3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The earliest historical references for activity in the area that became Tollcross can be traced to the mid-12th century in the reign of David I, when the area was probably occupied by orchards or used for cultivation (Bradley-Lovekin 2011). The site lies within the area historically known as 'Wright's Houses'. The area was a triangular parcel of land bounded to the north by the former Lochrin Burn (which also formed the southern boundary for the historic lands of Dalry), and to the east by Leven and Home Street (A702), the western boundary of an area known as Drumdryan. The west was bounded by Leamington Terrace, Leamington Road and Gilmore Park. An extract of Kirkwood's 1817 plan has been reproduced and annotated in Easton (Easton 1988: 6) (not illustrated) to show historical land boundaries that include Wright's Houses, Dalry, Drumdryan and Tollcross.

The earliest discovered documentation of the name Tollcross does not appear until 1439. Tollcross and the lands which surround it were at this time part of the Barony of Inverleith, held in sergeanty by successive important people in the king's personal duty (Easton 1988: 2).

Between the 12th and 15th centuries the area around the castle to the west and south, which today corresponds to the bounds of West Port, King's Stables Road, the west end of Princes Street, Haymarket and Morrison Street (to the north of Lochrin Basin) were orchard lands (market gardens) belonging to the Crown and kept by serfs. The extent of these orchards varied over the centuries and may even have gone further south and east to the lands of Tollcross and High Riggs, whose borders were the Burgh Muir on the south and Potterrow on the east (Easton 1988: 3). There was extensive cultivation of grain crops on the lands of Dalry (historically to the north of the site, with the southern border partially following the line of the Lochrin Burn), bordering Orchardfield (now Bread Street) and Tollcross. Easton records that the name Dalry, meaning king's farm or fields, 'has its roots in Celtic times' (ibid). A small hamlet called Castlebarns grew during this time and housed labourers and farmworkers from the Dalry estate. It was located closer to Tollcross on the eastern corner of (and opposite) Semple Street and Morrison Street (ibid). By 1500, for various reasons, the gardens had fallen into disrepair. Consequently, the lands were leased to private market gardeners, possibly former serfs, who were impelled by their superiors to maintain good standards of cultivation, or risk fines or imprisonment (Easton 1988: 5). The rural nature of the area persisted until the 18th century, when the lands were subdivided and held by the growing merchant classes who were leaving the Old Town in favour of country houses and the New Town (Easton 1988: 1). By the 18th century there were significant numbers of mansions, great and small, in the Tollcross area. One of the oldest mansions in the area was the ancient baronial home of William Napier (historically located to the south of the site, south of Gilmore Place) (Illus 1), whose lands adjoined those of Wrychis Housis (Wright's Houses). It was probably built around 1339.

Kincaid's 1784 map (not illustrated), although somewhat schematic, depicts the site as open ground bordered to the north by the 'Common Sewer' (the Dalry Burn). The presence of 'open ground' is confirmed in the *Sasine Register* where Lochrin is described as 'the north-east park … bounded by the Thornybaulk' (or 'bank') (RoS, SS 37866: 259), a name ('thorny bank') which also references the former agricultural landscape. The site was developed from *c* 1785 by the Haigs, distillers from Clackmannanshire (RoS, SS 17506: 96; Moss and Hume 2000). The Haigs also operated Sunbury and Canonmills, the latter being sold to their relatives, the Steins, of Kilbagie and Kirkliston distilleries (Townsend 2004; Cross 2008).

During the 18th and 19th centuries this area was heavily dominated by breweries and distilleries. Brewers were attracted to the Fountainbridge/ Tollcross area by the plentiful water supply as a result of the large quantities of pure water trapped within a geological fault underlying the district (Bradley-Lovekin 2011: 12). The first brewery in the area was established by Robert Gray in 1731 (Brown 1988: 49).

