



a Pelican Book

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Georgian London

John Summerson



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GEORGIAN LONDON

JOHN SUMMERSON



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*With forty-eight plates and
thirty-seven text figures*

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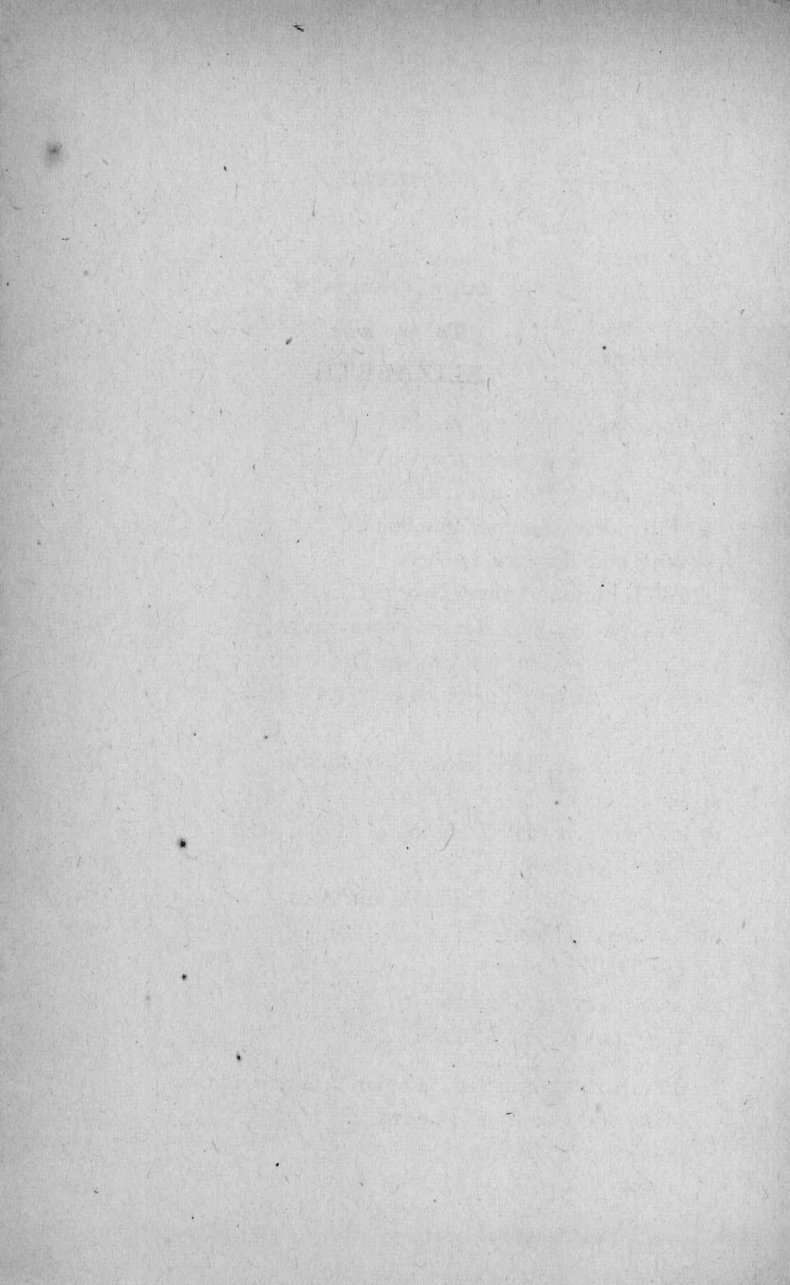
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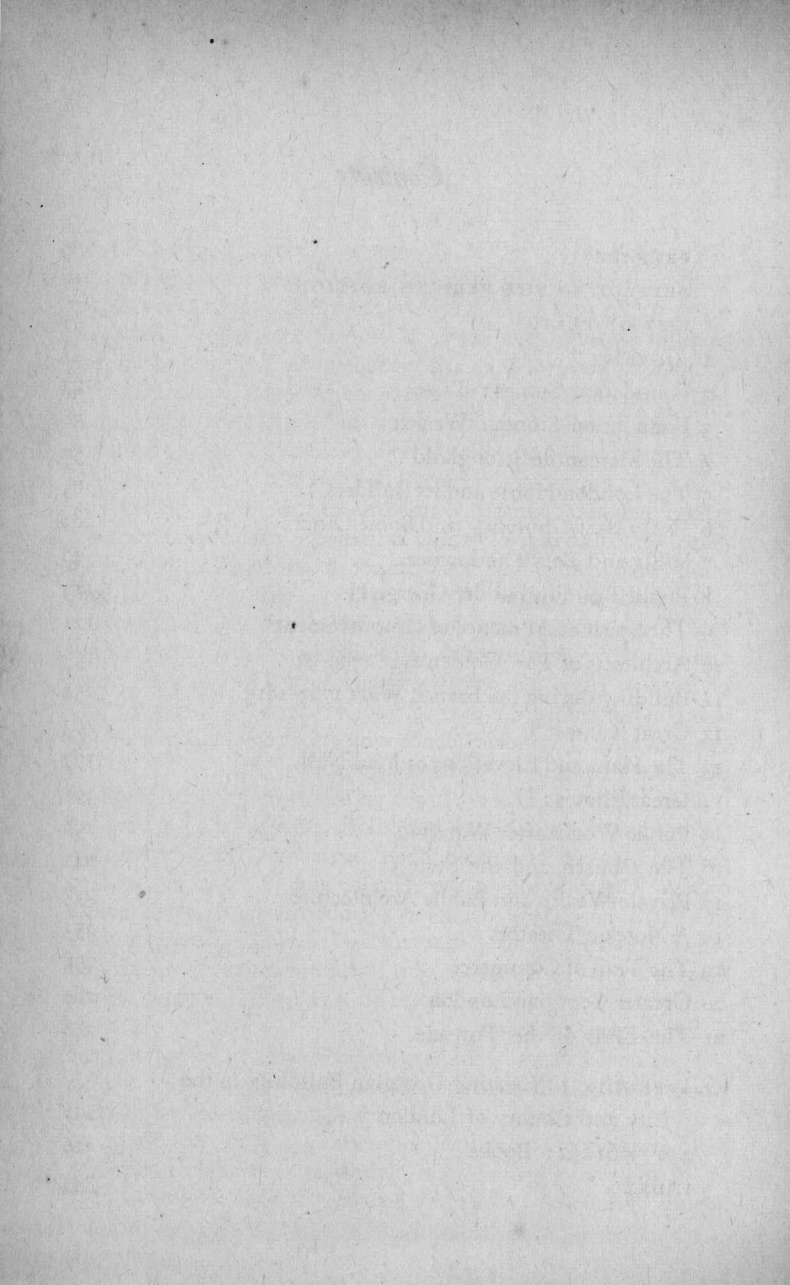
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To my wife
ELIZABETH



