

GEORGIAN
PUBLIC BUILDINGS
IN YORK



YORK GEORGIAN SOCIETY



THIS is a companion to the York Georgian Society's picture book of houses, and includes most of the important buildings of the period 1700 to 1850. The last date is later than the end of King George IV's reign, but the buildings themselves are not yet Victorian in style. As before, the captions under each picture provide the basic information on each building.

The Georgian period saw a marked increase in York's prosperity and a revival of its importance as a regional centre. Partly as a result of this, most of our public buildings date from this time. The Mansion House, still the Lord Mayor's official residence, is an outstanding example. Although the architect is not known, the design is based on the Palladian principles then newly in fashion, and echoes that of larger and more important buildings illustrated in Colin Campbell's book *Vitruvius Britannicus*. The rusticated basement has five round-headed openings, one of which is used to take the carriage entrance on the line of Common Hall Lane, an ancient right of way. Inside, a fine staircase leads up to the State Room on the *piano nobile*, a magnificent apartment rising through two storeys and ornamented with Corinthian pilasters.

The Assembly Rooms in Blake Street were built by public subscription to the design and under the detailed supervision of Lord Burlington, whose country residence was at Londesborough, twenty miles east of York. Burlington, both as a highly gifted amateur architect and as a discerning and bountiful patron of the arts, played a key part in initiating the Palladian revival in England. He modelled the great hall of the Assembly Rooms on Palladio's design for an Egyptian Hall, with a close-set colonnade inside the walls and clerestorey windows. A series of rooms grouped round it were used for weekly assemblies, games and refreshments. The present street front is not Burlington's, but was rebuilt to a completely new design by J. P. Pritchett in 1828.

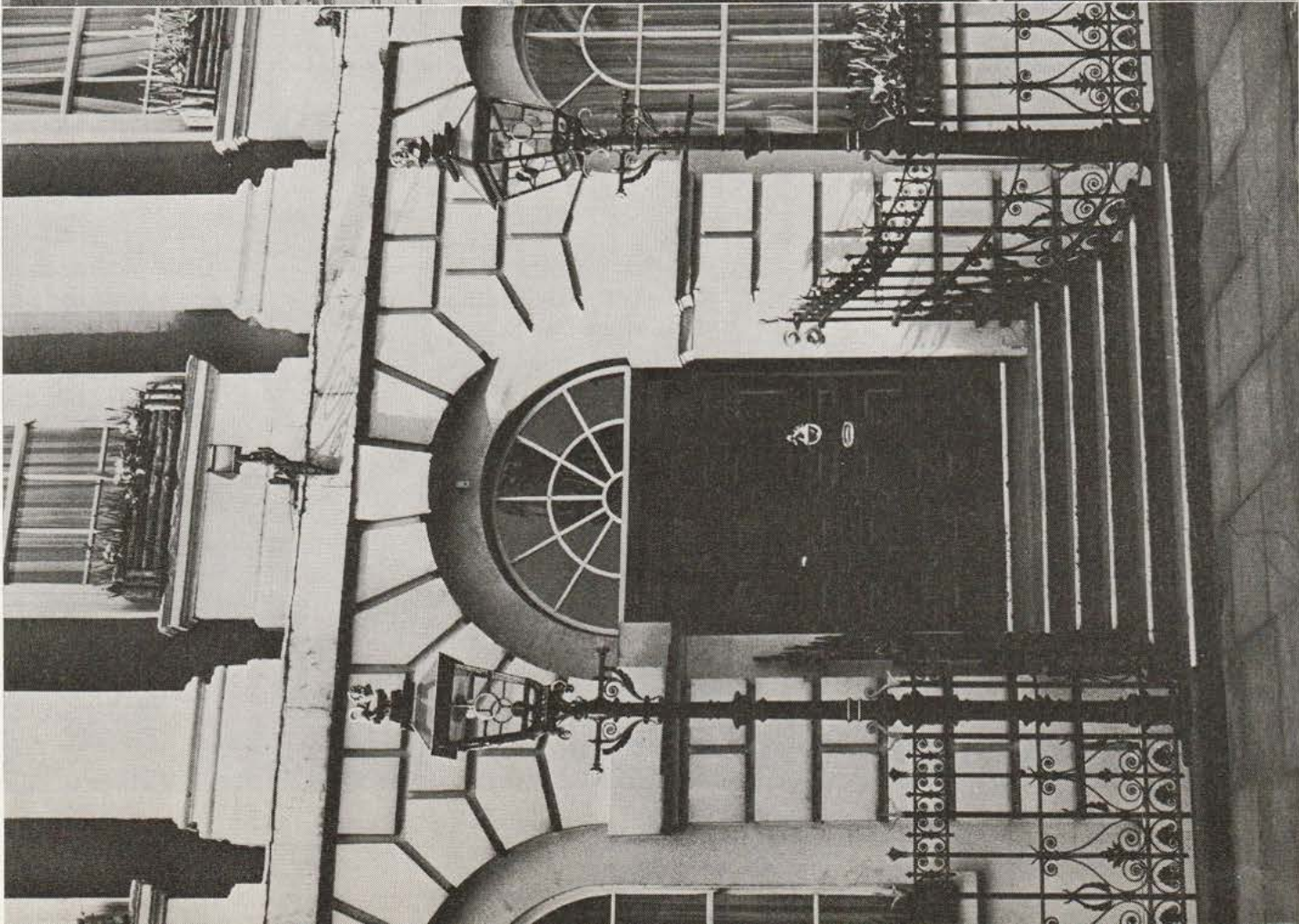
In Castle Yard stands an imposing trio of Georgian public buildings. Facing Clifford's Tower is the Debtors' Prison of 1701-5, with a horizontally rusticated basement against which were originally set two double stairways leading to entrances in both wings. Facing east on its right hand side stands the Assize Courts by John Carr of York in 1771-3, and opposite to it the matching facade of the Female Prison of 1780 and later (front cover). The Assize Courts are still in use as Crown Courts, but both prison buildings now house the famous York Castle Museum.