3.1 Lochrin Distillery

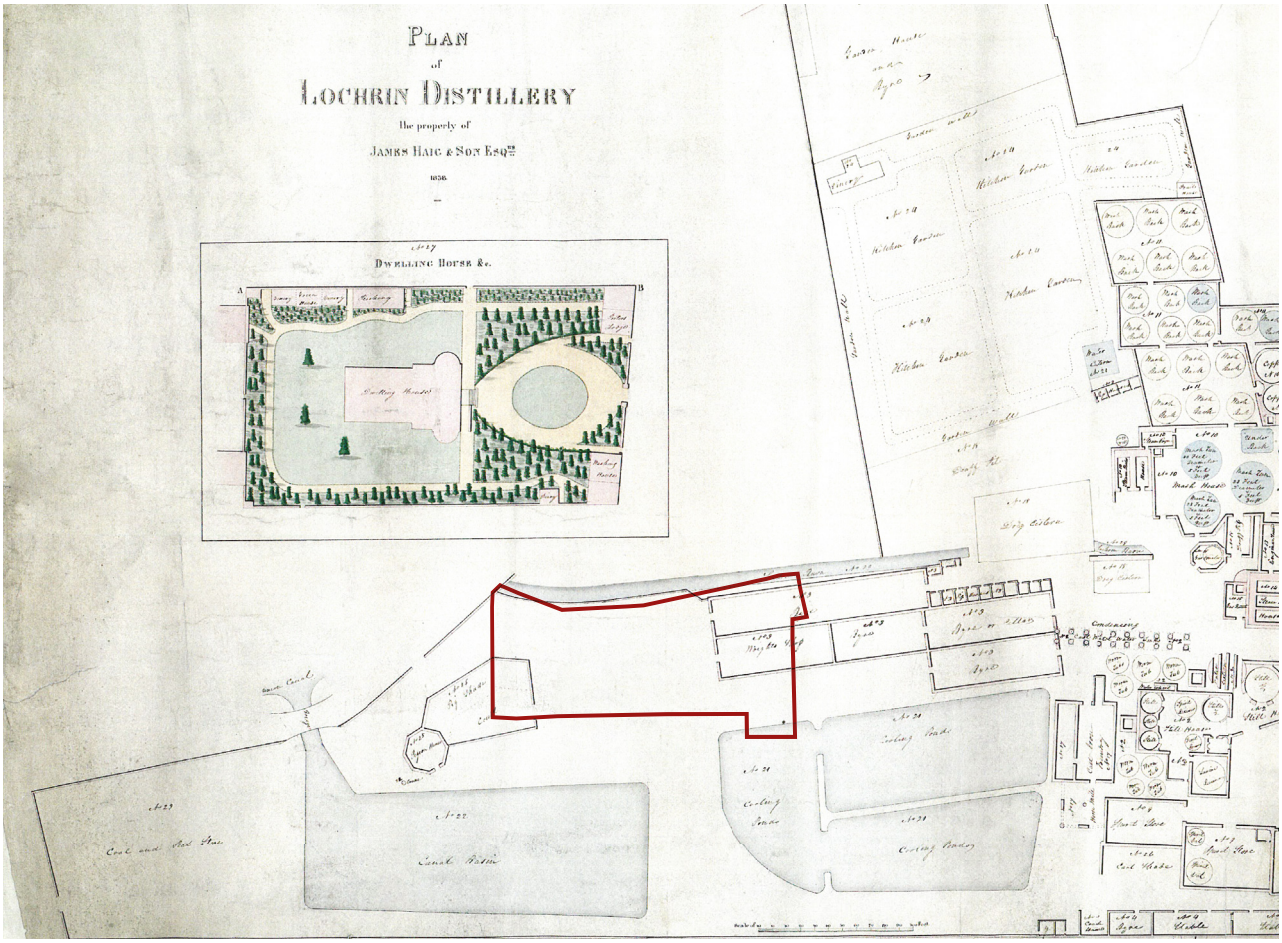
Lochrin Distillery was founded by John Haig *c* 1780. It first appears on Ainslie's 1804 map (not illustrated) and was located east of the excavation area. The Lochrin Burn, which runs east–west and lies to the north of the site, would have been an

