
Plan for Opening & Widening A Principal Avenue to the Castle
Little Abby Street
Great Strand Street
Swifts Row
Lower Ormond Quay
Upper Ormond Quay
Capel Street
Essex Bridge
Custom House Quay
Essex Street
Dame Street
Castle Lane
Wood Quay
Essex Quay
Blind Quay
Cork Hill
Smock Alley
Copper Alley
Fishamble Street
Castle Street
Pembroke Court
Cole Alley
Christ Church Yard
Skinner Row
Wine Tavern Street
Ormond Bridge
Charles Street
Mountrath
Arch Lane
Inns Quay
Kings Inns
Merchants Quay
Swan Alley
Church Street
Old Bridge
Bridge St
The Castle
Upper Yard
Lower Yard

From Rome to Paris and London: searching for the European roots of the Wide Streets Commissioners

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The remaking of the network of Paris streets from the mid-nineteenth century is unquestionably among the great city planning projects in history. That this did not begin until the 1850s, almost a century after Dublin's Wide Streets Commissioners were conceived of, appears to put the work carried out in the Irish capital in a unique vanguard among European city-planning projects. However, urban improvement on a grand scale long predated the Haussmannisation of Paris.[1] Tree-lined boulevards replaced the obsolete city walls of the French capital from as early as 1670.[2] The Pont Neuf, the Rue Dauphine, the Place Dauphine and the Place Royale were all instituted under Henry IV (1589-1610) some seventy years earlier.[3] And these Paris works were predated by Sixtus V's (1585-90) seminal plan to create a system of straight streets connecting the great pilgrimage basilicas of Rome. Indeed, the ambition to rationalise individual Roman streets – if not to make a complete new city plan – reached back to Nicholas V (1447-55).[4] One could also argue that the extent of the Dublin works pales in comparison to the staggering network of grand boulevards opened in Paris by Haussmann. Nevertheless, a substantial number of wide and elegant streets was carved out of Dublin's medieval and early modern city fabric, including Parliament, Dame, Westmoreland, D'Olier, Sackville (O'Connell) and Great Brunswick (Pearse) Streets. Although the greatest impact of the Wide Streets Commissioners might be confined to the forty years before the Act of Union (1800), the Irish planning body continued to influence and effect material change to the city fabric for a further half-century. Indeed, its approach and the legal instruments for its work were retained by the newly suited Dublin Corporation in 1849 when the Wide Streets Commissioners came to an end and were effectively incorporated into the new city government.[5] The sophistication of the Dublin body, its concerted and prolonged remit, its nature as an instrument of the nation rather than the city alone, and the complexity and longevity of its ambitions, all point to a planning body of considerable European importance.[6] That the Wide Streets Commissioners in Dublin has had little or

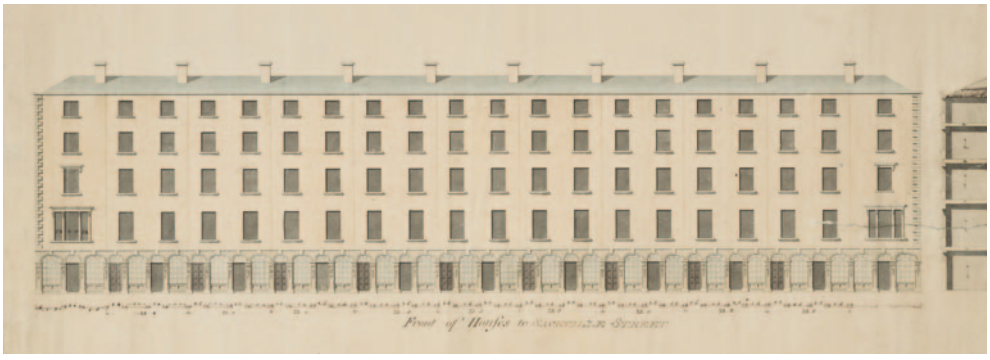
1 – [George Semple], A Plan for Opening & Widening a Principal Avenue to the Castle, 1757
(courtesy Dublin City Library & Archive, WSC/Maps/329)

no international distinction – then or since – points to the politically and economically provincial standing of Ireland rather than any inherent lack of substance in what was an advanced mode of thinking about cities and their organisation by a national government.

Whatever of the relative precocity of the Dublin planning body, we need to better understand its origins. What was the cause of the Wide Streets Commissioners coming into being? Where did they find their direct inspiration? One local and individual source of crucial importance is the architect and engineer George Semple, who, from 1751 to 1755, repaired and rebuilt Essex Bridge, the last bridge across the Liffey before the sea and the crucial and overworked communication between the burgeoning northside suburbs and the commercial and governmental centre of Dublin on the south. In 1757 Semple published a map arguing for a grand reordering of the streets from his new bridge to Dublin Castle, the clearing of the city quays, and the opening up of a more direct route from the Castle to the Four Courts at Christ Church Cathedral (Plate 1).[7] While the role of George Semple as a key local advocate for the founding of the Wide Streets body has been noted in previous histories of the Commissioners, the source of his planning ideas, which he hints at in his later published work, has never been explored.

Before we begin to look at English or continental precedents for this Dublin planning body, we should remind ourselves of what it was and what it achieved. The Wide Streets Commissioners were established following an act of the Irish parliament of 1758. Their initial task was to make 'a wide and convenient way, street, and passage, from [Essex] bridge to [Dublin] castle'.[8] The success of Parliament Street (completed around 1762) prompted the Commissioners to realign and widen Dame Street, establishing it as a more convincing axis from the Castle to the Parliament. Next, on the basis of accepting the inevitable but hard-won, more easterly bridge, and the resulting necessity to 'move' the Custom House to its seaward side, the Commissioners opened a wide passage from the northern road at Dorset Street to the south-eastern core at College Green, via an extended Sackville Street, over a new Carlisle Bridge, by way of the grand Westmoreland and D'Olier Streets. They also turned their tidying eyes to clearing obstructions on the river quays, sweeping away the cluttered rookeries surrounding the city's two cathedrals, and opening up many smaller pockets and cramped alleyways. Legislation in 1790 gave

2 – Thomas Sherrard, 'Front of Houses to Sackville Street', 1789
(courtesy Dublin City Library & Archive, WSC/Maps/297/1)



3 – Henry Brocas (1762-1837), College Green Dublin, 1828
showing Daly's Club flanked by stone-fronted houses to complete a cohesive palace façade
(courtesy National Library of Ireland, NLI ET C 96)

power to the Commissioners to oversee and control all new private street-making in the city.[9] This meant that the extensive new private developments of the Gardiner and Fitzwilliam estates, among others, were submitted to the board of the Commissioners for first approval.[10]

In keeping with best continental and English practice, the Commissioners sought to impose aesthetic control on the façades of new buildings.[11] The imposition of such integrated façades onto row houses (an increasingly common approach in exclusive London housing developments at the time) was less common in Dublin.[12] However, the Wide Streets Commissioners took this approach with its more commercial city building stock. Parliament Street was austere but uniform. The houses on Sackville Street and the south side of Dame Street were conceived as regimented rows, with identical arcaded shops at ground level (Plate 2). Residential houses, with shops at ground floor, on either side of Daly's Club (a block on the north side of Dame Street), were unified into an image of a single palace-like building with an integrated granite finish (Plate 3).[13] On Westmoreland Street, ground-floor colonnaded loggias were proposed, but proved too expensive to realise.[14] The compromise design is best observed in the surviving terrace on D'Olier Street. The neoclassical assemblage in granite neatly integrates the French-inspired ground-floor-and-mezzanine shops. The complete one-and-a-half-storey interior, characteristic of both D'Olier Street and Westmoreland Street, was recently restored in at least one of the shops on D'Olier Street,[15] but survived intact at 30 Westmoreland Street until 1976, complete with its 'striking Greek-Revival balustrade of anthemia and draped maiden ornaments'.[16] The mezzanines were used by owners sometimes as extra residential areas and maybe

even to spy on 'the eccentricities of apprentices and shop-men'.[17]

