

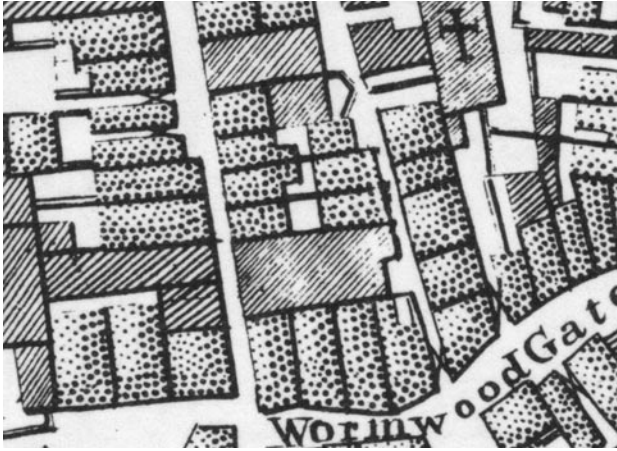
1 – John Rocque, *EXACT SURVEY OF DUBLIN* (1756)
detail showing dotted symbols at the Linen and Yarn Halls and on Henrietta Street, Dublin
(courtesy Harry Margary Publishers)

A shopping arcade in eighteenth-century Dublin: John Rocque and the Essex Street ‘piazzas’

JOHN MONTAGUE

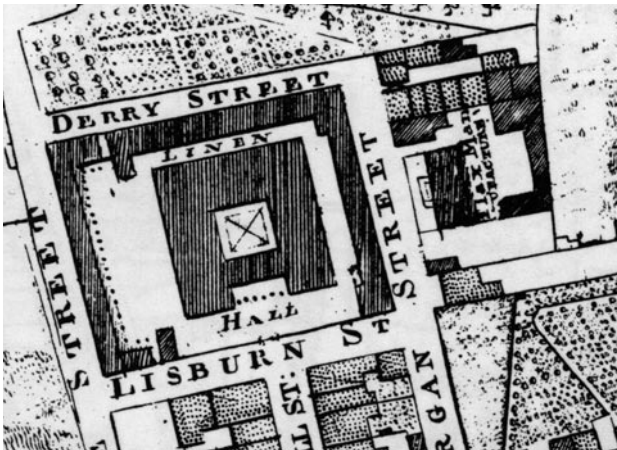
JOHN ROCQUE'S FOUR-SHEET *EXACT SURVEY OF THE CITY AND SUBURBS OF DUBLIN*, (1756), was the most comprehensive and detailed mapping of any city in these islands before the establishment of the Ordnance Survey in Ireland in the early nineteenth century.¹ Rocque was responsible for maps of cities throughout Europe, including plans of Rome, Paris and London. However, despite their considerable detail and large scale (the London map comprised twenty-four sheets and measured almost seven-by-thirteen feet), all of Rocque's previous maps had been limited to a depiction of the city block. His Dublin map, by contrast, was the only one which claimed to provide a detailed plan of 'the Ground Plot of all Publick Buildings, Dwelling Houses, Ware Houses, Stables, Courts, Yards &c' within the precincts of the mid-eighteenth-century city. Something about the intensity of the detail in this Dublin map, the linear idiosyncrasies, and the irregular, generally unrepeated shapes of many of the buildings depicted, tends on first view to suggest a level of accuracy we generally associate with a satellite photograph, or, indeed, of the early nineteenth-century OS maps. For the most part, Rocque delivered on the claims, quoted above, which he made in the title of the map. As a result, the 1756 map is the first port of call for historians and archaeologists in their efforts to reconstruct the city or decipher its excavated remains, whether they be medieval, early modern or eighteenth-century. Nevertheless, Rocque's limitations need to be considered.²

One aspect of the intense detail on display in Rocque's work is the manner in which he used the types of linear shading available to the engraver – parallel lines, hatched or cross-hatched, or stippled dots and spots in various patterns – to augment the information of the plan itself. Besides the limited number of hachures used to suggest the nature of the ground relief on the outer areas of the map, Rocque used these engraved micro-lines as symbols to indicate the function of the buildings

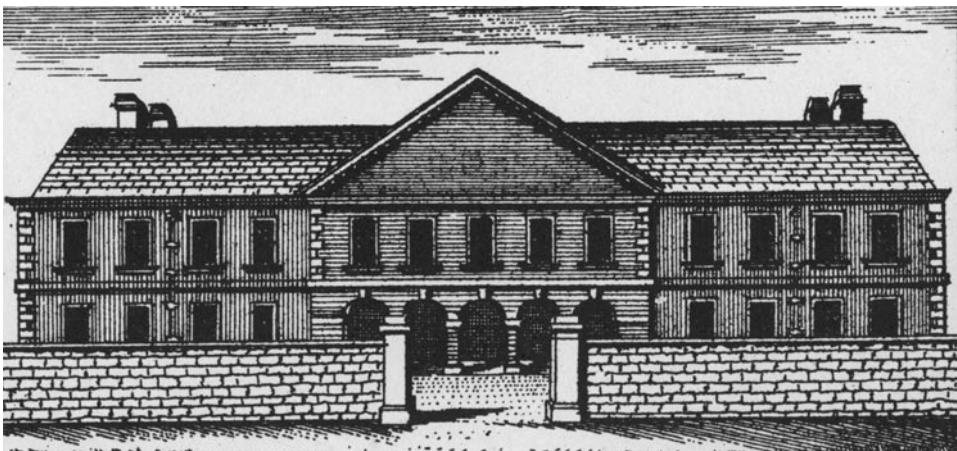


2 – John Rocque, *EXACT SURVEY OF DUBLIN* (1756): detail showing the care taken by engraver Andrew Dury over modulated stippling (courtesy Harry Margary Publishers)

3 – John Rocque, *Exact survey of Dublin* (1756): detail showing dotted symbols at the Linen and Yarn Halls and on Henrietta Street, Dublin (courtesy Harry Margary Publishers)

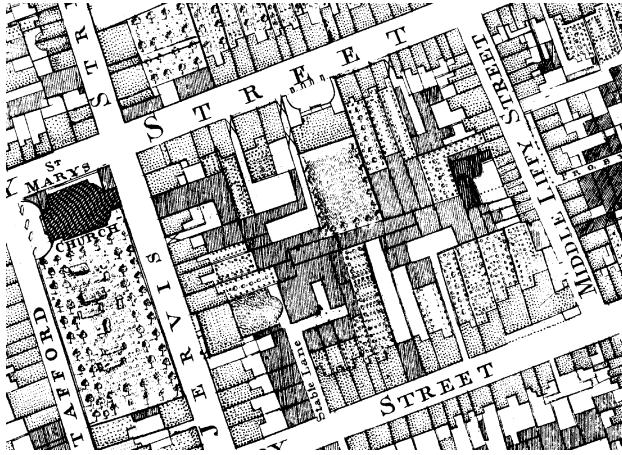


4 – Charles Brooking, *A MAP OF THE CITY AND SUBURBS OF DUBLIN* (1728): elevation of the Linen Hall, Dublin

