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Riddle's Court, Lawnmarket, Edinburgh: a merchant's house fit for a king

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1. ABSTRACT

Riddle's Court, a former merchant's house situated off the Royal Mile, Lawnmarket, Edinburgh, underwent major refurbishment and transformation into the Patrick Geddes Centre for Learning from 2015 to 2017. The results from historical research, building survey and architectural watching briefs are as yet unparalleled, as no other building on the Royal Mile has received the level of historical and archaeological research carried out at Riddle's Court.

In the late 16th century much of the Royal Mile was a plethora of mainly stone and timber-framed houses. However, Riddle's Court was an amalgam of predominantly ashlar and rubble construction with tall thatched roofs with dormer windows. Slate was a later addition in the early 18th century. The interior of the complex was furnished with several turnpike staircases of which only one now survives. During the 17th and 18th centuries Riddle's Court was bedecked with all the fine trappings of a country mansion house and was occupied by major and minor aristocracy until the late 18th century. The status of the building was further elevated by its earlier royal connections that led to its partial remodelling for ceremonial purposes. A legacy of a lavish royal banquet in honour of King James VI of Scotland (James I of England) and his bride Queen Anne of Denmark was a painted ceiling in the so-called 'King's Chamber' which commemorated their royal union. This ornate and historically significant painted beam and board ceiling was discovered in the 1960s during a period of building renovation by Edinburgh City Council. The ceiling was restored and is a focal point among a large collection of ornate plaster and painted ceilings. Subsequent removal of more modern lined ceilings during the present refurbishment led to the discovery of three more painted beam and board ceilings, and a concealed fireplace and bread oven that are rare survivors within not only the Royal Mile but elsewhere in Scotland. The presence of so much hitherto unrecorded artwork has significantly raised the importance of the Court's North Block.

2. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the results of historical research, standing building survey and watching briefs carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) on behalf of the Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT) between 2012 and 2017 at Riddle's Court, Lawnmarket (Royal Mile), Edinburgh (NT 22562 7352, Illus 1) (NRHE no. NT27SE 270) (Canmore ID [52291](#)).

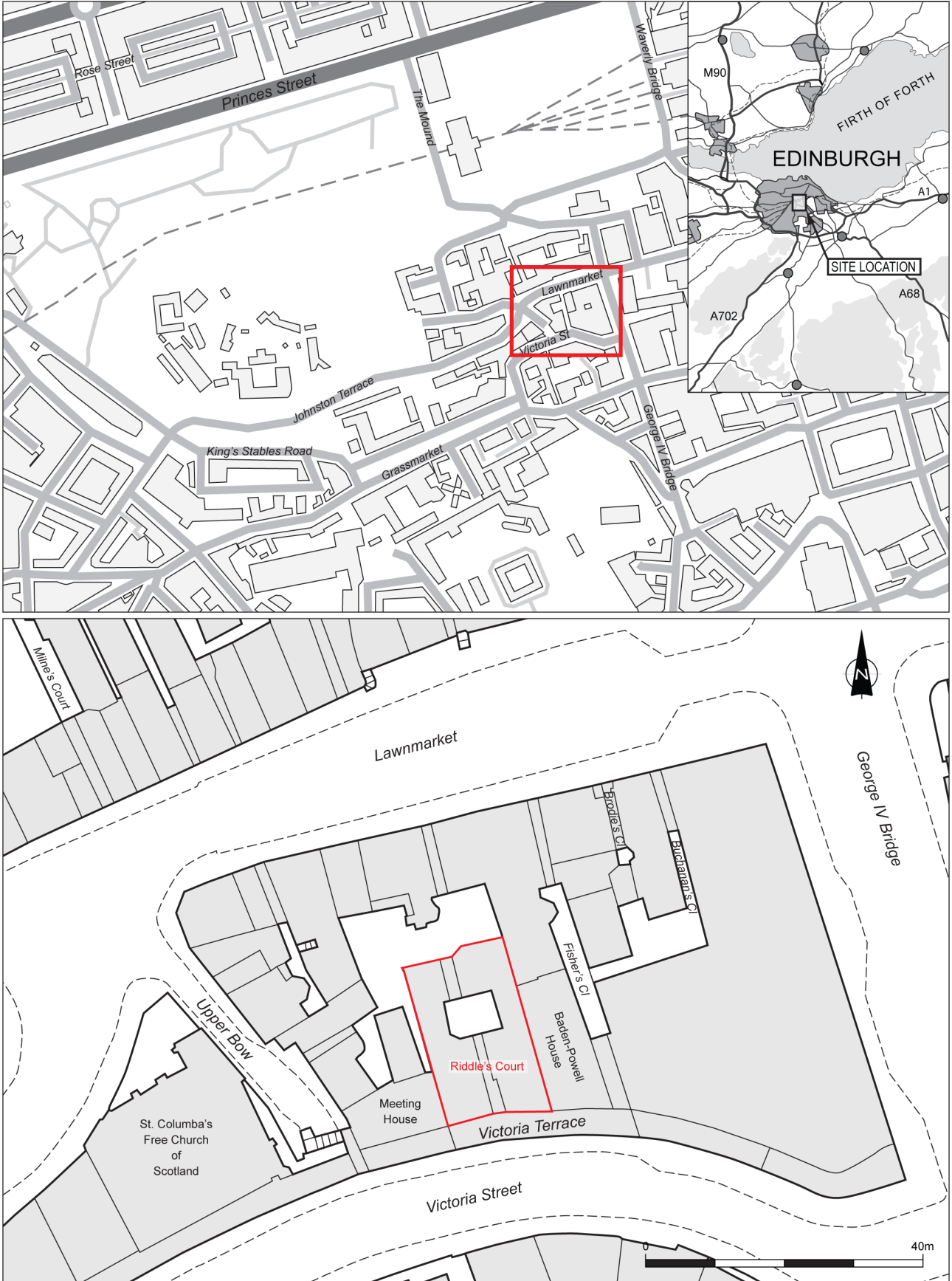
The work was undertaken to a scope of works requested, agreed and overseen by the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS), forming part of the planning conditions and Listed Building consent, in order to mitigate the loss of historic fabric during the redevelopment of Riddle's Court into the new Patrick Geddes Centre. In order to create the new centre, extensive conservation and major alterations had to be made: this included improved visitor access and 21st-century modernisation to ensure its suitability as a place for education, as well as new kitchens, office space and living accommodation. All of this was achieved while being sympathetic to the existing historical artwork and building fabric.

Riddle's Court is an A-listed building that was built in the late 16th century, and the complex is one of the finest surviving burghal residences within the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site. The present building known as Riddle's Court comprises the more southerly surviving set of buildings of what was known earlier as Riddle's Land at Nos. 322–328 Lawnmarket. At the heart of the historic court are two conjoined blocks: the North Block (forming the northern east/west leg of the historic three-storey fore or 'Great Tenement') with access to the main internal courtyard through an arched pend running south off Lawnmarket (Illus 2); and the South and West Block (the 'back tenement') which was reduced in size to its present footprint when Victoria Street and Terrace were created in the late 19th century. The removal of associated outshot buildings ('jamb's') and a large tenement on the north side in the 19th century reduced the court to its present size, thus preserving at least the central part of what was a much larger complex.

2.1 Investigative techniques

Work carried out between 2012 and 2013 (Phase 1) involved a comprehensive review of the historical records held within various archives to develop a much better understanding of the history of ownership of the building and the alterations that had been carried out over the past *c* 400 years. The historical sources covered the 16th to 19th centuries. Against this work a standing building appraisal was also undertaken; this included cataloguing architectural features that were out of place or missing and included the numerous 19th- and 20th-century insertions. Supporting-wall thickness analysis provided additional information, including areas where walls had been visibly thinned or in some cases completely removed. The removal of internal and external staircases was another focus of investigation, especially in relation to how people circulated through the building when the turnpike staircases had been removed. The historical map evidence was also examined, including the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) surveys, Dean of Guild Drawings and various other historical architectural drawings associated with 19th- and 20th-century refurbishment. This work resulted in a phase development model which formed a predictive template to identify critical high impact areas for targeted architectural watching briefs. A preliminary programme of dendrochronological work and ground penetrating survey was also carried out. The former was a pilot study to identify the potential for tree ring dating and distribution of oak timbers and the latter was to identify buried walls, culverts and voids to inform the new drainage routes to be installed below the current ground surface. Underpinning this work was a comprehensive photographic survey; this provided baseline data to inform the later work and created a permanent record of the building as it stood before its refurbishment. Further detail on the historical research and building analysis not published here can be found in Cressey et al (2013) and in the archive.

The refurbishment works carried out in 2015–17 included: upgrading all the principal rooms; installation of a new lift; reduction and in some cases the complete removal of internal floors;



Illus 1 General location map. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)



Illus 2 Looking through the pend from Lawnmarket to the courtyard entrance gate. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)

renewal and upgrading of services; the provision of new office space; and new door insertions requiring the cutting back or broaching of the walls. All areas where ground reduction was carried out were monitored and a great many of the rooms had wall plaster removed, revealing seven previously unrecorded fireplaces. These features are described fully in Cressey (2017) and the archive.

Alterations to the exterior of the building included the removal of existing harling, stone repair and/or replacement followed by re-harling. External building recording was confined to the courtyard and the north- and west-facing elevations of the North and West Blocks. The building had been covered with several coats of Portland cement render

in the 1960s and in certain parts this had failed, revealing the main building fabric and traces of part-exposed features. The elevations were recorded by laser scanning and photography, with new exposed detail added when the render was removed, and then phased. A comprehensive list of all the features can be seen in the respective inventories within the archive.

Paint analysis surveys were also carried out by the Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT) to establish what colour schemes had been used in the past, prior to restoration of the principal rooms. Various other investigative surveys contributed to the overall analysis, such as those undertaken by structural engineers and architects.

3. HISTORY OF OCCUPANCY AND KEY EVENTS

Alasdair Ross

While a great deal of previous research has been undertaken on the history and architecture of Riddle's Court, very little work had been done systematically. This was particularly noticeable in relation to the period encompassed by the late 16th and 17th centuries, for which very few hard facts had been established in relation to the property (prior to at least the mid-18th century, the buildings were known as McMorran's/Smith's Court, reflecting the ownership of the building in the 16th and 17th centuries). An unpublished report by Robin Tait (2012), which in turn was reliant upon an anonymous early 20th-century manuscript about the property in Edinburgh Library (Wright 2009: 16), underpinned all previous information available about the structure, and Tait established a development plan for the site, showing how it had been developed by various owners during the 16th and 17th centuries. Supporting this plan was the logical assumption that the various tenements of land in and around Riddle's Court ran on a north/south axis from the High Street downhill to the feature known as the King's Wall and the Cowgate (Wright 2009: appendix 7.2). However, new research demonstrates that while the tenements between the High Street and the façade of the great gate to McMorran's Court may have run in that direction, the two tenements below them which were conjoined to form the 'Great Tenement' ran on a east/west axis perpendicular to the others. These two east/west running tenements were referred to as the 'fore land' (the one nearest to the High Street) and the 'back land' (being the tenement closest to the King's Wall). Although the Great Tenement was subsequently subdivided again and again, and the fabric repeatedly altered, it retained large apartments still occupied by major and minor aristocracy and wealthy merchants until the mid-18th century at least.

As part of the works for the refurbishment, new research looked at the period for the initial and subsequent development of the property between *c* 1590 and *c* 1710 and was almost wholly based upon hitherto unpublished documentation. A timeline of the key events including occupancy and

related alterations as a result is listed in the Appendix at the end of this report.

3.1 McMorran's Court – the Great Tenement

John McMorran was the creator of the 'Great Tenement', lending his name to the complex of buildings which would later be known as Riddle's Court. McMorran was a merchant burghess (property-owning merchant) and baillie of Edinburgh (a civic officer, similar to an alderman or magistrate, in the burghs of Scotland; baillies appointed the high constables), and on his death he was listed as owning shares in nine ships with additional goods scattered in warehouses across Europe; these included wine in Dieppe, unspecified goods in Bordeaux, wax, salmon and pistols (Sanderson 1983). He, therefore, was a man of some importance in the town, and is referred to here as Baillie McMorran.

From a later (1630) list of writs relating to that property¹ it is clear that Baillie McMorran purchased his first piece of real estate on the south side of the High Street, a piece of waste ground, in 1580 from the Henrysone family. This was followed in 1586 by a second purchase of a larger piece of property from the same family which included backlands, houses, buildings, closes, yards and other 'pertinents'. He subsequently created his 'Great Tenement' post-1590 from a number of disparate buildings and structures lying to the south of the Lawnmarket on either side of what later became known as Riddle's Court which, originally, appears to have extended downhill south as far as the Cowgate.

Unlike its immensely tall and vertical neighbours facing the Lawnmarket and along Fisher's Close, the Great Tenement was much lower and greater in extent than the tenements facing the Lawnmarket and their immediate rear extensions – probably three and a half storeys at maximum above the inner court. However, McMorran's Court still remained the tallest building this far back down-slope of these closes. New evidence of there being blocked windows and stairs looking east on the second floor of both the North and South Blocks appears to confirm this, as these would have provided open views originally. At first-floor level, there was a horizontally planned suite of interconnecting apartments, some of which

overlooked fine yards/gardens on the slopes to the south; the essence of the Great Tenement was the provision of a continuous circulation of state and private chambers around the court at first-floor level, and improved circulation at ground level. The principal entrance seems to have been from the west, accessed by a close from the Upper Bow.

John McMorrان was shot and killed in September 1595 by a young boy when sent, in his role as baillie, to break up a sit-in at the Royal High School (then located near Drummond Street), where scholars were disputing the length of their holidays (Dalyell 1798: 34–5; Grant 1882, vol 2: 289). Following his death, an inventory of his ‘goods and chattels’ describes the contents of the various rooms at McMorrان’s Court

(MacPhail 1924: 226–30), indicating six separate rooms on either two or three levels, which cannot have comprised the entirety of the structure as currently understood. Accordingly, in 1595 Baillie McMorrان can only have occupied a part of the Great Tenement building, which might indicate that it had been designed to be a property investment, perhaps with the family (his wife Katherine Hutcheson and their children James, John, George and Ninian) only occupying a proportion of it and the rest available for commercial leasing. Baillie McMorrان had two brothers: George and Ninian (referred to here as the elder Ninian).

In 1598 the property hosted two banquets in quick succession for the Duke of Holstein, the son



Illus 3 Portrait of the Duke of Holstein. (Courtesy of [Wikimedia Commons](#))

of King Frederick II of Denmark (Illus 3), and his entourage.² The duke was the brother of Anne of Denmark, wife to King James VI of Scotland (Illus 4 & 5). The duke was visiting Edinburgh on an official visit, intending to depart with a Scottish embassy to Denmark and the Holy Roman Empire to secure support for James's accession to the throne of England. The lack of a grand town hall in the city meant officials hosted events in their homes, and this event was hosted at the late Baillie McMorrans's house, one of the finest in Edinburgh, to honour the duke as well as the king and queen as guests at the second banquet. The painted beam ceiling is considered likely to have been commissioned as part of the work to either host the duke or

commemorate the event (Pearce 2012).

Alexander Seton, Earl of Dunfermline, began renting the south part of the Great Tenement at some point during this period, prior to his death in 1622, including the courtyard floor, the whole of the back tenement and parts of the fore tenement. Seton was the most significant cultural patron of his day and was Great Chancellor of Scotland from 1609 until his death, at which point the Earl of Lauderdale took over as tenant of those lodgings. This part of the property was termed 'the Chancellor's House' due to Seton's occupancy (Wood 1940: 318), and it seems to have acted as his town house. The Chancellor's House also had its own brewhouse, stables and woman house.³



Illus 4 Portrait of Anne of Denmark (c 1605–10). (© National Portrait Gallery, London)



Illus 5 Portrait of King James VI of Scotland (1621). (© National Portrait Gallery, London)

3.2 Splitting the Great Tenement 1616–30

The period 1616–30 saw the sale of the entire Great Tenement. It was split into two properties by Baillie McMorrans's son Ninian: one was sold outside the McMorrans family; the other was purchased by his uncle, the elder Ninian.

