

AHSS EDINBURGH ARCHITECTURE QUIZ 2020 – ANSWERS

1. In what year did the Great Fire of Edinburgh destroy countless buildings?

c) 1824

In November of this year a fire broke out in a printing shop in Old Assembly Close, off the High Street. It raged for several days, killing 13 people, consuming an estimated 400 homes, and destroying the steeple of the Tron Kirk.

2. What were the original names given to the two squares sited at either end of George Street on James Craig's New Town plan of 1767?

c) St Andrew's Square and St George's Square

St George's Square was renamed Charlotte Square, after George III's wife, in order to avoid confusion with George Square in Edinburgh's southside.

3. This is one of two buildings facing each other in Thistle Court on Thistle Street. What is their significance in relation to the building of the New Town?

a) They are believed to be the earliest surviving buildings in the New Town

This pair of 2-bay semi-detached houses was built in 1767–68. The houses are unusual in that they were built at right angles to the street rather than in alignment.

4. Which author wrote the following, and where can a plaque bearing the quote be found?:
'... how I feared I should never have a friend far less a wife, and yet passionately hoped I might; how I hoped (if I did not take to drink) I should possibly one day write one little book. And then now — what a change! I feel somehow as if I should like the incident set upon a brass plate at the corner of that dreary thoroughfare, for all students to read, poor devils, when their hearts are down.'

b) Robert Louis Stevenson, Drummond Street

The quote is from a letter written by Stevenson in 1888 to his dear friend Charles Baxter in which he reminisces about his early life in Edinburgh.

5. Which bridge partially collapsed in 1769, killing five people?

c) North Bridge

Built from 1765 to the designs of William Mylne, the original three-arched bridge that linked the Old and New Towns was far enough advanced by 1769 to be opened to pedestrians. But then disaster struck when part of the south abutment collapsed, killing five people. The bridge was finally completed in 1772, only to be replaced in 1897 by the current steel-arched design.

6. Designed by Robert Adam in 1789, Edinburgh University's Old College provides a fine example of the use of sandstone quarried from Craigleith Quarry. Sixteen horses were required to haul each of the portico's six monolithic columns from the quarry to the site. What is the weight of each column?

b) 9 tons

Craigleith Quarry was worked from 1615 until its closure in 1942, during which time it supplied much of the high-quality sandstone used to build Edinburgh's New Town. The quarry was subsequently filled in with inert waste and in 1993 a new Sainsbury's store was built on the site.

7. Old College was completed after Robert Adam's death by William Henry Playfair. But who, in later years, designed the iconic dome that stands over the main entrance?

a) Sir Robert Rowand Anderson

The quadrangle was completed by Playfair in 1818–34, but the dome, envisaged on a smaller scale by Adam in his original designs, was not built until 1888. A hint that this is a later addition lies in the bowed housing of the staircase that protrudes from the drum (visible from inside the quadrangle), which intentionally disrupts the symmetry of the classical design.

8. Which area, designed and largely built between 1822 and 1827 and comprising 150 townhouses, was under feudal ownership and excluded from the council's New Town plans because the owner wished it to be the most exclusive area in Edinburgh?

a) Moray feu

The Earl of Moray owned a 13-acre estate to the north west of the New Town, which he decided to feu for development in 1822. He commissioned James Gillespie Graham to draw up plans for the street layout and elevations and by 1830 the grandest elements of the scheme – Randolph Crescent, Ainslie Place and Moray Place – had been completed, work on lesser streets continuing through until the mid 1850s.

9. Built from 1816 onwards through until the end of the 1820s, Ann Street is arguably one of Edinburgh's most picturesque streets. It is reputedly named after the relative of a famous Scottish painter associated with this area of Edinburgh. Who is that relative?

c) Sir Henry Raeburn's wife

Henry Raeburn acquired land around Stockbridge through his marriage to Ann Edgar, later extending his holding by purchasing the adjacent St Bernard's estate. He started to develop the land c.1813 and Ann Street was begun three years later, probably to the designs of James Milne. The street is unusual in that the houses have front gardens, which combined with the Greek architectural detailing contribute to its picturesque qualities.

10. On which building will you find five wise and five foolish virgins? The wise ones will doubtless have insured themselves!

b) *Standard Life Assurance Building*

The offices are located at the east end of George Street, on the north side. The neo-Palladian building, designed by JM Dick Peddie & George Washington Browne, was built 1897–1901 and incorporates a large pediment from David Bryce's earlier building of 1839. The pediment sculpture by John Steell represents the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins from Matthew 25:1–13. The adjoining extension by Michael Laird & Partner dates from 1975 and bears a more modern interpretation of the same parable by Gerald Laing.

11. Work is currently being carried out on the former Frasers store at the west end of Princes Street to create Diageo's 'Johnnie Walker Princes Street' visitor attraction. Who was the first occupier of a purpose-built department store on this site?

a) *Robert Maule & Son*

The drapers Robert Maule & Son set up shop in Tolbooth Wynd, Leith, in 1879, becoming so successful that by 1894 they were able to move to a grand purpose-built store on the west end of Princes Street. The company was subsequently bought out by Binns Ltd in 1934 and another new store – the one we see today – was constructed on the site the following year.