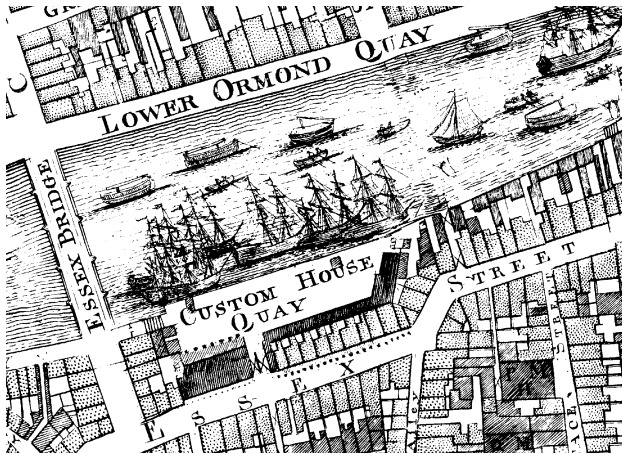


delineated.³ So the utility building, outhouse and stable were shaded with a series of parallel lines; domestic or dwelling houses were stippled; public buildings were described by a more intense parallel diagonal line, and Church of Ireland churches by a cross-hatch. Roman Catholic chapels and meeting houses of various denominations were also included, and although they were for the most part labelled by initials, we might perhaps not read too much into the fact that they have the same diagonal hatching as the stable or outhouse!⁴ The close control exercised over these discriminating ciphers is one of the factors which makes this map so potentially exciting as a repository of historical information. The care taken by Rocque's engraver – on this project Andrew Dury – to, for example, modulate the stipples inside every single house to give a slight hint of modelled three-dimensionality suggests to us the possibility that equal care was taken with the micro-lines which depicted function (Plate 2), with all of the social and historical information that this implies.

However, a slightly different type of stippling, or series of differently shaped or sized dots, was used to depict other subtle topographical and architectural features. A quick survey of examples will show the range of possible meanings of these dotted patterns, and the consequent difficulty in some cases of their interpretation. For example, in Rocque's depiction of the Linen Hall (Plates 1, 3), we might be forgiven for thinking that its entrance was marked by a row of six columns, while the more careful illustration in Brooking's elevation drawing indicates that this was an arcaded entrance loggia with four piers (Plate 4).⁵ The series of dots to the west of the Linen Hall entrance portico, with their suggestive shading, we might more confidently assume to be an arcaded loggia of the type found in the Royal Hospital or Royal Barracks. If we are to take it, for example, that the five dots in front of the Yarn Hall (Plate 1) represented a portico of some sort, what should we assume to be the meaning of the equally prominent dots in front of the terrace of houses just to the north of it on Henrietta Street? No doubt, its context, and our knowledge of the buildings which survive, suggest the probability of bollards, demarcating a pedestrian zone of the type also seen on Rocque's Sackville Mall, and confirmed as such by the near contemporary Oliver Grace view.⁶ However, this does not help us when we look at the wobbling line of dots on the east side of Liffey Street, or when we come to interpret the even more obtuse significance of the line of dots in the yard of the Roman Catholic St Mary's Church on Liffey Street, mysteriously hidden from view behind the street façade on a site now occupied by Marks & Spencer's (Plate 5). Then, just to confound our expectations, Rocque used an axonometric 3D depiction of the bollards at the front of the Church of Ireland St Mary's nearby. A similar three-dimensional approach was also used for the bollards in front of the private dwelling house (Langford House), which was on the same block as the city's main Roman Catholic chapel. Some deference by the cartographer to social significance, shown by his choice of marks, may be assumed.



5 – John Rocque, *EXACT SURVEY OF DUBLIN* (1756): detail showing block between Jervis, Henry, Liffey and Abbey streets, featuring St Mary's Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland churches (courtesy Harry Margary Publishers)



6 – John Rocque, *EXACT SURVEY OF DUBLIN* (1756): detail showing Custom House Quay (courtesy Harry Margary Publishers)

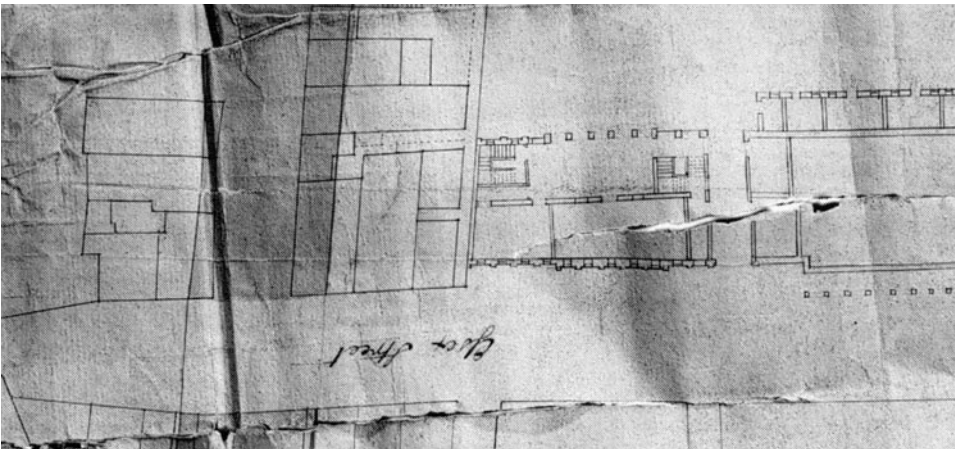
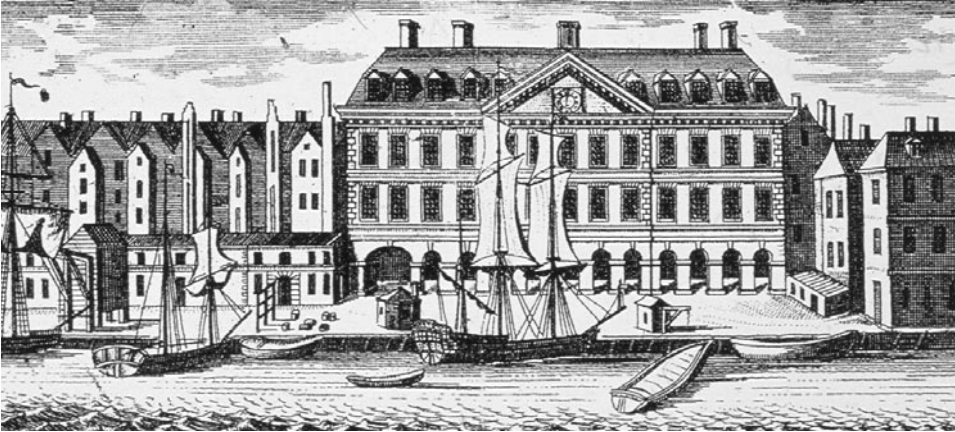
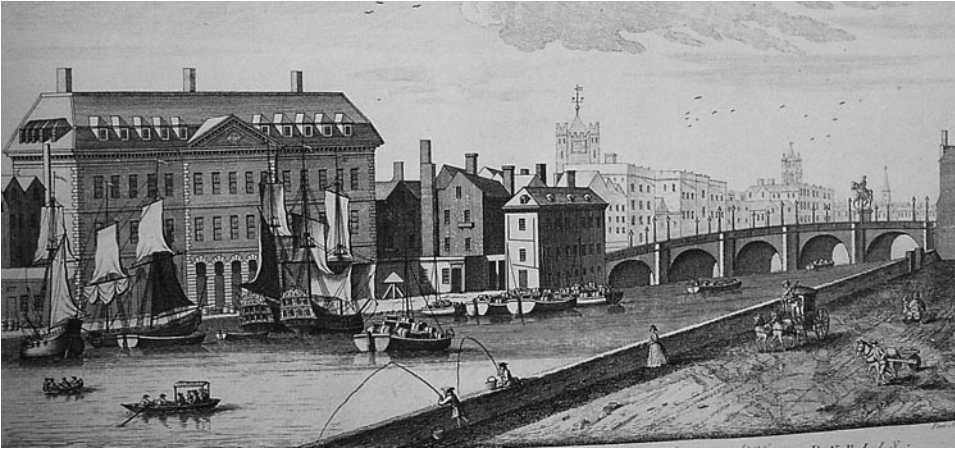
CUSTOM HOUSE

