

1 – Jonathan Barker, A Plan of Merrion Square with the Intended New Streets Being Part of the Estate of the Right Honble Lord Viscount Fitzwilliam (c.1762)
 (Pembroke Estate Papers, Acc. No. 2011/2/2/10. All photographs courtesy National Archives of Ireland)

Some problems in building on the Fitzwilliam estate during the agency of Barbara Verschoyle

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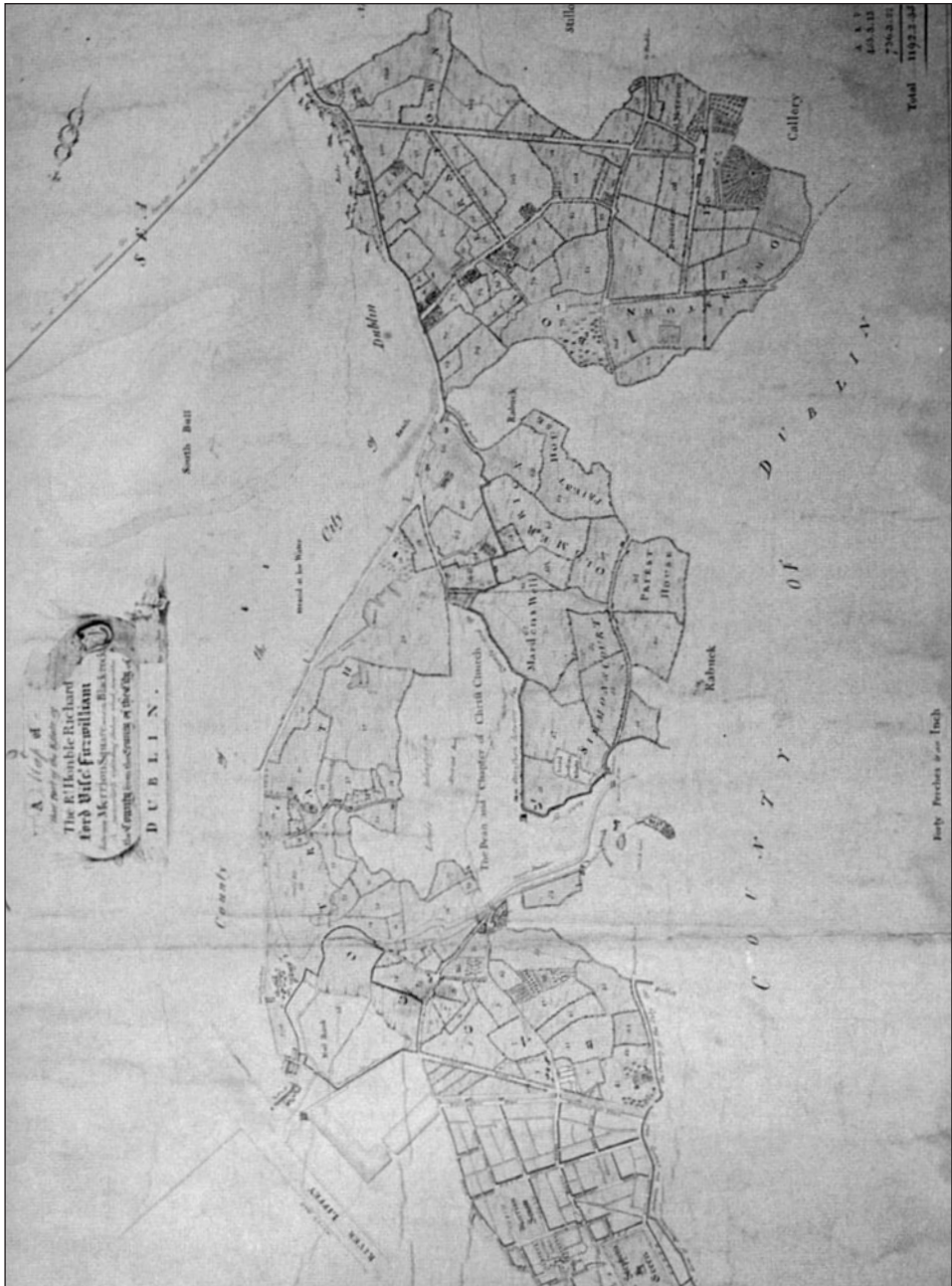
BARBARA VERSCHOYLE WAS THE AGENT FOR THE FITZWILLIAM ESTATE FOR nearly forty years, until 1827.¹ She devoted her life to the role, and oversaw the entire management of the estate through many difficult years, from the Rebellion to the subsequent post-Union economic decline. The estate was large and valuable: in Dublin it comprised more than 1,275 Irish acres, and in 1816 was worth £14,000 per annum (Plates 2, 3).² Although in the latter years of her agency she saw the emergence of the successful development of the estate, overall the years of Verschoyle's agency were largely beset with difficulties, mainly due to circumstances beyond her control. Her correspondence, in particular with her employer Richard, 7th Viscount Fitzwilliam of Meryon, gives a unique insight into the role of an agent to an absentee landlord in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Verschoyle was born into a family of agents. Her father and mother were agents to the Fitzwilliam estate before her. Her father, Bryan Fagan, was agent to the 6th Viscount Fitzwilliam until his death in 1761. He was a brewer, with a premises on Ushers Quay, Dublin. It is not known when he commenced his position as agent, although he was certainly established in the role by 1751.³ He instigated the significant developments of the estate of the mid-eighteenth century, chiefly the setting out of Merrion Square and its contiguous streets (Plates 1, 4).