In 1616 McMorrans's son Ninian sold the fore tenement (the one closest to the High Street and described as an L-shaped building with two turnpikes at that time) and a smaller tenement (to the right of the great gate) to his brother George McMorrans⁴ (the 'neighbour from hell', see below). The fore tenement was occupied by the elder Ninian in the upper dwelling, and by Alexander Seton, and

then Patrick Whitelaw, in the lower dwelling, and included a brewhouse used as a stable by the Earl of Dunfermline along with another dwelling.⁵ The 'great gate', by which the court was accessed from the Lawnmarket and comprised lodgings above a pend, remained part of the back tenement property; this may have been a deliberate choice by the son Ninian to ensure freedom of access to the back tenement from the High Street, which he occupied at that time. This change required alteration to the circulation, and greater strictures on privacy. It is arguable, therefore, that it was at this stage that the north part of the South Block underwent its most major changes.

In 1630 the son Ninian McMorran sold the back tenement (the tenement furthest away from the High Street) and great gate to Sir John Smith.⁶ At the date of sale the tenant was John, first Earl of Lauderdale, who appears to have leased the entire back tenement from the McMorran family.⁷ Sir John Smith subsequently evicted the Earl of Lauderdale. In 1630 the back tenement covered four floor levels in total, which means that unless the 1596 description missed out describing a substantial part of the back tenement block, one or possibly two storeys could have been added between 1596 and 1630.

The historical documents around this time pertaining to ownership and tenancies are peppered with cases of fractious neighbour disputes. It seems one of the sons of Baillie McMorran, George, was the typical 'neighbour from hell'. There are two serious complaints recorded against him in the burgh records. In the first of these, on 25 July 1631, he had created a hole on a side wall of his tenement to the detriment of one of his neighbours. Ordered by the Dean of the Goldsmiths' Guild to repair this hole with 'stane and lyme', George had instead dressed it, inserted a glass case, and turned it into a window. The Guild court subsequently ordered George to remove the glass and fill the hole in his wall.⁸ Here we have an early example of enforcement in action relating to unauthorised property changes.

The second case against him occurred on 15 August 1638 when owner Sir John Smith complained that George had built a new 'ravel of wood' (perhaps a stockpile of construction materials or firewood) adjacent to the exterior of the great gate, so big that it prevented horses with loads of coal and other cargoes from entering the gate and accessing the courtyard within, contrary to the good order of the neighbourhood. Interestingly, in the same complaint Smith also mentioned that George had not yet closed up the three entrances in the great gate and the courtyard which he had promised to do in 1616. The Dean of Guild and his council subsequently visited the site with Smith and McMorran and found in favour of Smith. George McMorran was ordered to remove the wood from outside the gate and close up the three entrances with stone and lime forthwith.⁹ No further complaints are recorded against him in these respects by Smith so it must be presumed that George complied with

the order from the Guild. The only gate or opening capable of allowing entrance of a cart must have been a blocked doorway with iron hangers recorded on the ground floor of the East Block during the refurbishment works. Arguably this feature is a strong contender for the position of the so-called 'great gate'.

A year later George became embroiled in another row with his neighbours. On 25 September 1639 he accused Adame Bartane, merchant burghess, Patrick Thomsons, merchant and tenant, and Jonat Eistoun, widow of the late Alexander Stewart, merchant burghess, of washing their pots and throwing filth and excrement out of one of their windows into a gutter running above George's laiche (low) gallery, polluting his property. In this instance the court found for George and ordered his neighbours to glaze their windows next to the guttering.¹⁰

3.3 Back tenement 1630–1702

Sources suggest Sir John Smith was something of a rogue, particularly in relation to his international business affairs, which eventually resulted in him losing the back tenement of Riddle's Court to Sir John Clerk of Penicuik (first baronet, 1649–1722) in 1676. Essentially, between 1658 and 1675 Smith and his sons borrowed various sums of money for their business dealings, all of which were secured against various properties that they owned. Sir John Clerk of Penicuik eventually took action after his father's death in 1674, foreclosing on the loans to Smith and his sons and ending up in possession of the south-most tenement in 1676.¹¹

Sir John Clerk seems to have kept the back tenement until 1684 when he sold the property to Roderick Mackenzie of Prestonhall, brother of George Mackenzie (the future first Earl of Cromartie).¹² The date 1684 on the plaster rose bearing the royal cipher and 'CR2' in the fore tenement (Room S03) (Illus 6), was most likely inserted by Roderick Mackenzie to signify the date of his acquisition of the property, and the support given by his family to the monarch following the Restoration in 1660.

Changes to the structure in this period include the addition of three new jambs (extensions) at some point before 1702.¹³ These extensions appear to have been undertaken during the period that



Illus 6 Plaster rose in Room S03. (© David Morris)

Roderick Mackenzie owned the tenement and were subsequently demolished during the construction of Victoria Street. A contemporary view of the buildings was produced by Slezer in 1693 (Illus 7).

By 1702 Roderick Mackenzie of Prestonhall had sold part of the back tenement (the upper lodging) to his brother George Mackenzie and his wife Margaret, Countess of Wemyss. Roderick Mackenzie had previously sold the other part of the same back tenement (the lower lodging) to Sir Thomas Stewart of Balcashie who, in turn, sold it to Sir Archibald Mure, ex-provost of Edinburgh.¹⁴ This information is important because it is the first time in the historical record that ownership of the back tenement is known to have been split between different people. Splitting the back tenement between different owners would mean any subsequent alterations made to the internal fabric of the tenement block would not be made across the entire structure. This may account for the now noticeable differences in floor levels between the various sections of the tenement.

The other point of interest during this period is the mention of the broad stair to the east of the

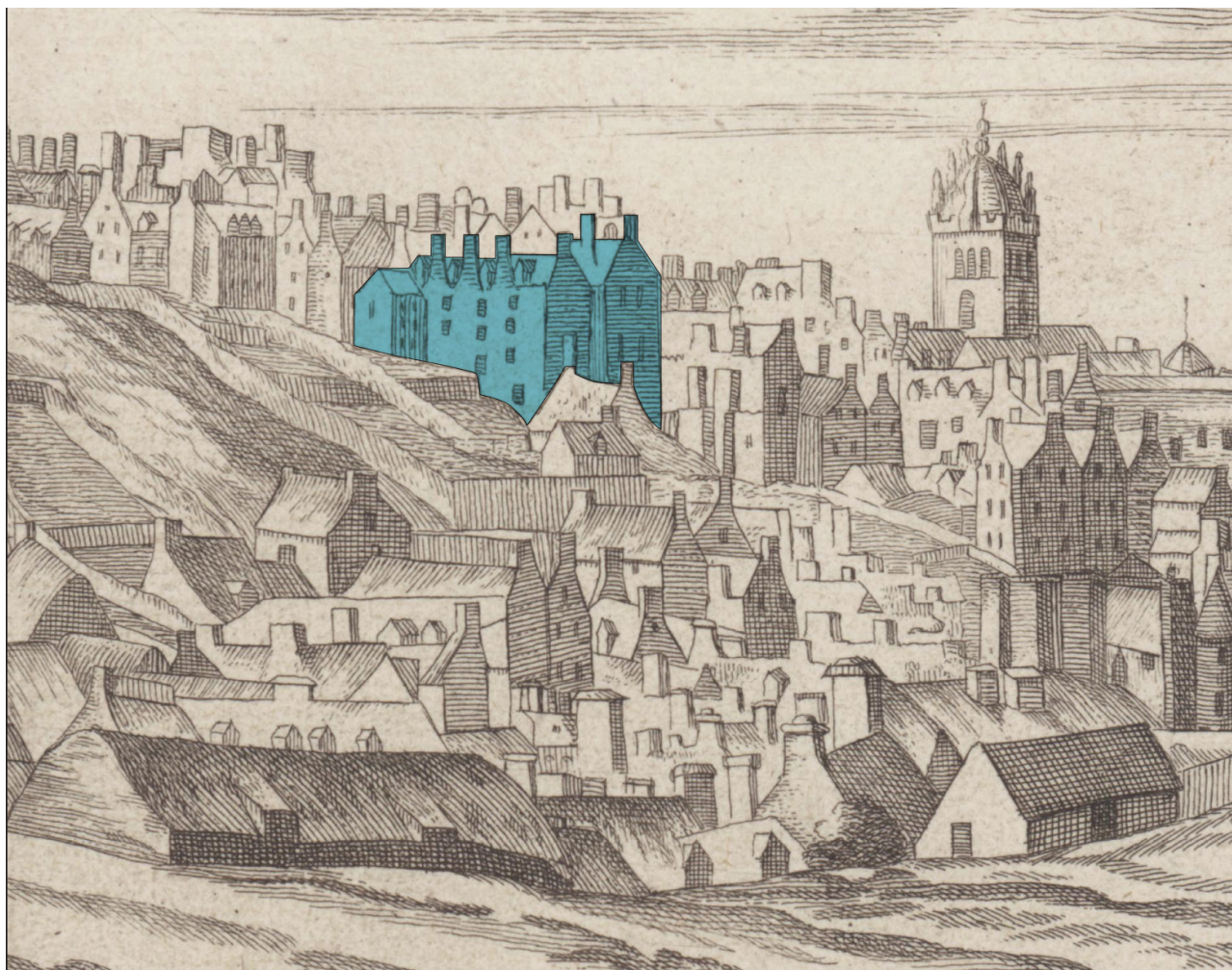
tenement which led to a garden, and confirmation of a garden in the back yard of the back tenement.¹⁵ The property had extensive formal gardens, which were a rarity then in this part of Edinburgh. An extract from James Gordon's Plan of 1647 shows the extent of the gardens at that time, reaching into an area which later became part the Cowgate as it expanded (Illus 8).

3.4 Back tenement post-1702

3.4.1 Upper lodging

In 1702 both the upper lodging and the great gate were in the possession of Countess Margaret of Wemyss. She died in 1705 and her husband on 17 August 1714 (Kidd 2004). The subsequent owner of the upper lodging was Duchess Anne of Buccleuch (1651–1732) (Nicholson 2004), who was related through marriage to Margaret (Sorensen 2004).

Duchess Anne had not previously been recognised as an owner and tenant of the upper lodging, since there are no references to the name Riddle's Court (or any of its other incarnations) in the Buccleuch muniments. The property is, however, described



Illus 7 Extract from John Slezer's 1693 depiction of 'The southside of the Castle of Edinburgh'. (Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland)

as being 'in the Lawn Mercat on the south side of the High Street at the foot of that close or vennall entering on the west side of Fisher's Land'.¹⁶ And after purchasing the upper lodging, the duchess installed Sir James Mackenzie of Royston as her long-term tenant, one of the senators of the College of Justice, and a son of the first Earl of Cromartie.¹⁷ This explains why the court was known as Royston's Court in 1730.¹⁸ Later renovation accounts would suggest that Duchess Anne was also the owner of the wing of the side tenement bordered on the east by Fisher's Close and occupied by James Mackenzie of Royston and William Carmichael. A timeline of the key events including occupancy and related alterations as a result is listed in the Appendix.

The duchess kept receipts for all the renovations carried out by the various local trades and her accounts show that a great sum of money was spent

during her ownership. Beginning in 1714 and lasting until 1730 she embarked upon an almost annual campaign of remediation and alteration of the upper lodging, and her legacy includes very ornate Italian marble fireplaces and a plaster ceiling (Illus 9). In the upper lodging the number of rooms was reduced, indicating the enlargement of living spaces, and cosmetic work such as wood panelling and painting were undertaken. The roof was also repaired and strengthened, perhaps a consequence of a change from thatch to slate, and the account specifies the use of Swedish, Bergen and Druntain (Trondheim) 'dales' (pine planks) in the renovations.¹⁹ There are at least three other occasions, in August 1714, June 1720 and September 1722, when large quantities of dales from Trondheim and Bergen were required, but those accounts do not specify what they were used for and in which part of the structure they



Illus 8 Extract from James Gordon's Plan of 1647 showing extent of Riddle's Court and its formal gardens to the south. (Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland)



Illus 9 Italian marble fireplace purchased by Duchess Anne of Buccleuch. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)

were employed. The accounts also provide excellent evidence that wood was occasionally recycled during the various renovation processes.²⁰

After Duchess Anne's death in 1732 the upper lodging and other parts of the tenement remained in the family as the property of Duke Francis until 1749, when he sold the property to Baillie William Alexander.²¹ After 1749 the upper lodging disappears from the historical records. This may be a reflection of the fact that the tenement was no longer owned by aristocracy, the people whose papers are more likely to survive, which may also go hand-in-hand with the construction of the New Town of Edinburgh later in the second half of the 18th century, as living in the New Town may have been considered to have been more desirable to a certain class of people (McKean 2013: 262).

3.4.2 Lower lodging

Sir Archibald Mure did not enjoy the lower lodging for long. He was dead by 1708, at which time his

three daughters, Margaret, Jean and Isobel, jointly inherited the lodging. There are few surviving records relating to the lower lodging but it seems likely that there had been a dispute among the three sisters and their respective spouses over their joint legacy. The subsequent owner of the lower tenement, Sir Robert Stewart of Tillicoultry, a Lord of Session, purchased the lodging in 1708.²²

3.5 Fore tenement

There are far fewer records relating to the fore tenement than the back tenement. This can probably be accounted for by the simple fact that while the back tenement continued to be owned by aristocrats, the fore tenement did not attract such clientele: this makes the latter much harder to trace in the historical record. From 1639 to the late 18th century records for the tenement become patchy, but occasional records appear which allow insights into ownership for brief windows of time.

In 1639 the fore tenement still belonged to the

son George McMorran, but it disappears from the historical record thereafter until it reappears in 1709, when Gabriel Rankin of Orchardhead inherited it (or part of it) from his father Walter, an Edinburgh burgess.²³ At that time the fore tenement was still split into two different properties, belonging to Catherine Hutchison (the lower lodging) and Patrick Graham (the upper lodging). The fore tenement does not obviously appear again.

The discovery that the Buccleuch family and James Mackenzie of Royston were the owners and tenants of sections of McMorran's Court between 1714 and 1749 perhaps explains who commissioned the Norie panel artwork in the fore tenement. Removal of a blocked window revealed the 18th-century painted panel in Room S03, part of the so-called Norie panels that were painted by the landscape artist James Norie around 1730 (see section 4.1.2 'External elevations' below). A sasine of 1730 seems to locate Royston there, and his main country residence at Royston House (now Caroline Park) near Granton also contained Norie artwork. The tenure of this fore tenement lodging by Royston could also help explain the plaster ceiling rose that contains the initials of King Charles II and the date 1684. That was the year of King Charles's death according to the Julian calendar which started the new year from the 25th of March. Royston's wife, Elizabeth Mackenzie, was the daughter of the famous supporter of royalism and avid prosecutor of Covenanters, George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh (Jackson 2007).

3.6 Riddel's Land

In 1727 the fore tenement property fronting onto the Lawnmarket was acquired and redeveloped into a new tenement by Captain George Riddel. Following this, it appears that the new tenement was known as Riddel's Land and the entire structure surrounding the courtyard was known as Riddel's Court. A property referred to as Riddel's Land enters the official Edinburgh sasine record in 1753 shortly after the death of Captain Riddel.²⁴ However, it is clear from this entry and subsequent entries that all of these records refer to the new tenement built by Riddel which faced onto the Lawnmarket.²⁵ None of these records make any reference to the other structures which comprised Riddel's Court. It is possible this is when the name of the Court changed

(from McMorran's/Smith's Court to Riddel's Court), as a reflection of the magnificence of Riddel's new property on the Lawnmarket.