An interesting case, and the principal subject of this article, is brought to our attention by the series of dots used by Rocque and his engraver to describe the layout of the old Custom House (Plate 6), for which we are well served by comparative contemporary or near-contemporary images. This building was constructed between about 1704 and 1707 by Thomas Burgh, architect of the Old Library in Trinity, and of the Royal Barracks and Linen Hall already mentioned.⁷ This Custom House was the third such building on a quay which had been laid out in the early seventeenth-century for the receipt and inspection of all goods being imported into or exported from the city.⁸ There are three lines of dots on Rocque's map here: one (to the north) in front of the Custom House proper; a very light line of dots directly to its rear (on the south side); and a much more prominent set (also to the south) at the front of a

terrace of houses facing onto Essex Street. In between is a heavy-handed depiction of the Custom House Gate, which appears on Rocque to involve a pair of vaulted passages separated by a wall.⁹ The nearest contemporary image of the Custom House is Joseph Tudor's marvellous 1753 *A Prospect of the Custom House and Essex Bridge* (Plate 7). This seems to represent a far longer and thinner building than the one shown on the 1756 map. The existence of the ground-floor loggia, albeit of up to thirteen bays, is greatly curtailed on Rocque's map. Nevertheless, the robust nature of the arcade is given expression on what otherwise would be an unforgiving scale for such descriptive detail. Brooking's 1728 view is also very instructive (Plate 8). It includes the detail of the wider opening for the Custom House Gate, as well as the returns of the terrace of houses to the east, which Rocque had also indicated on his plan.

As noted already, there are two lines of dots to the south of the Custom House on either side of what was its city-side main entrance. Those on the east are of much greater girth than those on the west – which we might guess, based on the evidence already cited, were a line of bollards, or some indication of a separation between the spaces of the pedestrian and that of vehicular traffic. It is the dots on the right (east) which are the most interesting and which point to the structure which is the subject of this article. Based on previous examples, the fairly substantial dots, square in plan, combined with the shading to the rear, almost certainly must have represented a loggia of some sort, albeit one that connects a line of domestic dwelling houses, as indicated by the stippled code. However, we have other and more conclusive evidence for this. The restriction of the arcade to one side only of the Custom House Gate is at least confirmed by the line of faint dots on what is believed to have been George Semple's published *Plan for Opening and Widening a Principle Avenue to the Castle* of 1757.¹⁰ However, a far more telling image, and one closely contemporary to both the Rocque map and Semple's drawing, is the Wide Streets Commissioners' map shown in Plate 9, which sketches out the proposed location of the newly planned Parliament Street.¹¹ On this carefully measured survey drawing, a very definite set of square-planned elements (smaller in girth than those which held up the loggia at the front of the Custom House) can be seen clearly on the east side of the Essex Street entrance. We might have been left to believe, without Rocque's depiction of the dwelling houses, that this was a continuation of the Custom House complex and was some kind of arcade which gave access to public offices, which we might have assumed existed somewhere here. As we shall see, there is enough contemporary documentary evidence to show that this range combined both domestic and commercial functions, but was not at all part of the official zone of the Custom House.

However, none of this made complete sense until the recent discovery in Australia, and publication in Ireland soon after the volume was returned to this



country, of Hugh Douglas Hamilton's *The Cries of Dublin*, an album of descriptive and closely observed drawings of street traders which can be dated to around 1760.¹² Rich with new evidence of mid-eighteenth-century social and cultural history, there are few images amongst the drawings, however, which contain any architecture. One, called *Hard Ware* (*The Cries of Dublin*, pl.51), is not place-specific, but does give us an impossibly phallic representation of a bollard – one of those, perhaps, which Rocque suggested were located in some of the grander streets such as Sackville Street or Henrietta Street. However, another of Hamilton's drawings to include architecture is certainly identifiable, and it brings to life a location in the city which had long since disappeared from the visual record.¹³ This is Hamilton's *A Shoe Boy at Custom House Gate* (Plate 10). Here we see a shoeboy or shoeblack standing in a distracted fashion in the middle of Essex Street, holding his pot of lampblack mixed with rotten eggs. Behind him a dray is pulled towards the gates of the Custom House, and beyond this we see a ship on the quay and a great weighing scales set on a tripod.¹⁴ Behind the main figure is another shoeboy placed towards the rear of the picture, bent at his work blacking the shoe of a man with a cane, who leans against a square post of some sort, belonging to a remarkable structure. The image shows what can only be the beginning of a ground-floor walkway, slightly raised above the level of the street, with a first floor projecting over it. The face of the first floor is carried on a straight timber lintel, supported by the square post at the corner and by what appears to have been a colonnade of Corinthian columns beyond it. That the colonnade continues eastwards is confirmed by the Rocque and Wide Streets Commissioners' maps. Rocque's stippled pattern asserted that these were separate dwelling houses of some kind, albeit all connected by this remarkable colonnade.

PIAZZAS

From references in contemporary newspapers and from other sources, it can be asserted that these houses with the colonnaded ground floor were commonly known as 'piazzas'. For example, in the November 16th edition of *Faulkner's Dublin Journal* in 1754, we hear that Robert Lewis 'Mathematician and Land Surveyor, having removed from the Piazza in Essex-Street, has furnished a [new] house ... in

7 – *Joseph Tudor, A PROSPECT OF THE CUSTOM HOUSE AND ESSEX BRIDGE* (1753)
(courtesy Board of Trinity College Dublin)

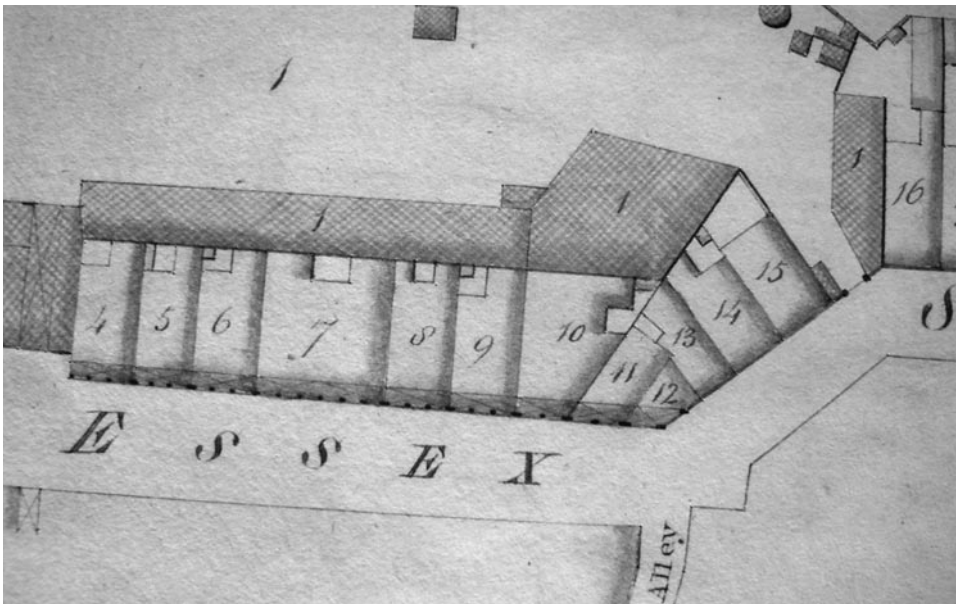
8 – *Charles Brooking, A MAP OF THE CITY AND SUBURBS OF DUBLIN* (1728): *elevation of Custom House*

