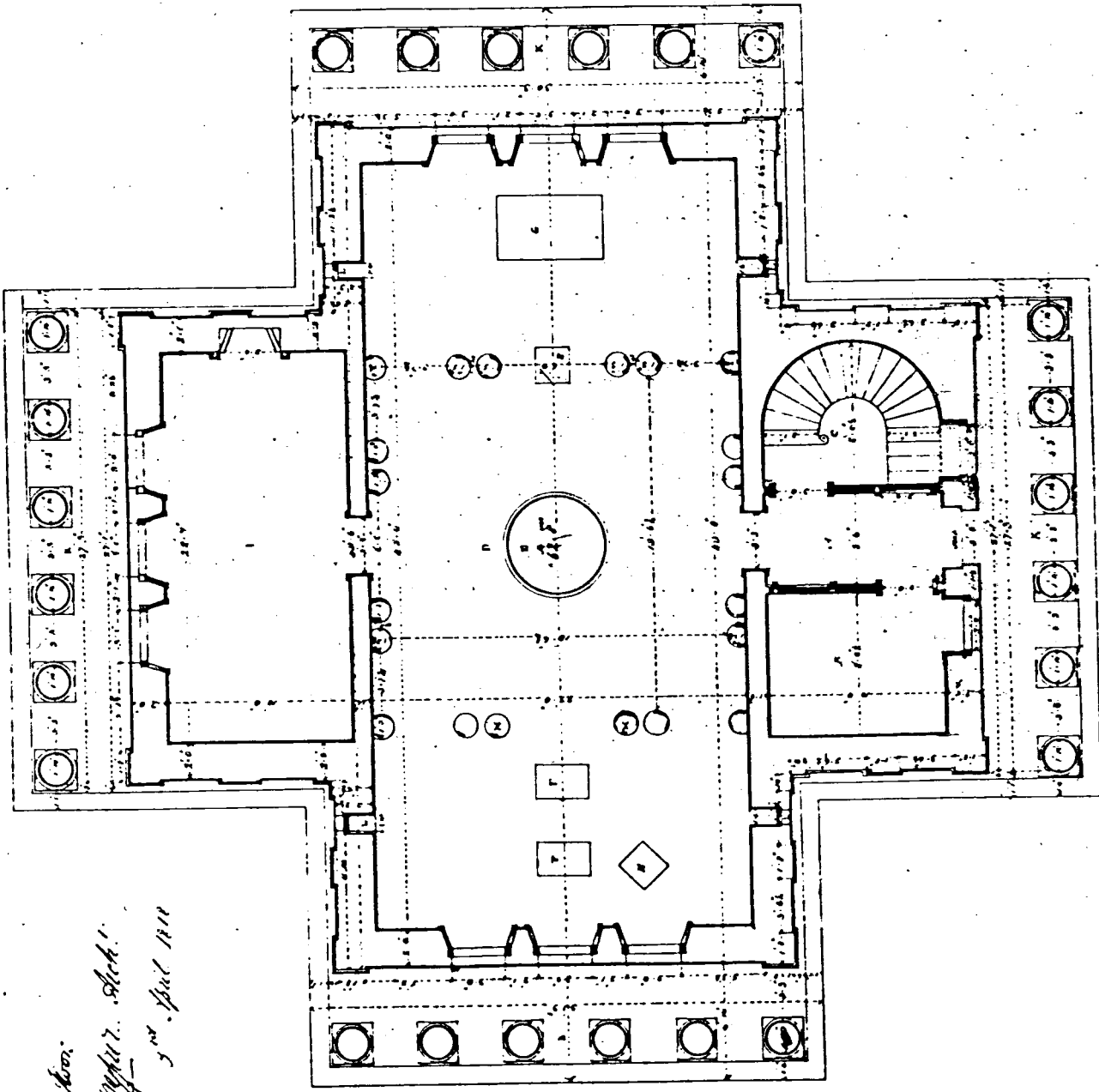
- Transit Instrument: set up with its viewing chair in the east wing for observing through the wall and ceiling slits. It is very occasionally used by A.S.E. members and is an excellent instrument but in need of attention.
- Altazimuth: in a corner of the east wing. It is also a very valuable instrument but is in very bad condition and requires a lot of attention.
- 6" McEwan Refractor Telescope: in the dome. In constant use by the A.S.E. and members of the public and in reasonably good condition but requiring a little maintenance.
- 3 Chronometers: two in cabinets in the central room and one in the dome.



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Copy

Handwritten title: *Plan of the Grand Room*  
*(signed) [Signature]*  
*3rd April 1811*