Clearing away older building stock for widening or opening new streets was achieved by way of compulsory purchase. If the values of the confiscated properties were disputed, they were fixed upon by a jury of 'substantial and disinterested' citizens.[18] This system of fair compensation for the expropriation of property for the public good may be contrasted with the more autocratic confiscations in parts of continental Europe.[19] In 1606, when some Augustinian friars in Paris sought to retain their lands blocking the development of the king's new Rue Dauphine, Henry IV boasted that if their walls weren't demolished before the morning, he would personally cannon-blast the offending obstacles to his ambition.[20]

DISCOURSE ON CITY PLANNING

It is difficult to find examples of pre-Wide Streets Commissioners public discourse on the subject of city planning that suggests evidence in Ireland of a sustained interest in international precedents.[21] What shape might such a discourse on planning have taken? What might have influenced it? Dublin was an already established city, therefore the ideal plans conceived for Renaissance princes of bastioned polygonal cities, with radial or gridded cores, were no use to Dublin planners. What was involved was localised improvement or inflection,[22] an aggrandisement by way of straightened streets with uniform façades, receptive to procession and ceremony (and to better traffic circulation in general) while lending grander expression to a city zone or its buildings – in Dublin, the Parliament, University, Castle and Cathedral.[23] Leon Battista Alberti, the Italian Renaissance architect and theorist, who was an advisor to Nicholas V, stated that 'apart from being properly paved and thoroughly clean, city streets should be elegantly lined with porticos ... and houses that are matched by line and level...'[24] Alberti's description matched the Vitruvian ideal of the tragic urban scene,[25] later illustrated by Serlio (1545),[26] in which streets were flanked by ordered ranks of classical buildings focussed on a distant monumental terminus. Calls for such localised improvement (or embellishment) began to be heard in Paris at the middle of the eighteenth century, as we shall see.

The extent and nature of a satirical discourse in the public press on bad building practices and complaints of the effects of brick and lime burning within the city limits has recently been demonstrated.[27] However, commentary on issues to do with city planning was much more limited, caught up for the most part in claims for or against the creation of a new Liffey bridge closer to the sea. Such a bridge would favour members of a landed and politically influential aristocracy whose estates lay to the east of the medieval city core, the latter being the heart of the economic interest of Dublin's merchant class.[28] The founding action of the Wide Streets Commissioners was restricted to opening the communication from bridge to castle in the heart of this ancient, commercially active city centre. The success of the resulting Parliament Street, however, offered the opportunity to direct their citywide planning ambitions eastwards. Commentary, other than George Semple's, as we shall see, on matters of public architectural importance and increasingly on issues to do with city planning per se only gathered momentum from about a decade

after the inception of the Wide Streets body. Therefore, if we exclude architect and author John Aheron's 1757 critique of the West Front of Trinity College, then under construction, as being predominantly an essay on architecture rather than on issues of city design, it was only with the announcement of the competition for what was to become the Royal Exchange that discourse on architecture expanded to issues of urban organisation.[29] These included the celebrated 'Observations on Architecture' (1768-69),[30] which called for a re-siting of the proposed Exchange, and a connection from College Green to Gardiner's Sackville Street, anticipating the works of the Wide Streets Commissioners by nearly two decades. Others, more naïve to the exigencies of city improvement, called for an emulation of the gridded plan of Philadelphia.[31] In the 1780s, the anonymous author of the *Letters Addressed to Parliament* critically scrutinised Wide Streets' plans for Sackville Street and Dame Street, even venturing to submit and display his own alternatives at the Royal Exchange Coffee Rooms.[32] As noted, none of these commentaries predates the inception of the Wide Streets body.

A rare reference which suggests a conceptual response to urban design among the Wide Streets' own surviving manuscripts appears on a Wide Streets' drawing sheet for a development on Cavendish Row and Great Britain (now Parnell) Street in 1787.[33] A handwritten note towards the bottom of the sheet states that '[This] Style of Building ... has long been in use on the Continent, and found uncommonly convenient in procuring Bed Chambers contiguous to Shops or the Apartments of Persons in Trade, unconnected with the Upper Floors.' This suggests a clear preference for continental over English models in the intended distribution of commercial and residential spaces. Upstairs apartments could be accessed by a second door on the ground floor, independent of the entrance to the shops, while the shopkeepers' families lived in the 'entre-sol' or mezzanine, 'a loft of from eight to ten feet' directly above the shop.[34]

In its most monumental phase, the Wide Streets Board was comprised of men of culture and learning, patrons of the arts, and industrious improvers such as William Burton Conyngham, Frederick Trench, Andrew Caldwell, Luke Gardiner and John Beresford.[35] Despite their cultural aspiration, it is next to impossible to find among their records any direct evidence of their having considered European models of city planning for Dublin. In 1783 and 1784, William Burton Conyngham and Charles Tarrant visited Lisbon, whose Baixa district had been recently redesigned and rebuilt following the earthquake and tsunami of 1755.[36] Although both men were closely associated with the redesign of Dame Street at this time, there is no hint in the contemporary minutes of the Commissioners, or from surviving images of the designs of these redeveloped streets, of any influence derived from this notable Portuguese development.[37]

Twenty years before Dublin commentators were agitated into print by the announcement of the Royal Exchange competition, an unofficial competition in Paris in 1748 for a new *place royale* to frame the equestrian statue of Louis XV generated the same kind of ramped up publication fever.[38] Voltaire, the strident and foolhardy king-addressing *philosophe*, was among the least equivocal. In his *Des embellissements de Paris* (1749), he 'blushed' at the 'public markets established in narrow streets, spreading their filth and infection and causing continuous disorder'.[39] 'Great city quarters must have great public squares', he argued. Piled-up buildings of 'Goths and Vandals' should be

cleared away from the Louvre of Colbert and Perrault.[40] The centre of the city was 'obscure constricted, hideous', and represented a 'shameful barbarism'.[41] To undertake works of rehabilitation was the responsibility of the city itself, and its citizens, not the king, who is 'no more king of Parisians, than of the Lyonnais and Bordelaise; every great city must rescue itself.'[42] Marc-Antoine Laugier, in his *Essay on architecture* of 1753, stated that 'The streets of a great town cannot make communication easy and convenient unless they are sufficiently numerous to prevent lengthy detours, sufficiently wide to forestall any obstructions and perfectly straight to shorten the way.'[43] The Pierre Patte plan of 1765,[44] with its multi-nodal reorganisation of Paris, was no more than an imaginary amalgam of design ideas for Place Louis XV, of which only one was realised.[45]

Such improvements to an already existing city, in the case of the Wide Streets Commissioners, may be classified according to the following three types. The first comprised opening new streets through existing city fabric (what the French referred to as the *grande percée*, or great breakthrough),[46] carried out at Parliament Street, Lower Sackville Street, Westmoreland Street and D'Olier Street among others. Second was the widening or aligning of existing streets, as took place at Dame Street, South Great George's Street and Nassau Street. Third were the centrifugal expansions to the figure of the city; in eighteenth-century Dublin this was largely the work of private developers, although as already noted, this work was vetted by the Commissioners.

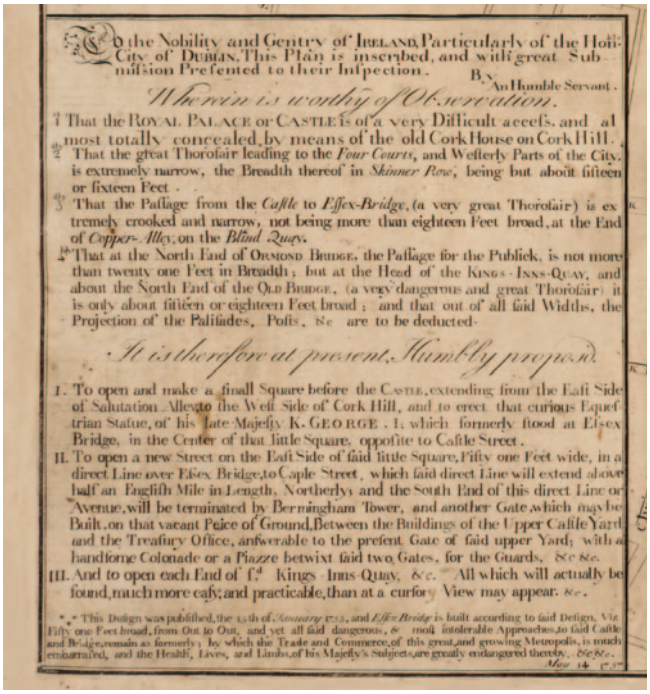
In papal Rome, such radical *percées* and alignments were sometimes a compromised strategy worked out between the local Roman government and the absolute powers of the Pope. The broad principle that the public good trumped private benefit was established, albeit not without a struggle with powerful local Roman families.[47] Compulsory purchase with compensation was a regular feature of their proceedings.[48] So also was the principle of the *contributo di migloria* or 'betterment tax'.[49] Such was the *tassa del gettito* (revenue tax) imposed by Pope Paul III (1534-49) on those who benefitted from his widening of the Corso.[50] Had such a tax been imposed by the Wide Streets Commissioners, perhaps the disastrously inflationary consequences caused by their own street improvements might have been avoided.[51] Although the Wide Streets Commissioners were wound up in 1849, a parliamentary commission of 1875 recorded that Dublin Corporation was still repaying interest to the British exchequer on a loan of approximately one quarter of a million pounds.[52]