The year 1727 is also the probable date of the paintings, commissioned for the panelled room (Room S03) with the 1684 ceiling, by James Norie Senior (1684–1757) and his sons; paintings by the Norie family can also be found at Royston House (now Caroline Park). See the gazetteer of Bryan & Bruce (2008) for a detailed account of the panels.

Between 1751 and 1763, David Hume, philosopher of the Scottish Enlightenment, lived in Riddel's Land, probably in part of the fore tenement (Wright 2009: 22–9).

3.7 19th and 20th centuries

By the time of the 1841 census, the majority of the dwellings at Riddel's Court were populated by shopkeepers, artisans and labourers, with some of the rooms including a bookbinder's workshop and public theatre (Bryan & Bruce 2008). The Riddel's Court properties were under multiple occupancy and fell into decline and disrepair, with only ad hoc repairs undertaken (based on observations of the building as it survives). A historic drawing by Drummond in 1854 captured the sense of 19th-century dilapidation of the building (Illus 10).

Radical changes took place during the 19th century (Wright 2009), occasioned by three disastrous fires that raged between the Tron church and Parliament Square. An ambitious improvement scheme to provide access to the Old Town from the west, and between the Old and New Towns led to the creation of Victoria Street between 1829 and 1834, which required the removal of a large proportion of the backland of the properties behind Riddel's Court and those at the Castle Hill and West Bow (Illus 11). The principal architects behind Victoria Street were William Burn (1789–1870) and Thomas Hamilton (1784–1858). While they saw merit in conserving the 'antiquities' of the High Street as found at the Lawnmarket, the properties at West Bow (and presumably those leading to what is now the Grassmarket) were described as wooden tenements crowded together and in a ruined state. The Victoria Street works resulted in the removal of two back jamps (outshot buildings) from Riddel's Court, and the garden and



Illus 10 Sketch of Riddle's Close by Drummond in 1854 of the demolished tenement on the left-hand side and the still surviving corbelled doorway and arch into Riddle's Court. (© [City of Edinburgh Council - Edinburgh Libraries](#))

backlands were redeveloped with brick industrial buildings.

In the 1850s the Mechanics' Subscription Library was relocated from James Court and occupied the whole of the building, using the ground floor as the library and renting out the tenements above. The Library owned all of the rear property, including the tenements at the upper levels, which were rented out. These tenants included W Robert Glass, a merchant, W Daniel McInnes, a picture dealer, and a Miss Sarah Banner.²⁶ The Library benefited from many associations with the leading printers and

publishing houses of the city, who donated works to it. Patrick Geddes purchased the back tenement from the Mechanics' Subscription Library in 1889 and over the next few years acquired the remaining parts of the quadrangle formed by Riddle's Court in a piecemeal fashion as they became available.²⁷

3.7.1 Patrick Geddes and the creation of the first University Halls

The purchase of Riddle's Court by Geddes in the late 19th century put an end to the building's use as housing by private domestic tenants and began



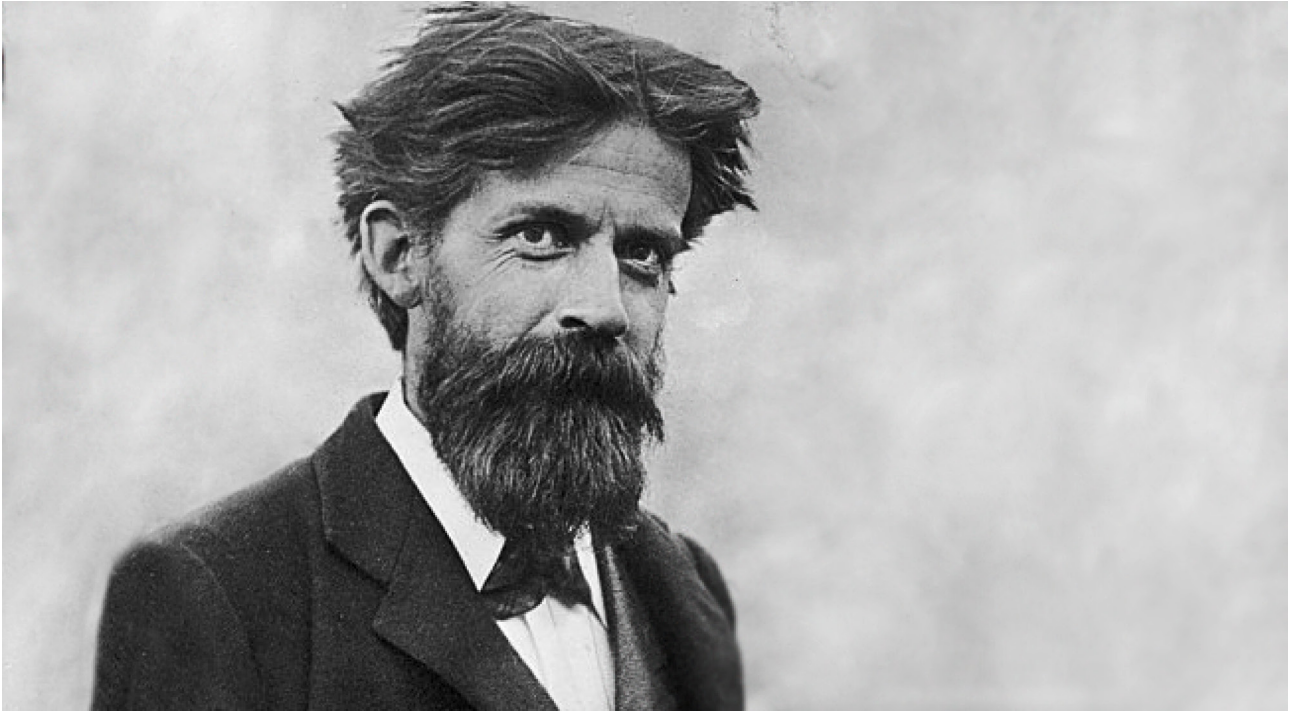
Illus 11 View of the new rear façade of Riddle's Court onto Victoria Street following demolition of the backland properties. (© Scottish Historic Buildings Trust)

its conversion into student accommodation. Patrick Geddes (1854–1931) was a Scottish biologist, sociologist, geographer and philanthropist, who was best known for his innovative thinking in the field of urban planning (Illus 12).

He wanted to encourage a mixture of people from different backgrounds and professions to settle in the Old Town to create a mixed, vibrant community. Geddes was also greatly concerned with the lack of accommodation for university undergraduates in Edinburgh.²⁸ He founded University Hall, the first Hall of Residence in Edinburgh. The Hall was set up in renovated properties around the Lawnmarket,

including in Riddle's Court, and the motto of one of his summer schools, *Vivendo discimus* ('By living we learn'), is incised into the voussoirs of the pend leading to the inner court (see Illus 22 and 4.1.2 'Room G12' below).

By 1889, Geddes had secured part of Riddle's Court and refurbished the back tenement, which housed students, most of whom were medical students from overseas within the British Empire (from places such as Madras and Mauritius). However, to increase the property further Geddes needed to clear the adjoining slums and convert the front buildings. By 1892 he had acquired three sides



Illus 12 Portrait of Patrick Geddes. (© Scottish Historic Buildings Trust)

of Riddle's Court and the fore tenement.²⁹ Geddes then approached the city authorities to determine whether the properties flanking Riddle's Close could be removed in order to 'largely increase the area, light and breathing space of the outer court [now Riddle's Close] and remove some very undesirable tenants'.³⁰ The same record also states that this would allow for the number of students to be increased from 14 to 24 which would prove 'desirable alike for grounds of economy and sociability'.³¹ It is clear that nearly doubling the number of students would allow more income for further improvements and pave the way to opening up the claustrophobic outer close, which was merely a passage flanked by tall dilapidated buildings, and Geddes's application in this regard was successful.

3.7.2 20th century

By the turn of the 20th century, Riddle's Court was in a state of decline and ceased as a university hall. By 1905 it was mainly owned by the Town & Gown Association Ltd and it continued to house domestic tenants as well as the High United Free Church. It was purchased by Edinburgh Council in 1946 and the courtyard complex remained in domestic occupation up until the late 1950s and early 1960s, when it was converted into a public meeting space and Fringe venue for the Edinburgh Festival (Bryan & Bruce 2008). The North Block was occupied by the Workers' Educational Association from 1975, with the rest of the blocks occupied by the Scottish Historic Buildings Trust from 2011.

4. RESULTS FROM INTRUSIVE WORKS

4.1 Architectural survey

This section will detail the results of the architectural survey, which are separated into interior and exterior parts of the structure. The description will begin with the recording of the building's elevations, both interior and exterior. Following this, the results of investigations of each floor of the building will be summarised, beginning with the basement storey and moving up through successive floors to the roof space. Finally, a brief account will be given of the finds discovered during the survey. The results provide insights into the changes made to the property through time, many of which were recorded in the historical record and are described in the section above.

The external building elevations were comprehensively photographed in 2013 and phased interpretations produced, which included the four sides of the internal courtyard (Illus 13) and the external north- and west-facing elevations. Additional recording was carried out during the refurbishment

works in 2015–16 from scaffolding attached to the external North and West Blocks, allowing up-close insight into the fabric that had been hidden behind the cement harling. The external east-facing elevation is hidden between Riddle's Court and the adjacent building. The south-facing elevation, above Victoria Street, is a late 19th-century façade and was not recorded (Illus 11). The courtyard elevations are shown in Illus 14, 15, 16 & 17. The component buildings are referred to as the North, South, East and West Blocks, with the courtyard in the centre.

4.1.1 Courtyard elevations

One of the most significant features on the east-facing elevation (Illus 17 & 18) was a chimney in the north-west corner of the courtyard that was comprised of large dressed blocks of sandstone laid in a series of quoins with rubble at its centre. The chimney was not keyed into the North Block, and on the south-facing elevation of the North Block (Illus 14) several windowsills and lintels were visible and clearly running behind this chimney, showing that in terms of phase development the North Block



Illus 13 View of the courtyard prior to alteration works. (© Scottish Historic Buildings Trust)



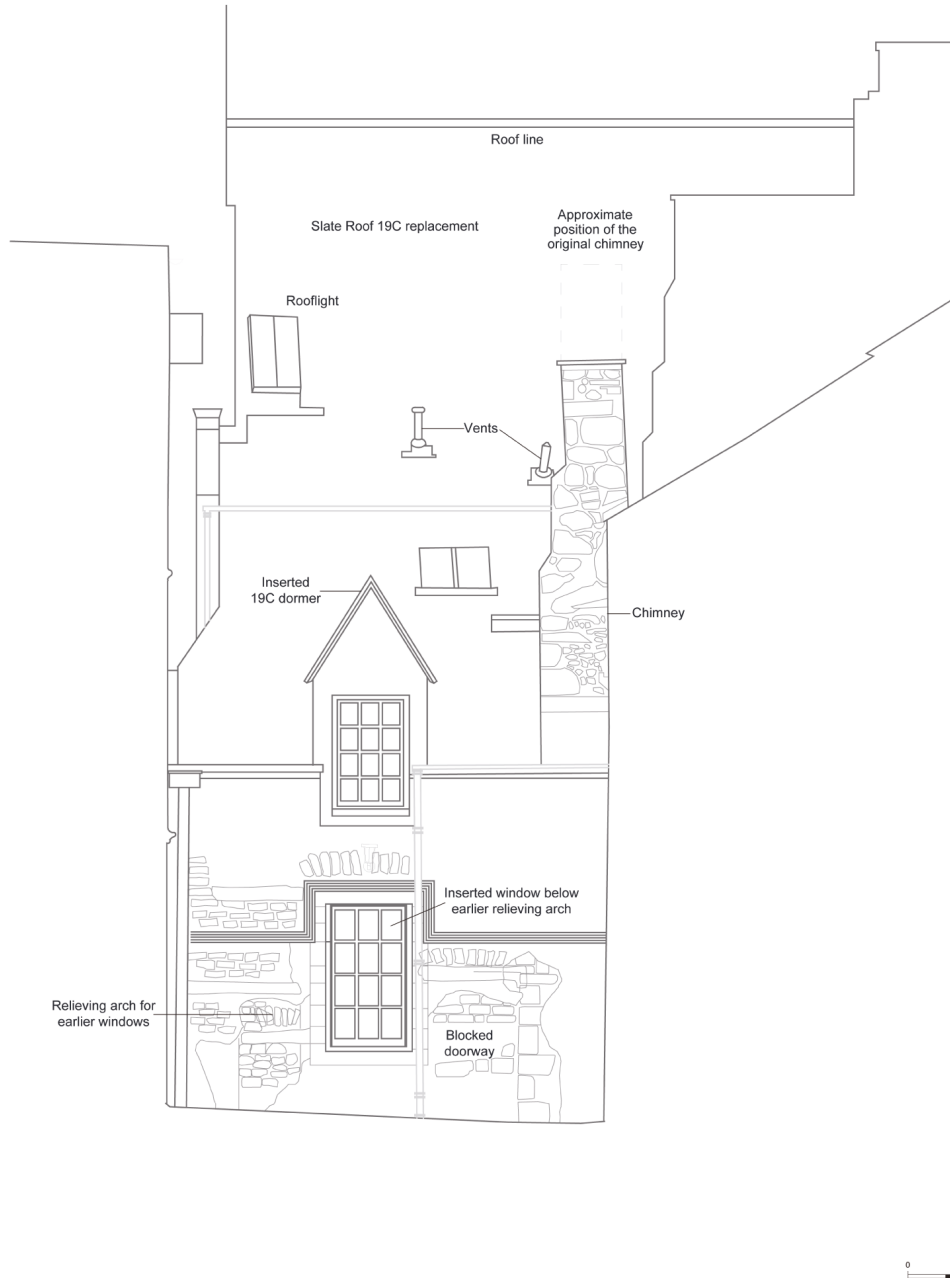
Illus 14 Courtyard, south-facing elevation. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)

had to have been built before the West Block. This is not at odds with the fact that the Great Tenement built by McMorran was the first building at the site, with the West Block built soon after and certainly by 1587, according to the date stone (Illus 19) and dendrochronology results (see section 5).

An enigmatic item recorded at first-floor level on the north-facing elevation (Illus 21) was a scallop feature comprising seven individual segments projecting from the main wall line. Past interpretations include a support for a goods-loading beam or mantel/hood over a bell. The quality of the masonry makes this unlikely and alternative interpretations could be a painted heraldic device over an earlier doorway or a formal ‘Great Entrance’ since removed.