important factor influencing the location of the distillery. James Haig initially used Lochrin Burn 'for cooling his worms', or copper condensing tubes, and a steam engine is shown on its bank in Ainslie's 1804 map (Smith 2000: 22). The burn was of utmost importance in the distillation process and Haig took legal action from 1806 to 1812 to prevent the Council draining the South Loch, where the stream originated (Curr 1988: 145–6; Smith 2000: 22). Probably due to the lawsuit, Haig created three cooling-ponds to ensure his own independent water supply.

Kirkwood's 1817 map (not illustrated) depicts the three cooling-ponds together with a pond-side steam-engine. The latter probably filled the ponds, whose large surface area dispelled excess heat, allowing the water's reuse in cooling condensors and 'worts' (malt liquor) (Ainslie 1804; Kirkwood 1817; RHP1382). These reservoirs were destroyed by the slaughterhouse extension of 1876 (discussed below), but any residual waterproof clay lining possibly contributed to the 'rubble bricks and clay' found filling the basin in 2005 (Sulman 1868; Wilson 2005: 4; Bradley-Lovekin 2011: 15; Roy 2014: 16). The distillery expanded during this period and various new buildings were constructed.

The Edinburgh and Glasgow Union Canal was constructed between 1818 and 1822. The cooling pond was adapted into a private canal basin (Wood 1823; RHP1382; Paterson 2006: 3–7). Wood's map of 1823 (not illustrated) records the basin as a large rectangular body of water connected to the canal via a channel cut from its north-west corner. This was probably done as an integral part of the excavation of the rest of the canal, to enable immediate delivery of bulk materials such as coal and grain to the distillery.

The 1830s and 1840s were difficult for the Haigs. During a fire in 1834, 'the iron columns supporting the [mill] roof … literally melted' (*Preston Chronicle*, 6 September 1834: 1; *Caledonian Mercury*, 1



Illus 2 Plan of Lochrin Distillery 1838. The red line indicates the site boundary (reproduced by kind permission of Brodies LLP. National Archives of Scotland (RHP1383))

September 1834: 3). In 1837, the over-loading of the five-storey granary's floors caused structural failure, killing four men (*Standard*, 17 April 1837: 2; *Scotsman*, 15 April 1837: 3). The Haigs tried, unsuccessfully, to sell their Sunbury, Lochrin and Canonmills premises in 1838.[1] Detailed plans of Lochrin Distillery (Illus 2), were drawn up for this sale, showing distillery buildings, including granaries, malting and kilns, located to the east of the site, outwith the development area.[2] The distillery's northern boundary was the Lochrin Burn, which was partially culverted at the eastern end, and extensive kitchen gardens lay still further north. The distillery complex included byres, a 'Wright's shop' (to the north of the cooling ponds), pig houses and a large octagonal structure, labelled 'pigeon house' with an attached 'pig shade [old Scots for shed] and court'. Although the 'pigeon house' appears to occupy the site of the 1817 and 1822 steam-engine, its industrial scale suggests it is unlikely to be the reused engine-house. Given the large dimensions of the two-storey polygonal structure and the stock enclosures attached, it is likely that its primary purpose was as a piggery or cattle byre (on the ground floor), with an ancillary dovecote/pigeon house above.

Alcohol production results in large amounts of spent grain, a nutritious animal feed. Since the disposal of distillery waste in a city environment was a major expense, feeding draff (or waste fermented grain) to cows and pigs penned nearby provided well-fed animals to sell for additional profit (Otto 1994: 2). Lochrin Distillery had '300 head of cattle, and innumerable pigs [which] were fed with the refuse' (draff) (*Scotsman*, 16 November 1850: 4). Canal barges, moored at the adjacent quayside, were used to remove the manure for sale as fertiliser (*Scotsman*, 1 February 1897: 10; 3 February 1910: 9; Laxton and Rodger 2013: 55).