9 – *Wide Streets Commissioners' map showing Custom House*
c.1757 (photo Peter Pearson; courtesy Dublin City Archive)



10 – Hugh Douglas
Hamilton, A SHOE BOY AT
CUSTOM HOUSE GATE
(from *THE CRIES OF DUBLIN*, 1760)

11 – Commissioners of
Revenue 1775 survey of
Custom House
(courtesy National Library of
Ireland)



Temple Lane'. On 28th August 1762, also in the *Dublin Journal*, we hear that 'the widow McCormick, Paper-stamper, being obliged to quit her house in Essex-street, has opened shop lower down the said street opposite the middle of the Piazzas'.¹⁵ While Robert Lewis was leaving the 'piazza', and Mrs McCormick was moving in across the street from the 'piazzas', the following advertisement in the *Dublin Journal* of January 1756 gives a graphic and clear account of the commercial nature of the piazzas themselves, when a house to be let was said to be:

...known by the sign of the Black Lyon at the Piazzas in Essex Street ... one of the best situations in the city of Dublin for public business, particularly for a hosier, most of the houses in the Piazzas being occupied by persons of trade.¹⁶

That the piazzas survived at least until 1775 is confirmed by the finest plan illustration of the covered space to emerge so far, in a Commissioners of Revenue survey drawing of that date (Plate 11).¹⁷ This survey drawing shows the arcade in place still. Each house is labelled with the name of the occupant or whomever held the lease there. Of these named occupants of the nine houses in the piazzas proper, evidence for only three in the corresponding edition of *Wilson's Street Directory* emerged; it is otherwise extremely difficult to establish from that source on what side or part of the street any trader was located. The following, matching those recorded on the 1775 Commissioners of Revenue maps, were found: Richard Pattison, Hosier, at newly numbered 3 Essex Street; Widow (in *Wilson's* named as Martha) Windas/es, Hosier at No. 7; and Daniel O'Brien, also Hosier, in No. 9 Essex Street.¹⁸ What emerges here then is a colonnade with shops, or a 'shopping arcade', dominated at least at the time of Hamilton's drawing and the Rocque map by the profession of hosiers. This explains, therefore, at least one of the house signs illustrated on the Hamilton drawing, depicting a pair of legs, above the lintel on the southern wall of the piazza building. The other shop sign visible on the same drawing may depict a bishop's mitre, although that name has not emerged amongst the house signs listed in leases or in Henry Berry's valuable list of house signs in the *Journal of the Society of Antiquaries*.¹⁹

Some significant evidence has also been found in the Registry of Deeds. Of those houses which can be categorically associated with the piazzas – i.e. where the piazzas (or on one occasion 'the pizzas') were named – we find a number of other hosiers such as Joseph Piercy, his wife, formerly Mary Power, and her father John Power (also hosiers), as well as an Andrew Keating, publican, and a Patrick Geoghegan, victualler, amongst others.²⁰ Geoghegan may well have been the tenant who answered the ad for the Black Lyon, already cited as a place eminently suited for business, because in 1757 he took out a lease on that premises from John Rogerson on a relatively short-term thirty-one-year agreement at a cost of £45 sterling per year.²¹ Rogerson's grandfather, Sir John, the former Lord Mayor, had owned

a great deal of property in this area, much of which he divested himself of around 1718, although his grandson is seen leasing a number of houses here throughout the 1750s and 1760s.²² However, it is not clear from this evidence who was responsible for the unusual development, at least as it appeared in the Hamilton illustration and on the Rocque map and other plans. There is a suggestion in one mid-century lease that the arcade as it appears here might have been in existence as early as 1712, and the details of the window – flush to the wall and with a shallow segmental head – would seem to confirm an early date, possibly coeval with the construction of Burgh’s Custom House itself.²³

CLOISTERS

However, one could not help but speculate on whether the colonnade, which could be interpreted as expressing or being part of a high-status processional space, might have been part of Arthur Capel’s newly planned Essex Street of 1674-75, which was terminated at the old city walls by the equally new Essex Gate.²⁴ This is despite the fact that the actual houses represented on Rocque’s and Hamilton’s images appear to have been completed with, or after, the construction of Burgh’s Custom House in the early eighteenth century.²⁵ That an arcade or colonnade of some sort was part of Essex’s late-seventeenth-century development can, in fact, be proved by evidence that has only recently come to the attention of the present author.²⁶ During the 1680s, a Thomas Denton of Cumbria visited his son who had settled in Dublin, and, in fact, worked in the Custom House. Denton has left us an accurate and first-hand description of Dublin, based on this visit, which he included in his much more substantial historical topography of Cumberland and Westmorland, the Isle of Man and Ireland, commissioned by Sir John Lowther (1655-1700), a local land owner and MP for Westmorland, and later Viscount Lonsdale.²⁷ Included in this was a superb description of Denton’s approach to the city. After landing at Ringsend, he was carried across its strand towards the city by the chariot-like three-seater ‘Rings-end coach’ for a penny fare, up ‘Lazy-hil’ [sic] (Townsend Street), before entering ‘into Temple-barr-street, along the southside the river, and so into Essex Street, reedified in a very uniform manner, with cloyster on each side, when the earl of Essex was deputy’.²⁸ That the word ‘cloister’ was used to mean a colonnade or arcade is confirmed by the fact that Denton used the exact same term to describe the arcades in the courtyard of the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham.²⁹ The structures in Essex Street must certainly have existed from the 1680s at least, the period when Denton visited, and in his opinion they were part of the work carried out by the Lord Deputy in the previous decade. Denton would appear to be best placed amongst our sources to make such a pronouncement. Most remarkable, perhaps, is the fact that the cloisters,

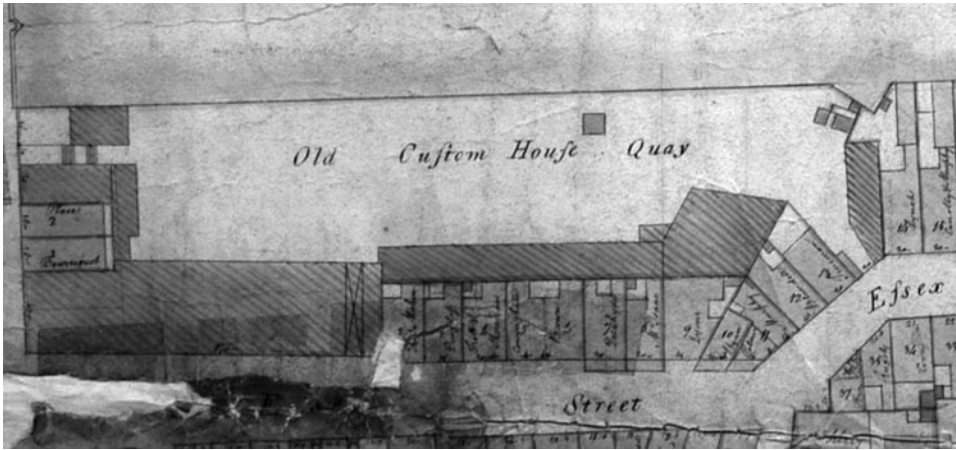
or piazzas as they were referred to in the eighteenth century at least, existed in the late-seventeenth century on both sides of Essex Street, north and south.