In nearly all capital cities there is a tension between the local and the national, between the city corporation and the state government. The Wide Streets Commissioners, a creature of the national parliament, took all planning control out of the hands of Dublin Corporation. In France, from 1599, the Crown-appointed *Grand Voyer* (the controller of roads and ways) superseded all local authorities.[53] The *Maestri delle Strade* (the masters of the streets) exercised similar powers in Rome.[54] While the principle of compensation was usually upheld in Paris and Rome, no disputes of any kind were entertained once a plan of alignment or street breakthrough was decided upon. Despite some resonances and parallels, the institutional and legislative set-up of the Wide Streets Commissioners remained quite distinct from those in the more autocratic jurisdictions of papal Rome and *ancien régime* France. It may come as no surprise therefore, that we should look closer to home for a more direct source of influence.

GEORGE SEMPLE AND HIS INFLUENCES

The role played by the Irish architect and engineer George Semple in the inception of the Wide Streets Commissioners and their initial mandate to open up a direct line from Essex Bridge to Dublin Castle has long been acknowledged. His name has been paired by previous authors with the anonymously published *A Plan for Opening & Widening a Principal Avenue to the Castle* of 1757 (Plate 1), which both agitated for a new wide street that would connect bridge to castle and anticipated closely the work that was eventually carried out by the Commissioners there when they opened Parliament Street.[55] Semple had rebuilt Essex Bridge in 1753-55, a crossing of the river constructed in the late seventeenth century by Sir Humphrey Jervis.[56] The bridge had partially collapsed in 1751. The link between Semple and the 1757 plan must in part be based on the convincing discussion of issues of urban design that appeared in his later *Treatise on building in water* (1776) and that were provoked by the same bridge, leading him 'to think of forming a Plan, to get a Street opened in a direct Line of fifty one Feet broad from the Bridge to the Castle, answerable to the Breadth of the Bridge'.[57] The streets on the southerly castle side of the river which led to the bridge were narrower than the bridge. In flipping Alberti's argument that a bridge should be as wide as the streets that lead to it, he posited instead that the streets should be widened to fit the newly widened bridge.[58] Bridge and street in the 1757 plan are 51ft wide; the street laid out by the Commissioners and completed in 1762 was to be 51ft wide. Indeed, confirming such a strong association, it was Semple whom the Commissioners hired to prepare the plan for the works themselves.[59]

The attorney Gorges Edmund Howard also claimed his place as the moving force behind the inception of the Wide Streets body, an idea he claimed to have conceived during a night's drinking in a 'chop-house called Sot's Hole' with the MP William Bristow. Afterwards he drew up the 'heads of a Bill to widen not only that passage, but also all other narrow passages in the city which needed it'.[60] Just as Semple went on to become the first surveyor for the Commissioners, Howard was their first clerk.[61] Nevertheless, Semple provided the urban and spatial vision for the project. Moreover, as we shall now see, his plans were in gestation as early as 1753, if not 1751, when he was first commissioned to repair the partially collapsed bridge.[62] The date for the *Plan for Opening & Widening...*, given as 'May 14 1757', is found at the foot of an inset box of text at the lower left of the plan (Plate 4).[63] A confusing second date is suggested a mere paragraph above: 'This Design was published, the 15th of January 1753, and Essex Bridge is built according to said Design.' The only explanation for the double dates is to interpret this as meaning that 'the same design' was previously published at the earlier date. This can be shown to be so. A pair of anonymously published plans of the area, dated 1751 and 1753, have not been previously identified as being related to Semple's 1757 map (Plates 5, 6).[64] The same date, 15th January 1753, is found on the second of these plans. The 1751 map shows the layout of the ground before the old bridge was demolished. Included on this image is the upriver platform for the equestrian statue of George I. In the 1753 plan in which the royal statue was removed from the bridge altogether – as it was in reality – a similarly shaped platform is placed at the centre of a new open space (square



To the Nobility and Gentry of Ireland, Particularly of the Honble City of Dublin. This Plan is inscribed, and with great Submission Presented to their Inspection. By An Humble Servant.

Wherein is worthy of Observation.

1 That the Royal Palace or Castle is of a very Difficult access, and almost totally concealed, by means of the old Cork House on Cork Hill.

2 That the great Thorofair leading to the *Four Courts*, and Westerly Parts of the City, is extremely narrow, the Breadth thereof in *Skinner Row*, being but about fifteen or sixteen Feet.

3 That the Passage from the *Castle* to *Essex-Bridge*, (a very great Thorofair) is extremely crooked and narrow, not being more than eighteen Feet broad, at the End of *Copper-Alley*, on the *Blind Quay*.

4 That at the North End of Ormond Bridge, the Passage for the Publick, is not more than twenty one Feet in Breadth; but at the Head of the Kings-Inns-Quay, and about the North End of the Old Bridge, (a very dangerous and great Thorofair) it is only about fifteen or eighteen Feet broad; and that out of all said Widths, the Projection of the Palisades, Posts, &c are to be deducted.

It is therefore at present, Humbly proposed

I. To open and make a finall Square before the Castle, extending from the East Side of Salutation Alley to the West Side of Cork Hill, and to erect that curious Equestrian Statue, of his late Majesty K. George I. which formerly stood at Essex Bridge, in the Center of that little Square, opposite to Castle Street.

II. To open a new Street on the East Side of said little Square, Fifty one Feet wide, in a direct Line over Essex Bridge, to Caple Street, which said direct Line will extend above half an English Mile in Length. Northerly; and the South End of this direct Line or Avenue, will be terminated by Birmingham Tower, and another Gate, which may be Built, on that vacant Peice of Ground, Between the Buildings of the Upper Castle Yard and the Treasury Office, answerable to the present Gate of said upper Yard; with a handsome Colonade or a Piazze betwixt said two Gates, for the Guards, &c &c.

III. And to open each End of ye Kings-Inns-Quay, &c. All which will actually be found, much more easy, and practicable, than at a curso[ry] View may appear. &c.

*** This Design was published, the 15th of *January* 1753, and *Essex Bridge* is built according to said Design, Viz Fifty one Feet broad, from Out to Out, and yet all said dangerous, & most intolerable Approaches, to said Castle and Bridge, remain as formerly; by which the Trade and Commerce, of this great and growing Metropolis, is much embarrased, and the Health, Lives, and Limbs, of his Majesty's Subjects, are greatly endangered thereby. &c &c.