At the same time as he designed the Assize Courts, John Carr was also working on Bootham Park Hospital, but while the former was financed by the magistrates of all three Ridings of Yorkshire, the latter was built at the expense of subscribers to a not yet popular cause. Although it is more modest, Bootham Park even so exceeded the estimated cost. By comparison The Retreat is severely plain, but was notable at the time for its humanely planned interior.

continued inside back cover



1. Debtors' Prison, Castle Yard. The designer of this handsome building is not known. It was erected in 1701-5 and is characteristic of the English baroque style; our picture shows the central block.



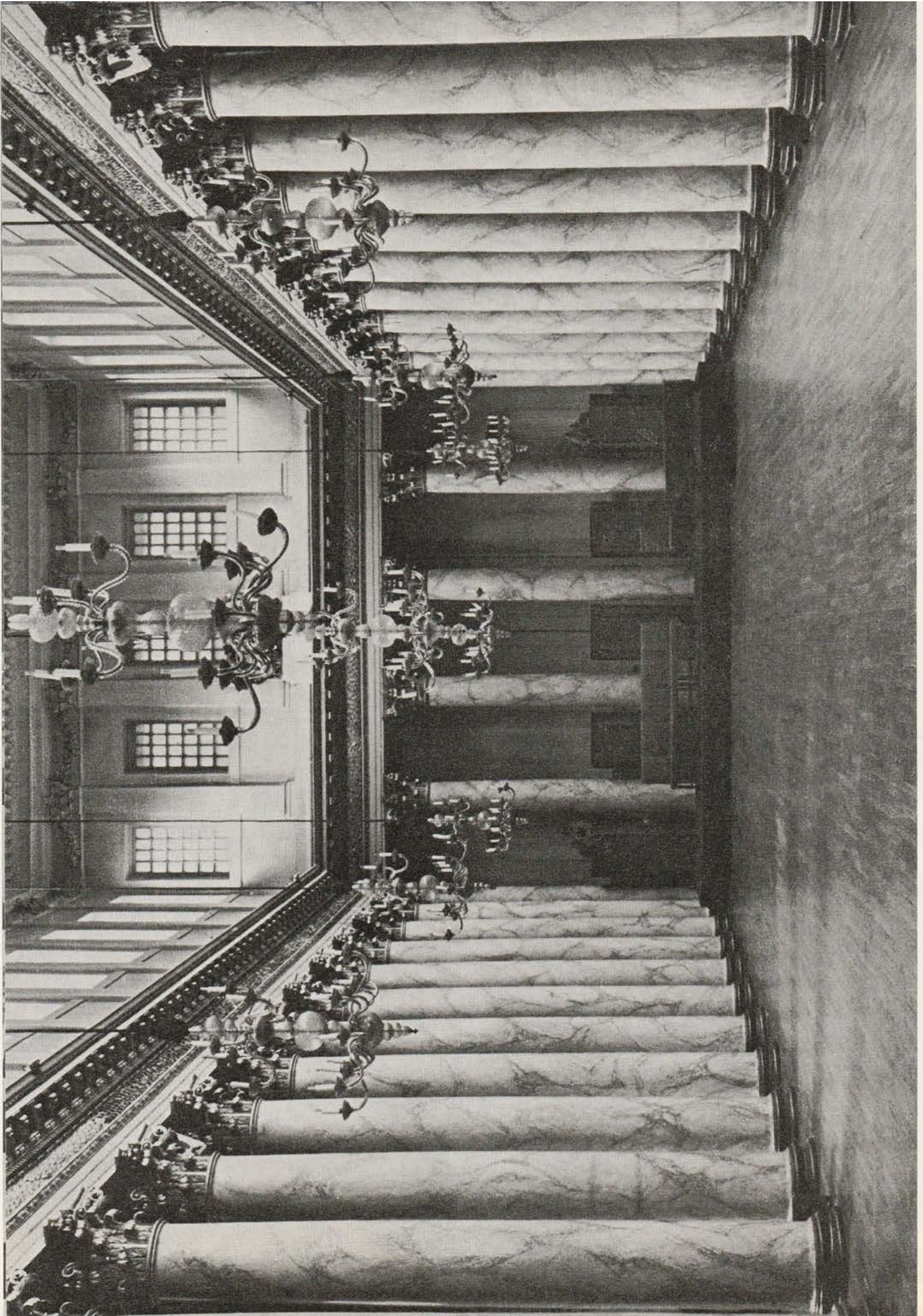
2. Mansion House, entrance. The front door is made more imposing by this approach up a flight of steps, with later iron railings and lamp standards.



3. Mansion House, State Room door. The State Room on the first floor has a fine door with painted panels flanked by classical columns carrying a full entablature.