After his sudden death in January 1761, the agency passed to his wife Elizabeth. She oversaw the administration of the estate for at least twenty-five years, while continuing the brewing business of her late husband. Unfortunately, the surviving correspondence of Elizabeth Fagan ends in 1771, and it is not known when her agency ended, or when her daughter's began. With the death of Elizabeth Fagan on the 28 April 1788, it is likely that Barbara became agent in the very late 1780s.⁴ Lack of evidence also precludes any knowledge regarding the circumstances of the appointment of Barbara. Why was she chosen over her sisters? Was she groomed for the role by her mother? Was she chosen by the 7th Viscount Fitzwilliam after the death of her mother? In fact, the very early years of Barbara's



2 – Pat Roe, A Map of Bagginbally, Mt. Merrion, Booterstown, etc Situate in the County of Dublin containing 1377.3.13 ARP Plantatn Measure being part of the Estate of the Lord Viscount fitzwilliam baron Thorncastle, Knt. of the Bath etc (1774)
(Pembroke Estate Papers, Acc. No. 2011/21/41)



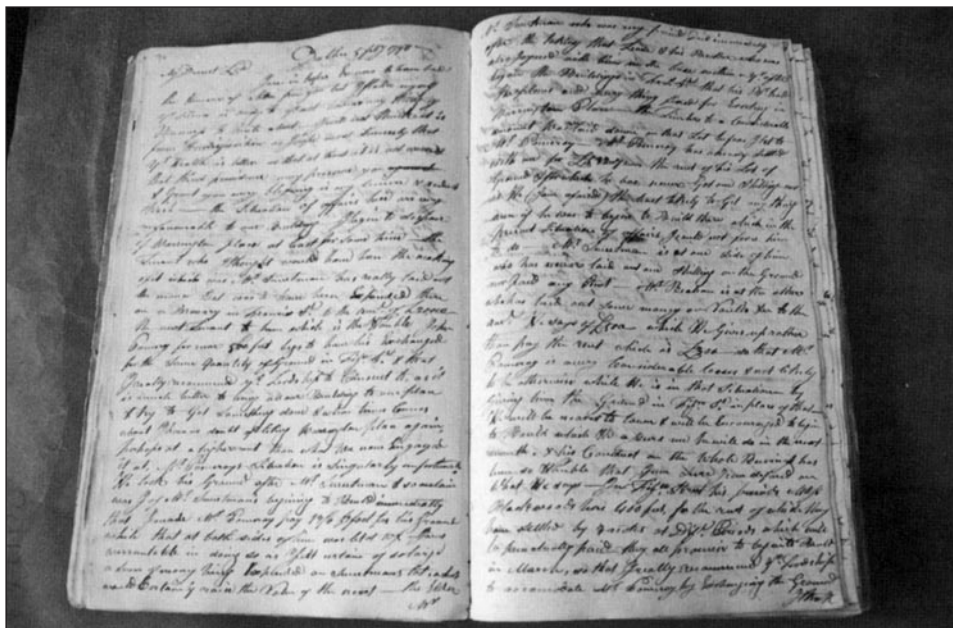
3 – John Roe, A Map of that part of the Estate of the Rt. Honble. Richard Lord Visct. Fitzwilliam between Merrion Square and the Black-rock particularly describing the line which separates the County from the County of the City of Dublin (1794)

(Pembroke Estate Papers, Acc. No. 2011/21/40)



4 – Jonathan Barker, A Map of Baginbun and all its Subdenominations (1762)
(Pembroke Estate Papers, Acc. No. 2011/2/2/6)

5 – A page from volume one of the Fitzwilliam Estate letter books
(Pembroke Estate Papers, Acc. No. 97/46/3/1)



agency remain almost a complete mystery. The story of the agency of Barbara Verschoyle does not begin until December 1796, the date of her earliest surviving correspondence.