3.2 Slaughterhouse

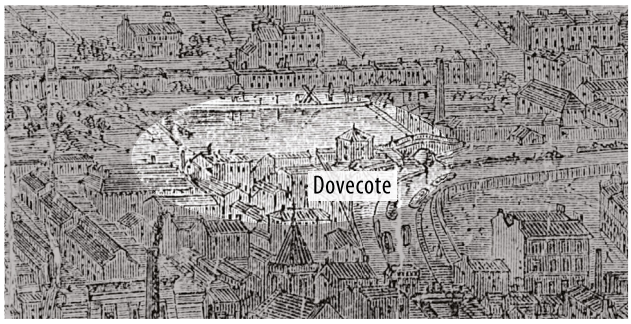
Under the Edinburgh Slaughter-Houses Act of 1850, Edinburgh Corporation rationalised the city's 78 private abattoirs into one site; the land was feued from Alexander Haig.[3] Work on the slaughterhouse, designed by city architect David Cousins, had begun by April 1851, and it was opened in May 1852 (*Scotsman*, 2 April 1851: 3). The area was 'almost entirely screened from public view' by the distillery's extant 'lofty granaries' (*Scotsman*, 19 October 1850: 2; 16 November 1850: 4). A southern boundary wall was erected in 1850, 'sufficiently high to conceal [the abattoir] from the view of the Gilmore Place windows' (*Scotsman*, 20 November 1850: 3). The gate pier of the 'private road from [the] manure depot to the … Canal', was recorded in 2005 (Wilson 2005: 5, fig 2, plate 14).

The 1853 Ordnance Survey map (Illus 5) shows that the slaughterhouse, following its opening in 1852, occupied the northern half of the site incorporating the former byres, 'wright's shop', wash backs and mash tuns. Part of the still-house remained but was labelled as 'ruins'. The octagonal pigeon house and pig shade are also extant.

3.3 The 1860s

The distillery's later history was largely unrecorded (Moss and Hume 2000: 325; Townsend 2004: 138). However, whisky production apparently continued under Andrew Stein (*c* 1790–1874, son of Hattonburn Distillery's owner, and nephew of Kilbagie's and Kennetpan's founders). Andrew and his son John Stein (1821–88) leased space from Alexander Haig (*Val Roll* 1885a: 609, no. 14). After their manager died in 1858 (*Paisley Herald*, 12 June 1858: 5), the Steins came to live at Lochrin around 1860–1, as agents for Cameron Bridge and Seggie Distilleries, both Haig/Stein concerns (*Post Office Directory* 1860–1: 253; 1861–2: 270).

In August 1860 'Mr Stein of Lochrin Distillery offered … the large … granaries used by him', as temporary military barracks[4] and he advertised for distilling vessels in 1862, which suggests that whisky was still being produced (*Scotsman*, 20 September 1862: 1). Rental lists from 1865 to 1866 show numerous tenants that included Charles and David Gray of Glasgow's Adelphi Distillery, although their precise activities at Lochrin are unspecified (Fell 1865: 878; Haig 1865: 1321; Fell 1866: 57). As they neither owned the site nor advertised any whisky production there, they possibly used it for storage or distribution (Townsend 2004; Moss and Hume 2000; Heawood 2009). The other main renters were Andrew Usher, brewers, with three bonded warehouses (recorded in *The Gazette*, issue 6,347, 30 December 1853: 1047; issue 6,899, 8 April 1859:



Illus 3 Site viewed from north, extract from panoramic view of Edinburgh, J Sulman 1868 (reproduced by kind permission of the National Library of Scotland)

501), and the Paraffin Light Company's works (Fell 1865: 878; Haig 1865: 1321; Post Office Directory 1859–60: 208). The famous James 'Paraffin' Young's Bathgate-based shale-oil firm bought out this rival in 1866.[5]

In 1863, established ironfounder William Bain opened the Lochrin Iron and Wire Works, making stable fittings and patented post and strained-wire agricultural fencing.[6] Large contracts from Australian sheep-ranches caused a move to larger premises in Coatbridge in 1888, while retaining the 'Lochrin' name (House 1959: 16–21).