4. *The Mansion House, St. Helen's Square. Built in 1726, this is the earliest purpose-built Mansion House in England still used for its original purpose. The name of the architect is not recorded.*



5. Assembly Rooms, Blake Street, York's finest Georgian building, this was erected 1730-32 to Lord Burlington's design. In 1951, descendants of the original subscribers danced here in Georgian costume to celebrate the restoration of the Assembly Rooms.



6. Assize Courts, Castle Yard. Erected 1773-7 to the design of John Carr of York, this fine building is still used today as the Crown Courts.



7. *Civil Court Room, Assize Courts. The interior of the Civil Court has Corinthian columns and a dome decorated with the classical symbols of law and order. There is also a Crown Court with rather more severe decoration.*



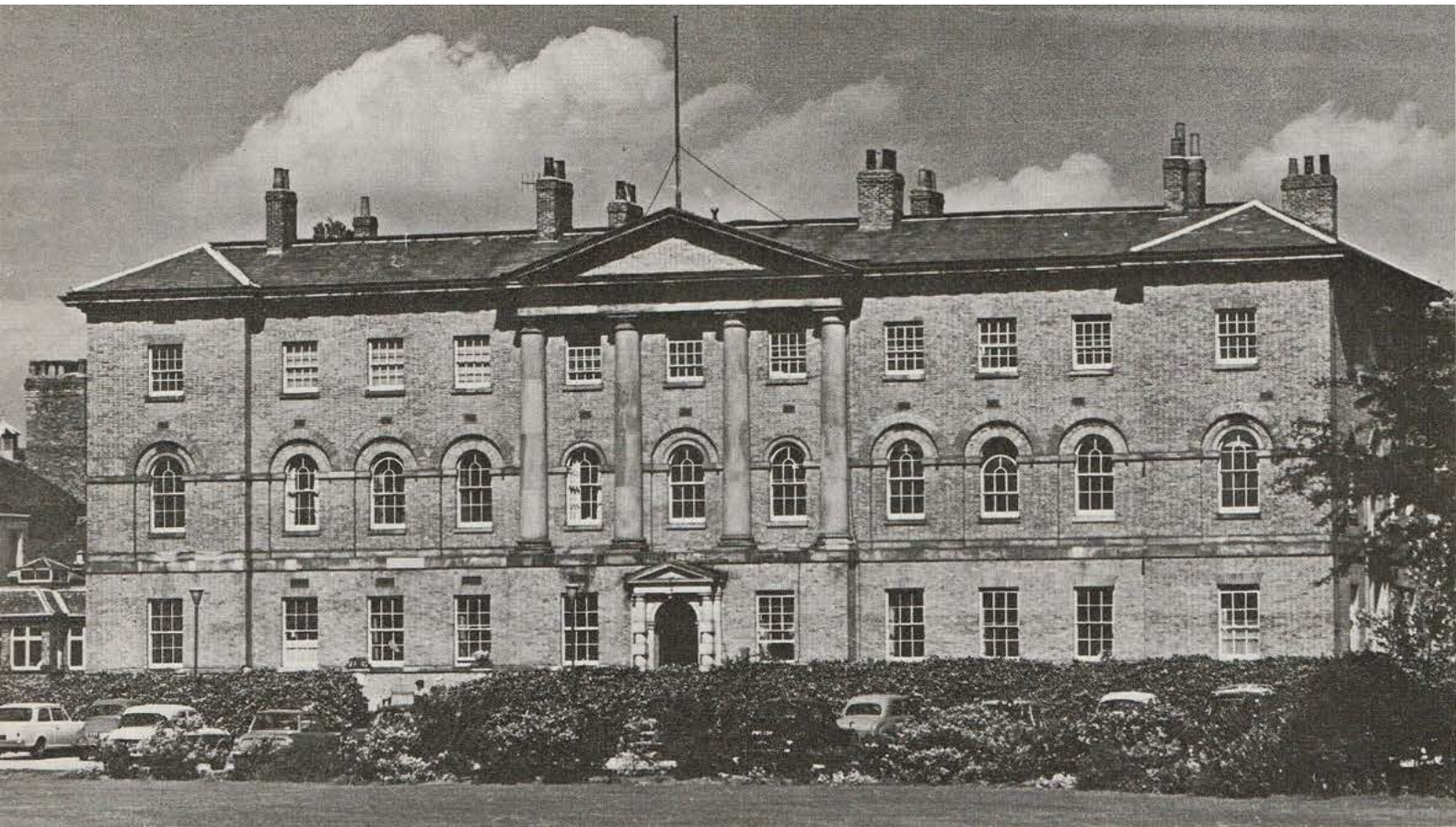
8. Judges' Lodging, Lendal. This was built c.1715-20 as a private house for the Doctor, Sir Clifton Winteringham, which explains the mask of Aesculapius over the door. In 1806 it was purchased to replace the old Lodging in Judges Court, Coney Street.