This was one of the pre-eminent zones of the city, including as it did at this time the Council Chamber on the south side of Essex Street, in the location of the later Dolphin Hotel on the east corner of Crane Lane;³⁰ the Horse Guard, consisting of stables and a guard house, also on the south side, close to the Council Chamber, built by John Payne in 1663-65;³¹ the Custom House on the north side of the street, with its great gate decorated by the city arms, as recorded in the Hamilton image; and west of these was the principal entrance to the city, which Essex had marked by his new gate constructed in 1674. This arcaded street was the culmination to the approach from overseas into the heart of post-medieval Dublin. Having made their way, just as Denton described it in his own trip, from Ringsend via Lazer's Hill and Temple Barr, newly arriving lords lieutenant first paid their respects at the Council Chamber (destroyed by fire in 1711), where they were 'sworn into office' to great ceremony before finally entering the old walled city.³² As late as 1763, on the occasion of the King's birthday, a celebration was held by Speaker Ponsonby at the Custom House. 'On this occasion the front of the building next to Essex-street was covered with most elaborate devices, and illuminated with about two thousand lights.'³³ The particular grandeur of the arcades on both sides of the street, that appear to have been introduced under the instigation of the Earl of Essex some hundred years earlier, would have been entirely in keeping with this iconography of State.³⁴

The 1775 map, already referred to, shows that the piazzas survived until the last quarter of the eighteenth century at least. Another survey drawing, also by the Commissioners of Revenue, first drafted in 1769 but copied and annotated in 1799, refers to the 'Old Piazza Ground'.³⁵ The word 'ground', and the blank space on the survey drawing where the houses were located, might suggest that the buildings were no longer extant in this closing year of the eighteenth century.³⁶ But a Wide Streets Commissioners' map that may date to the early nineteenth century, and that shares the footprints of the 1775 map, appears to hint, by means of a strange overlap of some of the houses, that parts of the piazzas could have survived into the early nineteenth century. It is difficult to be certain (Plate 12).³⁷

The late eighteenth-century survival of the piazzas is, however, corroborated by a number of complaints and generally negative reports regarding them, as well as a number of attempts to have them removed. For example, in an attempt to divert the plans to move the Custom House to the location on which Gandon's building was eventually constructed, a note in the minute book of the Dublin Society of Merchants (in the Royal Irish Academy), dated 17th April 1769, recorded:

That it is our Opinion that while private property and the General Interest of Trade would Suffer, no public Utility can be pretended for removing the



12 – Wide Streets Commissioners (Map 507)
 depicting Essex Street and the Custom House complex (courtesy Dublin City Archive)

Custom House from its present situation, as the insufficiency of the Ground can [be] easily & amply supplied by purchasing the Houses called the Piazzas, and a line of Houses which extend to Temple Lane slip, and adding the Ground on which they stand to the present Custom House Quay.³⁸

On 3rd November 1770 it was reported that the merchants and traders of the city requested ‘that the lord mayor take notice of the billiard tables in the Piazzas in Essex Street’. The following week the Lord Mayor ordered the closure of that establishment. But in December it was reported that ‘Joe’s billiard table had evaded closure’, and the following January requests were renewed for ‘the billiard tables at the Black Lion in Essex Street’ to be removed.³⁹ It is not clear whether the anti-gaming lobby had any success in this instance. However, only three years later, in 1774, a correspondent to the *Freeman’s Journal* felt himself competent to announce ‘that the Piazzas in Essex-Street, with the houses leading to the Ballast-office, will be taken down, in order to enlarge the Custom-house quay.’⁴⁰ However, the piazzas were still very much in place ten years later, when, in 1784, it was reported that ‘A strange man from Liverpool under the piazzas ... was robbed for what cash he had about him ... in one of those destructive night houses kept there.’⁴¹ A further call was made in 1786 to the high sheriffs of the city that the ‘houses condemned in Essex Street be taken down’ because they had

become the open and licentious receptacle of robbers and prostitutes, particularly that dreadful rookery which is in hourly danger of falling down, called the Golden Bottle, and two other ruins which have been condemned, in the range of the piazzas.⁴²

However, the piazzas still stood at least as late as 23rd September 1788, when, on a

Monday night, between the hours of twelve and one o'clock, a number of drunken buckeens reeling red-hot from the tavern ripe for sport paraded thro' Essex-street ... and at the end of the piazzas having met an oyster woman ... knocked the poor unoffending creature down...⁴³

MEANING

So what is to be made of the word 'piazzas' which was applied to the colonnaded structure indicated by Rocque and Hamilton? The *Oxford English Dictionary* is very helpful in this regard. In its second or alternative definition to the word piazza, it states the word was '[e]rroneously applied to a colonnade or a covered gallery or walk surrounding an open square or piazza proper, and hence to a single colonnade in front of a building'. It goes on to say that '[it] appears to have begun with the vulgar misapplication of the name to the arcade built after the designs of Inigo Jones on the north and east sides of Covent Garden, London, instead of to the open market-place or area'.⁴⁴ This exactly explains the case at Essex Street, where the word has nothing to do with an open space or square, but is a misappropriation (or corruption) of its original meaning to a new context – the colonnaded or arcaded walkway. Indeed, we find the word being used in the same way for the area under the colonnade of Edward Lovett Pearce's Parliament House, as shown in Rowland Omer's plan of 1767;⁴⁵ in a proposal for a colonnade or piazza between two gateways north of Dublin Castle on the Semple plan discussed above;⁴⁶ and in the area under the loggia on the river side of the Custom House itself.⁴⁷ One of the latest uses of the word in this context was in the great Dublin historian, J.T. Gilbert's own mid-nineteenth-century description of Essex Street in the eighteenth century. Indeed, Gilbert seemed to have been quite aware of the existence of some kind of gallery in this location, although his use of the since-obsolete colloquial term for it had perhaps left his account of the colonnade somewhat opaque to later readers until now.⁴⁸ It seems less likely, as Gilbert claimed, that the arcade spanned both sides of the Custom House Gate in the mid-eighteenth century, despite the ambiguous evidence of Rocque's map. An arcade on the eastern side only is very clearly marked in on the 1775 Revenue Commissioners' map, and on the even clearer *c.*1757 Wide Streets Commissioners' map (Plates 9, 11).⁴⁹

The word, and the use of columns to reserve a space separated from the street, evokes, and must have partaken to some extent, in the meaning and status of the piazza in Italy, or the Plaza Mayor in Spain, all ultimately derived from the Roman forum and the colonnaded stoas of the Greek agora.⁵⁰ However, its direct

source in this country was perhaps more modest. Some of the so-called ‘rows’ in Chester, the first coach stop on the road from Holyhead to London,⁵¹ are of this exact type (Plate 13), although the majority of the other rows in Chester were a distinct species of first-floor passage raised above half-basements.⁵² There are some rare images, however, of what really might have been a very general type throughout England from the seventeenth century. One of the finest of these is Thomas Sandby’s image of colonnaded spaces for shopping in eighteenth-century Nottingham (Plate 14).⁵³ Another is a still-surviving ground-floor loggia in front of a terrace of shops in Winchester.⁵⁴ A later-eighteenth-century example is the pantiles in Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Far more of these seem to have existed, but documentary or archaeological evidence for them is sometimes sparse.⁵⁵