4.1.2 External elevations

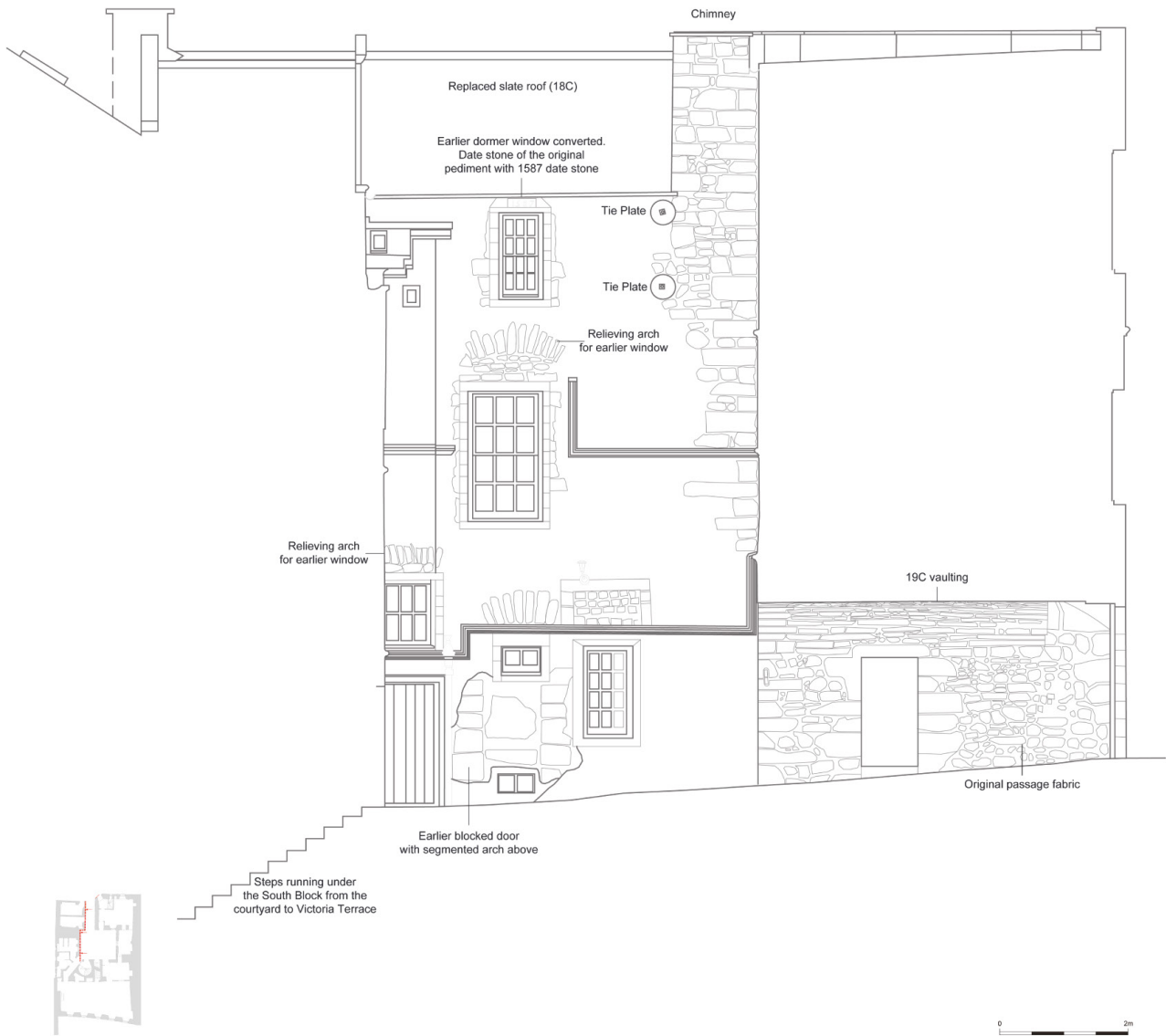
The north-facing elevation (Illus 22 & 23) incorporates the main arched entrance leading from Riddle’s Close into the interior courtyard (Riddle’s Court). The segmented arched entrance had been inscribed in Geddes’s time with the Latin inscription *Vivendo discimus* – ‘By living we learn’ (Illus 24). The arched opening was flanked by two plank-built doors, the left-hand of which has an ornate door surround with corbel work above it. An ornate moulded return stub marked the position of another door, which became a common entrance for the aforementioned demolished tenement building that occupied this position, and the scar of a stone staircase can also be seen on the wall.



Illus 15 Courtyard, west-facing elevation. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)



Illus 16 Courtyard, north-facing elevation. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)



Illus 17 Courtyard, east-facing elevation. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)

The largest feature on this elevation (Illus 22) is the advanced extramural pentice staircase that is a 1960s replacement of the architect Capper’s 19th-century staircase. In the absence of an internal staircase between the first and second floor of the block this pentice staircase was required.

Another interesting feature was a blocked window that, when removed by the masons, revealed the rear woodwork of the 18th-century painted panel work within Room S03, part of the so-called Norie panels that were painted by the landscape artist James Norie around 1730 and later removed and sold to the National Museums of Scotland; the Norie panels are exhibited in the National Museums of Scotland.³²

The west-facing elevation contained 18 individual windows of varying size and level (Illus 25). Only three windows on the first floor and two windows on the second floor shared the same lintel height. The line of windows including at the right-hand side (facing) of the elevation may have been associated with an external turnpike staircase; the surrounds around the second and third windows from the top are conjoined, suggesting that this was originally the position of a door.

4.2 Internal works

The building’s layout is comprised of the North, East, South and West Blocks. The individual



Illus 18 Courtyard, east-facing elevation. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)



Illus 19 The 1587 date stone. (© Scottish Historic Buildings Trust)



Illus 20 Courtyard, south-facing elevation. (© Scottish Historic Buildings Trust)

room numbers and relative phase development of the building are shown in Illus 26. The phase development model shown on this plan proposes five main phases, ranging from the pre-16th century (Phase 1 medieval period) through to the 20th century (Phase 5 modern period). The phasing does not account for the possibility of sub-phases, which are likely to exist.

Targeted watching briefs and architectural monitoring were carried out during the refurbishment. The results are exceptional in terms of the number of historical features that were recorded, which include seven hitherto unknown fireplaces of various dates, the largest being a large late-16th-century kitchen fireplace that contained

a bread oven and salt press. Three new Scottish Renaissance period decorated beam and board ceilings are also an exceptional find, as they rarely survive. The presence of other features, such as the earlier roof lines and evidence for late-16th-century barrel-vaulted ceilings on the top floor of the South and West Blocks, confirm that the roofs were indeed much steeper than at present. Some of the floor joists date to the primary phase (late 16th century) and were imported from Norway (see 7 ‘Narrative of the building’s historical and architectural development’ below). The results fed into the phase development plans, allowing the anatomy of the building to be much better understood, representing nearly 400 years of continued adaptation.



Illus 21 Scallop feature on the north-facing courtyard elevation. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)

4.2.1 Basement

The archaeological work carried out in the basement was confined to Room B02, the former cafe, and B10, a small office (Illus 26).

In Room B02, two 16th-century blocked doors, one with roll moulding, on the north side were exposed, which accessed the rear vaulted rooms. The south exterior elevation fronting Victoria Terrace dates to the late 19th century and includes the sweeping curve of the terrace. The construction of Victoria Street in the late 19th century required the demolition of two 16th-century jambs on the south side of the back tenement and a stair passage was installed from Victoria Terrace up to the courtyard, providing a

private entrance to the complex of sub-let properties. The basement doorways are the only survivors of what would have been entrances to the rear of the two jambs.

A cement panel, with a randomly placed series of butter-press type impressions including roses, thistles and shamrocks, on the east-facing internal wall of the room is of historical interest in that it may represent a sample of a tradesman’s work specialising in this type of material (Illus 27). Many decorative updates were commissioned by residents during their time in the house, and a craftsman may have left an example of their work for the owner/tenant’s consideration. A similar impressed panel is known to exist in a flat at Ramsey Gardens close to Edinburgh Castle (SHBT pers comm.)



Illus 22 External north-facing elevation. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)

In Room B10 the presence of a cobble floor and large quantity of coal dust strongly suggest that this room was used as a coal house, with the intramural stair allowing access to the floors above.

4.2.2 Ground floor

Watching briefs carried out in Rooms G01, G02 and G06 showed that these had beaten earth and cobble floors (Illus 28). Room G02 produced the largest number of finds, including metalwork, pottery fragments, shell and animal bone. The animal bone and shell included fish bone and oyster shell which may have been food waste, and pottery was found dating to the late medieval and

post-medieval periods. A detailed summary of the finds is given in the archive and 4.3 ‘Finds’ below.

Room G06 had walls that were heavily modified. Intriguingly, the west-facing elevation provided evidence for an inward opening door, as the stonework forming part of a door jamb had an in situ iron door hanger. Collectively, these features represent a 16th-century doorway that entered out into what would have been open ground prior to the enclosure of Riddle’s Court. Later, the East Block was built, making the doorway redundant. In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, Room G06 seems to have been the brewhouse/stables, based on its position within the structure and a contemporary



Illus 23 External north-facing elevation. (© Scottish Historic Buildings Trust)

account which describes closing off the entrance to this room.³³

Immediately to the south of Room G06, in Room G07, a fireplace and press were recorded within the area excavated to accommodate the lift shaft. The fireplace was blocked and surmounted by a large stone lintel (Illus 29). The significance of the fireplace is that it was very large in relation to the room in which it sat: a similar but smaller fireplace was recorded in Room G08, and again this was a large fireplace for a relatively small room, but this room likely formed part of the principal family chambers in the early 17th century. The most significant find from Room G08 was a crushed hallmarked silver mount from a walking cane which

was dated to between 1890 and 1930, the period just following Patrick Geddes's acquisition of the building (Illus 30).

In Room G12 (Illus 26), blocking work was removed from the large kitchen fireplace and it was found to contain within its interior side walls an intact bread oven and salt press. This fireplace was in use probably up until the 19th century when it was reduced in size by the insertion of a smaller fireplace and a coal cupboard (Illus 31 & 32). The date of construction of the fireplace was *c* 1587 according to the dendrochronology results obtained from the first-floor oak beams directly above it (see 5 'Dendrochronology' below). Parallels for this monumental feature lie in other high-status houses,



Illus 24 The inscription above the courtyard entrance. (© Scottish Historic Buildings Trust)

and a similarly proportioned fireplace and bread oven of slightly later date, built by Robert Maxwell in 1635, is situated in the Nithsdale Lodgings within Caerlaverock Castle, Dumfries and Galloway.

The bread oven was framed by four individual sandstone blocks, two of which were curved to form a beehive-shaped opening (Illus 33). The interior of the oven was lined with small rectangular refractory clay bricks that formed a small dome. The oven had no flue and it was stoked and vented through its opening. On the opposite wall to the bread oven was the salt press, where pots of sea salt could be kept dry (Illus 34). The press had a lintel stone surmounted by a small relieving arch, confirming that this was an original feature integral to the 16th-century fireplace

and not a later insertion. A small slot had been cut into one of the reveals, possibly to hold a thin stone shelf.

4.2.3 First floor

The removal of the ceiling in Room F03 (Illus 26) within the North Block revealed the remains of a painted beam and board ceiling dating from the late 16th century (see 6.2.2 'Room F03 ceiling (first floor)' below); the first to be uncovered since the famous painted commemorative beam and board ceiling in Room F02 (King's Chamber) was found in the 1960s (see 6.2.1 'Room F02 ceiling (King's Chamber, first floor)' below).

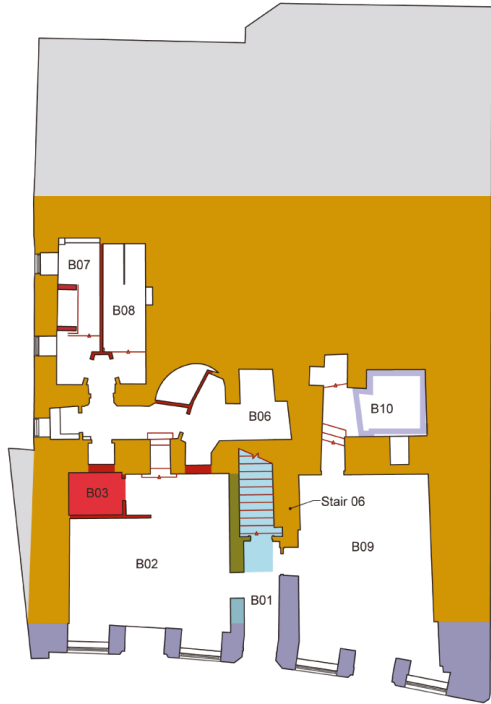


Illus 25 External west-facing elevation. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)

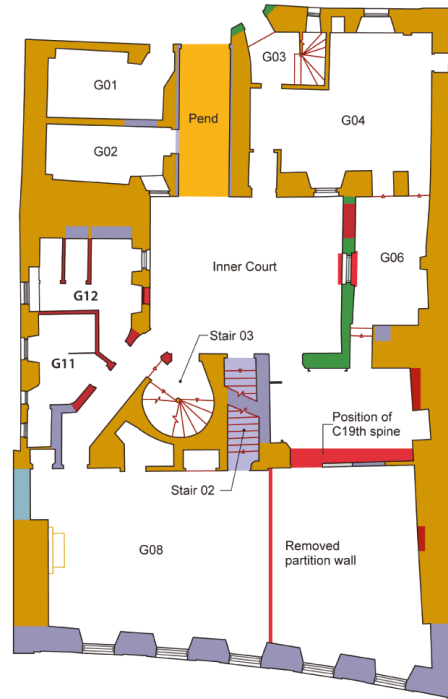
The F03 ceiling had not fared as well as the two ceilings higher in the block; the installation of a lath and plaster ceiling probably in the late 18th or early 19th century had been detrimental to the painted beams, and in some cases they had been cut back with an adze or axe to make them flush. Whereas the artwork on the beams provides a sense of the distribution of repeated patterns, the fine intricate detail that would have been present across the boards is represented by a single board only (see 6.2.2 ‘Room F03 ceiling’ below). The decoration in this area bears similarities to the commemorative artwork within the adjacent King’s Chamber (F02), but is more complex and elaborate. It possibly shows that both rooms were painted by the same artist

and that these rooms (or chambers) formed part of a suite that was used for the King James VI of Scotland royal banquet, and this decorated room may have been used as sleeping quarters for the royal retinue.

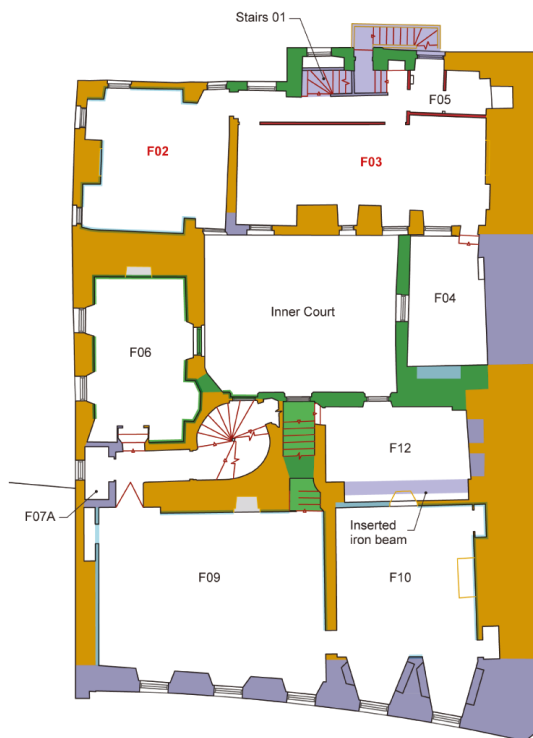
The installation of new floors within Rooms F09 and F10 revealed the sheer quality and quantity of the long straight oak beams that were probably Scandinavian in origin (Crone et al 2017). These were modified on the south side when large composite flitch beams were installed when Victoria Street was created. This is an example of how the Victorian engineers rebuilt the south-facing elevation and maintained the integrity of the painted ceilings and existing floors while introducing additional



Phase Development - Basement



Phase Development - Ground Floor



Phase Development - First Floor



Phase Development - Second Floor

- Phase 1 - 16th Century
- Phase 2 - 17th Century
- Phase 3 - 18th Century
- Phase 4 - 19th Century
- Phase 5 - 20th Century
- F02** Room Number



Illus 26 Phase development floor plans of Riddle's Court. (©CFA Archaeology Ltd)



Illus 27 Impressed cement panel in Room B02. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)



Illus 28 Cobble floor recorded in Room G02. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)



Illus 29 Blocked fireplace and press in Room G07. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)



Illus 30 An English sterling silver cane top with Birmingham maker's mark FS (Cornelius Shepherd & Francis Shepherd) c 1890s–1930s. Room G08 (unstratified). (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)



Illus 31 The G12 fireplace showing the segmented arch of the 16th-century fireplace with a later blocked fireplace and coal cupboard. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)



Illus 32 The G12 fireplace after the removal of the later insertions. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)



Illus 33 The flue-less bread oven within the interior of the G12 fireplace. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)

structural support when the bressummer beams (a large, horizontal load-bearing beam which bears the weight of a wall starting on a first or higher floor, found particularly in timber-framed buildings) were laid on the spine wall within the original 16th-century core of the South Block.