12. Which building in George Street bears a rather weary St Andrew leaning on his Saltire cross?

c) *Freemason's Hall*

Designed by A Hunter Crawford, Freemason's Hall was built 1910–12, replacing an earlier hall by David Bryce. The statue of St Andrew that surmounts the central doorway is by HS Gamley.

13. What would have been considered unusual for the time about the sculptor of David Livingstone's statue in East Princes Street Gardens?

b) *The sculptor was a rare example of a woman artist receiving a public commission*

Amelia Robertson Hill was a prominent 19th-century Scottish sculptor, who specialised in carving marble busts of literary and historical figures. She contributed three figures to the Scott Monument, and was married to the pioneering photographer David Octavius Hill.

14. Which architect was responsible for the creation of the city's ceremonial entry route from the east, completed in 1822?

b) *Archibald Elliot*

Designed on a grand scale as an extension to Princes Street, Waterloo Place incorporates Regent Bridge, which spans the Low Calton ravine. Elliot's designs were chosen over those of James Gillespie Graham and Richard Crichton.

15. In his Edinburgh lectures of 1853, John Ruskin was famously scathing about the city's classical architecture. He took particular offence at a series of sixty-six identical lion's heads adorning a Greek revival building, complaining 'it is seldom that, in the very basest and coarsest grotesques of the inferior Gothic workmen, anything so contemptible as this head can ever be found'. To which building was Ruskin referring?

c) *Royal Scottish Academy, formerly the Royal Institution*

The lions heads, which run around the cornice at regular intervals, were not part of Playfair's original design of 1822 but were added when the building was extended and enriched in 1832–35. Ruskin had John Millais draw the head of a tiger in Edinburgh zoo (there being no lions!) to prove his point that the stone heads were unrealistic and unacceptably idealised.

16. The Scottish Georgian Society, the previous incarnation of the AHSS, operated for many years from 39 North Castle Street. Which celebrated Scot previously lived at this address?

a) *Author Sir Walter Scott*

Sir Walter Scott lived in the house in North Castle Street from 1801 and made it his Edinburgh home until he was forced to sell it in 1826 to help pay off his debts. Turner made a watercolour of Scott's former home in 1836, which was later engraved for JG Lockhart's 'Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott'.

17. The forecourt of the Palace of Holyroodhouse is partially enclosed by substantial wrought iron railings and gates based on Jean Tijou's work at Hampton Court in the late 17th century. What is their significance?

c) *They were built as a memorial to Edward VII*

George Washington Browne was commissioned to design the wrought-iron screen and gates which form the Scottish National Memorial to Edward VII in 1911 but the work was not executed until 1920–22. A quick search on YouTube will reveal Pathé News footage of Queen Mary officially opening the Memorial Gates in 1922.

18. Can you place the following Edinburgh schools in the date order of their foundation: (1) George Watson's College (2) George Heriot's School (3) Royal High School?

b) *3, 2, 1*

The Royal High School was founded in 1128, the iconic building on Calton Hill being completed to the designs of Thomas Hamilton in 1829. George Heriot's was founded in 1628 and the initial building phase progressed from this date until 1693. George Watson's opened its doors in 1741 and the current building on Colinton Road, designed by James B Dunn, dates from 1932; until recently a portion of William Adam's original building could still be found to the rear of the Royal Infirmary on Lauriston Place, but it has since been demolished.

19. Modernist buildings are rare in central Edinburgh. Built in 1962–64, this brutalist extension to Edinburgh University's Student's Union is one of the few remaining. It can be found tucked away behind Teviot Row House in Charles Street Lane, but which was the architectural practice responsible for designing it?

b) Rowand Anderson, Kininmonth and Paul

With its uncompromising concrete façade, complete with béton brut detailing (shutter-marked concrete), the building would doubtless never have been passed by the planning office had it not been tucked away in an obscure location. Alas, it is now being threatened with demolition as part of the University's redevelopment of the Student's Union building.

20. Edinburgh has many carved stone plaques incorporated into its buildings, celebrating a wide range of trades. Where is this plaque to be found?

c) Stockbridge Colonies

Comprising eleven terraces of 'flatted cottages', the Stockbridge Colonies were laid out in 1861 by the Edinburgh Co-operative Building Association, the first of several such colonies built in the city during the second half of the 19th-century. Five of the gable ends fronting onto Glenogle Street bear carved stone plaques depicting the tools of various building trades.

21. Edinburgh's cemeteries provide peaceful places to walk during lockdown. Can you match the following architects with their final resting place?

1. William Adam – **c) Greyfriars Kirkyard**
2. Thomas Hamilton – **d) Old Calton Burial Ground**
3. William Henry Playfair – **a) Dean Cemetery**
4. David Bryce – **e) New Calton Burial Ground**
5. Sir John James Burnet – **b) Warriston Cemetery**