Whatever of their broader iconographical meaning and their likely architectural sources, this present impression, from the images of Rocque and Hugh Douglas Hamilton, as well as the documentary evidence of the colonnaded walkway, providing a type of stage or covered promenade in front of a succession of dwellings of mixed domestic and commercial function, is an extremely important addition to our very limited stock of knowledge of how shops appeared in Dublin at this time. There are the images in Malton of a type of shop – at least in terms of the arrangement of their façade – we might properly believe only emerged in the later decades of the eighteenth century.⁵⁶ A type of structure which could be a more primitive cousin of that shown on Hamilton’s drawing can be found in the lean-to shambles illustrated in *West Front of St. Patrick’s Cathedral*, also by Malton.⁵⁷ One remarkably late survival of this type of structure were the shambles at Castle Market, photographed just before their demolition in 1878.⁵⁸ Shops without fenestration, protected only by shutters which went up at night, were common, and indeed we have no idea whether or not the shops inside the piazzas were glazed.⁵⁹ Finally, the strange lean-to fenestrated projections to houses on College Green illustrated in Joseph Tudor’s image of that area could be an early seventeenth-century type of shop front; there is nothing, at least in an Irish context, with which to compare them.⁶⁰

There seems to be little evidence that an arcade or walkway such as the piazzas existed anywhere else in Dublin in the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, Dublin, like Paris, Milan and London, would make its own gesture to the craze for arcaded life in the passageway which existed briefly between Suffolk Street and

13 – *Lower Bridge Street Rows, Chester (1817) by George Batenham*

(courtesy Board of Trinity College Dublin)

14 – *Nottingham: detail of image by Thomas Sandby showing ground-floor colonnade*

(courtesy Nottingham City Museums & Galleries: Nottingham Castle)

15 – *Wide Streets Commissioners’ elevation of Thomas Sherrard’s design for Westmoreland Street, featuring a ground-floor colonnade referred to as ‘piazzas’* (courtesy Dublin City Archive)

A SHOPPING ARCADE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY DUBLIN



College Green.⁶¹ Before this, however, in May 1799, the Wide Streets Commissioners had requested a design from Thomas Sherrard for a colonnade in Westmoreland Street, which not only replicated in an elaborate classical scheme the form, but also the very nomenclature of the Essex Street piazzas. The minutes of 25th May 1799 record that the Commissioners:

Resolved that the Buildings to be erected in said [Westmoreland] Street shall stand upon a Calonade [sic] of Twelve feet Wide & fifteen feet high ... so as to form an Extended piazza for the length of the Street on either Side the Super structure to be supported on Stone Pillars of the Doric order the said Piazza to be vaulted underneath & Flagged & to occupy the space of the footway...⁶²

This statement is reflected by Sherrard's surviving design for the scheme, which is remarkably similar, albeit in a classicised guise, to that of the piazzas in Essex Street upon which Sherrard's scheme must have been modelled (Plate 15).⁶³

Although the Westmoreland Street design proposals were never carried to fruition, their vision of shopfronts included within an integrated architectural scheme would be some decades in advance of the type of 'designed shopping street' which Summerson had suggested only emerged in a modest fashion during 'the Regency and after' in London.⁶⁴

CONCLUSION

All vestiges of Dublin's eighteenth-century shopping arcade have now disappeared. Nevertheless, there is some persistent quality in architecture, and the development of cities generally, reminiscent of the persistence of tracks made by goats on a mountainside, which has resulted in the great door of the Clarence Hotel today being situated in almost the exact same place as the gate into the Custom House in the mid-eighteenth century. The place of the eighteenth-century shoeboy with his pot of black paint, however, is now taken by a twenty-first-century bootboy with a mobile phone.

This article has emerged from research for my Ph.D. dissertation on John Rocque's map of Dublin, which I am carrying out under the generous supervision of Edward McParland. I am very grateful to him for his relentless enthusiasm and optimism, and his caring and expert guidance throughout. I am in the debt of Robin Usher for his many helpful leads and for the numerous discussions we had on the architecture of Dublin in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I also received welcome advice and encouragement throughout the preparation of this work from Anna Moran. Others who gave assistance or offered suggestions include Catherine Delano-Smith, Paul

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ENDNOTES

The following abbreviations are used:

DCLA	Dublin City Library & Archives
NLI	National Library of Ireland
RD	Registry of Deeds, Dublin
WSC	Wide Streets Commissioners

- ¹ John Rocque, *An Exact survey of the city and suburbs of Dublin in Which is Express’d the Ground Plot of All Publick Buildings Dwelling Houses Ware Houses Stables Courts Yards & C By John Rocque Chorographer to Their Royal Highness the Late & Present Prince of Wales 1756* (Dublin 1756).
- ² Bill Frazer, ‘Cracking Rocque?’, *Archaeology Ireland*, XVIII, 2, 2004, 10-14, has made a considerable contribution in this regard in his recent critical interpretation of Rocque’s accuracy and surveying techniques in the Liberties area of the city.
- ³ Catherine Delano-Smith, in a paper entitled ‘From diagram to portrait: recognising the reader in the map image’ at *The Images of Maps: Maps of the Imagination* conference, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, 12th May 2006, used the expressions macro-lines and micro-lines to distinguish, respectively, the lines used to outline the subject of the map and those used for the content of the map, such as map signs and words.
- ⁴ Another distinction is that Church of Ireland churches, like public buildings in the city, were given their full title, for example, St Mary’s Church or St Andrew’s Church, while the equivalent Roman Catholic churches were marked simply with a cross without being named.
- ⁵ Charles Brooking, *A Map of the City and Suburbs of Dublin and also the Arch Bishop and Earl of Meaths Liberties with the Bounds of each Parish. Drawn from an Actual Survey. Made by Charles Brooking* (Dublin 1728), including inset ‘The Custom House’.
- ⁶ Oliver Grace, *A Perspective View of Sackville Street and Gardiner’s Mall Dublin...* (Dublin, n.d.; c.1756), reproduced in Andrew Bonar Law and Charlotte Bonar Law, *A Contribution Towards a Catalogue of Engravings of Dublin. Originally by E. MacDowel Cosgrave: Revised and Expanded, to which is added volume 2, a similar contribution towards a catalogue of: the maps and charts of Dublin city and county*, 2 vols (Shankill, Co Dublin, 2005) I, pl.41. The function of these bollards or posts is made clear by a published complaint in a contemporary newspaper regarding the practice of shortening them to ‘stumbling blocks’. Proper posts of about three feet in height had been put in place, it was argued, ‘to guard the Foot Passengers from Carriages and Cattle [and] are set up in Streets and Highways, in every well regulated Country...’, the *Freeman’s Journal*, 82, 16th-19th June 1764, 327. I am grateful to Lisa-Marie Griffith for bringing this reference to my attention.