From December 1796 onwards, all letters on estate matters sent by Verschoyle were transcribed into a single volume (Plate 5).⁵ The letters in the volume are written in different hands, which, along with their lack of sensible punctuation, seems to indicate that they were dictated. The most frequent addressee was the landlord, Richard, 7th Earl Viscount Fitzwilliam. Verschoyle would write to him as frequently as two or three times a week, and although he was in fairly regular communication with her, she frequently had cause to censure her employer for his tardiness in replying. Although for the first few years there seems little doubt that almost all estate correspondence which occurred was recorded in this volume, the regularity and frequency of the correspondence included in the volume declines sharply after 1801. It is likely that this is more a reflection on a decrease in efficiency rather than a reflection of a substantial decrease in correspondence, although that probably also happened to a degree.

Barbara Fagan was born *c.*1749-53, the sixth of eight daughters.⁶ At the time of her mother's death in 1788, she was still, at the age of at least thirty-five, unmarried. Two years later, on 8 September 1790, she married Richard Verschoyle, a Dublin merchant, from an established Protestant family.⁷ Barbara was a devout Catholic, and evidently spent much of her time trying to convince her husband, to whom she was devoted, of the error of his ways and to convert to Catholicism. In a sense, they became a partnership of agents. Richard Verschoyle, in his sphere of business contacts, constantly looked out for the interest of the estate, and assisted his wife in every way he could.

The correspondence to Fitzwilliam illuminates the personality of Verschoyle as well as her personal relationship with him; this was indeed a close and unusual relationship. Her letters to him constantly open with a query after his Lordship's health. Fitzwilliam must have suffered from ill-health recurrently, for she regularly entreats him to come to Ireland for the benefit of his health, as well as to observe the progress of the estate.

The letters also convey the complex nature of their working relationship. Throughout the correspondence, Verschoyle shows a desire to please Fitzwilliam in all aspects of her administration. In many of her letters is an implicit seeking of approval for her actions, as if she needs to be reassured. However, in other letters she is quite confident of her abilities. Indeed, in some letters she is quite blunt, leaving Fitzwilliam in little doubt that by his inaction or inattention he has caused problems. On the 20 March 1797 she writes:

Yr. Lordships inattention to Business while you were on the Continent, & giving no ansr. to several letters I had the Honour of writing to you on Business has been a loss to you – some rent that would have been Secured by Good Tenants in Rings End, that now decline having anything to do with the Ground.

However, as well as affording an analysis of the relationship between landlord and agent, the most fundamental and intrinsic importance of these letters is the detailed chronicle of events which they form. They were, and are, a truly unique record of the administration and evolution of a whole estate.

Verschoyle's administration chiefly involved the collecting of rents and the negotiating of new leases, acting as mediator between tenants or prospective tenants and the landlord. Because the landlord was absentee, the procedure for negotiating, allocating and drawing up new leases was a protracted affair. Once a proposal had been approved by Fitzwilliam, the lease was drawn up in duplicate by a clerk, under Verschoyle's instructions. Verschoyle would compare each pair and ensure that they were exact copies; she would then tie them up separately, and carefully label each bundle with a memorandum to assist Fitzwilliam. The leases, parcelled together in one large bundle, would then be sent to Fitzwilliam, usually to his residence in Richmond. There he would look them over, after which he would summon a Mr Hone, 'a young Lawyer & friend of Mr Verschoyles', who would witness Fitzwilliam signing them.⁸ Hone would then seal the leases and return with them to Ireland, where he would attend to their signature by the various tenants. This procedure could take many weeks, and would frequently cause complaint from the prospective tenants because they were not able to commence with the agreed terms of their lease until the leases were returned from England, signed by Fitzwilliam. There were several instances where tenants would claim for indulgence (relief) of their rent because they had been so delayed beyond the agreed date of commencement of their lease.

Her system of allocating leases and method of administration was taught to her by Fitzwilliam himself. She was proud of, and confident in, her ability and efficiency. In a letter to him of 25 April 1798 she proclaims:

you may rely on it every thing shall be done regular – I wish you were here My Dearest Lord you Should judge yourself whether yr. Good instructions have been thrown away on me, but I will not praise myself, I only hope you will do it when I have the Honr. of Seeing You – Yr. affairs here are all very safe & Regular.

Her confidence was such that when Fitzwilliam apparently expressed doubts about

some aspect of the leases he had been sent, she was able to rejoin her employer somewhat indignantly:

having had the Honr. of being yr. Lordships Pupil (for it was you instructed me in this Business) I feel a little surprized that you Should be uneasy or fear I should be Irregular – I think you will not say so when you Come here ... I Expected to have got great Credit for my regularity ... I flatter myself that ere now you will have Given me Credit for my regularity ... for I assure you I think I am almost Equal to my Instructor in that particular.⁹