Nov 14 [illegible]

4 – [George Semple], A Plan for Opening & Widening a Principal Avenue to the Castle, 1757 [detail]
(courtesy Dublin City Library & Archive, WSC/MAPS/329)

opposite

5 – [George Semple], A Survey of the Present Streets Immediately leading to His Majestys Royal Pallace or Castle of Dublin, Nov.r ye 9.th 1751

6 – [George Semple] A Design for Opening proper Streets or Avenues to His Majestys Royal Pallace &c in Dublin, Jan:ry 15.th 1753
(courtesy Clem Kenny)

or piazza) at the entrance to the Castle. The proposed square links Parliament Street to Dublin Castle, but is offset to the west, so that any such statue would regrettably not provide a terminal view to the axis of the new street. This peculiarly offset spatial proposition for the square and equestrian statue is exactly replicated in the 1757 plan, and therefore, along with the exact coincidence of the dates, demonstrates a direct connection between these maps. All three of these published maps were therefore part of a continued public study of the spatial possibilities of the area, and the series reached back to 1751. If we had doubts over Semple's involvement, the 1753 map shows an accurate rendering of his Essex Bridge two years before it was completed, and indeed this fact is referenced in the 1757 map, which states that 'Essex Bridge is built according to said Design' (Plate 4). This further demonstrates that Semple had been speculating on ways to rework this area since at least 1753 (if not 1751, the date of the first map) (Plates 5, 6), some four years or more before the Wide Streets Commissioners was officially convened.[65] Finally, it is worth noting that in October 1755, the City Assembly of Dublin ordered that six hundred copies of a plan 'for opening the avenues ... as far as his majesty's castle, should be struck off [printed] and distributed amongst the members of both houses of parliament'.[66] It seems likely that this was a version of the pair of maps produced in 1751/53 and was the map that eventually appeared in May 1757.[67]

The *Treatise* also recounts Semple's memories of a design research trip made to London during his preparations for building Essex Bridge. In London, Semple tells us, he made contact with Charles Labelye, the Swiss architect of Westminster Bridge.[68] Unsatisfied with Labelye's technique of dropping foundations from floating caissons, Semple used coffer-dams described by the French engineer Forest de Bélidor, taken from

his recently published *Architecture hydraulique*.[69] However, explaining his 1752 London trip, Semple stated that he also sought:

> To find out the Methods which were at that Time in Agitation, for opening the Streets in *London* and *Westminster* ... On my arrival ... I soon acquired the Knowledge of their Method of forming Plans, Maps and Schemes, for opening and widening their Streets, and procured the three Acts of Parliament passed there for those salutary Purposes.[70]

It is curious that if you read John Gwynn's later *London and Westminster improved* (1766),[71] one is led to believe that despite the great opportunities for urban redesign presented by the Great Fire a century earlier, no significant improvements to the street plans of the great city and its western outlier had been made in the previous one hundred years. This leaves one to wonder what 'Methods ... were at that Time in Agitation', what 'Plans, Maps and Schemes, for opening and widening their Streets' were made, and what 'Acts of Parliament' might have been enacted around the time when Semple visited?

An anonymously published pamphlet, recently unearthed, gives some important clues. This is a seven-page octavo edition without title page, date or author. Its opening paragraph – 'To these whom it may concern. (For once in his Life) the Author of a second Plan for opening and widening a principal Avenue to the Castle, dated 14th of May, 1757, most humbly begs Leave thus to acquaint you' – makes clear however that the author of

7 – John Gwynn, A Plan for Rebuilding the City of London, after the Great Fire in 1666; design'd by that great architect S.r Christopher Wren; and approv'd of by King and Parliament; but unhappily defeated by faction, 1749
(courtesy of the British Library)

this pamphlet is the author of the 1757 plan, and indeed that that plan (as demonstrated above) was a second iteration of an earlier attempt.[72] Through the course of this short publication, the author states that he is eager to see the ideas posited in the 1757 plan brought to fruition. Anyone with £10,000 could manage to cover the purchase of the properties from Arran Quay to Dublin Castle along the route indicated on that plan by way of a 'darker Tint' (Plate 1). Such a private or public investor could recoup their investment by a factor of 'five, ten or fifteen Times'.[73] The urgency of the case, the author continues, should be underlined by recent events in Essex Bridge [Street],[74] where rebuilding on the corner with Essex Street had reconfirmed the ancient line of the street, without care for the public good and not in keeping with the opportunity to respond to the width of the new bridge. All of these buildings should be removed of course, 'see[ing] if there be above two good Houses to obstruct said Design, from *Arran-key* to the *Castle*'.[75]

To suggest, therefore, to those with the power to make changes in Dublin a 'parallel case', the author goes on to describe how, faced with a desertion of London by 'many People of Rank and Fortune' to the 'more healthy and open Places adjacent', its citizens 'united themselves in order to put a Stop to this growing Evil'.[76] Among the best of their responses was when 'Mr. Gwynn revived and republished Sir Christopher Wren's Plan for rebuilding that City, after the dreadful Fire in 1666'. This was John Gwynn's 1749

publication of Wren's manuscript plan for rebuilding London after the fire (Plate 7).[77] Crucially, as a model for Semple's polemical plan of 1757, Gwynn's publication combined the graphics of Wren's abandoned project for a new London with four great panels that included his own textual arguments. The author of the anonymous Dublin pamphlet, *To these whom it may concern*, quoted at length from Gwynn's text, which noted the great 'Opportunity which Accident [the Great Fire] offers', despite that chance for change being 'defeated by faction'. 'One Cannot help wishing', Gwynn lamented, that similar 'Principles of Beauty, Elegancy, and Utility' could be effected in London, by means 'of a standing Commission, founded by Parliamentary Authority'.[78] While no such authority was established in London, as we know, the Wide Streets body was established in Dublin directly after Semple's 1757 plan. It is worthwhile remembering too that Gwynn published the Wren plan only a year after the debate on urban improvement began in earnest in Paris, although no reference is made by Gwynn to any aspect of that particular discourse.[79] The 1749 call for action by Gwynn is rehearsed again in Dublin in 1757 by way of the 1757 plan, the *To these to whom it may concern* pamphlet, also from 1757, and by a republication in 1758 of Gwynn's version of Wren's map by the redoubtable visiting map-maker, John Rocque.[80] 'This curious Piece, the Author hopes, will be published here [in Dublin] by Mr. Rocque, within a few Weeks.' [81]

So much for the 'Agitation' and at least one of the 'Plans'; what of the 'three Acts of Parliament' Semple referred to in his 1776 *Treatise*? Two of these, at first sight, appear to be named outright in the 1757 pamphlet.

> 'The citizens of London united together and made a vigorous Application to Parliament, on which they procured two Acts passed in the Twenty-seventh Year of the Present's Majesty's Reign; one ... An Act to improve, widen, and enlarge the Passage over and through London-Bridge; and the other, An Act for building a Bridge cross the River Thames, from Black-fryars, &c.[82]

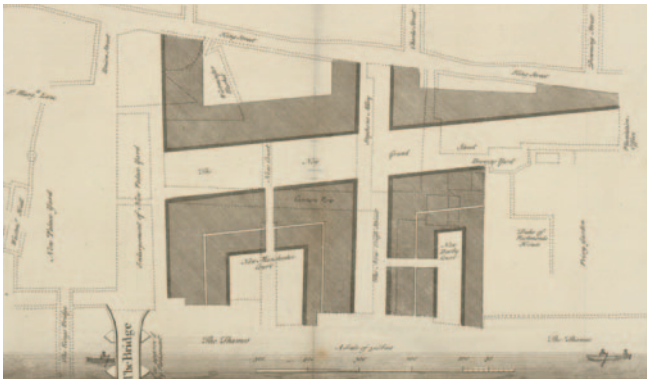
8 – Canaletto, London: Whitehall and the Privy Garden looking North, probably 1751
(by kind permission of the Duke of Buccleuch & Queensbury KT KBE)

London Bridge, which was built in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and spanned 900ft (270m), was famously lined with buildings, and therefore cleared from 1756 as an act of city rationalisation by way of route-widening.[83] Blackfriars Bridge was the third crossing of the Thames in the London area, following London Bridge and Westminster Bridge (discussed below). Built from 1760 to the designs of the Scottish architect and civil engineer Robert Mylne, it opened to traffic in 1769.[84] However, both of these Public Acts date to 1756, four years after Semple's visit, and therefore cannot justifiably be counted among those Semple later said he 'procured' at the time of his visit. We should look now a little deeper into what indeed was ongoing in London in 1752, when Semple was there.