Artist Thomas Sulman produced a cartographically accurate panorama of Edinburgh in 1868 (Illus 3), showing the cooling-ponds (as on the 1853 Ordnance Survey map) and distinctive 'pagoda' kiln-roofs. The pigeon house is also apparent in this image, albeit no longer as a 'garden feature'.

3.4 The 1870s and 1890s

The open-air cooling ponds were infilled between 1875 and 1876, during an abattoir extension.[7] They were built over by two blocks of killing booths designed by architect Robert Morham (*Scotsman*, 10 April 1875: 6; 6 November 1876: 3), which are depicted on the 1877 Ordnance Survey map (Illus 8). The pigeon house was still standing, with a small addition on the southern (canal) side. In short, the distillery was rented out as wholesale warehousing, to tradesmen and anyone requiring storage for bulk products and wheeled vehicles.

By this time, the canal was a safety hazard. In 1892, a hansom-cab owner from Thornybauk had his vehicle repaired at Lochrin Basin smithy. His children were in the coach while the driver was turning and 'part of the roadway subsided and the horse fell into the water dragging the cab after it'. The children and the horse drowned in the 15ft-deep water.[8] The quayside was described as both narrow and poorly maintained, which probably led to the partial infilling of the basin depicted on the 1894 Ordnance Survey map (not illustrated). This would have enlarged the area for carts to manoeuvre. The pigeon house was used as a builder's store between 1885 and 1895, surrounded by workshops.[9] The former distillery workshops and maltings were rented to multiple small tradesmen, coachbuilders, corn merchants and the brewers William McEwan & Co. (of neighbouring Fountainbridge).

The houses around Thornybauk, Home Street and Ponton Street had, by 1892, become a slum area 'inhabited by wooden shanties … containing ... a couple of acres of water, stagnant ... and stinking' (*Scotsman*, 14 November 1892: 9). The narrow streets, filled with cattle herded to the slaughterhouse, also inhibited essential access for Edinburgh's new tram system (*Scotsman*, 16 February 1893: 7; 17 February 1893: 3; 11 October 1893: 8; 6 September 1894: 7). J R Haig advertised the site in 1895 as 'about 5 acres, with valuable frontage to Home Street' (*Glasgow Herald*, 26 August 1895: 3). Lochrin House and Distillery were purchased by the 'Lochrin Buildings Syndicate' (including lawyer Lewis Bilton and investor George MacLennan, the sitting tenant of Lochrin House). They borrowed £31,000 in May 1896, using the land as security, and then built and sold off the various building plots and feu duties to private investors and trusts.[10] The syndicate 'reserved the power to feu', thus controlling the overall style and layout of the planned new tenements. One of the earliest buyers was the City Council itself, which acquired 1,700 square yards (just over 1,421 square metres) to extend the slaughterhouses. The Lord Provost proudly referred to 'the success of the Lochrin feuing plan' as a means of redeveloping the area (*Scotsman*, 18 March 1897: 8).

It seems highly probable that, following demolition, Lochrin House (recently an Episcopalian children's home and then let to grain merchant MacLennan) and the granaries fronting Home Street were dumped straight into Lochrin Basin, which was now being reclaimed to redevelop the ground.[11] Lochrin Place was adjacent to the

canal basin, and tipping building debris straight over the now-obsolete quayside would also have saved transport costs. The 2005 excavation showed the basin packed with 'mixed demolition material including bricks … iron slag and clinker' (Wilson 2005: 4).

