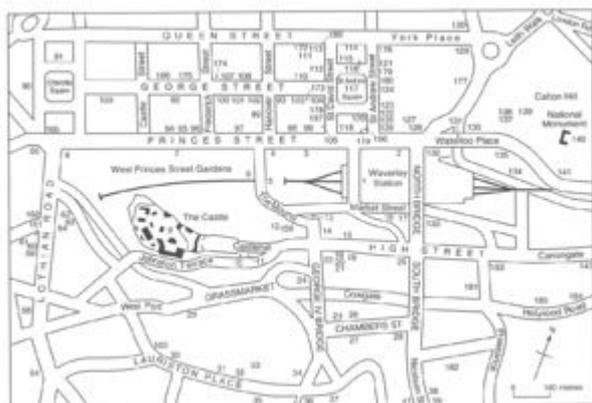


Building stones in Edinburgh from the Carboniferous of the Stirling and Glasgow areas

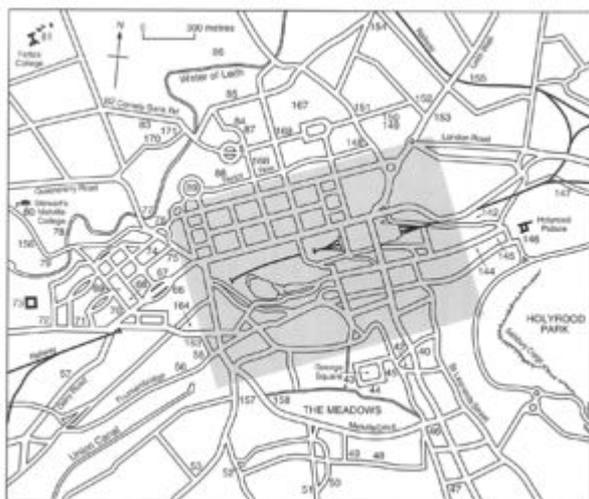
From Earthwise

[Jump to navigation](#) [Jump to search](#)

From: **McMillan, A.A., Gillanders, R.J. and Fairhurst, J.A. 1999 [Building stones of Edinburgh](#). Edinburgh: Edinburgh Geological Society.**



Edinburgh's buildings - location map, inset (Central Edinburgh).



Edinburgh's buildings - location map.

With depletion of stone from quarries in the vicinity of Edinburgh, the more easily worked stone from Stirlingshire quarries and those further west near Glasgow were brought to Edinburgh by the newly opened railways, particularly from the 1860s onwards.

□

Contents

- [1 Bishopbriggs Quarries: Kenmure and Huntershill](#)
- [2 Pleau](#)

- [3 Dullatur](#)
- [4 Polmaise](#)
- [5 Dunmore](#)
- [6 Giffnock](#)
- [7 Braehead](#)
- [8 Auchinlea](#)

Bishopbriggs Quarries: Kenmure and Huntershill

The Bishopbriggs or Kenmure Sandstone of the Upper Limestone Formation was quarried and mined at Bishopbriggs in Huntershill Quarry where it is developed as two units, the lower 18m thick and the upper part 14m³¹, separated by 3m of marine fossiliferous strata. Locally, the Bishopbriggs Sandstone is defined as lying below the Huntershill Cement Limestone: The latter unit is, however, not always present elsewhere which makes the estimation of thickness of the Bishopbriggs Sandstone difficult. In general the sandstone is mainly fine- to medium-grained (in contrast to the coarse-grained pebbly Barrhead Grit which lies above the Huntershill Cement Limestone in Glasgow).

The Bishopbriggs Sandstone was worked at several quarries, especially at Huntershill and Robroyston, north of Glasgow. Kenmure was one of the Bishopbriggs quarries . that supplied the stone used extensively in **Cockburn Street** (16), between 1859 and 1864, to give access to Waverley Station from the south. In 1987 many of the buildings showed signs of severe weathering. Since then much of the badly worn detail and scaling stonework, including that on the former **Old Cockburn Hotel** at the north end of the street, has been restored. The original yellowish-grey stone exhibits a stugged finish and polished quoins.

Plean

In Stirlingshire the Bishopbriggs Sandstone was worked as the 'Plean White Freestone' at Plean or Blackcraig Quarry situated to the south-west of Plean House, Kilsyth between Bannockburn and Larbert. It was described as a pale buff-grey, medium-grained, slightly micaceous sandstone and was about 18 m thick.

The only large building known to have been built of Plean stone in central Edinburgh is the former Catholic Apostolic Church, now **Mansfield Place Church** (151), built between 1873 and 1885. In the prolonged and interrupted work, a Carboniferous sandstone from Woodburn. Northumberland was also used. It is not possible to be sure which stone is which in this building but it is likely that the Plean stone forms the bulk of the greyish-buff rock-faced walls with polished or tooled quoins. Weathering is particularly marked around the windows especially at the south-west end. The spokes of the wheel window at the west end are particularly badly scaled. Plean was also used in the **Great Michael Home & Links House building** (1878-79) (formerly the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society), at least for the north-eastern extension of 1885, at Links Place, Leith. The two stones seen in the **Meadows Pillars** (158) are little weathered today though in 1893 they were said not to be standing well.

Dullatur

The Bishopbriggs Sandstone was also worked at Dullatur Quarry, near Kilsyth. The quarry, reported to be in operation in the 1860s, yielded a medium-grained, loosely cemented, white to light brown sandstone.' The quarry face was stated to be 32m high but workable stone ranged between 12 and

22 m thick. Examples of the stone's use in Edinburgh include:

Merchant's Hall (89) (1865-66; completed 1901), Hanover Street.

Capability Scotland Westerlea School (1860-69), Ellersly Road. Weathering badly.