In Room F12, a blocked fireplace and press on its west-facing wall were revealed. The presence of the fireplace points to domestic use, which ended when the bressummer beams were inserted. The cement used to block the fireplace and the press was the same as that used to seal the two large cast-iron bressummer beams in place on the north-facing elevation during the late 19th century. Due to its position in the building and the fireplace, it is possible that this room was used as a bedroom with its own private staircase and views into the courtyard.

The work carried out in the East Block at first-floor/roof level (Room F04) has provided a large amount of architectural information on its later development. Firstly, the room originally had a pitched roof, as shown on historical drawings and as evidenced by the presence of the earlier

roof line on its north-facing gable. Here a small fireplace was also present. An earlier blocked door with ashlar moulding was present on the opposite wall. This appears to have been bricked up when the roof was altered and given a lean-to roof. The earlier doorway is an enigma because it probably pre-dates the construction of the East Block. The late architectural historian Professor Charles McKean, who helped to develop the detailed phase development model for this building, proposed that access to this door must have been either by an external forestairs or via a wooden gallery. He suggested that the gallery may have run from the South Block to the North Block along a curtain wall that enclosed the east side of the courtyard. This also raises the question about the remains of the door hanger and door surround recorded on the west-facing elevation situated at ground level in Room G06 (immediately below). Perhaps the wooden gallery served as the primary route of a royal procession leading from the formal gardens at the rear of the back tenement (South Block) up through a turnpike staircase from the ground floor to first-floor level and along the gallery into



Illus 34 The salt press within the interior of the G12 fireplace. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)

the first-floor banqueting chambers in the North Block. It is a matter of conjecture if the banquet was a highly publicised or private affair but what we do know is that it was costly and its lasting legacy is reflected in the artwork on at least two decorated beam and board ceilings.

4.2.4 Second floor

Within the second floor of the North Block another highly decorated beam and board ceiling was discovered in Room S02 (see 6.2.3 'Room S02 ceiling (second floor)' below). Its style and detail was not as intricate as that recorded within the first floor (Room F03; Illus 40) but it does appear to be

contemporary with the hidden ceiling discovered at roof level above the ornate plaster ceiling in the adjacent Room S03, where an important 17th-century plaster ceiling survived along with later 18th-century wall panelling. The medieval painted ceilings of Scotland have a distinct national style which these ceilings are typical of. The decoration includes foliate ornament, scrollwork and patterns with a *trompe l'oeil* effect. These types of ceilings were common in the houses of major and minor aristocracy and the Royal Mile contained the highest number of recorded decorated ceilings anywhere in Scotland (see 6.3 'Discussion' below).

The insertion of the lift shaft at the top of the South Block required the removal of the wooden



Illus 35 Blocked doorway in Room S07 with chamfered door surround. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)

staircase between the Cupboard S07 and Room S08. The removal of the staircase revealed a 16th-century blocked doorway within the east wall of the cupboard (Illus 35). This doorway must have opened into a larger room (part of Room S08) with a lean-to roof with a steeper pitch supported on stone corbels. The *c* 1580s wall must have run the full length of the north side of the South Block but it was replaced by a thinner wall supporting the existing (19th-century) windows overlooking the courtyard. This wall was later modified when the north-facing windows were installed along with the only surviving turnpike staircase in the 17th century. Room S08 would have been a chamber of significant size in the 17th century.

Above what could have been a doorway within S07, leading into the South Block at second-floor level, were two large corbels. The reason for the position of the corbels is not entirely clear. The closest parallel for the corbels can be seen above the ground-floor entrance on the north-facing elevation of the North Block, where a series of corbels underpinned an outshot section of wall associated with the possible position of a turnpike staircase. The S07 corbels may have been load bearers for a demolished outshot window that pre-dated the installation of the extant passage wall with windows leading to Room S08.

Within the South Block, the replacement of floors within the enlarged S17 and S20 rooms and Room

S11 showed, like the floor below, that long straight Scandinavian oak timbers had been used. Crone et al (2017) established that most of the oak in Scottish houses of this period was Scandinavian oak as all the native useful structural oak had been depleted. A timber trading route was well established by the late 16th century between Norway and Scotland. As with the floor below, Rooms S11, S17 and S20 incorporated a composite fitch beam running the full length of the second floor from east to west. The use of smaller pine timbers was evident within the floors of the window bays.

4.2.5 Roof space

No formal survey of the roofs of the South and West Blocks was undertaken on the grounds of health and safety; however, sufficient information was seen from the second-floor level once the lath and plaster ceilings had been removed. This confirmed that all the oak trusses present within these blocks had been re-configured, which effectively made them lower and wider to accommodate the current slate roofs. Prior to this the trusses had a steeper pitch and in both cases probably accommodated second-floor attic spaces with barrel-shaped or elliptical-shaped ceilings, deduced from the presence of elliptical-shaped plaster at rafter level within both rooms. The timbers also contained evidence from when the block was truncated to create Victoria Street, and the existing roof plan shows the South Block roof curving outwards at its east end in line with the existing south-facing elevation of Victoria Street. The oak beams contained redundant mortice joints with tree-nails (or pegs) still in situ, showing reconfiguration. All the older rafters have large Roman numerals carved into them, which was a standard 16th- and 17th-century technique (Newland 2010). On the West Block, the ridge on a dormer window containing a date stone of 1587 is partly hidden by the eaves of the existing roof, providing supporting evidence for a secondary roof.

The roof on the North Block was monitored during the removal of several layers of timber. This revealed the presence of two floors separated

by a stone-built partition wall. The base of several fireplaces was also recorded, suggesting that these floors had smaller rooms within them. An early roofline and blocked fireplace is present on a former gable wall subsumed within the adjoining 19th-century National Library offices, thus attesting that the attic was the third floor of the North Block and had a steeply pitched roof. The floor boards on the west side of the block (Room S03) were highly decorated on their underside and represent the third painted beam and board ceiling recorded during the project.

4.2.6 Courtyard

The watching brief during drainage works in the exterior courtyard recorded fragmentary wall footings that may relate to the Great Tenement that stood until the late 19th century.

4.3 Finds

Christina Hills

During the refurbishment works a number of artefacts were discovered. A detailed inventory of all the finds is included in the archive.

The majority of the more recent finds included 20th-century dated items found below the floorboards, including cigarette packets, newspapers, and a very early Edinburgh Festival poster from the 1960s for a play called *The Bailie* along with prize draw raffle tickets dated to 1956. In the corridor between Stair 04 and Rooms S02 and S04 (Room S01), a most charming find was discovered unstratified. The find was a small child's enamelled cup (Illus 36): on one side of the cup was a picture of Old Mother Hubbard standing weeping over her dead dog and on the opposite side was part of the nursery rhyme text.

One wooden decorative object is a possible medieval oak finial from a piece of furniture or shelving (Illus 37). It is blank on one side, where it would have been unseen, possibly against a wall. The other side is decorated with a hexagonal carving in the centre of a circle.



Illus 36 An early 20th-century toy cup inscribed with part of the text from 'Old Mother Hubbard' (Room S01 unstratified). (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)



Illus 37 A possible medieval oak finial with dowel fixing holes (unstratified). (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)

5. DENDROCHRONOLOGY

Anne Crone

Dendrochronological samples were taken from four locations, Rooms G02, G12 and F12 and the Turnpike Stair. Some 26 core samples were removed from oak joists, beams and rafters and, of these, 17 have been calendrically dated (Illus 38). The results are summarised below by room (full analytical results can be found in Crone 2013; 2016) and then discussed in terms of their contribution to the chronology of Riddle’s Court. The evidence for the source of the timber is presented and the significance of the assemblage is placed within the context of the contemporary timber trade and building construction in Edinburgh.

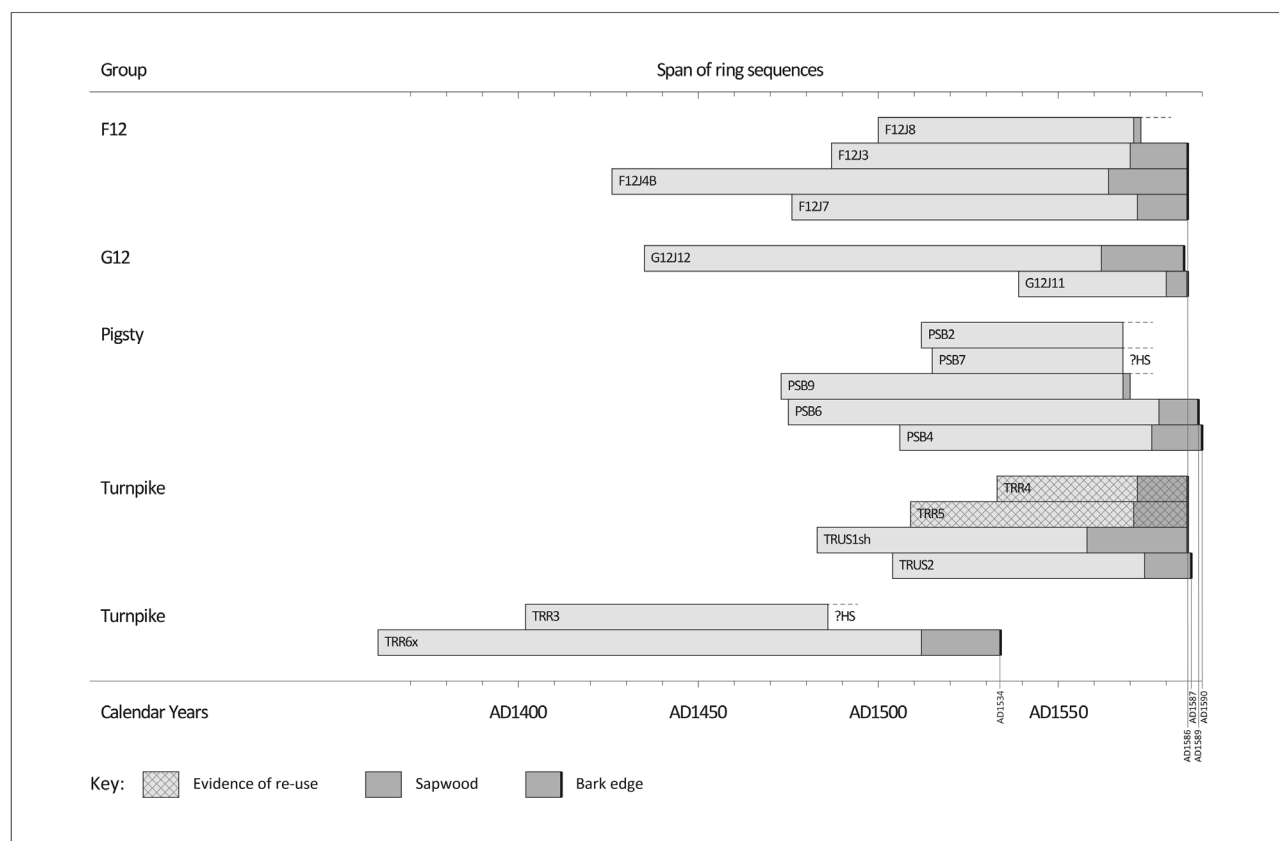
The nature of the outermost ring is critical in determining the felling date; this is explained here to avoid repetition below. If a complete ring is present under the bark then felling could have occurred in the autumn of the dated year or the spring of the following year; for example, a timber with a complete outer ring dated to 1600 could have been

felled in either the autumn of 1600 or the early spring of 1601, before new growth started again that year. Such a felling date will be referred below to as 1600/01. If new growth is just visible under the bark then the timber was felled in the spring of the following year, ie a timber with an outer complete ring dated to 1600 but displaying new growth will have been felled in the spring of 1601.

5.1 Results

5.1.1 Room F12

Four of the seven sampled joists from this room have been dated. Three of the timbers were felled in 1586/87. F12J8 was felled sometime after 1578, a *terminus post quem* calculated by adding the minimum number of missing sapwood rings to the heartwood/sapwood boundary. With three felling dates in the same year, and the absence of any evidence for reuse, it seems most probable that the timbers were imported into Scotland in the spring/summer of 1587 and used in Riddle’s Court that year.



Illus 38 The chronological relationships between the dated timbers. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)

5.1.2 Room G12

Two of the five sampled joists from this room have been dated. G12J12 was felled in the spring of 1586 and G12J11 was felled in 1586/87. With only two dated joists it is difficult to be precise about the construction date of this floor. G12J11 cannot have been imported into Scotland until 1587 at the earliest, even if it was felled in the autumn of 1586 (see below) but the presence of a timber definitely felled in spring 1586 raises the possibility of other, later felling dates in the assemblage which have not been identified. The G12 joists cannot have been inserted earlier than 1587.

5.1.3 Room G02 ceiling

Five of the seven sampled beams from this room have been dated. Only two of the cores retained an intact sequence to bark edge; PSB4 was felled in the spring of 1590 while PSB6 was felled in 1589/90. Woodworm damage on the other cores meant that the sapwood was either missing or detached. Adding a sapwood estimate of 7–21 rings (see below) to the heartwood/sapwood boundary and taking into account the number of detached sapwood rings, it was possible to calculate felling ranges. Thus, PSB2 was felled sometime between 1580 and 1589, PSB7 between 1575 and 1589, and PSB9 between 1588 and 1589.

The interpretation of PSB4 is unequivocal; it was felled in the spring of 1590. All the other timbers could have been felled in either 1589 or 1590. In the absence of any evidence for the use of recycled timber, these timbers probably represent a shipment to Scotland in the spring/summer of 1590.

5.1.4 The Turnpike Stair roof (South Block)

Six of the seven rafters from this roof have been dated. Three of the timbers were felled in 1586/87 and one was felled in 1587/88. TRR6 was felled in the spring of 1534. The outermost rings of TRR3 were damaged by woodworm; consequently, the addition of the minimum number of sapwood rings to the outermost surviving ring provides at best a *terminus post quem* of 1493.

The dendrochronological results do not provide us with an unequivocal date for the construction of the Turnpike Stair roof. Two of the timbers felled

in 1586/7 display redundant joints, so they must have been reused in the construction of the roof sometime after that date. It seems reasonable to assume that a recently constructed building would not have been torn down to provide the timber, so it may have been many decades after the felling date when the roof was built, possibly sometime in the 17th century. Much older timber was also reused in the roof; TRR6 was felled in 1534, nearly half a century earlier than the other timber used in the roof, so the builders may have been using a stockpile of recycled timber from a variety of buildings.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 Building history

Illus 36 summarises the chronological relationships between the dated timbers from Riddle's Court. There is evidence for felling episodes in 1534, 1586, 1586/87, 1588/89, 1589/90 and 1590. Setting aside the earliest episode, the spread of felling dates over five years from 1586 to 1590 could represent the use of stockpiled timber in a complex building project (Crone & Mills 2012: 358–61). For example, at Edinburgh Castle, timber used to build the Great Hall roof had been imported and stockpiled from 1505 to 1509 before construction in 1510 (Crone & Gallagher 2008). Nonetheless, the 1586 and 1586/87 felling dates all occur in Rooms F12 and G12, while the 1589/90 and 1590 felling dates were found only in Room G02, which suggests that there is a chronological sequence throughout the complex, with Rooms F12 and G12 being built first and Room G02 a year or so later. Timbers from these building phases were then reused, possibly later in the 17th century, in the construction of the Turnpike Stair roof which appears to have been built with a mixture of reused timber from varied sources.