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Preface

THIS book originated in a series of lectures prepared for the Courtauld Institute in 1939, but not delivered owing to the turn of events. In 1940 it was suggested to me that the material might usefully be expanded into a book and I set about the work, completing some of the earlier chapters by the end of the year. More urgent things then intervened and the manuscript, less than half finished, was put away and only taken up again in the summer of 1944. The whole period has, of course, been somewhat unpropitious for a book of this sort. The subject-matter has been bombed from time to time and many papers, plans, and drawings of whose existence I was aware have been totally inaccessible. The book cannot therefore claim to be much more than an outline. As an outline I hope it will be useful. I hope most especially that it will show what an immense amount of research remains to be done on the building-history of London since the seventeenth century. This research needs doing now, before the age of reconstruction blots out all that vast quantity of minor evidence which, battered and often derelict, cannot be expected to survive long.

Some of the chapters are based on papers and articles prepared for certain occasions and periodicals. Chapters 2, 7, and 12 contain material assembled for a paper on 'The Great Land-owners' Contribution to the Architecture of London', read to the R.I.B.A. in 1939. Chapter 3 embodies parts of an article which appeared in the *Architect and Building News* in 1938. Chapter 13 is the substance of a lecture given at the Courtauld Institute in 1941, while Chapter 16 was read as a paper to the Ecclesiological Society in 1943.

The line-drawings in the text are, with certain exceptions, the work of Alison Shepherd, A.R.I.B.A., and my warmest thanks are due to her for the care and critical thought she has given to their execution. The only line-drawings not by Mrs Shepherd are as follows: Figs. 9 and 10, which are reproduced from the *Survey of London*, vol. x, by courtesy of the London County

Council; Fig. 25, which is from my own book, *John Nash*, by courtesy of Messrs George Allen & Unwin; and Fig. 36, which is a National Buildings Record drawing by Miss B. G. Bryan-Brown. I am indebted to Mr W. R. Headley for the loan of the drawing from which Figs. 7 and 27 were made. The half-tone plates are derived from a variety of sources, named in the list of illustrations, and I should like to acknowledge the kind permission of the Earl of Pembroke, the Editor of the *Builder*, the librarian of the R.I.B.A., and the Secretary of the School of Oriental Studies, to reproduce illustrations in their possession. My final obligation is to Miss Dorothy Stroud for reading the proofs.

J. S.

London, August 1945

Preface to the Pelican Edition

IN revising this book more than twenty years after its inception I have made no attempt to change it from what it set out to be – an outline sketch of the subject from a particular and personal angle. The stuff within the outline, however, has been subjected to rigorous scrutiny in the light of present knowledge and with access to sources not available to me at the start. This has involved some re-writing and the elimination not only of crass error and ill-founded speculations but of what now seem to me immature or pedantic judgements.

While the final disintegration of Georgian London proceeds apace the definitive study of its fabric moves all too slowly. Nevertheless I must pay respectful and grateful tribute to the magnificent post-war volumes of the L.C.C.'s *Survey of London* – the finest things of their kind. I am also much indebted to Mr B. H. Johnson and Mr Donald J. Olsen for kindly allowing me to benefit from their unpublished studies of the Hanover Square area and the Bloomsbury estates respectively. Mr Howard Colvin's *Biographical Dictionary of English Architects, 1640-1840*, has, I need hardly say, been my constant companion and I have continually compared notes with Professor Pevsner through his two London volumes in the 'Buildings of England' series.

J. S.

London, May 1962

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Where not otherwise stated, the prints reproduced are in the author's possession.

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