

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1991

THE REGISTERED BUILDINGS (GENERAL) REGULATIONS 1991

To: Chief Executive
Department of Local Government &
the Environment
Murray House
Mount Havelock
DOUGLAS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that at a meeting held on the 31st January, 1997, the PLANNING COMMITTEE of the Department of Local Government and the Environment, in pursuance of its powers under the above Acts and Regulations REGISTERED The Douglas Court House and 13 Athol Street, Douglas as defined in red on the enclosed plan, in the PROTECTED BUILDINGS REGISTER by reason of architectural and historic interest.

THE EFFECT OF THIS REGISTRATION IS IMMEDIATE and prohibits the alteration or demolition of the structure or appearance of any part of the building except in compliance with an obligation imposed by or under any statutory provision or with the prior written consent of the Planning Committee.

Dated this 10th day of April, 1997.

By Order of the Committee



R M Quine
Secretary, Planning Committee.

3rd Floor, Murray House,
Mount Havelock,
Douglas,
Isle of Man.

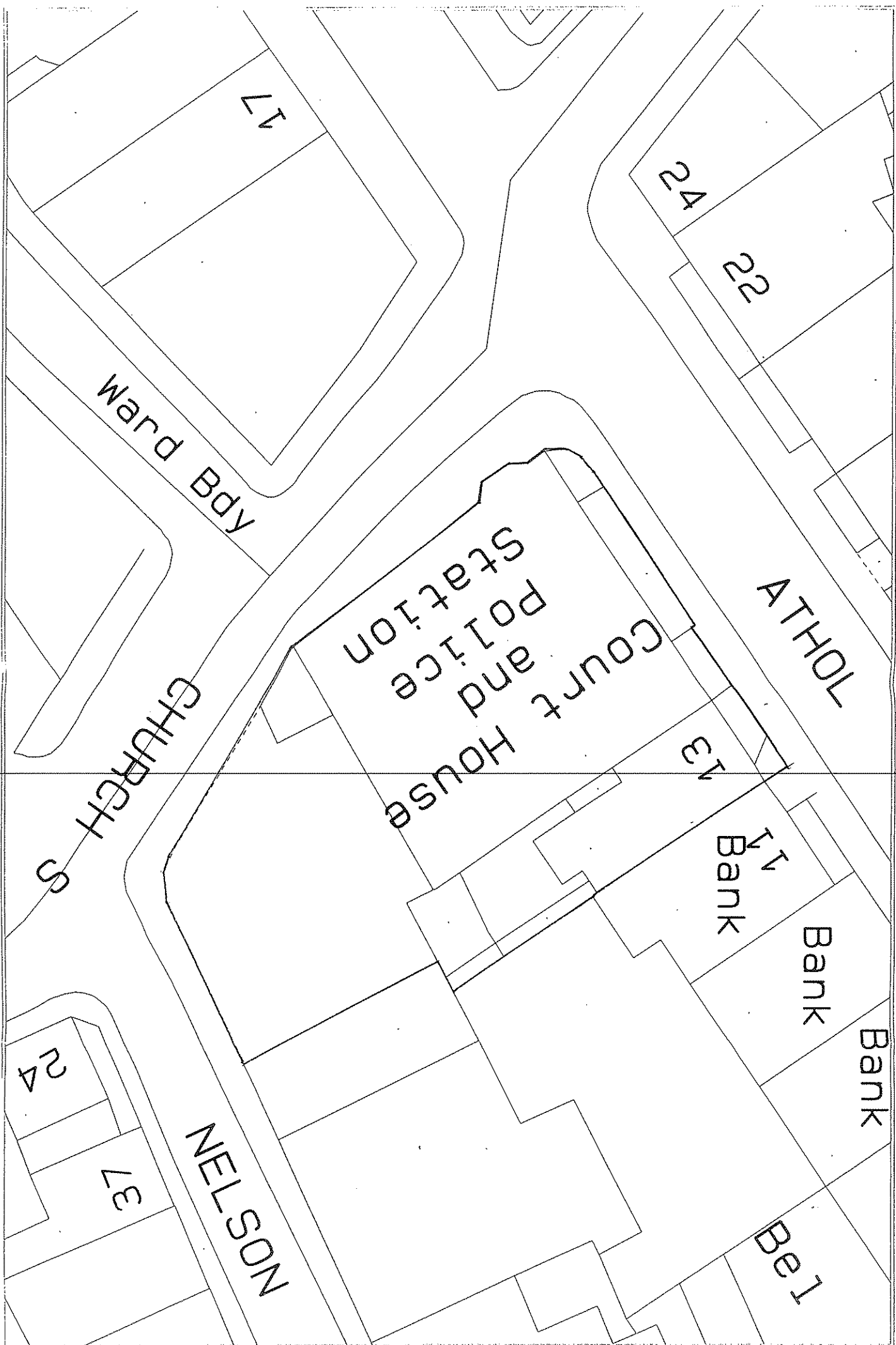
NOTE: Rights to request de-registration of the building are provided under the Regulations and in summary are that:

Application in writing for de-registration may be made by the owner or occupier of, and any other person having an interest in the buildings within a period of 28 days of service of this notice. Such application should be sent to the Secretary, Planning Committee, 3rd Floor, Murray House, Mount Havelock, Douglas.

In the event that de-registration is not requested by any party within the 28 day period described above, then de-registration may not be requested within a period of 3 years.

- c.c.
- 1) R.B. File
 - 2) Douglas Corporation, Town Hall, Ridgeway Street, Douglas
 - 3) Manx National Heritage, Kingswood Grove, Douglas
 - 4) ADCO, Rose Cottage, Mount Rule, Braddan
 - 5) K Barber, Properties Administrator, D.L.G.E.
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Scale 1:200



THE DOUGLAS COURT HOUSE INCLUDING No 13 ATHOL STREET

This building is probably the most notable work of the local architect John Robinson who contributed a wealth of fine buildings to the Island's architectural stock. His father (also John Robinson) came to the Isle of Man 1793 to work on the new Nunnery Mill: having decided to stay, he married Jane Cannell and they went on to have eight children, of which John and his brother Henry, were two.

The John Robinson whose work became so revered, worked with his father, but there is no evidence of him having any formal architectural training. Although John Robinson may be termed an "amateur" architect, his designs served to lift the town of Douglas almost out of the "dark ages" giving us such fine compositions as are seen in Clarence Terrace, the Esplanade and the Bank of Mona (now Government Offices, Bucks Road).

Robinson was also responsible for the design of Prospect Terrace and the buildings which face it across Woodbourne Road, including the Rosemount Hotel.

The first signs of town planning were seen in the layout of streets and terraces in the locality of Mount Havelock and Bucks Road.

John's brother had for some time worked in London on such notable buildings as Hampton Court, Apsley House (for the Duke of Wellington) and on the reknowned Bank of England. When John was commissioned to design the new Meeting Rooms and Concert Hall for the Independant Order of Oddfellows, it was brother Henry who undertook the responsibility of building the structure.

The Hall was, in its time, said to be the largest room in the Island, capable of accommodating 400 persons at dinner, with a gallery above providing seating for a further 150. The lower levels held large kitchens with shops and offices around the perimeter, which could be let to tenants and so provide a useful source of income.

The building did not receive its fine "cloak" of elegantly detailed lime stucco until 1850: by this time the building had changed in use to The Prince of Wales Theatre.

The Isle of Man Government acquired the use of the property in 1860, when it was used as the Rolls Office, as a meeting place for the Legislature and as a Court House, in which use it has remained until very recently.

Number 13 Athol Street is included in this Registration: this building has historically been linked to and identified as being part of the main Court House and its Athol Street facade has been modelled to respond to the rich Georgian architecture of the main building itself.

Designed in the Neo-Classical style, the Court House retains some of its fine architectural features on a scale which is imposing and yet it has a fine intricacy of detailing, as seen in the capitals of the four Corinthian columns of the portico.

The Athol Street and Church Street elevations combine to provide us with one of the finest examples of Georgian architecture in the Island and it is this aspect of the building which undoubtedly provides the focus of Registration. The rear elevation is very plain and is in fact, the face of the building which remains, following demolition some time ago, of small lean-to shops.

The skill with which Robinson "turns the corner" shows the elegance and ease of the designer in handling what is always a very telling aspect of an architect's ability.