Surprisingly few buildings have been recorded with clear evidence of reuse of timber (Crone & Mills 2012: 362) but given the shortage of native timber and the need to import supplies recycling must have been commonplace, and indeed is referenced during Duchess Anne of Buccleuch's later renovations (see 3.4.1 'Upper lodging' above). The Turnpike Stair roof is a prime example of the difficulties of interpreting structures which included mixed cargoes and recycled timber.

5.2.2 Timber source and the timber trade

The Riddle's Court sequences were dated by comparison against a suite of master reference chronologies, generating the highest correlations with chronologies from Scandinavia and thus identifying that region as the source of the timber (Crone & Mills 2012: 330–1). The sequences compare most strongly with Norway, as well as with other Scottish 'import' chronologies (Table 1). The source of the timber is important when estimating felling ranges because sapwood estimates vary across Europe. As Norway has been identified as the source of these timbers, a sapwood range of 7–21 years (Christensen & Havemann 1998) has been used in calculating the felling ranges and *termini post quem* quoted above.

The source of the timber would also have had an impact on transportation times to Scotland, creating a lag between felling and use (Crone & Mills 2012: 361). In Scandinavia, timber processing was carried out in spring and autumn when floodwater and meltwater respectively made sawmilling easy (Lillehammer 1999: 13), yet all the timber ships from the region arrived in Scotland between May and September, the optimum time of year for sailing across the North Sea (Smout 1963: 155). This means that timber felled and processed in the autumn of one year will not have been imported into Scotland until the following

summer, thus introducing a lag of at least one year. This lag has been taken into account when interpreting the felling dates above.

Large numbers of ships must have been arriving in the ports along the Forth loaded with timber to fuel the building boom in Edinburgh between c 1550 and 1650 when the population of the city tripled (Glendinning 2003), and the heterogeneous nature of these cargoes is reflected in the timber in Riddle's Court. The assemblage is very mixed, with timbers varying in age from 48 to 178 years, the age and average ring-widths reflecting widely differing growing conditions. As there are multiple felling dates which must represent shipments over up to five years, the timber must come from different woodlands and this is reflected in the low level of heterogeneity within the assemblage, ie the degree to which each sequence compares visually and statistically with the other. For instance, the two sequences from Room G02, PSB4 and PSB6, did not correlate at all with the other G02 sequences or with other sequences in the assemblage, suggesting that they came from a very distinct and different source. This heterogeneity has been noted in many other assemblages of imported timber (Crone & Mills 2012: 343).

5.2.3 Context

Every 16th- and 17th-century building in Edinburgh and the Lothians which has been dated

Table 1 Riddle's Court full dendrochronological sequence correlations (Note: RCMN×15 is a building chronology combining all dated sequences from Riddle's Court. The numbers in the right-hand column are t-values, the statistic which quantifies the correlation between RCMN×15 and the reference and site chronologies in the left-hand columns)

Sequence code	Site name	Date range (AD)	t-values compared with RCMN×15 AD 1426–1590
Norwegian chronologies			
N053N027	Vennesla+Bjorvatn	1480–1678	7.89
Z010m001	Larvik 5 & 6 (boat)	1480–1727	6.93
Z062m001	Oslo Vaterland (boat)	1384–1512	4.87
Scottish 'import' chronologies			
BRECHIN2	High Street, Brechin, Phase 2	1451–1575	5.89
ACMN×8	Advocate's Close, Edinburgh	1428–1590	4.45

by dendrochronology has been built with oak or pine imported from Scandinavia, and principally from Norway (Crone & Mills 2012; Crone et al 2017), and indeed pine planks from Sweden and Norway are referenced during Duchess Anne of Buccleuch's early 18th-century renovations (see 3.4.1 'Upper lodging' above). Along the Royal Mile this includes Edinburgh Castle, tenements at 302–304 Lawnmarket, 375 High Street and

John Knox House, and Abbey Strand and Queen Mary's Bathhouse at Holyrood. In a recent study of eight of the painted ceilings so characteristic of this period, including those in 302–304 Lawnmarket and Abbey Strand, all were found to have been built using Norwegian oak and pine (Crone et al 2017), so it is possible to be confident in asserting that the painted ceilings in Riddle's Court were also built with Norwegian timber.

6. PAINTED CEILINGS: THEIR SIGNIFICANCE ON THE ROYAL MILE AND WITHIN THE WIDER CONTEXT

Karen Dundas

In the late 16th century Riddle's Court was embellished with highly decorated interiors including painted timber ceilings when the property was built by John McMorran, a wealthy merchant and baillie of Edinburgh, who commissioned the decoration. This type of decoration belongs to a period of artistic activity in Scotland spanning from approximately the mid-1500s to the mid-1600s, and is often referred to as the Scottish Renaissance (Bath 2010). During this period, ceiling and wall painting flourished in domestic settings (Macmillan 1996: 56). A particularly unexpected feature of this decorative style is its popularity over a wide range of society: surviving decoration adorns more obvious interiors such as Falkland Palace and Edinburgh Castle, but it is also commonly found in homes of fashion-conscious wealthy merchants. It is important to note that this type of decoration seems to be quite specific to Scotland, forming a distinctive national style rather than being a British phenomenon (Macmillan 1996: 56). Scotland's connections with continental Europe and Scandinavia were much stronger than with England throughout the 16th century, and the painted decoration was an entirely independent tradition with its own connections (Crone et al 2017). Dendrochronology carried out recently on a number of Scottish Renaissance painted timbers, contemporary with those at Riddle's Court, has confirmed that the majority of pine used in Scottish construction during the 16th and 17th centuries was imported from southern Norway and the Baltic States (Bath 2003: 1).

6.1 Scottish Renaissance painted decoration

During the Scottish Renaissance, painted decoration was usually applied to timber boards and support beams that formed the ceilings of more significant spaces within a building; generally the reverse of the painted boards served as floorboards in rooms above. It is believed that these decorative schemes would have included a 'frieze', painted onto the upper walls between beam ends. Some examples of frieze remains include those discovered in Room F02 at

Riddle's Court; Crathes Castle (Aberdeenshire); and fragmentary evidence found at Moubray House (Royal Mile, Edinburgh). However, wall plaster is easily damaged and often replaced, therefore examples of original frieze decoration are rare. Occasionally paintings extended down the entire wall and examples include Gladstone's Land (Royal Mile, Edinburgh), Culross Palace (Fife), and Crathes Castle (Aberdeenshire); however, this would have been less common in sleeping spaces, where textiles would have been hung below frieze level for insulation.

While decoration was usually executed in tempera (powder pigments in a medium of animal size), work carried out by Scottish Wall Paintings Conservators (SWPC) at Riddle's Court and elsewhere has shown that techniques were often slightly more involved. Until fairly recently, the received view was that Scottish Renaissance tempera ceilings were never varnished; however, it was interesting to note a varnish coating on certain elements of the F02 ceiling at Riddle's Court (eg foliage). A similar coating has been found by SWPC on contemporary painted ceilings along the Royal Mile (Moubray House; 302–304 Lawnmarket). Indeed, it was the discovery of coatings on two surviving ceilings at 302–304 Lawnmarket, and subsequent involvement by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) in this aspect of the project, that resulted in a reappraisal of the original theory. It is now understood that a varnish consisting of pine resin mixed with walnut oil was used to highlight elements of painted ceilings in Scotland from 1580 to 1630.³⁴ It is also possible that an oil/resin-based paint may have been used to achieve a specific colour or desired effect for some decoration (although no research has been carried out to test this theory). Either way, whether executed in tempera or oil paint, it would not have been unrealistic for the budget of a wealthy merchant to stretch to the decoration of a couple of rooms in this fashion, the cost depending upon intricacy of the design commissioned and the expense of pigments chosen.

Academic study of Scottish Renaissance decorative schemes in terms of subject matter, inspiration or technique has been limited. Initial publications describing this style of decoration were published (Apted 1966a; 1966b) over 50 years ago, and it was not until 2003 that a comprehensive

study was published (Bath 2003), which identified sources and listed known schemes (including those lost). Since 2003 there have been a handful of new discoveries;³⁵ nevertheless Bath's book remains the definitive study to date, and his research identifies sources of many of the iconographical features deriving from the engravings and emblem books which were circulating around Europe during that period. These images often entered Scotland via trading connections (Bath 2003: 231; Howard 1995: 7–8), and Bath states that '... much of this painting assumes a certain level of literacy, both verbal and visual, in its viewer, which undoubtedly reflects not only the humanism of the court of James VI but also the level of general education that was available to virtually all social classes who had access to the Scottish universities' (Bath 2003: 2).

The designs on surviving paintings range from popular fruit and flower motifs,³⁶ representing 'plenty' but with no definite symbolism (eg Gladstone's Land, Royal Mile; Culross Palace, Fife) to paintings with highly symbolic or moralistic references (eg Crathes Castle, Aberdeenshire; the 'Painted Chamber' at Culross Palace, Fife). Other motifs such as arabesques seem simply decorative (Culross Townhouse, Fife). Regardless of the designs commissioned, their classical origins evidently reflect the cultural and intellectual aspirations of the owners.

While many more decorative interiors would have been painted than survive, Bath (2003) identifies over a hundred buildings in Scotland where Renaissance painted ceilings still survive in situ, 16 of which are located in Edinburgh; this number has increased to 21 since 2003, three of which are the recent discoveries at Riddle's Court.

By the mid-17th century, Scottish Renaissance painted decoration was beginning to fall out of fashion in Edinburgh, and then gradually throughout the rest of the country. Many ceilings had already been damaged or destroyed by fire, which was a constant threat for overcrowded timber buildings. Uneven beams were shaved back to apply lath, and boldly coloured decoration was concealed behind the monochrome ornamental plaster ceilings and wall panelling that became the predominant taste in a city that now viewed itself as a centre of Enlightenment thinking. Such was the fate of Riddle's Court; the Scottish Renaissance ceilings,

hidden for centuries behind false plaster ceilings, were finally uncovered during refurbishment of the property over 400 years later.

6.2 Scottish Renaissance paintings at Riddle's Court

6.2.1 Room F02 ceiling (King's Chamber, first floor)

Ceiling description

Densely patterned paintings on the board and beam ceiling in Room F02 (Illus 39) were first discovered in the early 1960s. The decoration is believed to date to 1598, to commemorate a visit to Scotland by Ulric Duke of Holstein, representative of the Holy Roman Empire. Pearce (2012) notes that the chief motif is a repeated 'crowned double eagle, the arms of the Holy Roman Empire, cradled by a spray of thistles, and another motif with a cherub's head. The eagle and thistle motif seems unambiguously to declare alliance between Scotland and the empire' and goes on to describe the importance of this ceiling as a rare example of '... ephemeral festive architecture' rather than simply domestic decoration (ibid).

The ceiling consists of 13 beams and 12 bays (compartments) running north/south across the room. As is typical with these ceilings, the widths of the bays and dimensions of the beams vary. The condition of the decoration is very good, and although the paintwork now appears a little worn and faded, it would have been more strongly coloured originally. Decoration on the boards is painted in blue, green earth, red earth, yellow ochre and white with designs outlined in black. The colour of decoration on the beams alternates: red earth, blue, raw umber(?), blue, red earth, blue, raw umber(?), blue, etc. Some of the motifs have a varnish coating which, while clearly visible in raking light, has oxidised and darkened over the centuries. When first applied this coating would have saturated the paint colours beneath, giving them even more impact.

Frieze description

Two surviving frieze fragments from wall plaster between the painted beam ends were removed from the building upon discovery in the 1960s. A black and white photograph from HES conservation files, dating to the discovery of the decoration, shows five surviving frieze fragments on wall plaster between



Illus 39 Part of the painted ceiling in the so-called King's Chamber (F02) showing ornate detail. (© Andrew Wright)

beam ends at the north side of the room; it seems that the fragments were removed from the building upon discovery. The fluid, irregular painting style of the foliate design on these fragments demonstrates that the frieze was painted freehand, unlike the repeating ceiling board emblems which are uniform in size and shape and were probably 'pounced'. A

section of bright yellow line has survived beneath one fragment, indicating that there would have been a line running horizontally along the bottom of the frieze. This line would have marked a distinct separation between the ceiling/frieze and wall paintings or hanging textiles, giving a sense of completion to the scheme.

To the naked eye the bright yellow pigment underlining the frieze has a crystalline appearance and thus sparkles as it catches the light. It is almost certainly orpiment (arsenic sulphide), possibly cut with the more economical yellow ochre to make it go further. Interestingly SWPC found the same colour on a similar line below decorative frieze remains during conservation treatment at Moubray House, further down the Royal Mile. Pigment sellers on the Royal Mile were recorded during the 16th/17th centuries, whose estates on death list ‘orpiment in large quantities’ (Pearce 2015).

Comparison with contemporary ceilings in Scotland

Although the ceiling colours in Room F02 are entirely typical of their era, and the decoration seems simpler than on the more recently discovered

ceilings at Riddle’s Court, there is no doubt that the F02 ceiling is exceptional and unique in its subject matter, and its importance cannot be overestimated, due to the unique commemorative nature of its composition, marking a historically important event in Scotland. There are no other known painted ceilings in Scotland which provide suitable content for comparison in this regard.

6.2.2 Room F03 ceiling (first floor)

Ceiling description

The ceiling of Room F03 (adjacent to the F02 King’s Chamber ceiling) had been significantly affected by fire at some point in its past, and dousing of flames with water has irreversibly damaged the paintings; consequently all of the original decorated boards in this room are missing (Illus 40).



Illus 40 A colour orthophotograph of the painted beam and board ceiling in Room F03, North Block. Inset: the only surviving painted board on the ceiling of Room F03. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)

The ceiling consists of 26 beams and 25 bays running north/south across the room; however, following structural alterations, beams 22–26 are currently hidden behind the east wall of the room. Also, the northernmost ends of beams 8–18 continue outwith the confines of the room and into the stairwell; a solitary painted ceiling board, spanning six bays, survives in this space. Room F03 was originally two distinct spaces; the area east of ceiling beam 20 originally belonged outside of the painted room. Evidence of this is indicated by notches in the beam for a timber room divider; also there are no decorative remains on timbers from the east side of beam 19.

Conservation treatment stabilised the paint remains and improved legibility of the design, but it has not been possible to revive the original pigment colours. Although there appears to be little remaining colour, at close range tiny fragments are still visible in places where the paint surface is broken or the charred surface layer has delaminated.

Decorative design

Three distinct, elaborate designs were discovered on the ceiling beams in Room F03 and, like the decoration in the adjacent King's Chamber, the pattern wraps around all three sides on each beam.

- *Beam design 'A'* – strapwork/ribbon bands outlined with a contrasting colour, with *trompe l'oeil* (an artistic technique that produces an optical illusion of three dimensions) highlights and shadows. A loose, rinceaux vine (decorative bands depicting leaves and often fruit or flowers extending from a central undulating stem) runs in the background, heightening the *trompe l'oeil* effect. On the beam soffit strapwork is punctuated by simple, generic flowers at approximately 60cm intervals. 'Leaf' shapes on either side of the flowers form part of the rinceaux vine decoration.
- *Beam design 'B'* – strapwork/ribbon bands with large fleur-de-lis and other shapes at intervals along beam sides. The ribbons appear to consist of either a wide band with a thin central line of contrasting colour, or a wide band outlined with a contrasting colour. A loose, rinceaux vine runs in the

background. The soffit depicts 'oak leaf' shapes with 3-D 'shadowing', alternating with octagonal shapes formed by strapwork.