Polmaise



McEwan Hall, Edinburgh. Carboniferous sandstones Polmaise (Stirlingshire) and Prudham (Hexham, Northumberland). Small red sandstone columns are Triassic St Bees sandstone from Corsehill (Annan). Built in 1888-1897 by Sir R. Rowand Anderson.

IS024

In the Stirling district, between the Orchard and Ca/my limestones, extensive quarrying took place at two quarries at Polmaise and Dunmore in sandstone known locally as the 'Cowie Rock' which is about 52 m thick.

Fresh Polmaise stone was described by Craig as cream or white in colour and of a very fine texture. Like Plean stone it was rarely used on its own in Edinburgh. Even at the end of the 19th century, the recently completed Italianate **McEwan Hall** (37) (1888-97), where Polmaise was used with Prudham stone and red Corsehill pillars (Plate 8), and the **Medical School** (36) (1876-86) were said to be showing signs of weathering. Much of this weathering has been made good. Polmaise stone was used in the **Central Public Library** (24) (1887-90), George IV Bridge. The grey-yellowish stone shows some brown staining. Bedding is not clearly marked on the polished faces. Generally the stone has stood well but some stone replacement has been done recently. On the north-east side of the eastern of the two **Meadows Pillars** (158) the Polmaise sample is worn and chipped. Other examples of the 'Cowie Rock' from Polmaise include:

Palmerston Place Church (70) (1873-75). Arches and columns inside are of pink Peterhead granite.

Nos. 42 & 43 Drumsheugh Gardens (74) (1877).

Debenhams (94) (1882-84), 109-112 Princes Street. (formerly Liberal and Conservative Clubs).

North Morningside United Presbyterian Church (1879-81), 15 Chamberlain Road. With Dunmore stone.

Dunmore

Stone from the original Dunmore Quarry near Cowie, Stirling, was described by Craig as creamy in colour and of a hard, fine-grained texture. He noted that the stone 'in some parts shows a great number of small round holes, which are discernible when polishing. In the examples given by Craig, the stone had not weathered well. Large quantities of Dunmore stone were used in the tenements of Marchmont.³⁹ Stone from the original Dunmore Quarry was also used for the following buildings:

Coltbridge Hall (St George's School) (1875), Coltbridge Terrace.

North Morningside United Presbyterian Church (1879-81), 15 Chamberlain Road. With Polmaise stone.

A new quarry at Dunmore, about 1.6 km east of the former working, was opened in 1985 by Scottish Natural Stones Ltd. The stone is a whitish grey to pale brown fine- to medium-grained sandstone. It has been used, for example, in the frontage of the **Trustees Savings Bank** (109) (1986), 120-124 George Street. The paving in the entrance hall and atrium used pink granite from the Ross of Mull.

Giffnock

The Gnock Sandstone lies between the Lyoncross and Orchard limestones' and was formerly exposed at quarries in Giffnock, near Glasgow. In the famous Braidbar Quarries a thickness of about 18m of stone was worked, the top 9 m of which was termed 'Moor Rock', a somewhat porous and less valuable material. The quality of the underlying 'Liver Rock' was such that eventually it was mined in order to avoid removing the overlying inferior rock.' The principal market was Glasgow although Craig records Giffnock stone in his list of building stones used in Edinburgh.'

Braehead

Braehead Quarry, near Fauldhouse worked sandstone in the Lower Coal Measures. It produced a medium to coarse-grained sandstone, locally pebbly, of a pale yellowish brown to brownish grey colour. In the years up to closure of the quarry in 1939 the stone, although soft, was said to stand well, and was widely used for rubble work, lintels, wall copings, etc.' Examples in Edinburgh include:

Villas at west end of Comiston Drive.

Alma Lodge, Midmar Drive.

Villas in Grange Loan. Built in grounds of Grange House.

Villas in Mayfield Road, Esslemont Road and Ross Road. Facing stone with Hawkhill Wood rubble work.

Auchinlea

The Auchinlea and North Auchinlea quarries lie about 1.6 km north-east of Cleland near Motherwell. This Middle Coal Measures sandstone is 18m thick on average although at North Auchinlea Quarry as much as 27m of sandstone was exposed at one time. It is a drab, medium-grained, stone sometimes micaceous or with ferruginous specks and described by C T Clough (of the Geological Survey) as 'a yellowish freestone, not so hard as to be difficult to work'. The stone was much used in Edinburgh about the 1880s, for example in Roseburn Terrace (1882), but went into disuse with the

introduction of the harder stone from Northumberland.' Other buildings where use of this sandstone may be seen include:

South Buchanan Street tenements (155) (1878-81).

Villas at Trinity (1883).

At all times follow: [The Scottish Access Code](#) and [Code of conduct for geological field work](#)

Retrieved from

'http://earthwise.bgs.ac.uk/index.php?title=Building_stones_in_Edinburgh_from_the_Carboniferous_of_the_Stirling_and_Glasgow_areas&oldid=23450'

Category:

- [5. Midland Valley of Scotland](#)

Navigation menu

Personal tools

- Not logged in
- [Talk](#)
- [Contributions](#)
- [Log in](#)
- [Request account](#)

Namespaces

- [Page](#)
- [Discussion](#)

Variants

Views

- [Read](#)
- [Edit](#)
- [View history](#)
- [PDF Export](#)

More

Search

Navigation

- [Main page](#)
- [Recent changes](#)
- [Random page](#)
- [Help about MediaWiki](#)

Tools

- [What links here](#)
- [Related changes](#)
- [Special pages](#)
- [Permanent link](#)
- [Page information](#)
- [Cite this page](#)
- [Browse properties](#)

• This page was last modified on 17 November 2015, at 10:38.

- [Privacy policy](#)
- [About Earthwise](#)
- [Disclaimers](#)