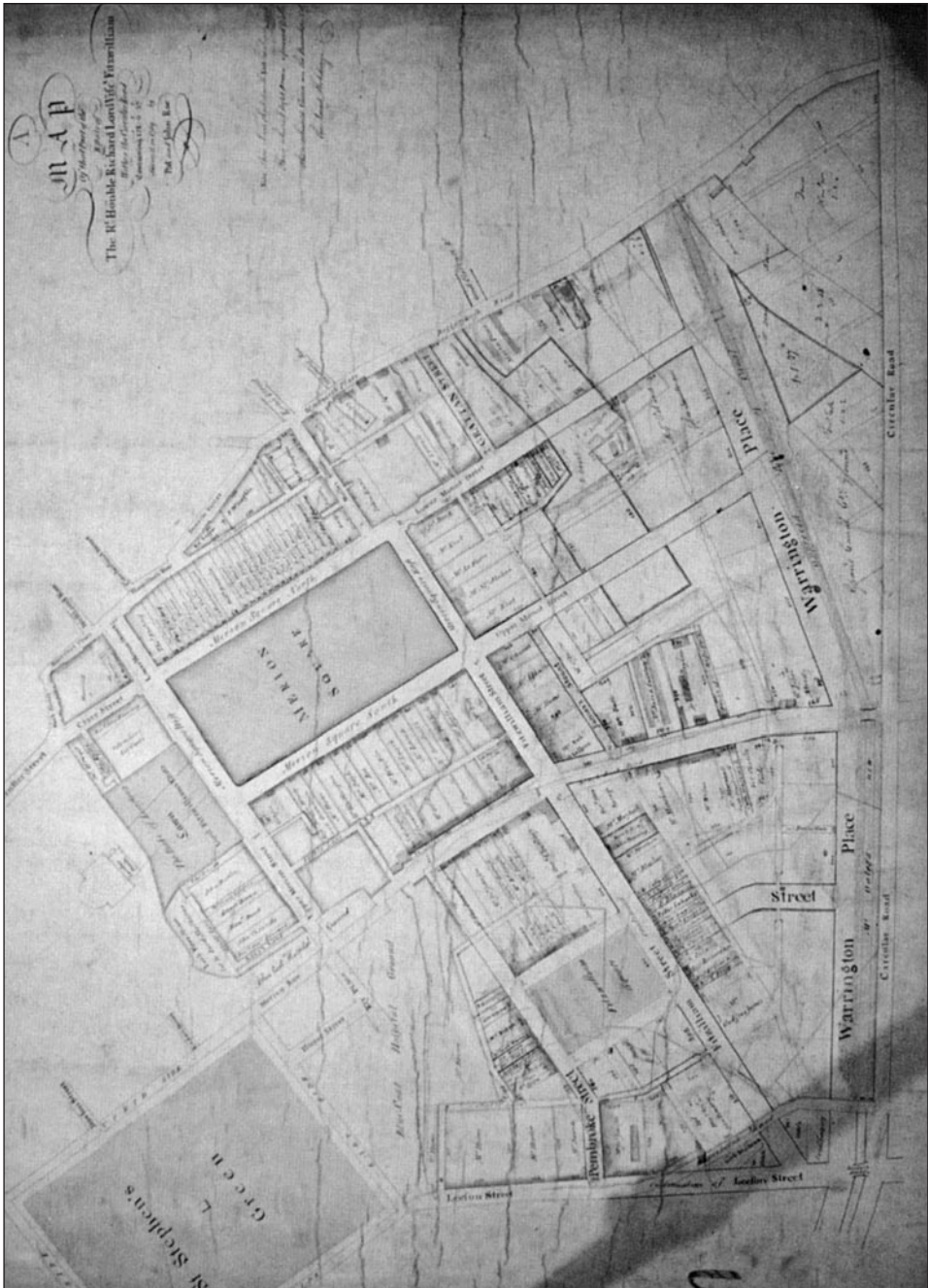
The specifications in the leases for the houses to be built were laid out in general terms and changed little between leases. A lease of 25 March 1790 to the Revd Gilbert Austin to build one house in Baggot Street is a typical example. It specified:

one good and substantial dwelling House with Lime and Stones, or with Bricks and Lime, well roofed and covered with Slates, not less than Forty five Feet in the Front, and Two Stories high above the Cellars at least, and shall make an Area of Eight Feet wide at the Front of said House, and lay Flags before the House for a Foot-passage, in the like Manner as the same is now done before the Houses in Merrion-street, and shall pave the half of the Street before the Front of the said House from the said Flags to the Middle of said Street and shall fill up the remainder of the front of said Lot with a Gate and doorway ornamented with Cut Stone so as to render it Handsome to the front of said street.¹⁰

The building development undertaken by Verschoyle during her agency was severely affected by the political and economic situation of the time. Her letters constantly make reference to the severe difficulty she had trying to collect the rent arrears from all tenants, but particularly from building tenants. In fact, the first letter in the letter-book of late December 1796 includes a sort of progress report on all the various building leases allocated around the estate at the time (Plate 6). Although it is not complete, there is no doubt about the tenor of the report; it makes for grim reading.¹¹