3.5 Cold store

In the late 19th century, food preservation was a continuing problem; storm-delayed ships arrived simultaneously, causing Canadian cattle to accumulate at landing-depots, and regulations demanded slaughter within ten days (Maxwell 1909: 4). Scandinavian ice was imported for chilling compartments but proved very expensive. Consequently, once technology allowed, port authorities began opening mechanised commercial cold stores from the mid-1890s.[12]

In October 1898, several prosperous city butchers formed the Edinburgh Ice and Cold Storage Company.[13] They stated that 'Ice-making ... on the Linde system ... by ammonia compression' would avoid 'the heavy losses suffered by … butchers ... in such hot seasons' as summer 1898 (*Scotsman*, 31 January 1899: 4).

In November 1898, Bilton sold to the Cold Storage Company '1132 sq yards' (or '112 feet … by 95 feet') (RoS, SS 37866: 272; *Scotsman* 31 Jan 1899: 4), where ground was 'to be formed to the width of … 15ft into a continuation of … Lochrin Place'(RoS, SS 37866: 272). This would have led straight into the canal basin, which must therefore have been obliterated by this date.

Planning consent was granted in January 1899, and the building was begun at once. Half the space, 100,000 cubic feet, was compartments insulated by silicate cotton, for perishables, the remainder being ice-making machinery. Rails ran from the slaughterhouse for conveying freshly killed carcasses straight into the freezer (*Scotsman*, 31 January 1899: 4).

William Beattie & Sons, builders, of nearby Fountainbridge were contracted in February 1899 'to drive between 700 and 900 cubic feet of pitch pine piles in the foundation[s]', and finished four months later (*Scotsman*, 23 June 1899: 5; *Glasgow Herald,* 23 June 1899: 10). The piles were uncovered during excavation in 2005 (Wilson 2005: 4, 6), suggesting that they were required to stabilise the canal landfill. The architects were W Beattie Taylor, the contractor's grandson, and J H Cooper of the Burgh Engineer's Office (who was responsible for all construction work at the slaughterhouse) (*Scotsman*, 26 August 1899: 6; DSA, Cooper & Taylor Practice).

By August 1899, ice was being made from mains water distilled in galvanised pipes, poured into moulds and frozen in brine tanks at 15° Fahrenheit over 48 hours. 'The [ice] blocks weigh 360lbs each', the stores held 250 tons of ice, along with '200 sheep … all hard frozen', showing why the massive wooden piling had been required (*Scotsman*, 26 August 1899: 6). Only the ground floor was refrigerated, with rails and running pulleys for carcasses, the upper two storeys being air-chilled. Liquid ammonia was 'cooled by a flow of water over the pipes in an open container on the roof' and passed to cool the salt-water tanks (*Scotsman*, 26 August 1899: 6).

Edinburgh College of Agriculture used the Ice Company's stores for practical demonstrations to students, assisted by the Swift Meat Packing Co. of Chicago. The variety of imported provisions at Lochrin included Argentine beef, US pork and Australian rabbits, because 'refrigerating … annihilated distance' (*Scotsman*, 23 December 1908: 5). The facilities were of such a high standard that a fact-finding deputation from London's markets visited in 1908 (*Scotsman*, 12 April 1908: 6).

The dovecote, its yard and sheds still appear on the 1905 valuation roll but were 'vacant' and presumably 'derelict' (*Val Roll* 1905: no. 20). Neither the pigeon house nor the pig shade is recorded on the 1908 Ordnance Survey map (Illus 10), suggesting that they were demolished between 1905 and 1908, and replaced by additions to the Ice and Cold Storage Company's premises.

The timing of the Ice Company's foundation (1898) was unfortunate, because the slaughterhouse's urgent need to find larger premises was already under discussion in 1900–2[14] and was authorised by a Provisional Order Act of 1903.[15] The Ice Company's directors initially opposed their prime customer's removal to outlying Gorgie[16] but eventually dropped their objections.[17] The slaughterhouse in Slateford Road, Gorgie, was ceremonially opened in June 1910, and business there commenced in September 1910.[18]