- *Beam design 'C'* – strapwork/ribbon band, which appears to consist of either a wide band with a thin line of contrasting colour, or a wide band outlined with a contrasting colour. A rinceaux vine runs in background, periodically forming 'trident' and foliate shapes on beam sides. The rinceaux vine appears as the most dominant feature for design 'C'. In addition to strapwork/ribbons, the beam soffit is punctuated with large, 'flouncy' flowers with four tripartite-edged petals. These flowers alternate with smaller, monochromatic 'spiked' floral designs that form part of the rinceaux vine.

Colour scheme

Colours found on ceiling F03 are white; pale yellow ochre; red earth; blue (azurite or smalt, which have been identified on contemporary ceilings such as those at Gladstone's Land; azurite is not particularly stable and converts to black copper oxide when heated – since the blue painted elements were in particularly poor condition this may indicate use of azurite); a fiery orange-red (likely vermilion containing impurities such as iron oxide and lead oxide; while vermilion is quite stable, impurities are not, causing the paint surface to darken over time to a purplish-brown); a bright yellow (the same as found on the F02 King's Chamber frieze fragment – likely orpiment); a bright green (possibly 'vergaut', a mixture of orpiment and indigo) (Siddall 2018) – all on a black ground.

Comparison with contemporary ceilings in Scotland

The large scale of this space suggests that Room F03 may have been a 'Great Hall', presumably forming a suite of rooms with Room F02.

Designs 'B' and 'C' alternate on beams of the F02 King's Chamber ceiling (albeit in a less detailed manner); however, there is no evidence of beam design 'A'. Large 'flouncy' flowers similar to those of beam design 'C' are also present on the S02 ceiling (described below); very similar painted flowers have been seen on timber wall panels in the 'Painted Chamber' at Culross Palace (Fife).

Designs on the ceiling beams in Room F03 are elegant and elaborate in their composition, and while there are obvious similarities to the beam pattern in adjacent Room F02 (King's Chamber), designs on the F03 ceiling beams appear more complex and finely executed. Examples of this are highlighting and shading on the strapwork, creating a three-dimensional, *trompe l'oeil* effect; the use of a more varied colour palette; and the subtle and intriguing rinceaux vine weaving through the background (the combination of vine overlaid with strapwork on the F03 ceiling is unique to Riddle's Court). Overall the F02 King's Chamber ceiling has the same basic design, but lacks the dramatic effect.

One can only speculate about the decoration on the lost ceiling boards; paint remains on a single surviving panel in the stairwell are of similar proportions to those on the F02 ceiling, and offer a few tantalising clues. However, there are clear differences in the patterns used: the F03 board depicts a bird in a 'walking' pose painted in one of the bays, and folds of hanging draperies. Similar birds can be found on ceiling boards at nearby Gladstone's Land,

and also at Nunraw Tower (Garvald). The source of the bird image is likely to be a 16th-century book illustration. Folds of hanging draperies feature on other painted ceilings such as those at Prestongrange (Prestonpans) and Moubray House (Royal Mile, Edinburgh), and are likely to have been inspired by Hans Vredeman de Vries engravings.³⁷ Curiously, the direction of decoration on the solitary board suggests that the ceiling should be viewed from the north facing southwards (the bird and draperies are upside down), but the most likely explanation is that the board has been taken down at some point and then put back facing the wrong direction.

6.2.3 Room S02 ceiling (second floor)

Ceiling description

The remains of a third Scottish Renaissance painted board and beam ceiling was discovered hidden behind a false ceiling in Room S02 (Illus 41). Like the F03 ceiling, the ceiling in Room S02 had been badly affected by fire at some point in its history and damage to the paintwork had been exacerbated by water. The S02 ceiling has 12 beams and 11 bays



Illus 41 A colour orthophotograph of the painted beam and board ceiling in Room S02. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)

running north/south across the room; approximately one quarter of the original boards are replacements, and many of these are badly charred.

Decorative design

There are two distinct board designs, which alternate with each bay:

- The first design consists of repetitive strapwork cartouches with stylised foliate motifs, all framed by border lines running along either side of the bay.
- The second design is identical, except that floral motifs replace the foliate motifs.

Similarly, there are two alternating beam designs (same pattern on soffits and sides):

- The first design is a running scroll of coloured bands (a form of strapwork) interlacing at approximately five points along the beam, dividing all three beam faces into rectangular lozenges containing arabesque or 'squiggle and dot' motifs.
- The second, simpler design consists of a series of rectangular, framed lozenges containing arabesque or 'squiggle and dot' motifs. Note: beam side lozenges contain arabesques; beam soffits randomly contain either an arabesque or 'squiggle and dot'.

Colour scheme

Historic fire and water damage have irreversibly altered the colours and the resulting appearance is entirely misleading: for instance, areas looking somewhat blue from floor level are in fact where the paint surface has completely turned to ash. Despite this, it has been possible to identify and record the majority of designs and colours.

While much of the paint surface is now covered with a hard, charred coating, SWPC discovered an intricate, bold and brightly coloured scheme, which stresses the insatiable passion for colour evident in Scottish Renaissance interior decoration. The colour pattern is often unpredictable, a typical feature of this type of decoration which tends to be free-flowing and spontaneous. Colours found in cracks, scratches or small losses include white chalk ground; black outlining motifs (lamp or bone black); yellow ochre; blue (azurite or smalt); fiery orange-red (vermilion);

vibrant yellow-green (probably a mix of orpiment and indigo); and bright yellow (orpiment) found on some beam elements but, interestingly, not on the boards.

6.2.4 'Hidden' ceiling (Room S03, second floor)

A fourth Scottish Renaissance painted board and beam ceiling was discovered while lifting the floorboards in the room above Room S03, revealing Renaissance paintings on the reverse of the boards. This ceiling is hidden behind a significant 17th-century ornamental plaster ceiling in Room S03 (which remained unaffected by the refurbishment works), and therefore could not be exposed for viewing. The upturned boards were recorded by CFA and a photographic montage gives an idea of the ceiling designs (Illus 42, 43 & 44).

This ceiling also appears to have been affected by fire, albeit to a lesser extent than the adjacent S02 ceiling. Some lovely decorative details such as highlights and shadows on the strapwork create a three-dimensional, *trompe l'oeil* effect.

The relationship between Rooms S02 and S03 is unclear but it seems fair to say that they would have formed a suite of rooms, given the similarity of the decoration. The board designs (Illus 44) are virtually identical on these ceilings, apart from the colour scheme which may differ, as dark/light colours do not seem to coincide on the various elements. Room S03 ceiling photographs show what looks like a red ochre, white and black scheme; however, as already noted, caution must be observed when making assumptions about colours, as the paint layer consists of poorly bound pigment particles affected by smoke or fire.

Crucially, the beam designs differ completely: the S03 ceiling has strapwork decoration wrapping around from the beam soffits, having more in common with decoration on the F02 King's Chamber and F03 ceilings. Particularly interesting are the sides of the S03 ceiling beams, which depict hanging bunches of grapes.

Comparison with contemporary ceilings in Scotland

The bunches of grapes painted on the Room S03 beams are the only known example of this motif on Scottish Renaissance ceiling beams. In contrast, bunches of grapes are a common motif on ceiling



Illus 42 The floorboards found below the North Block roof prior to uplifting. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)



Illus 43 Tempera artwork underneath one of the floorboards. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)



Illus 44 A colour orthophotograph of the painted ceiling boards below the North Block roof. (© CFA Archaeology Ltd)

boards (eg Gladstone's Land, Royal Mile; 302–304 Lawnmarket, Edinburgh; Culross Palace, Fife), and they are also often found on plaster wall friezes forming part of a Scottish Renaissance scheme (eg Huntingtower, Perthshire; and Crathes Castle, Aberdeenshire). It is noted that the elaborate coloured-banding design on alternate beams of the S02 ceiling is similar to the design on a contemporary ceiling at Nunraw Tower (Garvald).

In addition to the usual earth pigments, SWPC once again discovered bright yellow orpiment and vibrant green on many elements of the S02 ceiling beams. This same green was also found on the F03 ceiling at Riddle's Court, and the colour appears to be 'vergaut'. During conservation treatment in 2010, SWPC observed this vibrant green on a beam lozenge at Moubray House (Royal Mile, Edinburgh).

6.3 Discussion

Unquestionably, the Scottish Renaissance paintings at Riddle's Court are some of the most intriguing survivals of their genre. The elaborate decorative designs on ceilings F03, S02 and S03 have few comparisons either on the Royal Mile or further afield. The range of pigments used, some more valuable than the usual earth pigments (for example, vermilion: although this is the synthetic form of costly cinnabar, it is equally expensive due to its mercury content, since mercury is also rare and valuable), is more extensive than found on the majority of contemporary schemes, and, unquestionably, the F02 King's Chamber ceiling design is entirely unique not only with regards to its application method and uniformity, but also due to its status as an emblem of Scottish diplomacy

towards the close of the 16th century.

The badly charred F03 and S02 ceilings at Riddle's Court have offered a rare and unexpected glimpse of these lively schemes as they would have looked when first painted. Most surviving ceilings from this period have lost their vibrancy due to a variety of factors, among them centuries-long exposure to open fireplaces, UV light degradation, and well-meaning but detrimental

restoration practices; yet brightly coloured remains beneath these damaged paint surfaces have given us a more accurate indication of their intended appearance. Investigation of the Scottish Renaissance painted ceilings at Riddle's Court has provided a treasure trove of new insights into decoration from this period, adding both to the historical archive of the building and the wider oeuvre.

7. NARRATIVE OF THE BUILDING'S HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT

There was no archaeological evidence for earlier buildings on the site of Riddle's Court and what scant building remains were found within the Close were certainly related to later development of the site. However, dendrochronology dates for one of the roof rafters within the Turnpike Stair roof of the South Block indicated a felling date in the spring of 1534, a much older timber than the other timber used in the roof, which may have been recycled from earlier buildings on the site, demolished to make way for the new tenement.

Archaeological excavation undertaken by AOC Archaeology between 2018 and 2019 at the nearby site of India Buildings, Cowgate, uncovered a sequence of occupation, with buildings pre-dating the formation of the burgh in the mid-12th century through to modern times. Discoveries included early medieval wattle and daub buildings, early Edinburgh boundary markers, extensive evidence of burgage plot industry, medieval stone buildings and later 17th- to 20th-century buildings. An interesting and important point is that these burgage plots were established in the mid-12th century and had very rigid property boundaries, and it is a matter of conjecture what form of division was used between them and the formal gardens (Illus 8) under the curtilage of Riddle's Court.

The historical documentary research, in conjunction with the architectural/archaeological investigations, has produced a broad narrative of the building's development up to the early 18th century, divided into five phases (Illus 26). One of the problems encountered in the documentary research was that the name of the building changed several times, as did that of the close. Although known as (Ninian) McMorran's house (or Great Tenement), in the 1660s it was still called the Chancellor's House after Seton's occupation of half a century earlier, and in the 1750s the close was called Royston's Close. Therefore, there may be further documentary information concealed beneath different titles.

In light of the historical evidence that Riddle's Close was part of a much larger building called the Chancellor's House under the tenure of Alexander Seton during the 1610s, the whole concept of the

building complex being solely a merchant's house needs to be revised. The term 'Great Tenement' is rare, and implies something very distinctive. This historical documentary evidence now affords the building a much higher status than was hitherto known. There are almost no surviving comparable courtyard houses in Edinburgh or Leith, and they may always have been rare. The nearest obvious parallel is with the Great Lodging of David Hunter in Dundee's Overgate (demolished 1860s), which was set around a courtyard with a spacious four-windowed hall on the first floor. Hunter's mansion was completed in the early 17th century and was finished with fine furnishings and elaborately carved wooden panelling (McKean et al 2009: 23).

New material found during the historical research is quite explicit that while the tenements between the High Street and the façade of the great gate to McMorran's Court may have run in a north/south direction, the two tenements below them which were conjoined to form the 'Great Tenement' of land ran on an east/west axis, perpendicular to the others. This crucial information is repeated in three different documents of 1616, 1630 and 1684.³⁸ A reference to the removal of thatch by Sir John Clerk post-1663 to fireproof the properties could account for the very steep roofline present at the east end of the existing gable. This and the presence of thackstones on the chimneys at the west end of the block support the common use of thatch until the early 17th century.

The discovery that the Buccleuch family were the owners of the upper lodging between 1714 and 1749 now explains who commissioned the famous Norie panel artwork. Perhaps even more significant is the tenure of the upper lodging by Duchess Anne, which the late Alasdair Ross argued might help explain the plaster ceiling rose that contains the initials of King Charles II and the date 1684. As Ross recalled, her first husband was the illegitimate son of King Charles II, the Duke of Monmouth, who was executed for treason in July 1685. Although her father-in-law died on 6 February 1685, this is according to new-style dating – as far as the duchess was concerned King Charles would have died on 6 February 1684, according to old-style dating. If this suggestion has any merit it means that the ornate plaster ceiling's date should be revised to the period 1714–32 rather than to the late 17th century.

The 18th-century accounts record the costs of the huge amount of refurbishment works to all parts of the building complex. The references to the alterations to the roof spaces and the fenestration show that a great deal of remodelling work was undertaken. The wealth of information also provides an insight on the internal decor of the period (see 3.4 'Back tenement post-1702' above).

The combination of the historic building survey and historical research has revealed that there have been consistent misunderstandings in the earlier interpretations of the development of the site, largely a consequence of the assumption that it developed from two north/south L-shaped blocks in the 16th century. The building has undergone an exceptional level of alteration and adaptation, but, even so, detailed examination revealed too many oddities or inconsistencies for that narrative to be accepted at face value. From the beginning, it was evident that the surviving turnpike was unusual, did not suit various floors and indeed cut across earlier circulation. There was substantial built evidence for a separate turnpike stair towards the southern end of the west wall, and that was then confirmed by the historical research – when the house was sold in 1616 it was described as having two turnpike stairs (see 3.2 'Splitting the Great Tenement 1616–30' above). Equally, a turnpike stair in that location was a more rational explanation for the differing floor levels than the assumption of later alteration for which little evidence could be found.

Once historical research described the property in terms of an east/west layout, and the Edgar 1743 map of Edinburgh confirmed the existence of a close running from the West Bow, the curiosities on the west side of the building began to make more sense. Moreover, once historical research indicated a north-west turnpike, an examination of the fabric indicated that what had been taken for windows could once have been doors (west façade, north-west block).

The crucial issue was whether a horizontal circulation at first-floor level in order to create the Great Tenement made sense of some of the architectural anomalies – and it did, once historical evidence supported the conclusion that the east wing chimney stack was a 17th-century addition.

Analysis of the building helped to develop a better understanding of the early evolution of the

building and, importantly, highlighted the many changes to the complex that were carried out in the 18th to 20th centuries. For instance, the external north-facing elevation on the North Block and the west-facing elevation on the west block have several relieving arches above square-headed windows that are either too narrow or in the wrong position entirely. It is clear from this evidence that the present windows installed mainly in the 19th century are much larger than the ones they probably replaced.

One of the questions raised at the outset of the study was how the residents circulated through the building, given the lack of staircases today, and why so many of the floors did not share the same level. Importantly, when did the lack of formal access between the blocks occur and was this compartmentalisation of the blocks due to the historic sale of different parts of the complex? For example, the 19th-century demolition of the tenement that fronted the Royal Mile effectively removed the turnpike staircase that linked this building with the North Block. Once removed the only access between the first and second floors was by an extramural wooden pentice-roofed staircase (an external timber staircase covered with a sloped roof projecting from the outer wall, to provide some cover), a replica of which still stands today (Illus 22).