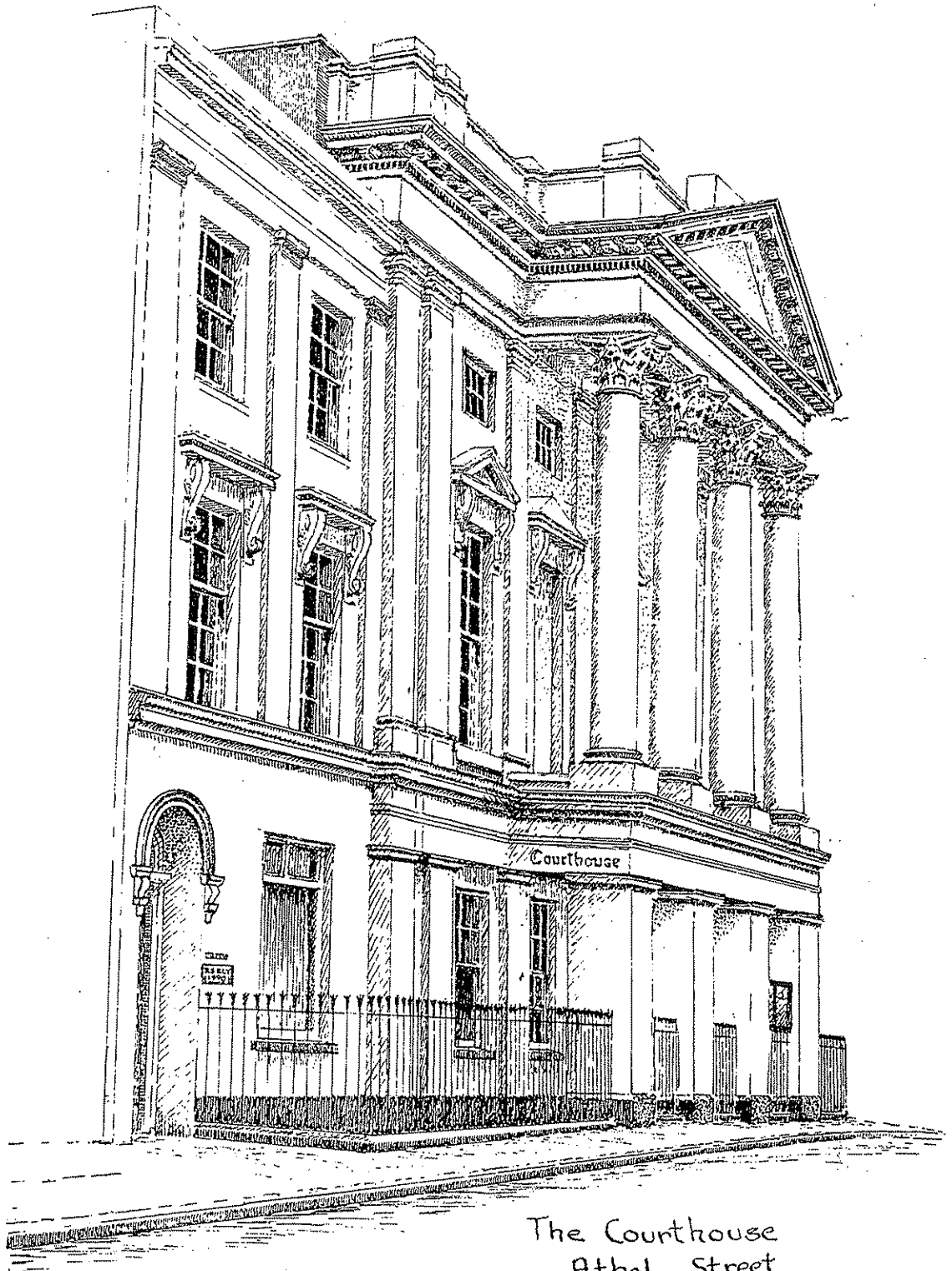
The building has undergone changes during its life having lost parapet ballustrading and other features, added to which the internal re-modelling for use as the main Police Station, has resulted in the original concept of the interior having been, to a great extent, lost along the way.

The present building does provide us with a unique civic landmark and is deemed to be worthy of entry into the Register of Protected Buildings on the following grounds:-

- 1) The Aesthetic Quality of the building, in particular, the external stucco work to be found on the Athol Street and Church Street elevations;**
- 2) The unique role which the building has played in the Sociological and Historical development of the Island, particularly by virtue of its use as the central Court House for the Island and its traditional connections with the Judicial system.**
- 3) The building is among the most notable works of one of the Island's finest Architects, John Robinson 1798 - 1880.**

Sources:

Manx Life - Article by P.Kelly " His Loved Name Will Not Perish"



The Courthouse
Athol Street
Douglas.