Despite the argument made by John Gwynn in his 1766 publication,[85] a great deal of work had indeed been carried out, in the city of Westminster at least, from the 1730s to the 1750s. In an otherwise overlooked article in *The Burlington Magazine* of 1958, John Hayes recovered evidence for the creation of a breakthrough street linking the newly built Westminster Bridge to Whitehall. The street was recorded in a small group of topographical views of Whitehall made by the Venetian artist Canaletto between 1747 and 1752, the year that Semple visited the English city (Plate 8).[86] The street was created by the demolition and clearance of already existing urban fabric. It is therefore a *percée*, like Parliament Street in Dublin, but anticipates the latter by just under ten years.[87] Remarkably, if one is looking for coincidence to prove precedence, this earlier London new street was also named Parliament Street. That the first Wide Streets Commissioners' intervention may have been directly influenced by the London street, at the very minimum in their choice of name, is perhaps confirmed by the fact that the London street at least led to their parliament while the Dublin street did not. Canaletto captured London's Parliament Street under early construction, including, on the left of the painting (west of the street), a timber palisade around a site with scaffolding frames for houses that were yet to appear. Almost all of the elements of the original street have been superseded as further demolitions were made in the nineteenth century on its west side to create the even wider thoroughfare that is there today. Two original houses on the east side of Parliament Street – both probably by the architect Sir Robert Taylor – survive.[88] One was refaced in the nineteenth century; the façade of the other retains its original form (Plate 9).

In the 1958 article, Hayes made a passing reference to a Thomas Lediard, whose *Observations on the scheme, ... for opening the streets and passages to and from the intended bridge at Westminster* was published in 1738.[89] It was Lediard, and Thomas Cotton, with the assistance, advice and drawings of the architect Nicholas Hawksmoor, who first made the proposal for the new street to rationalise the Whitehall to Westminster link. Hawksmoor's late-career designs included 'a Colonade, on each Side of the Way' to resemble the arcade 'at Covent-Garden'.[90] Like Alberti's and Nicholas V's streets lined with porticos, and Henry Aaron Baker's colonnaded Westmoreland Street in Dublin, nothing came of them.[91]

Despite this disappointment, Lediard's role as the key planner in this project, and what we know about the planning works carried out at Westminster just before the



10 – Thomas Lediard, Observations (1738), 'A Plan of Part of Westminster from the Hall to the Plantation Office' *(courtesy of the British Library)*

opposite

9 – Nos 43 and 44 Parliament Street, London

commencement of the work of Dublin's Wide Streets Commissioners, can be considerably amplified. The original 1736 legislation for building a new bridge at Westminster included references to clearing unspecified approaches to and from the bridge.[92] Lediard's campaign resulted in a new Act in 1739 which considerably expanded the street-making remit of the original. The Westminster Bridge Commissioners, to whom Thomas Lediard had by this time been appointed surveyor, were as a result of this new Public Act, now empowered to 'open, make, design, and lay out' new streets 'to and from the intended Bridge, the Courts of Justice and both Houses of Parliament'.[93] This was to be done on the basis of the compulsory purchase of houses and grounds. A 1747 House of Commons report noted that by 1741, almost £40,000 was spent purchasing 'several Houses [for demolition] and Parcels of Ground' to facilitate the new planned streets.[94]

The proposed scheme for building 'The New Grand Street' (later named Parliament Street) is shown in an illustration from Lediard's 1738 publication (Plate 10).[95] The map is oriented with north to the right. The new street runs parallel to the river, south to north, left to right. Lediard's 1738 *Observations* contained two schemes. A second map, more modestly appended, more or less merely referencing the ideas he and his associates had pushed for over the years, was also enclosed (Plate 11).[96] As we can see, the second engraved map includes a substantial number of other suggested changes to the street plan, including a new partially covered Westminster Market, with a suite of new streets and cross streets west and south of Westminster Hall.

Despite Lediard's initial modesty, other significant breakthrough streets were built at the Westminster Bridge location following his lead and as a result of the new Act – streets which radically transformed an otherwise congested city zone. All of this was already achieved at least five years before Gwynn's lamentations on the state of Westminster and London of 1766, and indeed was in train when he published the Wren plan in 1749. That the works were complete by 1766 is demonstrated by a 1761 map of the area published by the engraver Paul Fourdrinier (Plate 12),[97] and indeed verified by contemporary city rate books, the new streets first appearing there in 1750.[98] The Fourdrinier map includes the north-south line of Parliament Street, perpendicular to the bridge and running parallel to the line of the river. The continuation of the line of Westminster Bridge was brought about by the new Bridge Street and a new (still surviving) Great George Street. The covered Westminster Market which Lediard had looked to

11 – Thomas Lediard, OBSERVATIONS (1738), 'A Plan of the Lower Parts of the Parishes of St Margaret and St John the Evangelist, Westminster…'

12 – Paul Fourdrinier, A PLAN OF THE ANCIENT CITY OF WESTMINSTER…, 1761

(both courtesy of the British Library)

initiate was built, but in a location south of George Street. Other cleared new streets inspired by Lediard's published proposals and facilitated by the 1739 Act included a reconfigured Dean's Yard to the southwest of Westminster Abbey, and east of that, the newly created Abingdon Street.

Pressed by a critic to justify his planning proposals by way of precedent, Lediard cited Hamburg, where a 'beautiful Street' and several others adjacent to it, were 'raised almost from a Dunghill'; and Dresden, 'the Residence of the late and present Kings of Poland ... almost entirely [re-]built of Stone, and the Streets laid out, as well as the Houses built, in a grand and beautiful Manner'.[99] More interesting as precedent, from the perspective of the practical workings of the Wide Streets Commissioners, was Lediard's citing of another English Public Act of 1673, which established Commissioners for the 'Amendment and Enlargement' of 'Streets and Passages' in the vicinity of the Strand, Covent Garden, St Martin in the Fields and Temple Bar. While Wren's radical geometry was not an option, some significant rationalisation – widening and straightening of streets – was initiated after the fire with the legal mechanisms such changes required. These late seventeenth-century Commissioners were empowered to 'treat and agree with the Owners and Occupiers of any ... Houses, as they shall judge fit to be removed, rebuilt, or pull'd down', upon a payment of an agreed compensation. Should such agreement not be reached, the Commissioners could issue a Warrant to empannel a jury to 'enquire and assess ... Damages and Recompense'. Like the Roman *tassa del gettito*, a betterment tax, or 'annual Rent, in Consideration of ... Improvement and Melioration' was to be assigned to those remaining buildings that benefitted from any improvements made to the surrounding streetscape.[100] Notwithstanding the fact that a betterment tax was unfortunately not adopted by the Dublin body, the fundamental workings of the Wide Streets Commissioners, particularly its jury-led system for establishing the values of houses to be appropriated to facilitate improvement, is in all of its details fundamentally anticipated here in English legislation enacted some eighty years before the parallel Irish body came into being.

CONCLUSION

We cannot be certain now of course, which legislation exactly Semple was referring to in the 1776 *Treatise* when he described the mechanisms for urban change that he discovered in London during his 1752 visit. The 1757 anonymous pamphlet *To these whom it may concern* shows us how Gwynn's argument added in 1749 to Wren's geometrical plan (Plate 7) suggested a graphical and textual approach that Semple adopted in his plan of 1757 (Plate 1). As for the legislative instruments he got excited about in 1752, the Acts cited in *To these whom it may concern* are good examples of the type, but had not yet been enacted at the time of Semple's visit to London. Instead, when Semple was in the English capital, and spent time with Charles Labelye, the architect of Westminster Bridge, he must have taken note of the radical reworking of the streets all around him, streets that Canaletto's painting shows were in an advanced state of development exactly when he visited (Plate 8). All of these works were founded

upon Lediard's textual and graphical campaign typified by his 1738 publication (Plates 10 and 11). Lediard's initiatives must present themselves here, even if we cannot be sure that they did so to Semple at the time, as key precedents for 'Methods ... in Agitation' involving 'Plans, Maps and Schemes, for opening and widening ... streets', all resulting in 'Acts of Parliament' which established the legal mechanisms for their execution. The latter included the 1739 Westminster Bridge Act which resulted in such grand *percées* as London's Parliament Street – an uncanny precursor to the first Wide Street in Dublin – and the 1673 Act cited by Lediard in *Observations*, which widened and rationalised the streets of the post-fire city, despite this fact being ignored by eighteenth-century critics like Gwynn and urban historians ever since.