[Warrington Place]

the tenants on Warrington Place have done nothing Except the tenants at the corner lots in Bagot street – they have laid out a good deal of money on sinking Vaults & range walls, their leases were signed in 91 & they owe two years rent & they certainly have never got any thing out of the ground – they pay 10 & 12/- a foot – the other tenants got theirs in March 1792 & owe one year & a halves rent – but they have done nothing to the Ground – I think they should get no allowance untill their Vaults & range walls are Built –



6 – Pat. and John Roe, A Map of that part of the Estate of the Rt Honble Richard Lord Visct Fitzwilliam Within the Circular Road Containing in the whole 128.0.37 ARP (1789) (Pembroke Estate Papers, Acc. No. 2011/2/1/15)

[Baggot Street]

Wildridge & Hartwell, in the lower end of Bagot Street near the Bridge Got their leases in 92 they have laid out a good deal of money in Vaults Sewers & Range walls & have got no return – there are 4 years rent due last March by Hartwell & 3 by Wildridge – Hartwell pays 10 & Wildridge 8/- p foot – almost all the other Leases of Bagot Street were signed in 1791 – there are a good many Houses Built but not all let – none has paid Any rent but Milne, who sold his Int. There are three Houses built on his, which secures the rent –

[Fitzwilliam Square]

in Fitzm Square there are no Houses built but 4, which is by Donovan, Doyle & Brown – they all owe two & a half years Rent – the Ground you last let in Bagot St below the Bridge on which Hendy & Poor Kenny have Built a good House Each, & Mr Oates has Sunk the foundations for 3 & Built them up one story high besides Range Walls &c are also under rent 2 1/2 years – there is not a bit of that producing money to the tenants – Hendy & Kenny lives in their own Houses, & tho the later as I mentioned to your Lordship when I had the Honr. of seeing you, has made Every Effort to let or sell his House (for he is Considerably in debt by Building it) he has not been able to do it -

[Mount Street]

in Mount St Grant & Crossthaite are the only tenants that have Built Since the year 91 & they have indeed done a great deal – some of their Houses are let, but they have made such Exertions – they purchased part of the Ground that Mr. Sproule had across that street & opened it all this way to the Canal & there are some Houses built on that, tho the lease is but 47 years – there are none of your Lordships tenants in these bad times has made so many Exertions & them & Mr David Courtney whose letter I Inclose & who I am sure has Expended more money on the Ground than He in that letter mentions – at least If I may Judge by the sum Expended on our own House – Wm. Osbourne at the corner of Fitzm. Street next the square has also laid out a great Deal of money there & Built Exceeding Good Houses, some of which are let & others now Building – He owes two & a half years Rent – He has 216 feet at 11/- p foot – He also has 100 feet in Mount Street at the rere of that lot at 10/- a foot under rent since March 94 –

[Leeson Street]

in Leeson Street there is also a good Deal of money laid out by Mr Johnson

& Mr Swords – but as the whole of their ground is not Built I have Recd no Rent.

Verschoyle elaborated on the problems she faced: with building not proceeding, the lessees were in breach of their contract, having undertaken to enclose their plots, turn the vaults and commence building. She found, however, that there was little she could do. She was desperate to try to negotiate some means of compromise, with the approval of Fitzwilliam, to encourage building to proceed. In the same letter as the above report, she wrote to Fitzwilliam:

by all the Building Tenants there is a Considerable Arrears due ... but the times are now so bad and so little prospect of amendment that it may be a long time indeed before all the ground is Built & if I am to Receive no Rents till then, the Arrear on Each lot may be so great that it wld. be difficult to get it all, for as to Enforcing the penalty for not Building, that on account of the badness of the times & dearness of all Building Materials commencing so soon after signing the leases, I am sure we should not be able to do it.

Thus the necessity of some sort of relief for the building tenants, in the interest of the estate, was becoming increasingly apparent. From a letter to Fitzwilliam of 7 January 1797, it is clear that this was an issue that was still preoccupying Verschoyle: ‘With respect to your Lordship’s Building tenants I am turning in my thoughts, something that you may do for them which will be a Relief to them & not so material an Injury to your Lordship’. She does not describe her plan at this stage, but allows ‘in a few days I hope to be able to write more fully on this Business – for the present I shall only say that no allowance ought to be made Except when some money is Expended.’

In a letter to Fitzwilliam of 6 February 1797 she revealed her plan to allow a remission of rent, but only to those who had fulfilled their building covenants and who had paid all the rent they owed:

I feel I am right in insisting on the rent now due being Paid & in insisting on the Vaults & Sewers being built because that is a stake to you for the Rent they Engaged to pay, ... yet I think if you were to accept of one fourth of the next 3 years it would be Liberal and they would be thankfull – turn this in yr. mind my Dearest Lord, for I think I could Easier get them to pay the rent now due, if they were sure Indulgence would follow, & these times are very bad indeed.