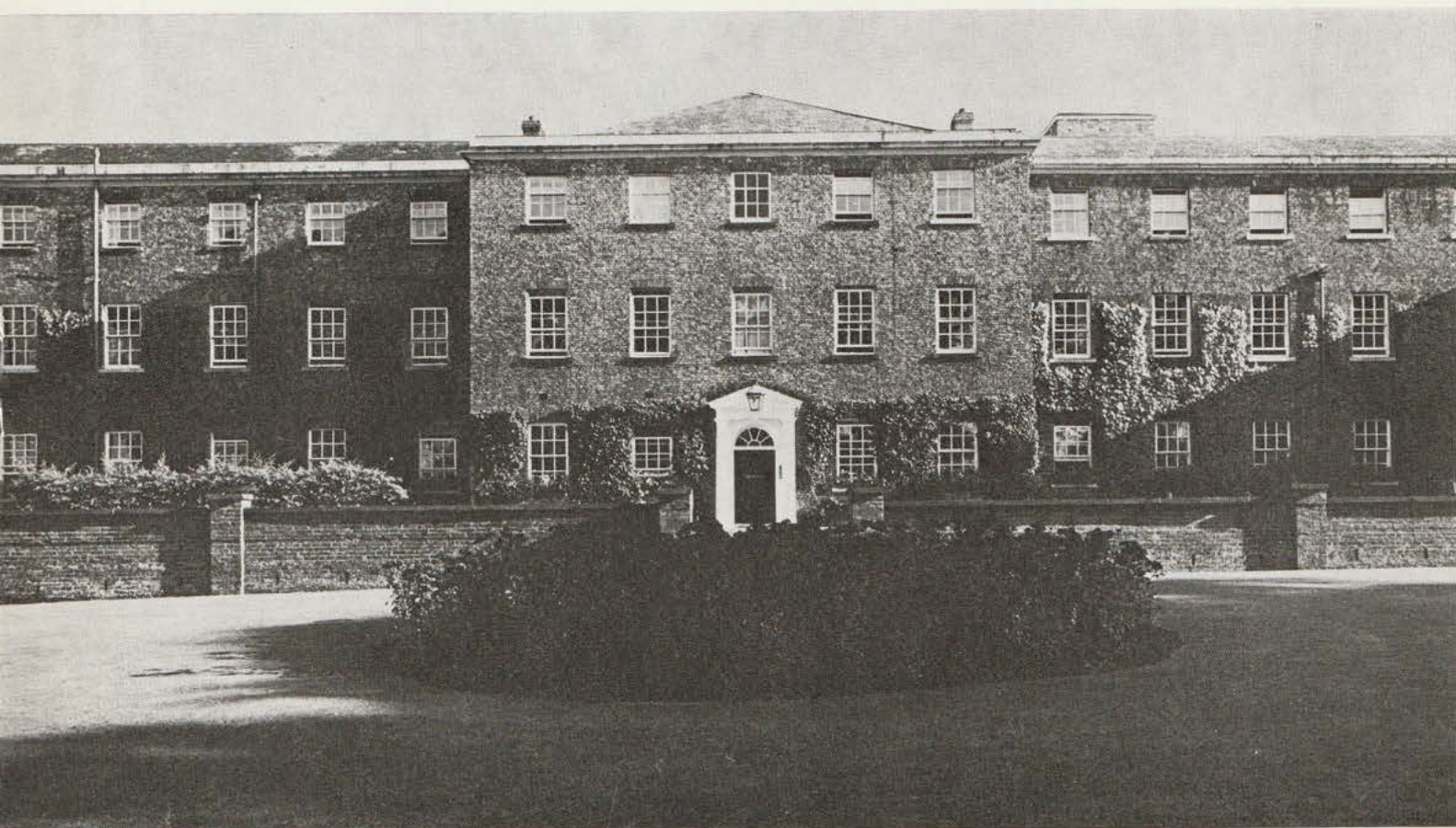
9. Wandesford Almshouses, Bootham. Mary Wandesford's will, made in 1725, included a bequest for the benefit of 'ten poor Gentlewomen who were never married'. The building is believed to date from 1739.