So what are we to make of these assembled London and Continental precursors of the Wide Streets Commissioners? Heretofore, England in the period before John Gwynn stirred George IV, John Nash and the Adam brothers to revamp some of London's major thoroughfares in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century seemed like a fallow field for the student of planning history.[101] But George Semple, clearly the single most important, and ultimately successful, exponent of innovation in town planning in mid-eighteenth-century Dublin, stated without equivocation his own sources of inspiration. While he looked to a French engineer for the know-how to build aquatic foundations, and a Swiss architect for the elevation of his smaller Dublin bridge, it was to London that he went 'to find out the Methods ... for opening ... Streets', and it was there, during his visit of 1752, that this know-how was made explicit. Based on the evidence assembled here, these plans and schemes must have encompassed the work of Thomas Lediard. Lediard's work at Westminster was, in turn, informed by late seventeenth-century planning improvements to London, whose mechanisms closely anticipated those used by Dublin's Wide Streets Commissioners.

For architectural inspiration of a Vitruvian caste, it is has been established that the artistic gentlemen of the Wide Streets Commissioners looked to Italy. For inspiration of a more recent and polemical kind, and for ways of organising apartments over shops, France – in particular, Paris – was the source. But for the practical means and the legal precedent, it must come as no surprise to us that it was to London that Irish planners turned for the means and know-how. The most salient precedent for this was Thomas Lediard's works at Westminster – in Parliament Street of all places – and in other streets laid out in the area, as George Semple must have discovered when he reprised Lediard's and Gwynn's 'methods of agitation' in his 1751, 1753 and 1757 polemical plans.

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ENDNOTES

The following abbreviations are used:

DCLA	Dublin City Library & Archives
NLI	National Library of Ireland
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
WSC	Wide Streets Commissioners

1 Georges-Eugène Haussmann was appointed as Préfet de la Seine in 1853 in part to execute the already conceived ambitions of Napoleon III to renew and rebuild Paris. See for example Thomas Hall, *Planning Europe's Capital Cities: aspects of nineteenth-century urban development* (London, 1997) 8, 64-80; Michaël Darin, 'Haussmann: reconsidering his role in the transformation of Paris', in P.J. Larkham, Michael P. Conzen, and Keith D. Lilley (eds), *Shapers of Urban Form: explorations in morphological agency* (New York, 2014) 97-113.

2 Louis XIV ordered the demolition of the city wall on the right bank of Paris in 1670 and its transformation into what came to be known as the 'boulevard' with pedestrian *contre-allées* planted with double rows of trees. The word boulevard is thought to be a corruption of 'bulwark', which means palisade, that the open space replaced, but has since come to mean a 'broad tree-lined avenue'. The boulevards were completed in 1705. A.E.J. Morris, *History of Urban Form: before the industrial revolutions* (3rd ed, Prentice Hall, London, 1994) 201-02; Michaël Darin, 'French belt boulevards', *Urban Morphology*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2000, 3-8.

3 Hilary Ballon, *The Paris of Henri IV: architecture and urbanism* (Cambridge, MA, 1990).

4 Torgil Magnuson, 'The project of Nicholas V for rebuilding the Borgo Leonino in Rome', *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 36, no. 2, June 1954, 89-115; Carroll William Westfall, *In this Perfect Paradise: Alberti, Nicholas V and the invention of conscious urban planning in Rome, 1447-55* (University Park, PA, 1974); Christoph L. Frommel, 'Papal Policy: the planning of Rome during the Renaissance', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*: *The Evidence of Art, images and meaning in history*, vol. 17, no. 1, 1986, 39-65; for a corrective to Westfall's thesis on 'conscious' city planning in Rome at this early stage, Manfredo Tafuri, '"Cives esse non licere", the Rome of Nicholas V and Leon Battista Alberti: elements towards a historical revision', *The Harvard Architecture Review*, 6, 1987, 60-75.

5 12 & 13 Victoria, c. 85 (1849); see for example Maura Keogh. 'The development of Lord Edward Street', BA, History of Art, TCD, 2004.

6 Key previous research includes Edward McParland, 'The Wide Streets Commissioners, their importance for Dublin architecture in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries', *Irish Georgian Society Quarterly Bulletin*, 15, 1972, 1-32; Nuala T. Burke, 'Dublin 1600-1800, a study in urban morphogenesis', PhD, Dept of Geography, TCD, 1972; Murray Fraser, 'Public building and colonial policy in Dublin, 1760-1800', *Architectural History*, 28, 1985, 102-23; Edward McParland, *James Gandon, Vitruvius Hibernicus* (London, 1985); Edward McParland, 'Strategy in the planning of Dublin, 1750-1800', in P. Butel and L.M. Cullen (eds), *Cities and Merchants: French and Irish perspectives on urban development, 1500-1900* (Dublin, 1986) 97-107; Mary Clark, 'Catalogue of Wide Streets Commission architectural drawings', unpublished report for Dublin City Archives [1988]; Niall McCullough, *Dublin, An Urban History* (Dublin, 1989); Niall McCullough, Michael Gough and Mary Clark, *A Vision of the City: Dublin and the Wide Streets Commissioners* (Dublin, 1991); Conor Lucey, 'Building dialectics: negotiating urban scenography in late Georgian Dublin', in Gillian O'Brien and Finola O'Kane (eds), *Portraits of the City: Dublin and the wider world* (Dublin, 2012) 91-109.

7 *A Plan for Opening & Widening A Principal Avenue to the Castle &c*. There are two known extant copies – one in the National Library, NLI 16 G 49 (6), which includes the date as part of the title, and a copy in the Dublin City Library and Archives, Wide Streets collection, DCLA, WSC/Maps/329, that doesn't include the date in the title, but does include the signature of the engraver P[atrick] Halpin on the bottom right hand corner. The full date of May 14 1757 appears on both states, at the end of the long passages of text inset within a box on the left-hand side.

8 31 Geo II, c. 19 (1758).

9 30 Geo III, c. 19 (1790).

10 For example, DCLA, WSC/Maps/355/2, 'A Plan of Baggot Street and Fitzwilliam Street, John Roe, April 1791' on which it was 'Resolved that we approve of the Lines laid down on this Map for Fitz-William Street & Baggot Street only. this 27th April 1794...'

11 For the concept of 'aesthetic control', albeit as applied to a twentieth-century context, see John

Punter, 'A History of Aesthetic Control, Part 1, 1909-1953: the control of the external appearance of development in England and Wales', *The Town Planning Review*, 57, no. 4, October 1986, 351-81.

12 The earliest example in London was at the east and north sides of Grosvenor Square in two separate developments in the 1720s (now largely demolished); Simon Bradley and Nikolaus Pevsner, *London 6: Westminster* (New Haven and London, 2003) 27-29. There were important French precedents, such as the royal places in Paris, the earliest being the Place Royale (now Place des Vosges) begun around 1605.

13 See also DCLA, WSC/Maps/445/2.

14 The architect Henry Aaron Baker presented the first of two colonnaded designs (neither built) for Westmoreland Street on 6th June 1799, DCLA, WSC/Mins/15, 205.

15 No. 8 D'Olier Street.

16 Sarah Foster, '"Ornament and splendour": shops and shopping in Georgian Dublin', *Irish Architectural & Decorative Studies*, XV, 2012, 12-33: 18-19.

17 Anna Moran, 'Merchants and material culture in early nineteenth-century Dublin: a consumer case study', *Irish Architectural & Decorative Studies*, XI, 2008, 140-65: 150 and note 48, quoting *Freeman's Journal*, 26th October 1808.

18 31 Geo II, c. 19, § v.

19 Donald J. Olsen, *Town planning in London: the eighteenth & nineteenth centuries* (2nd ed., New Haven and London, 1982) 4.

20 Pierre Lavedan, Jeanne Hugueney and Philippe Henrat, *L'urbanisme a l'époque moderne: xvie-xviiie siècles* (Geneva, 1982) 11.

21 This is not to gainsay material examples of a town-planning sensibility among previous developers, as evidenced by axial plans such as the building of St Ann's Church (1720) as terminus to Anne Street, Leinster House (*c*.1742-45) at the end of Molesworth Street, or the statue of William III at the western end of Dame Street. Edward McParland, *Public Architecture in Ireland 1680-1760* (New Haven and London, 2001) 48; Maurice Craig, *Dublin 1660-1860* (2nd ed., London, 1992), 132-33; Robin Usher, *Dawson, Molesworth & Kildare Streets, D2: a study of the past, a vision for the future* (Dublin, 2008); Paula Murphy (ed.), *Art and Architecture of Ireland, Volume III: Sculpture 1600-2000* (Dublin, New Haven and London, 2014) 2, 325, 406, 429, 501.