Handwritten notes at the bottom of the page:  
A circle  
B Room for small mathematics  
C Room for reading & the stores  
D Small room  
E Room for circular instruments  
F Room for  
G Room for  
H Room for  
I Room for  
J Room for  
K Room for  
L Room for  
M Room for  
N Room for  
O Room for  
P Room for  
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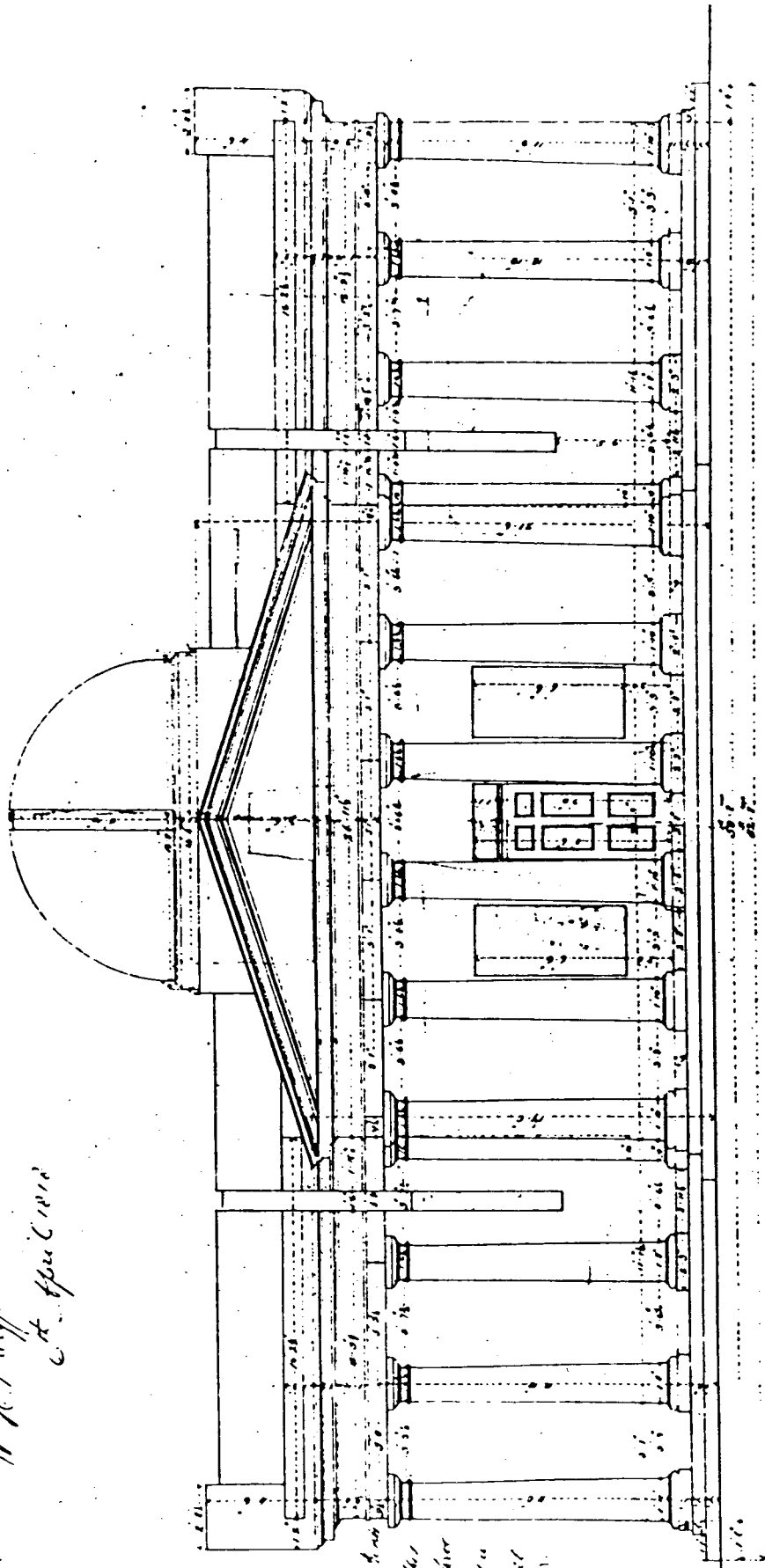
A set of good furniture in the library belonging to the District Council requires attention and the A.S.E. have added some of their own belongings, notably paintings and carpets. Most of the best books in the library are now probably those belonging to the A.S.E.

This New Observatory building is central to the activities of the Astronomical Society of Edinburgh. Some keen members use the premises at all times, and there is also a programme of planned use consisting of viewing, instruction and lectures to both the membership and the public. The library is the private domain of the Society with supervised access to non-members by arrangement. The Society pays no rent but is responsible for 50% of full rates and all charges for heating, lighting and cleaning of the buildings. They receive grant from the District Council to help with running costs.



Copy

No. 12, University Observatory  
Elevation of the Eastern Front  
by Augustus W. P. Phipps architect  
Oct. 1861



As the line representing the  
the walls, should be the  
correcting that the line  
is within instead of a  
line between the frontal  
columns, as they are.

Scale 1/4 inch = 1 foot



## CITY DOME

This was built in 1895. At 10.5 metres diameter it is the largest dome on the site, but it no longer houses an instrument and the dome is fixed.

It is a substantial stone building, although not of such high architectural merit as the New Observatory.. The dome is copper covered, on steel framework. The stonework is in good repair, but the copper is in a bad state and is about to be replaced. Internally the structure is one large circular space with very high windows and bad acoustics. It is doubtful whether the (now tatty) false ceiling assists the acoustics or the prevention of heat loss. Services require modernisation. None of its contents is any value.

## USES

The A.S.E. use it for meetings too large to be accommodated in the New Observatory and regular lectures take place on the first Friday of each month when attendances are usually from 40 to 70 people and show an upward trend. The Society sublet it occasionally - at present a jazz band practises there - but the state of the approaches, lighting and security of Calton Hill tend to discourage would-be users.