Unfortunately the situation only worsened. In a letter to Fitzwilliam of 15 March 1797, Verschoyle wrote:

the Situation of this Country at present is truly Melancholy, where it will End God Knows – our Bankers here have stoped [sic] Circulating Cash which has Occasioned Great Confusion – there is no such thing as Getting a Guinea from them – Several Manufacturers have been Obliged to Discharge more than three fourths of their People, & the Crowds of Poor Creatures that are hourly Beging [sic] for bread are Shocking to Humanity.

She detailed the continuing problems she had trying to get any rents paid:

you may Suppose in all this Distress that rents are not paid – I assure you I cannot Get a Settlement from any one – it is my Oppinion [sic] that the rumor of the French Invasion makes the rich as well as the poor avail themselves of the General Distress likely to be Should such an event happen – for the Ansr. I now Get from the most Wealthy & punctual of Yr. Tenants is – I cant pay – I cannot Get in my own rents – Eject if you will what can I do – I assure you my Dearest Lord it is Impossible for me to tell you the Torment that I have – I am kept from Morning until Evening arguing with them the Necessity of their paying the rent.

It is clear that her hopes of getting the building tenants to pay by offering them a remission of rent had failed:

Even the Building Tenants to whom I mentioned your Lordships liberal intentions of a Reduction of Rent for the next three years provided they pay their rents & turn their Vaults &c have made no Effort to pay – every one says I will not be the first let some one pay before me, Eject me if you please I shall be Glad to Get rid of my Bargain – in this way I really am & Except from 4 of yr. new Building Tenants, I have not Got one shilling of Rent – I told them I certainly should not Eject them as they are all very well able to pay their rent and as I could recover that by Action of Debt they might be certain that while ever they had a property they would be sued for their rent – this I hope will have some effect – but I declare the uneasiness & anxiety of my mind is such & the unpleasant Language that I am obliged to listen to, torments me to Such a degree, that nothing but my real affection and Attachment to your Lordship would make me bear with it at all.

In order that these problems of accruing rent arrears (accompanied with no building) would not happen in the future, Verschoyle devised a shrewd plan. These problems had arisen because earlier building leases had a clause in them which allowed for three years rent-free before the full rent had to be paid. Verschoyle realised that this was a misguided clause – instead of encouraging building, it allowed tenants to hold

onto their plot, and do nothing to it, without fear of censure. By the time the three years rent-free had elapsed, sites remained unbuilt, and it was then very difficult to compel the lessees to start building on holdings they had held rent free for three years. Interestingly, it seems that she introduced the new measure into building leases without waiting for the approval of her employer. She wrote to Fitzwilliam on 15 October 1797 about a new tenant who wished to build on Fitzwilliam Square: 'I have ... got him to agree to Commence rent next march & not to Get any time rent free untill after the first House is Built in the front of the Square – then he is to Get 3 years rent free.' She explained her reasons for introducing this new clause:

by this method, which I hope you will approve, & in future adopt, the Landlord is secured his Rent before he gives the Indulgence, which I think is but fair, it will prevent so much Ground being taken on Speculation, as if a Man is bound to pay rent from the time he takes it, He will Naturally [sic] try to do something with it ... I recommend in the strongest manner that this method may be adopted – I really see the necessity of it & wish I had recommended it before ... by this method you are able to reward when yr. rent is first secured, which I think is the fairest & the Best way & I hope you will think so.

This was a radical new clause which was included thereafter in leases in an effort both to encourage building and prevent further rent arrears occurring in the future. Another change was also introduced into later building leases which also followed these aims. While the stipulations regarding the appearance of the buildings were similar to earlier leases, the later leases were more stringent in their clauses, which specified what was to be done and by when. They also contained very specific penalties to be enforced after a shorter length of time, if the clauses were not fulfilled.

This can be seen in the example of a building lease of 25 March 1805 to the Reverend George Alley for '23 feet of Ground in Lower Mount Street'.¹² Like the stipulations of earlier leases he was to build, 'one good and substantial Dwelling-house of the best Materials, well roofed and covered with Slates, not less than three stories and a half high above the Cellars at least'. However, the lease also stipulated that the builder was to 'enclose the said demised Premises with a Stone or Brick Wall, within the first six Months, and shall turn the Vaults to the Front of said Lot within the first twelve Months of said Term, or in default thereof ... shall pay or cause to be paid unto ... Lord Visct Fitzwilliam ... an additional yearly rent of £10 sterling'. Moreover, it was stipulated further that 'if the said House and said Area, Passage and Pavement shall not be built, fixed up and made in Manner aforesaid within the said first year...[there will be an] additional yearly rent of £15.'

Although the clauses controlling the style of the buildings did not change much, they did become more specific in later leases. This can be seen in the same lease to Reverend Alley: ‘no Bow Window or other Projections shall be made in the Front of the said House beyond the Window Stools and Door Cases, and that the Area shall be enclosed with a stone Kerb with Iron Pallisadoes [palisades] on Top, ranging uniformly along the said intended Street and that the Fronts of the said Houses to the said Street shall be built of Stock Brick.’