22 What Thomas Hall refers to as 'accents' to an already existing city structure; Hall, *Planning Europe's Capital Cities*, 19.

23 See Barry Bergdoll, *European Architecture: 1750-1890* (Oxford, 2000) 48-49, on the principle of *dégagement*, the separating of buildings from the detritus of their surroundings to better express their monumentality, first articulated in a French context by Étienne de La Font de Saint-Yenne in his critique of the treatment of the Louvre, *À l'ombre du grand Colbert* (Paris, 1751). On La Font's 'reading' of Paris, see also Richard Wittman, *Architecture, Print Culture, and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century France* (New York, 2007) 75-79.

24 Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books* (Cambridge, MA, 1988) 261; Anthony Vidler, 'The scenes of the street: transformations in ideal and reality, 1750-1871', in Vidler, *The Scenes of the Street and Other Essays* (New York, 2011) 16-127.

25 Vitruvius, *On Architecture* (London, 2009) 143.

26 *Tutte l'opere d'architettura, et prospetiva di Sebastiano Serlio Bolognese*, II (Venice, 1600) 51.

27 Conor Lucey, 'From reportage to ridicule: satirizing the building industry in the eighteenth-century Irish press', in Michela Rosso (ed.), *Laughing at Architecture: architectural histories of humour, satire and wit* (London, 2018) 37-56.

28 McParland, 'Strategy in the planning of Dublin', 97-100.

29 Edward McParland, 'James Gandon and the Royal Exchange competition, 1768-69', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, CII, 1, 1972, 58-72.

30 'Observations on Architecture', *Freeman's Journal*, 27th-31st December 1768 to 4th-7th February 1769; McParland, 'James Gandon and the Royal Exchange competition', 60-62; Jane Meredith. 'Andrew Caldwell (1733-1808): a study of a "Guardian of Taste and Genius"', M. Litt, History of Art, TCD, 2004), 172 ff.

31 *Freeman's Journal*, 11th-14th February, 1769.

32 Anonymous, *Letters Addressed to Parliament, and to the Public in General; on various improvements of the metropolis; which appeared in the Dublin Journal, in December Last. With Remarks on the public buildings; now conducting by that eminent architect, James Gandon, Esq;...* (Dublin, 1786).

33 DCLA WSC/Maps/206. See discussion of this in McParland, 'The Wide Streets Commissioners',

20-21.

34 *Freeman's Journal*, 2nd-4th August 1787, 3; Edward McParland, 'Eclecticism: the provincial's advantage', *Irish Arts Review Yearbook,* 1991-92, 210-13: 212.

35 McParland 'The Wide Streets Commissioners', 3-4.

36 Livia Hurley, 'William Burton Conyngham's antiquarian tour of the Iberian Peninsula 1783-84', *Irish Architectural & Decorative Studies*, XII, 2009 38-53.

37 Compare DCLA, WSC/Maps/342, the 1785 elevation drawing of Dame Street, influenced by the ideas of Frederick Trench, William Burton Conyngham and Charles Tarrant and the elevation designs of the newly developed Lisbon reproduced in Joanna Cunha Leal, 'Post-1755 Lisbon: two-and-a-half portraits' in O'Brien and O'Kane (eds), *Portraits of the City*, 49-61, figs 4.3, 4.4 and pl. 7.

38 Wittman, *Architecture, Print Culture, and the Public Sphere*, 80-94. See also Bergdoll, *European Architecture*, 44-48.

39 Voltaire, 'Des Embellissements de Paris', in Ulla Kölving (ed.), *Les Oeuvres completes de Voltaire*, vol. 31B, 1749, II (Oxford, 1994) 213-33: 214. 'Nous rougissons avec raison de voir les marchés publics établis dans des rues étroites étaler la malpropreté, répandre l'infection, et causer des désordres continuels.'

40 *ibid*., 213. 'On passe devant le Louvre et on gémit de voir cette façade, monument de la grandeur de Louis XIV, du zèle de Colbert, et du génie de Perrault, cachée par des bâtiments de Goths et de Vandales'.

41 *ibid*., 216. 'le centre de la ville, obscur, resserré, hideux, représente les temps de la plus honteuse barbarie'.

42 *ibid*., 221. 'Mais, après tout, il n'est pas plus roi des Parisiens que des Lyonnais et des Bordelais. Chaque métropole doit se secourir elle-même'.

43 Marc-Antoine Laugier, *An Essay on Architecture* (Los Angeles, 1977) 127.

44 Published in Pierre Patte, *Monuments érigés en France à la gloire de Louis XV, précédés d'un tableau du progrès des arts & des sciences sous ce règne ... par M. Patte* (Paris, 1765).

45 Antoine Picon, *French Architects and Engineers in the Age of the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1992) 192-95.

46 Michaël Darin in his 'The study of urban form in France', *Urban Morphology*, II, 2, 1998, 63-76: 66, translates *percées* as 'break-through streets'. The expression *les grandes percées d'Haussmann* is common in French descriptions of the opening up of the great boulevards across the city by the late nineteenth-century planner. I am grateful to Dr Alice Vialard for first bringing this to my attention.

47 Valeria Cafà, 'The via Papalis in early cinquecento Rome: a contested space between Roman families and curials', *Urban History*, vol. 37, no. 3, 2010, 434-51.

48 In the late fifteenth century, the Roman Office of Works began the practice of expropriation with compensation (or compulsory purchase), in the public interest. These powers emanated from Sixtus IV's 1480 papal bull *Etsi de cunctarum civitatum*, which established the general interest as more important than that of an individual. Lavedan et al, *L'urbanisme*, 36.

49 Emilio Re, 'Maestri di strada', *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria*, 43, 1920, 5-102: 53-54.

50 Lavedan et al, *L'urbanisme*, 36.

51 The most notable example being the inflationary response to property values in newly laid-out Abbey Street and Beresford Street as a result of Henry Ottiwell's reckless speculations there in the early 1790s. See, for example, Gough 'The Dublin Wide Streets Commissioners', 50.

52 £226,728.17.6 owed to the British Exchequer according to Consolidated Fund. Abstract Account, 1875-75, UK Parliamentary Report, 1876, v. 23, 9. The source was found at https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=4EMTAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA90&dq=%22wide+streets%22+dublin&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=%22wide%20streets%22%20dublin&f=false (accessed 3rd February, 2019).

53 D.J. Buisseret, 'The communications of France during the reconstruction of Henry IV', *The Economic History Review*, New Series 18, no. 2, 1965, 267-77: 267.

54 Emilio Re, 'Maestri di strada'.

55 McParland 'The Wide Streets Commissioners', 8; Burke, 'Dublin 1600–1800', 341, 344, 354-55; Fraser, 'Public building', 103; McParland, 'Strategy in the planning of Dublin', 99-100.

56 J.W. de Courcy 'Grattan Bridge', *The Liffey in Dublin* (Dublin, 1996) 177-80.

57 George Semple, *A Treatise on Building in Water in Two Parts* (Dublin, 1776) 27.

58 Semple, *Treatise*, 27.

59 DCLA, WSC/Mins/1, 3, 9th May 1758. The WSC resolved to make a passage from Essex

Bridge to Cork Hill, 51 feet wide, 'ranging exactly from the Outlines of Essex Bridge', and that Mr Semple was to prepare the plan. Semple broke from the WSC not long afterwards, refusing to deliver maps, and the WSC resolved not to consult him further, 22nd January 1759, DCLA, WSC/Mins/1, 18. McParland, 'Strategy in the planning of Dublin', 100.

60 J.T. Gilbert, *A History of the City of Dublin*. 3 vols (2nd ed., Dublin, 1861) II, 24-25.

61 DCLA, WSC/Maps/1, 1, 4th May 1758.

62 Semple, *Treatise*, 1.

63 DCLA, WSC/Maps/329 version (also Plate 1). The 1757 date is inscribed directly below the actual title in the NLI copy of the same map. See note 7 above.