The survey confirmed that there was a much earlier entrance into the North Block from the south side at first-floor level that pre-dated the construction of the East Block. This entrance is of historical importance, and it could only have been accessed either by a wooden forestair rising from within the inner courtyard or along a timber gallery that ran along a curtain wall that the East Block was later built against. Early historical accounts mention the presence of 'waste ground' or more likely ground that had yet to be fully developed. Later this became Fisher's Close. It was confirmed that the curtain wall had a door at ground level, which was corroborated by the remains of a *c* 16th-century blocked courtyard entrance with moulded surrounds (found inside the East Block).

From the 17th century onwards there were no adjoining features which linked the West and North Blocks or the South and East Blocks except at the ground level. This discontinuity in circulation on the upper floors was brought about by the historic removal of external turnpike staircases that allowed

access into the main apartments of the three blocks. When the north/south aligned tenement fronting the Lawnmarket was removed it resulted in the removal of the common stair on the north side of the North Block. The aforementioned historical

sketch (Illus 10) of a tenement building flanking Riddle's Close shows the corbelled-out diagonal common entry. The remains of the door jamb and the corbelled-out stonework of the doorway are still present today (Illus 22).

8. CONCLUSION

Riddle's Court has a rich documentary archive which is remarkable for the information contained therein: it chronicles the important people and patrons who lived in the building until it succumbed to the ravages of time as the gentry moved out and the working class, representing a variety of trades and occupations, moved in. The building had the honour of being the first University Halls of Residence under the scrutiny of Sir Patrick Geddes, an astute patron of the arts and a forward thinker on town planning. His ethos of betterment through education was maintained long after his death as the North Block became the offices of the Workers Educational Association. Arts promotion continues to the present day as a venue for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

The documentary evidence confirmed that Riddle's Court has been the home of individuals spanning every social class from the major and minor aristocracy to the working classes. All of these people have left their indelible mark on the building. The presence of so much hitherto unrecorded artwork, namely on the painted beam and board ceilings, has raised the status of the North Block from a modified 19th-century tenement with surviving elements of historical importance in a courtyard setting, to a building commensurate with a very high-status townhouse during the Scottish Renaissance period. The status of the building is further underlined by its royal connections that required the remodelling

of the North Block for ceremonial reasons, and in all probability the commissioning of new painted ceilings including the one surviving in the King's Chamber. The painting which adorns the King's Chamber ceiling is exceptional in terms of the quality of its application, and due to its status as an emblem of Scottish diplomacy towards the close of the 16th century.

The dendrochronology programme has identified a cluster of felling dates between 1586 and 1590 and shown that the source of the oak timbers was Scandinavia. Recycling of useful timber appears to have used locally sourced material to build the turnpike roof within the South Block.

Fire damage appears not to have been catastrophic enough to warrant the replacement of the floors in the North Block where the painted beams and boards show evidence of fire blackening and water ingress from leaks. Research on the charred painted ceilings of F03 and S02 revealed an ornate, bold and brightly coloured scheme despite the damage. We are left to speculate whether the North Block roof space was barrel-vaulted and there is no reason it could not have been elaborate given the amount of artwork on the ceilings of the two floors below.

To date, the results are unparalleled as no other building in the Royal Mile has received this level of historical and archaeological research. As stated by one of the late authors, the truth of the building's story throughout the ages lies within its lost features and the gaps they left behind.

APPENDIX 1 TIMELINE SUMMARISING THE PATRONS AND KEY CHANGES TO THE BUILDING

Table 2 Timeline summarising the patrons and key changes to the building

Date	Historic event	Building development
6/8/1584	John McMorran begins buying property to the south of the High Street.	
13/1/1587	Final sasine recorded to complete John McMorran's purchases of property to the south of the High Street.	
1595	John McMorran shot and killed.	
Unknown	Alexander Seton, Earl of Dunfermline, begins to rent the south (major) part of the Great Tenement, including the courtyard floor east and north-east, and the whole of the back tenement and parts of the fore tenement.	
1598	Banquets for King James VI and his wife, Anne of Denmark, the Duke of Holstein and his entourage held at Riddle's Court.	Painted beam ceiling commissioned in the King's Chamber and other fine ceilings painted within the North Block.
1/8/1612	The Convention of the Royal Burghs meets in Ninian (1) McMorran's house.	
10/2/1616		Ninian (2) McMorran sells the fore tenement of the Great Tenement (minus the great gate) and one other tenement to his brother George for 10,000 merks; as part of this deal George agrees to close up with stone and mortar the three entrances belonging to him in the courtyard and the great gate. [Great Tenement broken up into two properties.] [The two tenements sold to George are linked on the first floor via Ninian (1) McMorran's apartments.] <i>Note:</i> Theoretically there should be a blocked up doorway somewhere high on the wall to the right of the great gate.
Unknown	Earl of Lauderdale takes over as tenant from the Earl of Dunfermline, possibly after Seton died on 16 June 1622?	

Table 2 *cont*

Date	Historic event	Building development
7/2/1630	Back tenement sold by Ninian (2) McMorran to Sir John Smith for 12,000 merks and Earl of Lauderdale evicted.	Referred to as Johne Makmorans close.
1662	City Council rents the Chancellor's House from Sir John Smith at £50 per month.	
1665	Sir John Clerk of Penicuik begins to buy up the Smith family bonds that were secured against the property.	
June 1676	Sir John Clerk of Penicuik forecloses on Sir John Smith and receives title to all of Smith's lands to the south of the High Street, including the back tenement of the Great Tenement.	
20/5/1684	Sir John Clerk sells on these lands to Roderick Mackenzie of Prestonhall.	Referred to as John McMorans close.
Unknown	Roderick Mackenzie sells part of the back tenement to (1) Sir Thomas Stewart of Balcashie who subsequently disposes the same to (2) Sir Archibald Mure, late Provost of Edinburgh. [Back tenement broken into two properties.]	
1684–1702	Roderick Mackenzie of Prestonhall sells the upper lodging of the back tenement to his brother George Mackenzie, the future first Earl of Cromartie.	
28/3/1702	George Mackenzie disposes the upper lodging of the back tenement to his wife, the Countess of Wemyss. This half still includes the great gate and the court.	Building referred to as McMorrans close.
1709	Gabriel Rankin of Orchardhead inherits two lodgings and their cellars as part of the fore tenement from his father, Walter; at that time the tenants are named as Catherine Hutchison (the lower lodging) and Patrick Graham (the upper lodging).	

Table 2 *cont*

Date	Historic event	Building development
1714	Duchess Anne of Buccleuch purchases the upper lodging of the back tenement from the Earl of Cromartie and installs James Mackenzie of Royston (son of the first Earl of Cromartie) as a tenant.	The duchess begins renovating the property quite extensively. A large collection of trade receipts for painting and repair show that her involvement in refurbishment was extensive. Alterations including the installation of panelling to first-floor rooms in South Block (Rooms F08–F10): the installation of marble fireplaces; the roof changes from a mix of thatch and slate to 100% slate.
1730	James Mackenzie of Royston, together with William Carmichael, own part of the Court, possibly the main part of the fore tenement.	Now called Royston's Court.
Early to mid-18th century		Installation of panelling and painted landscape panels by James Norie in North Block (Room S03).
1749	Francis, Duke of Buccleuch, sells the upper lodging and the great gate to William Alexander, a merchant in Edinburgh. This seems to be the end of the aristocratic occupancy of any of the McMorran's Court buildings.	
1749	Alexander Home sells two dwelling houses and their cellars in Royston's Court to John Mein, a slater, who then subsequently sells the same to James Carmichael, a writer to the signet. Otherwise unlocated but this could be the property owned by Gabriel Rankin of Orchardhead in 1709.	
1751–63	David Hume (philosopher of the Scottish Enlightenment) resides in Riddel's Land (probably in foreland properties on the Lawnmarket).	The names Riddle's Court/Close begin to appear in documents.
1752		The close is known as Royston's Close, and is occupied by well-to-do merchants among others.
1829–34		The south part of the South Block and wings and the gardens are removed by the construction of Victoria Street.

Table 2 *cont*

Date	Historic event	Building development
1841	By the 1841 census most of the dwellings at Riddle's Court are populated by shopkeepers, artisans and labourers. Accounts document the use of some rooms in Riddle's Court, including a bookbinder's workshop and former public theatre. Riddle's Court properties are under multiple occupancy and fall into decline and disrepair with only ad hoc repairs undertaken.	Large interior fitted cupboards and shelving possibly date from this period of use.
1854–93	The Mechanics' Subscription Library is relocated from James Court, occupying the whole of the building, using the ground floor as the library and renting tenements above.	
1865–6	Valuation Rolls name the following owners of Riddle's Court: James Pillans, George Moir, the Mechanics' Library, Thomas Baillie, William Kenmore, Rev William McLean, Miss Thomson, John Campbell, Adam Rutherford and Dr James Ramsay.	
1867		Improvement Act saw the introduction of sanitary provision to Riddle's Close, although by this time most respectable tenants had left.
1871		The Norie panels are painted over by a fish cadger who occupied the royal apartment. Other panels are removed.
1885–6	Valuation Rolls name the following owners of Riddle's Court: Hay Norrie, Mrs Stuart Leake, the Mechanics' Library, Andrew Smith, William Clark, William McLean's Trustees, James Gray, James Cameron, James Beveridge, Mrs Georgina Duncan and William Black.	
1881	Census records 247 inhabitants in Riddle's Court in a combination of families.	

Table 2 *cont*

Date	Historic event	Building development
1889–97	Patrick Geddes secured property at Riddle's Court and lodged the application for improvements to the South Block, which was opened as accommodation for students in 1890.	Alterations included seated bays to the first-floor room for use as a common room (F10) and the subdivision of the large ground floor vacated by the Mechanics' Subscription Library into five narrow rooms with a corridor at the rear. Geddes also acquired the North Block and, following the demolition of the adjacent tenement on the east side of the close, the architect Capper devised a pentice stair to access the second floor of the property. The original pitched roof of the North Block was replaced by a flat roof during this time.
<i>c</i> 1895		<i>Vivendo discimus</i> ('By living we learn') is inscribed on the voussoirs of the rebuilt pend arch, with an armorial panel of the University Hall insignia above. In 1892 the accommodation is reported as consisting of: Large Common Room (F10) Dining Room (F09) 14 Private Rooms Kitchen Servants' Rooms The kitchen and the servants' rooms were noted as being part of the rest of the building. There were two entrances: one from Victoria Terrace and the other from Riddle's Court.
1895–6	Valuation Rolls name the following owners of Riddle's Court: Patrick Geddes and Robert Gordon.	Through the compulsory purchase powers under the 1893 Act, Geddes was able to commission the removal of tenements on the east and west sides of Riddle's Court corresponding to the foreland properties by Aitken, and creating a larger outer court to Riddle's Court buildings.

Table 2 *cont*

Date	Historic event	Building development
1897		Dining room ceiling is painted by master artist Thomas Bonnar.
1901	Census reveals a breakdown in student occupancy of the University Halls at Riddle's Court. Eleven students, a cook, a table maid and a housekeeper are listed among 25 other residents, mainly artisans and skilled workers.	
1905–6	Valuation Rolls name the following owners of Riddle's Court: The Town & Gown Association, Donald Stewart.	
1925–6	Valuation Rolls name the following owners of Riddle's Court: The Town & Gown Association, Donald Stewart.	
1946	The City of Edinburgh Council acquires Riddle's Court and the properties fronting the Lawnmarket from the proprietors of Riddle's Court for £1,700. At this time the properties comprised 15 houses, including shops fronting the Lawnmarket. The houses were initially used to provide overspill accommodation for the city.	
1952	Riddle's Court is used as Fringe venue by the Oxford Theatre Group using the ground-floor room as performance space, much of the South Block as a dormitory and the courtyard as an alfresco dining area.	
1975		Riddle's Court is repaired and developed by the City of Edinburgh Council to the designs of John W Paterson to provide accommodation for WEA offices on the second floor of the North Block. Refurbishment of the second floor of the South Block provides caretaker's flat and the remainder for community and education outreach.
1996		Painted dining room ceiling is repaired on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council by M M Pryor, funded by the sale of the Norrie panels to the National Museums of Scotland.

Table 2 *cont*

Date	Historic event	Building development
2005	The City of Edinburgh Council vacates Riddle's Court.	
2011	Scottish Historic Building Trust occupies South Block second floor.	
2012	Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland (AHSS) moves to Riddle's Court.	
2015–17	The creation of Riddle's Court into the new Patrick Geddes Centre for Learning.	Extensive internal and external refurbishment carried out by SHBT. Officially opened by the HRH the Duke of Rothesay on 8 September 2017.

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The project archive will be deposited with the National Record of the Historic Environment. The finds have been accessioned to the Museum of Edinburgh.

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10. NOTES

1. NAS, B22/8/26: Edinburgh Burgh, Register of Deeds 7 July 1629 – 29 March 1631.
2. For the banquets see Juhala (2000); NAS E31/15, 16, master household books of Hume of Wedderburn, described in Milne Home (1902: 66–71, 77). Letter from George Nicolson to Sir William Bowers dated 2 May 1598: Mackie (1969: 203–4), banquet Sunday 2 May 1598. The town's expenses are partly published in Wood (1927: 362–3), app. xxxiv, totalling £1103-18-8d, from Edinburgh City Archives, Treasurer's Accounts, ii, 114, 135–7.
3. A 'woman house' is where senior female members of the household (but not the family) slept and worked. It would have implements for sewing and laundry, and the family's children sometimes slept there (for example, the baby Prince Charles who was in Seton's custodianship prior to his removal to London *c* 1604–5).
4. NAS, B22/8/26, 1629–1631 (no pagination).
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. Edinburgh Library, SL144/1/5, Dean of Guild Minute Book, 1624–1646 (no pagination). It should be noted that three of these minute books were unavailable at the time of writing because they were undergoing conservation. They may contain further details about the tenements.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. NAS, GD18/658.
12. NAS, GD18/2419.
13. NAS, GD305/1/96/13.
14. *Ibid.*
15. NAS, B22/2/44, ff 32r–34v.
16. NAS, GD224/172/2.
17. *Ibid.*
18. NAS, B22/2/24, ff 130v–131v.
19. NAS, GD224/260/7.
20. *Ibid.*
21. NAS, B22/2/44, ff 32r–34v.
22. NAS, B22/2/19, ff 158r–160r.
23. NAS, B22/2/19.
24. NAS, B22/2/53, ff 54r–57r.
25. NAS, B22/2/51, ff 3r–4v; B22/2/59, ff 8v–10v; B22/2/62, ff 76v–78v.
26. NAS, B22/4/148, ff 155–9.
27. University of Strathclyde Archive, T-GED 12/1/51.
28. *Ibid.*
29. University of Strathclyde Archive, T-GED 12/1/24.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*
32. <https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/collection-search-results/panel/373912>
33. NAS, B22/8/26, 1629–1631 (no pagination).
34. Michael Pearce (previously Historic Interiors Researcher with Historic Scotland), in email correspondence with SWPC dated 10 May 2010.
35. Since the publication of Bath's book in 2003, two late 16th-century painted ceilings were discovered during construction work at Advocate's Close, followed by three more at Riddle's Court (Crone et al 2017; Borden & Holden 2010).
36. In email correspondence with SWPC dated 26 July 2010, Michael Pearce states that fruit and flower motifs on Scottish Renaissance decoration bear a striking similarity to those on contemporary tapestries produced in France and the Low Countries in centres such as Oudenaarde in Flanders.
37. <https://www.europeana.eu/portal/en/explore/people/161718-hans-vredeman-de-vries.html> Accessed 7 August 2019.
38. NAS, B22/1/65, f 27v; B22/8/26, 1629–1631 (no pagination); GD18/589.

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