The Ice Company was forced to diversify to keep trading. The 'Grand Rink', a roller-skating rink, had

opened beside the slaughterhouse in 1909 (replacing an iron foundry).[19] At the end of the contemporary roller-skating craze in 1911 (Creighton 2012a; Creighton 2012b) it became a cinema (Baird 1963: 337–41, 495), but this former rink possibly inspired the Ice Company's next venture. The Company's partners especially enjoyed curling, which traditionally had an enormous popular following in Scotland (O'Brien 2010: 158–71; Haynes 2014: 43–7). Scotland's first purpose-built (rather than converted) indoor ice-rink had opened at Crossmyloof, Glasgow in 1907 and doing likewise would be a natural extension of the Ice Company's facilities (O'Brien 2010: 167–9).

3.6 Ice rink

Lochrin became Edinburgh's first indoor rink, opened the day before its bigger competitor at nearby Haymarket.[20] A building warrant was granted in August 1911, for 'a large rink 160ft long by 80ft (1,422yds^2), with 'ample tea and smoking rooms' on the north side. The ice, large enough for four curling rinks, was to be frozen by '22,000 feet of pipes' (6.7km) which were 'arranged in grids' and powered by the refrigerator plant (*Scotsman,* 25 August 1911: 4).

Edinburgh Masonic Curling Club formally inaugurated Lochrin rink on 2 February 1912; the ice was 'excellent', and 'constructed on the same principle as Crossmyloof', and Haymarket (*Glasgow Herald*, 3 February 1912: 12; *Scotsman*, 3 February 1912: 13). Haymarket, like Lochrin, had an elliptical arched roof to provide unobstructed playing space. The flooring, consisting of 'brieze [sic], cork and asphalt was flooded with 6ins of water', frozen by piped brine and ammonia (*Scotsman*, 3 February 1912: 13).

Lochrin's popularity is shown by young men's teams booking curling space in February 1914, for the October season, nine months away (*Scotsman*, 24 February 1914: 10). The outbreak of war in August 1914 saw many of those bookings go sadly unfulfilled. Like many sports venues, Lochrin 'suffered badly from falling usage' during the war, and this is likely to be the primary reason that the rink closed in 1915.[21]

In December 1920, the Edinburgh Ice and Cold Storage Co. Ltd sold 0.45 acres with 'an artificial ice skating and curling rink thereon' to 'James Ross & Son, Automobile Engineers' of Lochrin Buildings, for £10,000 (RoS, SS 17506: 97). The now-subdivided site underwent considerable redevelopment by the two companies in 1921–3. The Ice Company refocused on the growing refrigeration market, and after lawsuits in 1920 over food spoiling 'due to the defective condition of the ... store' they invested in updated machinery (*Scotsman*, 19 December 1921: 2). Their new plant was opened in July 1923, by the City Treasurer. 'At a cost of nearly £10,000 a spacious building has been erected', producing 25 tons of ice daily (*Scotsman*, 5 July 1923: 5). 'The ice-box was now a feature of every high-class food establishment', and 'the first ton of ice manufactured [was] presented to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary' (*Scotsman*, 5 July 1923: 5; *Glasgow Herald*, 5 July 1923: 11).

3.7 Garages

There were minor alterations to garages and access roads during the 1930s and '40s.[22] However, the major change was the sale of the Ice Company's own premises to James Ross & Sons in 1965 (RoS, SS 17506: 100; RoS, SS 18707a: 344). This property faced onto both Lochrin Place and Lochrin Lane. James Ross then promptly sold it to Shell & BP Scotland Ltd (RoS, SS 17506: 100–1; RoS, SS 18707b: 155). Garage owners 'James Ross & Sons' entered voluntary liquidation in 1977 (recorded in *The Gazette*, issue 20,167, 11 October 1977: 1128; 12 August 1980: 1010). Their successors, Ross of Lochrin, were purchased by Arnold Clark's nationwide car dealership in February 1982, who 'regarded [the garages] as the jewel in the crown' (RoS, SS 18707b: 156; *Glasgow Herald*, 21 October 1982: 14; 6 August 1984: 9).