It was not only general economic factors which affected building. Several individuals through their action, or inaction, also had a direct impact on the development of the estate. Two such people who had a severe detrimental impact on the development of the estate, and occupied much concern of Verschoyle in her correspondence, were Samuel Sproule and John Sweetman.

Both Sproule and Sweetman were wealthy men, practised in the business of building speculation. Sproule had several holdings around the estate. One in particular was contentious; it was a holding of an acre with a 300 feet frontage onto Grand Canal Street (Plate 7). Verschoyle described the situation to Fitzwilliam in a letter of 6 November 1797:

Inclosed [sic] is a letter I have Just Got from Mr. Sproule, my ansr. to it is on the Back of it, how far I have Merited his abusefull Conduct, your Lordship is the best Judge when I tell you I never Ejected him untill there was two years rent due and on this one acre which is the Business in dispute – However He receives from Mr Le Favre £25 p. annum it pays yr Lordp £7-5- He got that lease from 25 March 1780 & in the first 7 years was to lay out in Building £300 or pay an additional yearly rent of £14 p annum – 17 years last March has Elapsed & the ground remains Exactly in the same state ... in the year 1792 We Let the Ground lower down than that [than Sproule’s holding] at 5/- p foot – in the year 1790 We Let the ground nearer to town adjoining that at 3/- a foot, & now the Tenants who in the year 1792 took the ground at 5/- a foot are complaining that nothing is done with this Great space of ground that lies between them and town & which is certainly an Injury to them.

Verschoyle had received no rent from this holding since 1792. While his holding remained neglected, Sproule managed to successfully evade her efforts to eject him for several years, frustrating further development along Grand Canal Street. Verschoyle wrote to Fitzwilliam, acknowledging the grievances of the other tenants: ‘The Tenants Complain, that his Ground remaining unbuilt is a Great Injury to them, as his is nearer the town, the Street Cannot be formed.’ In the same letter Verschoyle wrote to Fitzwilliam in exasperation about her dealings with Sproule:



7 – Detail of Plate 6 showing holding of Samuel Sproule on Grand Canal Street

8 – Detail of Plate 6 showing holding of John Sweetman on Warrington Place



‘you know not what a hard Card I have to play – If an Angel from Heaven undertook an Agency on Earth they would not Escape blame.’¹³

Verschoyle’s dealings with John Sweetman also tried her patience. Once again she explained the situation to Fitzwilliam in a letter:

I begin to despair of Warrington Place at least for some time – the Tenant who I thought would have been the making of it which was Mr Sweetman has really laid out the money that was to have been Expended there on a Brewery [sic] in Francis St. to the amt. of £20,000.¹⁴

Again Verschoyle acknowledged the negative effect this was having on other tenants, as well as building development. So much so that she arranged for the lessee next to Sweetman’s holding to swap his holding for one in Fitzwilliam Street (Plates 8, 9). She gave her reasons in the same letter thus:

the next Tenant ... which is the Honble John Pomeroy for near 500 feet begs to have his Exchanged for the same Quantity of Ground in Fitzm St. & that I really recommend Yr. Lordship to Consent to, as it is much better to bring all our Building to one Plan & to try to Get something done ... Mr Pomeroy’s situation is Singularly unfortunate. He took his ground after Mr. Sweetman & so certain was I of Mr. Sweetman’s beginning to Build immediately that I made Mr. Pomeroy pay 13/6 per foot for his ground while that at both sides of him was let at 10/- I was warrantable in doing so as I felt certain of so large a sum of money being Expended on Sweetman’s lot, which would Certainly raise the value of the next.

Pomeroy had paid his rent regularly, but had not been able to fulfil his building proposals due to the inaction of Sweetman, and as a result had received no return from his holding. Verschoyle wished to be equitable to Pomeroy because she acknowledged that he was

a very considerable looser [sic] & not likely to be otherwise while He is in that situation – by giving him the Ground in Fitzm. St. in place of that – He will be nearer to town & will be Encouraged to begin to Build which He assures me he will do in the next month. & his Conduct on the whole Business has been so Honble that I am sure I can depend on what He says.¹⁵

Displaying a shrewdness for the interest of the estate, as well as a sense of fairness to Pomeroy, she wrote in the same letter to Fitzwilliam: ‘I really recommend yr. Lordship to accomodate [sic] Mr Pomeroy by Exchanging the Ground I think it will be a Considerable advantage to yourself, as it is a great deal better to try to Get one St. finished than to begin two.’

many People tell me there was Just such a Check to Building and trade of Every Kind during the American War – but I do not find that at any time the People of this country were so ungovernable as at present.