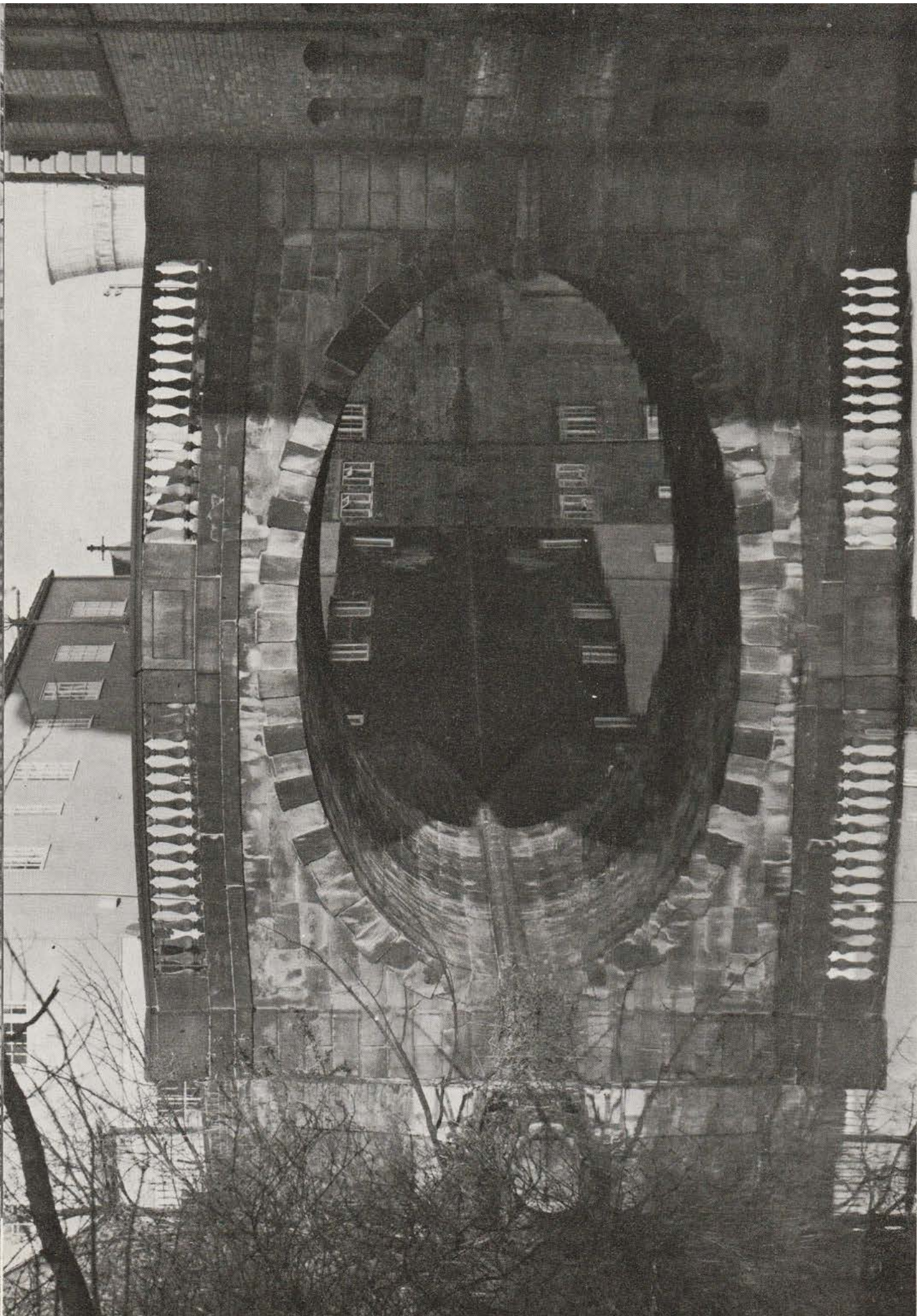
10. Middleton Almshouses, Skeldergate. Ann Middleton's Hospital was founded in 1659, but the present building is a new design by Peter Atkinson erected in 1828. It is now a hotel.



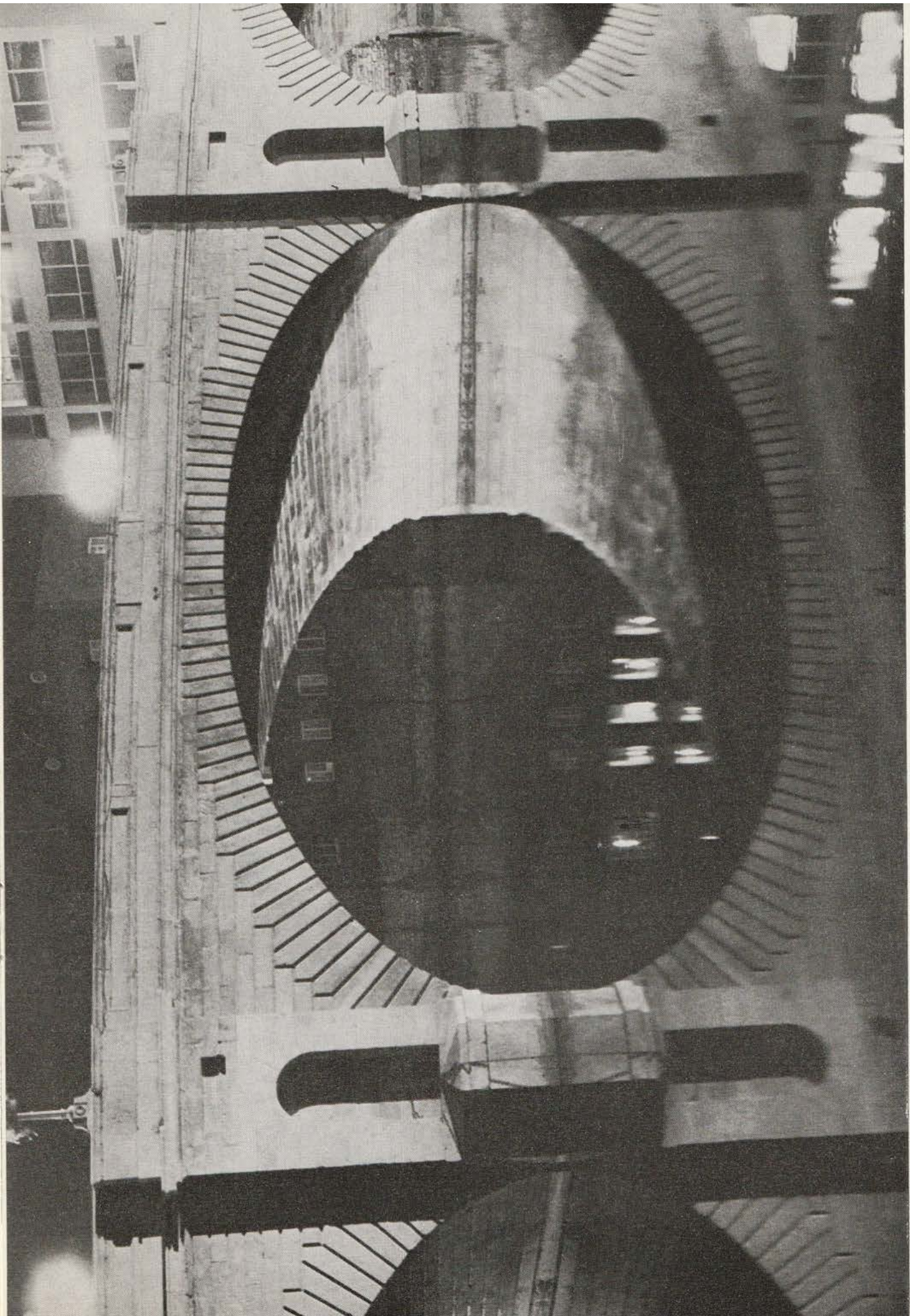
11. *Bootham Park Hospital. Erected by public subscription in 1772-7, this was one of the earliest mental hospitals in the north of England. It was designed by the famous York architect, John Carr.*