64 E. MacDowel Cosgrave, 'On two maps, dated 1751 and 1753, of the Essex Bridge district, Dublin', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 6th Ser, 8, 1918, 140-49; Andrew Bonar Law and Charlotte Bonar Law, *'A Contribution towards a Catalogue of Engravings of Dublin', originally by E. Mac Dowel 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, Maps (Shankill, Co Dublin, 2005) II, 258, G8 and G9.

65 Although the first map is dated 1751, it seems more likely to have been published as part of a pair with the 1753 map. The 1751 map makes little sense on its own.

66 R.M. Gilbert (ed.), *Calendar of the Ancient Records of Dublin*, X (Dublin, 1891) 190. Christine Casey, 'Books and Builders: a bibliographical approach to Irish eighteenth-century architecture', PhD, 1991, 235-36.

67 We might note in passing that the remarkable Semple was also the author in 1757 of a scheme for expanding the harbour of Dublin, the drawings for which and instructions for their publication surviving in the Dublin Port & Docks Board Archive. Casey, 'Books and Builders', 232.

68 Semple, *Treatise*, 27.

69 Semple, *Treatise*, 30. Bernard Forest de Bélidor, *Architecture hydraulique, ou l'art de conduire, d'élever et de ménager les eaux pour les différens besoins de la vie. 2 tom.* (Paris, 1737-53).

70 Semple, *Treatise*, 27.

71 John Gwynn, *London and Westminster improved, illustrated by plans. To which is prefixed, a discourse on public magnificence...* (London, 1766). See F.M. Dodsworth, 'Shaping the city, shaping the subject: honour, affect and agency in John Gwynn's London and Westminster improved (1766)', in O'Brien and O'Kane (eds), *Portraits of the City*, 76-90; Miles Ogborn, 'Designs on the city: John Gwynn's plans for Georgian London', *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 43, no. 1, January 2004, 15-39.

72 NLI, LO P209 no. 1, *To these whom it may concern. (For once in his Life) the Author of a second Plan for opening and widening a principal Avenue to the Castle, dated 14th of May, 1757, most humbly begs Leave thus to acquaint you...* (s.l. [Dublin], n.d. [1757]). Although undated, the publication comes after the 14th May 1757 *A Plan for Opening & Widening a Principal Avenue...* and before the Wide Streets legislation, 31 Geo. II, c. 19, enacted in 1757 but ratified by the Crown in 1758. Therefore, the pamphlet was clearly also published in 1757.

73 *To these whom it may concern*, 2.

74 A short north-south street leading away from Essex Bridge but stopped by the east-west Essex Street was also, a little confusingly, referred to as Essex Bridge.

75 *To these whom it may concern*, 7.

76 *ibid*., 3.

77 *A Plan for Rebuilding the City of London, after the Great Fire in 1666; design'd by that great architect, S.R. Christopher Wren and approved of by King and Parliament but unhappily defeated by faction* (London, 1749). Wren wasn't the only one to make such a plan. Other key players after the fire who made plans were John Evelyn, Robert Hooke and Valentine Knight. Wren's original drawing, known through later engravings, including one made by Henry Hulsbergh in 1721, survives, and is kept at All Souls College, Oxford. Christine Stevenson, *The City and the King: architecture and politics in restoration London* (New Haven and London, 2013) 136-37.

78 *A Plan for Rebuilding the City of London*.

79 See note 38 above.

80 John Rocque, *A Plan for Rebuilding the City after the Fire, Design'd by that Great Architect S.r Chrisoph.r Wren* ([Dublin] 1758). The London-based Huguenot map-maker was in Dublin from 1754-60 when he published, among a whole slew of maps of cities and counties in Ireland, the important four-sheet house-by-house *Exact Survey of Dublin*. Colm Lennon, and John Montague, *John Rocque's Dublin: a guide to the Georgian city* (Dublin, 2010); John Montague. 'John Rocque and the making of the 1756 Exact

Survey of Dublin', PhD, History of Art and Architecture, TCD, 2009, available at http://www.tara.tcd.ie/handle/2262/ 84955 (accessed 3rd February, 2019).

81 *To these whom it may concern*, 3.

82 *To these whom it may concern*, 6. In fact, these UK Public Acts were from the 29th year of the reign of George II, not the 27th, and were, respectively, 29 Geo II, c. 40 and 29 Geo II, c. 86, both enacted in 1756, the year before the publication of the pamphlet itself.

83 Mark Latham, 'The London Bridge Improvement Act of 1756: a study of early modern urban finance and administration', PhD, Centre for Urban History, University of Leicester, July 2009, available online at https://lra.le.ac.uk/bitstream/2381/8266/1/2009Lathammphd.pdf (accessed 3rd February, 2019).

84 'Blackfriars Bridge and Blackfriars Road', in Howard Roberts and Walter H Godfrey (eds), *Survey of London: Volume 22, Bankside (the parishes of St. Saviour and Christchurch Southwark)*, (London, 1950) 115-21. British History Online http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol22/pp115-121 (accessed 1st February 2019).

85 Gwynn, *London and Westminster improved*.

86 Charles Beddington, Brian Allen and Francis Russell, *Canaletto in England: a Venetian artist abroad, 1746-1755* (New Haven and London, 2006) figs 8, 26. There are two paintings that include Parliament Street by Canaletto in the Beddington book (a third is a black and white photograph of a watercolour sketch, whereabouts unknown). Fig. 8 is the key image, which is in the collection of His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, KT, Bowhill, and is reproduced here.

87 Parliament Street in Dublin was completed around 1762.

88 Simon Bradley and Nikolaus Pevsner, *London 6: Westminster* (New Haven and London, 2003), 246.

89 Thomas Lediard, *Some Observations on the scheme, offered by Messrs. Cotton and Lediard, for opening the streets and passages to and from the intended bridge at Westminster...* (London, 1738).

90 *ibid*., 13.

91 See notes 14 and 24 above.

92 9 George II, c. 29 (1736), 'and whereas several Streets, Ways, and Passages, on each Side the River ... to and from the said Bridge, are so narrow, that they may be incommodious to Coaches, Carts, and Passengers, and prejudicial to Commerce and Trading; be it enacted ... that the said Commissioners ... shall have full Power and Authority to agree with the Owners and Occupiers of Ground, or of such ... houses, as they ... shall judge fit to be removed, rebuilt, or pulled down, or any part of them ... and upon the Payment of such Sum or Sums of Money so agreed upon, are hereby authorized to appoint Workmen to pull the said houses down...'. If agreement on monetary compensation could not be reached, a jury was to be 'impanelled' to hear witnesses for both sides, and decide the amount.

93 12 George II, c. 33 (1739).

94 *Journals of the House of Commons UK, vol. 24 1741-45*, 1803, 94-95: 'Thomas Lediard esquire, Surveyor to the Commissioners: Who, being examined, said, That several Houses and Parcels of Ground have accordingly been purchased ... for the Purposes aforesaid, amounting to the sum of £39,868 11s 10d; and that the Street leading from the Abutment on the Westminster Shore to King's-Street, is laid out, and will soon be completed, and are now opening and laying out several Ways, Streets, and Passages'.

95 'A Plan of Part of Westminster, from the Hall to the Plantation Office, taken from an actual Survey...', in Lediard, *Some Observations*, between pp. 6 and 7.

96 'A Plan of the Lower Parts of the Parishes of St Margaret and St John the Evangelist, Westminster from the Horse Ferry to Whitehall, taken from an Actual Survey', Lediard, *Some Observations*, between pp. 16 and 17.

97 *A Plan of Part of the Ancient City of Westminster from College Street to Whitehall, and from the Thames to St. James's Park, in which are laid down all the New Streets that have been built & other alterations made since the Building of Westminster Bridge. Published according to act of Parliament by C. Fourdrinier & Co at Charing Cross, January 1761* (London, 1761).

98 'Parliament Street', in Montagu H. Cox (ed.), *Survey of London: Volume 10, St. Margaret, Westminster, Part I: Queen Anne's Gate Area*, ([s.l.], 1926) 1. British History Online http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol10/pt1/p1 (accessed 3rd February 2019).

99 Lediard, *Some Observations*, 18.

100 13 & 14 Charles II, c. 2, §§ 28 & 29 (1673-74).

101 John Summerson, *Georgian London* (New Haven and London, 2003) 119-20.

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