From the very first rumours of the possibility of a Union, Verschoyle dreaded the effect one would have on the estate. She wrote to Fitzwilliam on 13 November 1798:

I hope yr. Lordship is right in yr. Idea that we shall not have an Union – If we should it will be a material Injury to yr property – the Ground would remain unbuilt & the land about Dublin considerably fall in its price – ... I am told it would be the Ruin of this Country – indeed I have always heard so & am very much inclined to believe it.

As the introduction of a Union became more and more likely, Verschoyle's worries deepened. She wrote to Fitzwilliam on 24 April 1799: 'I really fear if the Union goes on you will be obliged to take up all the Ground that is unbuilt.' Later in the same letter she elaborated:

now no one wishes for any think [sic] but to get shut of what they have here – the Union is the terror of every one & I am sorry to say I am sure it will be & if it is – even here in this delightful spot Merrion Square – we shall have grass where it was once pavement.

It seems that many of her fears were to be realised. Although correspondence declined sharply after 1802, it is still possible to get a sense of what the times were like from that which survives. Verschoyle claimed the negative impact of the Union only a few months after it was enacted. She wrote to Fitzwilliam on the 12 February 1801, making the case for building tenants who were pleading for indulgence on their rents: 'they plead the badness of the times the Union & the dearness of the building materials & the hardness of paying so much for ground that produces them nothing, this is certainly true.'

And so the story of the development of the estate continues for several years. Building tenants were still pleading for indulgence on their rents as late as 1811, but surviving correspondence for these years is so infrequent that it is not possible to determine any overall pattern or a precise point at which the fortunes of the estate started to improve. Fitzwilliam died in February 1816, at which point the estate entered a new phase, becoming the Pembroke estate, as it was left to George Augustus, 11th Earl of Pembroke. Verschoyle remained as agent until August 1827, and although she continued to work diligently and faithfully in the interest of the estate, never again do we see the fervent personal devotion which was so evident in her letters to Fitzwilliam.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ At the death of Richard, 7th Viscount Fitzwilliam in 1816, the estate was left to the 11th Earl of Pembroke, George Augustus, thus becoming the 'Pembroke estate'.
- ² In *A Map of that part of the Estate of the Rt. Honble. Richard Lord Visct. Fitzwilliam between Merrion Square and the Black-rock particularly describing the line which separates the County from the County of the City of Dublin* by John Roe (1794), the Dublin estate is measured as nearly 1200 Irish acres; National Archives of Ireland, Pembroke Estate Papers (Acc. No. 2011/2/1/40). The estate also comprised land in the Dublin mountains and Wicklow, which is not included in this measure. Joseph Farington records that the 11th Earl of Pembroke told Richard Westmacott that he had been left an estate of £14,000 per annum in Ireland by the late Irish Viscount Fitzwilliam; Kathryn Cave (ed.) *Joseph Farington's Diaries* (Newhaven and London, 1984) xv, 5397.
- ³ This is the date at which surviving correspondence of Fagan commences; National Archives of Ireland, Pembroke Estate Papers, Handlist (Acc. No. 97/46)
- ⁴ National Archives of Ireland, Betham's Genealogical Abstracts, Prerogative Wills, F, 1777-1795.
- ⁵ The letter books are in the National Archives of Ireland, Pembroke Estate Papers (Acc. No. 97/46/3). The first volume, from which all quotations in this article are taken, spans the years 1796-1820.
- ⁶ This date is based on two sources of information. The plaque to her memory in Booterstown Church states that she 'departed this life on the 25 January 1837 in the 85th year of her age'. This implies that she was born in 1752 or 1753. However the announcement of her death in the *Dublin Evening Mail* of Monday 30 January 1837 states that she died aged 87 years, implying she was born in 1749 or 1750. Thus there is a discrepancy of several years, putting the year of her birth somewhere between 1749-53. The biographical information is from Betham, loc.cit.
- ⁷ National Archives of Ireland, Betham's Genealogical Abstracts, Prerog. Marr. Lics.: 'Verschoyle Richard of the City Dublin Merchant and Fagan Barbara of Parish St Audeons Dublin Spinr. Dated 8 Sepr 1790'.
- ⁸ National Archives of Ireland, Pembroke Estate Papers, Verschoyle to Fitzwilliam, 20 March 1797 (Acc. No. 97/46/3/1)
- ⁹ *ibid.*, 2 April 1797
- ¹⁰ National Archives of Ireland, Pembroke Estate Papers (Acc. No. 97/46/2/7)
- ¹¹ The first pages of the letter book are missing.

- ¹² National Archives of Ireland, Pembroke Estate Papers (Acc. No. 97/46/2/9)
¹³ *ibid.*, Verschoyle to Fitzwilliam, 2 June 1797 (Acc. No. 97/46/3/1)
¹⁴ *ibid.*, 5 February 1798
¹⁵ *ibid.*
¹⁶ *ibid.*, 19 August 1798
¹⁷ *ibid.*, 22 February 1799
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