12. *The Retreat, Heslington Road. After the death of a patient at Bootham Park Hospital, the Quaker William Tuke founded the Retreat for Persons afflicted with Disorders of the Mind in 1796, administered by the Society of Friends.*



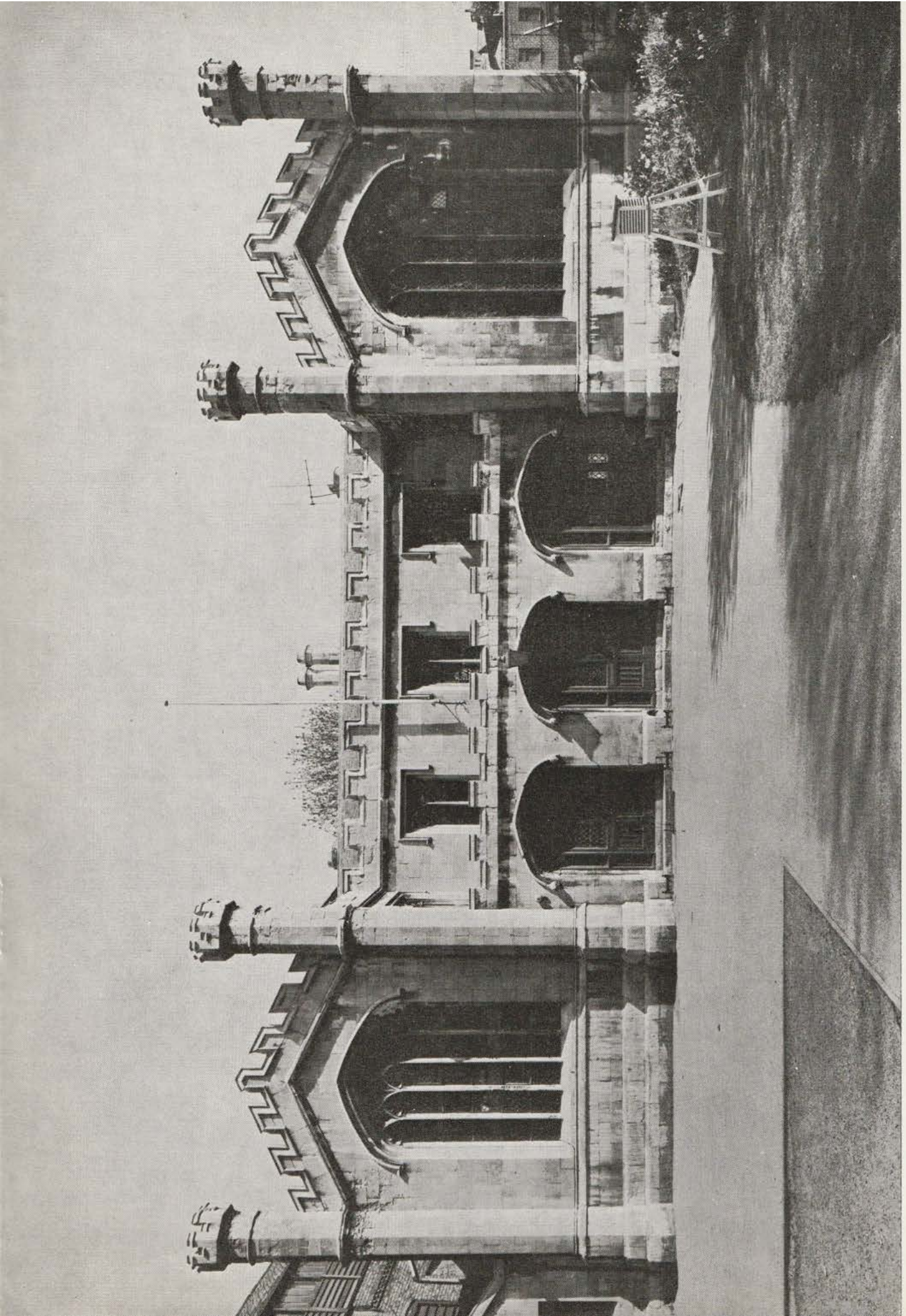
13. Foss Bridge, Fossgate. Erected in 1811, probably to the design of Peter Atkinson the younger, this single-span bridge is simple but delightful.



14. Ouse Bridge. This was the prizewinning design, by Peter Atkinson the younger, in a competition judged by Thomas Harrison of Chester. The bridge, erected in two halves in 1818 and 1820, replaced a medieval bridge in the same position.



15. Yorkshire Museum, Museum Gardens. The Yorkshire Philosophical Society erected the Museum in 1827 to the design of William Wilkins, with interior details by R. H. Sharp and J. P. Pritchett. It was the scene of the foundation in 1831 of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and in 1961 was presented to the City of York.