- ⁷ Rolf. Loeber, *A Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Ireland 1600-1720* (London 1981) 35.
- ⁸ R.M. Gilbert (ed.), *Calendar of the Ancient Records of Dublin*, 19 vols (Dublin 1889-1944) V, 546-60.
- ⁹ This depiction of a paired entranceway at the Custom House Gate is not corroborated by any other contemporary plans or by the Hugh Douglas Hamilton image discussed below.
- ¹⁰ DCLA, Gilbert Library, WSC/Maps/329.
- ¹¹ The lines on the map which indicate the proposed location of the new Parliament Street suggest that this drawing dates to soon after 1757, the date of the establishment of the Wide Streets Commissioners, when such a survey would have been drafted.
- ¹² William Laffan (ed.), *The Cries of Dublin &c: Drawn From the Life By Hugh Douglas Hamilton, 1760* (Dublin 2003).
- ¹³ There are two other images with some suggestion of an architectural backdrop in Hamilton's album: plate 4, *Oyster Carrs at Ormond Market Gate*, shows two horses standing before the open door and window of a dwelling house, and plate 66, *A Travelling Cutler*, shows the cutler of the title standing before a cobbler's display of shoes. It is not clear whether this was a permanent stall to the front of a shop or one belonging to an itinerant tradesman.
- ¹⁴ It just might be possible that the gate shown here represents one of two vaulted entries side by side, as suggested by Rocque, although there is nothing in the drawing to suggest as much (cf. note 9 above).
- ¹⁵ See also the *Freeman's Journal*, 6th August 1768, when the same business had just imported 'at their Paper Warehouse, opposite the Piazzas in Essex-Street, a new curious Assortment of Paper for hanging Rooms, Ceilings, Stair-cases, Chimney-boards...' However, they were also manufacturers of 'all Kinds of Irish Paper, and [were willing to] finish plain Rooms in the neatest Manner'.
- ¹⁶ Jenny Price, 'Dublin 1750 to 1850: Spatial Distribution and Organisation of Economic Activity', MSc thesis (Trinity College Dublin 1980) 37, fn.17, quoting from *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 17th January 1756.
- ¹⁷ NLI, 16 G 16 (15), Commissioners of Revenue Map of Essex Street, 1775.
- ¹⁸ *Wilson's Street Directory* (Dublin 1762), *passim*. There is only one house on the 1775 survey between Richard Pattison's (which must only recently have been assigned as No. 3), and the Custom House, which therefore must have been considered, from the rear façade facing south at least, to have been No. 1 Essex Street.
- ¹⁹ Henry F. Berry. 'House and Shop Signs in Dublin in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, Papers and Proceedings*, Part II, XL, 1910, 81-98.
- ²⁰ RD, for example, Memorial nos 292.216.190193, Piercy to Keating, 4th March 1772; 290.392.192716, Power to Butler, 4th May 1772; 290.392.192716, Power to Butler, 4th May 1772.
- ²¹ RD, Memorial no. 190.297.126844, Rogerson to Geoghegan, 3rd May 1757.
- ²² RD, Memorial no. 21.369.11841, 'All Sr. John Rogerson's houses in Essex Street', 1718. For the activities of Sir John Rogerson's grandson, cf. lease to Geoghegan cited in fn.19 or, for example, Memorial no. 219.134.142955, John Rogerson to John Power, 29th September 1761.
- ²³ RD, Memorial no. 97.63.67295, Camak to Black, 13th October 1739, which refers to the piazzas on Essex Street, refers also to a parent lease dated to 1712 (not actually recorded in the memorials), of which this 1739 lease was possibly a direct copy.

- ²⁴ Arthur Capel, Earl of Essex, was Lord Lieutenant from May 1672 until June 1675, and again from May 1676 until May 1677; see T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin and F.J. Byrne (eds), *A new history of Ireland IX: maps, genealogies, lists* (Oxford 1984) 489-90. His order to Dublin Corporation 'that a highway [Essex Street] be made from the Custome house lane [Crane Lane?] through the garden in the possession of Alderman Lovett, at the Blind Key' is recorded in Gilbert (ed.), *Calendar of the Ancient Records of Dublin*, V, 30; cf. 'The Seventeenth Report of Sir Bernard Burke, C.B. Ulster King of Arms, Keeper of the State Papers in the Record Tower, Dublin Castle, dated 1st February, 1885', *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1884-85*, Appendix III, XL (London 1885). For an extended discussion of Essex Street and Essex Gate, see Robin Usher, 'Power, Display and the Symbolic Terrains of Protestant Dublin, c.1660-1760', Ph.D. dissertation (University of Cambridge 2007)
- ²⁵ The segmented-headed windows as shown on the Hamilton drawing is one clue to their early eighteenth-century date. For a full exposition of the early development of this zone from the beginning of the sixteenth century, see Nuala T. Burke. 'Dublin's north-eastern city wall: early reclamation and development at the Poddle-Liffey confluence', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, LXXIV, section C, 1974, 113-32. I am also grateful to Edward McParland for his suggestions in this regard and others.
- ²⁶ Angus J.L. Winchester, 'Dublin in the 1680s', *History Ireland*, XV, 1, January-February 2007, 48-51, which in turn refers to the more substantial and complete Angus J.L. Winchester and Mary Wane (eds), *Thomas Denton: a Perambulation of Cumberland 1687-1688 including descriptions of Westmorland, the Isle of Man and Ireland. Record Series: The Surtees Society and Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society*, CCVII (Woodbridge 2003). Both of these are based on the original manuscript of Denton's topographical work: Carlisle, Cumbria Record Office D/Lons/L12/4/2/2. I am grateful to Robin Usher for bringing the recent article on this subject to my attention.
- ²⁷ Winchester and Wane (eds), *Thomas Denton: a Perambulation*, 8-9 and *passim*.
- ²⁸ *ibid.*, 531. The italics are inserted by the present author. Attention should be drawn here to the fact that the word 'cloyster' appears partially in square brackets, i.e. as cl[oyster] in the 2003 publication. According to fn.33 on p.525 of that publication, a linen strip repair had obscured a small section of the manuscript on the sides of pp.182 and 183. The missing material from these pages was supplied by a copy of the manuscript which is in the Manx archives of the Isle of Man. This fact has also been corroborated by a personal communication with Dr Winchester, the editor of that work.
- ²⁹ Winchester and Wane (eds), *Thomas Denton: a Perambulation*, 537.
- ³⁰ The exact location of the Old Council Chamber, just prior to the laying out of Essex Street, is indicated on de Gomme's 1673 map of Dublin: Greenwich, National Maritime Museum, P/49(11): *The City and Suburbs of Dublin from Kilmainham to Rings-End, wherein [sic] the Rivers, Streets, Lanes, Allys, Churches, Gates &c are Exactly described 15th No: 1673*; cf. Edward McParland, *Public Architecture in Ireland 1680-1760* (New Haven and London 2001), 114, quoting John Dunton: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Rawl D71, Dunton's letters, ff.25-26.
- ³¹ Loeber, *A Biographical Dictionary*, 83.
- ³² Robert Pentland Mahaffy (ed.), *Calendar of the State Papers relating to Ireland. Preserved in the Public Record Office. September, 1669-December, 1670* (London 1910) 3, 6, 111-13; McParland, *Public Architecture*, 17, 91; Nuala T Burke. 'Dublin 1600-1800, a study in urban morphogenesis', Ph.D. dissertation (Trinity College Dublin 1972) 149.