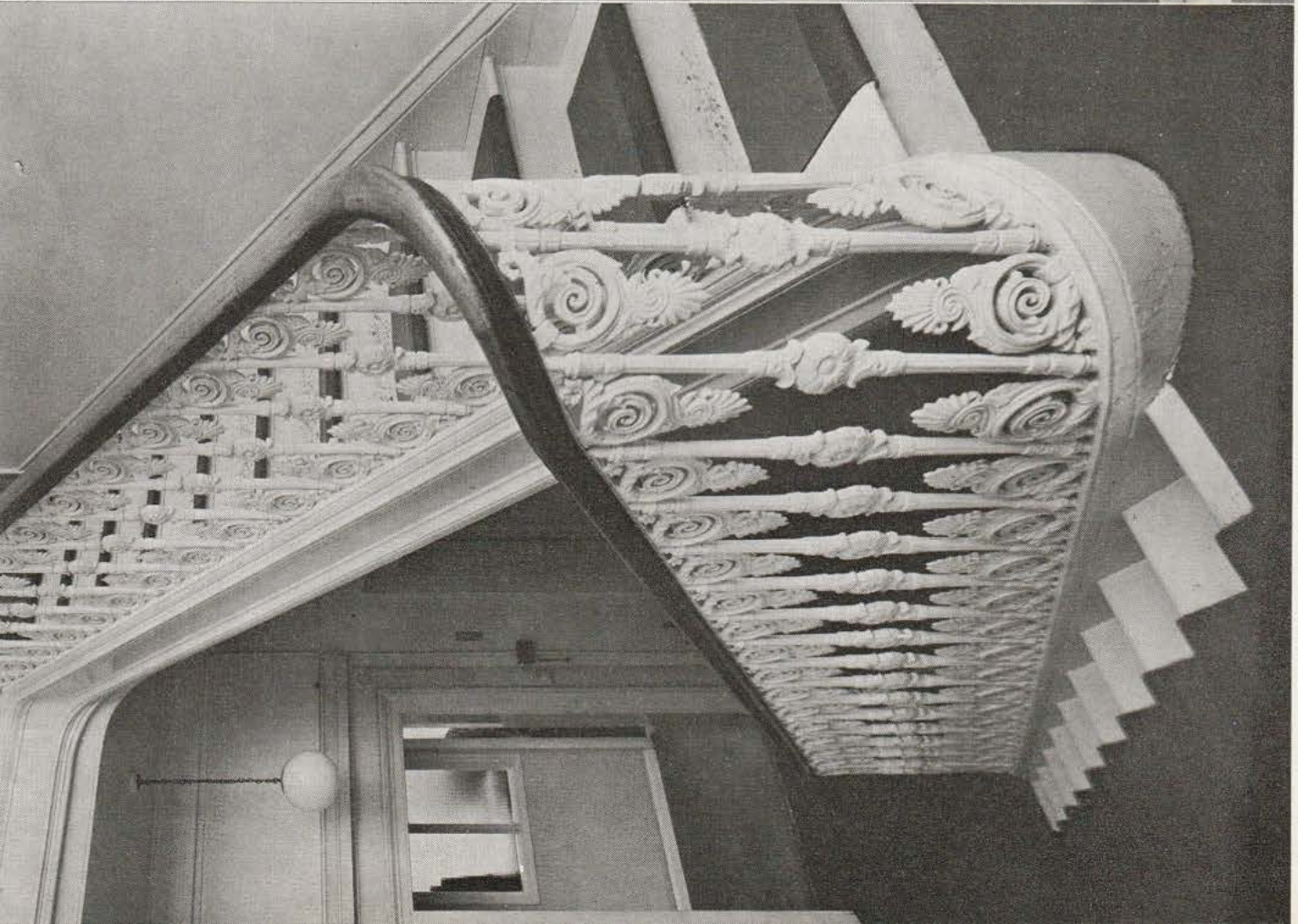
16. Minster Song School. This gothic revival building was designed for St. Peter's School in 1832 by J. P. Pritchett. In 1844 St. Peter's moved to Clifton and a Design School took over this building. It is now the choir school of York Minster.



17. *de Grey Rooms, Exhibition Square. Erected in 1841-2 to the design of G. T. Andrews, this building was intended to provide accommodation for Earl de Grey and the officers of the Yorkshire Hussars during their annual assembling in York, and for other similar purposes. Part now houses the City Department of Tourism.*



18. *St. Leonard's Place. This curved terrace, built from 1834 onwards to the design of John Harper, included a Subscription Library, the Yorkshire Club and seven private houses. On the expiry of the lease, the terrace reverted to York Corporation and is occupied by Council Departments.*



19. 6 St. Leonard's Place, staircase.

These are only two examples of the very fine cast iron work produced by the Walker Foundry in York in the early 19th century.



20. 9 St. Leonard's Place, staircase.

The two almshouses illustrated are nearly a century apart in date but alike in their simple design of a seven-bay rectangular block. Though dignified, they are not excessively imposing and rely on simple central pediments to place emphasis on their Founders' statues. The Ouse and Foss bridges probably both come from the hand of Peter Atkinson the younger, a successor to the practice established by John Carr. St. Leonard's Place is York's principal Regency terrace, designed in a bold curve and ornamented with elegant ironwork outside and in; the de Grey Rooms opposite echo the same mood of assured social ease. All are now used by Departments of the City Council.

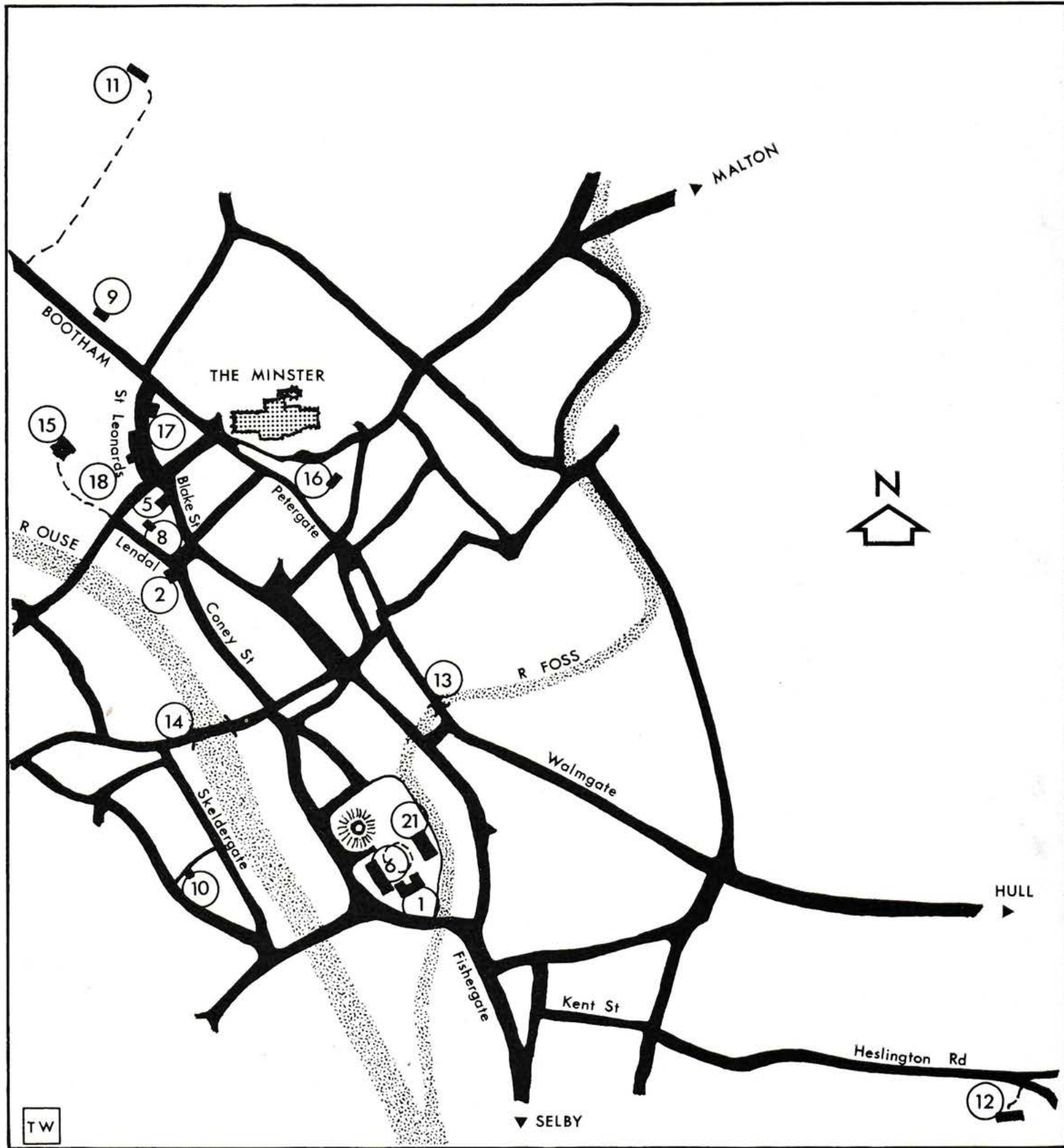
Towards the middle of the 19th century we find examples of both the Greek Revival and the Gothic Revival. The Yorkshire Museum's dignified classical design is in complete contrast to the Abbey ruins; it stands on the Manor Shore, a site granted to the Yorkshire Philosophical Society by the Crown to be maintained as a 'scientific garden'. The Minster Song School is similarly juxtaposed to the Minster, but makes no pretence of imitating its true Gothic, presenting a balanced, academic facade.

The York Georgian Society wishes to thank the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments for permitting the reproduction of photographs, and particularly for the invaluable help of the staff of its York Office. We especially thank Mr J. E. Williams whose advice has guided us throughout; also Mr A. R. Whittaker for designing the front cover and the map, and the Commission's photographers Mr Terry Buchanan, Mr W. C. Light and Mr John Bassham. We also thank Mr J. Rendel Ridges and Mr John Shannon, two of the Society's members, for their photographs. As before, the York Georgian Society must accept responsibility for any errors that may have escaped expert scrutiny.

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York's heritage of historic public buildings is the pride and the concern of the York Georgian Society, which came into being to draw attention to this period of York's past, once neglected, and continues with lectures and visits, research and publication, advice and encouragement, to stimulate interest in Georgian York. If your interest has been aroused, write to the Hon. Secretary, c/o The King's Manor, York, for more details about the York Georgian Society.

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The numbers on the map relate to the numbers of the pictures — 21 is on on front cover

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