- ³³ J.T. Gilbert, *A History of the City of Dublin*, 3 vols (Dublin 1972) II, 139.
- ³⁴ It is also possible that the colonnade had a more modest or mixed inception than this. We have no evidence for the external appearance of the Old Council Chamber, but it was a grand architectural piece, according to John Dunton's description of its great stair and first-floor Council Room. It may simply have been that this building had been constructed with a loggia to the front, and houses opposite picked up on this when Essex Street was laid out.
- ³⁵ NLI, 16 G 16 (19), 'A MAP of the Old Custom House Dublin together with the several Offices thereunto Belonging SURVEYED / by Order of the Commissioners of the Revenue / in April 1769 by T Mathews. C.S. [city surveyor] / Copied / By A.R. Nevill City Surveyor / December' [manuscript torn here]. Although the year is missing in the title of this drawing, an annotation within the body of the map refers to an agreement 'bearing date the 28th of Aug.st 1799'.
- ³⁶ It seems more probable that it was because the houses and piazzas were outside of the agreement defined by the drawing that they were not delineated.
- ³⁷ DCLA, Gilbert Library, WSC/Maps/507.
- ³⁸ Royal Irish Academy, MS. 12-D-29, Minutes Book of the Dublin Society of Merchants, 1767-82, unpaginated. I am once again grateful to Robin Usher for this reference.
- ³⁹ The *Freeman's Journal*, 3rd and 13th November 1770, 8th and 18th December 1770, 8th January 1771, 13th June 1771 and 20th August 1771. I am grateful to Lisa-Marie Griffith for bringing my attention to these references.
- ⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 31st May 1774.
- ⁴¹ *ibid.*, 22nd July 1784.
- ⁴² *ibid.*, 16th November 1786.
- ⁴³ *ibid.*, 23rd September 1788.
- ⁴⁴ *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary: complete text reproduced micrographically*, 2 vols (Oxford 1971) II, 2163; cf., for example, a view of the 'piazzas' by T. Sandby, 1768, reproduced in John Summerson, *Inigo Jones* (Harmondsworth 1966) 94.
- ⁴⁵ *The Plan of the Parliament House Dublin ... R. Omer delin.* (Dublin 1767); see also the complaint in the *Freeman's Journal*, 9th March 1768, about the 'Set of Miscreants, under the Piazzas of the Parliament-house, playing Ball, Pitch and Toss, &c. [the same] Roof, under which All our Laws are framed, [and which provided] a Covering for such Wretches to trample upon all Laws, Divine and Human'.
- ⁴⁶ DCLA, WSC/Maps/329, 'and the Treasury Office, answerable to the present Gate of said upper Yard; with a handsome Colonade [sic] or a Piazzes [sic] betwixt said two Gates, for the Guards, &c &c'.
- ⁴⁷ Commissioners of Revenue map, 1769/1799, area marked No. 6, and explained in the reference table as 'The Piazza'.
- ⁴⁸ Gilbert, *History of the City of Dublin*, II, 165. Gilbert also noted the existence here of the hosiers, the billiard tables, and the Black Lion Tavern, amongst others.
- ⁴⁹ Rocque's marks on the western side are of a much smaller girth, and are more likely suggestive of bollards, as noted already.
- ⁵⁰ For a discussion of the persistent Spanish type and its roots in Roman precedents, see Roland Martin et al (eds), *Forum et Plaza Mayor dans le Monde Hispanique: colloque interdisciplinaire – Casa de Vel-squez – Madrid: 28 Octobre 1976* (Paris 1978); for a descriptive evocation of the cultural implications of both the agora and the forum, see Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: the Body and the City in Western Civilization* (London 1994) 52-60, 111-18.

- ⁵¹ D.M. Beaumont, 'An Irish gentleman in England – the travels of Pole Cosby c.1730-35', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, CXLIX, 1996, 38; see also the many moaning missives from Chester made by Jonathan Swift in his *Journal to Stella*, ed. Harold Williams (Oxford 1974) *passim*.
- ⁵² Andrew Brown (ed.), *The Rows of Chester: the Chester Rows research project* (London 1999); P.H. Lawson and J.T. Smith, 'The Rows of Chester: two interpretations', *Journal of the Chester and North Wales Architectural, Archaeological and Historic Society*, XLV, 1958, 1-42.
- ⁵³ Thomas Sandby, *Market Place*, NCM 1939-64 (courtesy Nottingham City Museums & Galleries: Nottingham Castle). A second image of the market square, also by Sandby, can be found reproduced in Mark Girouard, *The English Town: a history of urban life* (New Haven and London 1990) 16.
- ⁵⁴ An image of this row of buildings, which it is suggested was fourteenth-century in origin, is reproduced in Kathryn Morrison, *English Shops and Shopping* (London 2003) 25. From one perspective, the first floor, carried on a colonnade, was a special case of the jettied building, albeit with strong hints towards an antique, if not, at least, a Mediterranean source as well.
- ⁵⁵ For a discussion of the evidence for other colonnades and arcades associated with commercial premises in towns in the Middle Ages and in the seventeenth and eighteenth century in England, see Morrison, *English Shops*, 24-27, 31, 109, 113.
- ⁵⁶ James Malton, *A Picturesque & Descriptive View of the City of Dublin, Reproduced from the Edition of 1799, with an Introduction by the Knight of Glin* (Dublin 1978) *passim*; cf. Edward McParland., 'Malton's views of Dublin: too good to be true?' in Raymond Gillespie and Brian P. Kennedy (eds), *Ireland: Art into History* (Dublin 1994) 15-25.
- ⁵⁷ James Malton, *A Picturesque & Descriptive View of the City of Dublin*, pl.13.
- ⁵⁸ Millard and Robinson, photographed in 1878, reproduced in Niall McCullough, *Dublin, An Urban History: plan of the city* (Dublin 2007) 208.
- ⁵⁹ Note the shops illustrated on the top right-hand side, in the location of the present Westmoreland Street, on the drawing *A view of the Principal Front of the Parliament House....*, which is ascribed to Edward Lovett Pearce, NLI, Drawing 589 TB, reproduced in McParland, *Public Architecture*, 205.
- ⁶⁰ Joseph Tudor, *A Prospect of the Parliament House in College Green, Dublin* (Dublin 1753).
- ⁶¹ *The Royal Arcade Dublin*, reproduced in Mairead Dunleavy, 'Dublin in the early nineteenth century: domestic evidence' in Gillespie and Kennedy (eds), *Ireland: Art into History*, 196. The Royal Arcade was also depicted directly after it had been destroyed by fire (on 25th April 1837) by William Turner de Lond, and is reproduced in William Laffan (ed.), *Painting Ireland: Topographical Views from Glin Castle* (Tralee 2006) 196.
- ⁶² Edward McParland, 'The WSC, their importance for Dublin architecture in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries', *Quarterly Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, XV, 1972, 19, quoting from the WSC' Minutes, 25th May 1799, DCLA, WSC/Minutes/3.
- ⁶³ DCLA, Gilbert Library, WSC/Maps/195/1-2, 'Elevation of Westmoreland Street (West side), extending from the Portico of the House of Lords to Fleet Street, and design for New Shops by A. Baker, Architect, 1799. Approved 30 Jan 1800 Thomas Sherrard, 1800'; reproduced in McParland 'Wide Streets Commissioners', pl.11.
- ⁶⁴ This point regarding the precocious nature of the WSC' designs for the Westmoreland Street façades was made by McParland, 'WSC', 20, referring in turn to Sir John Summerson, *Georgian London* (London 1945) 250.