

Hull Museum Education

The Significant Buildings and People of High Street

Maister House

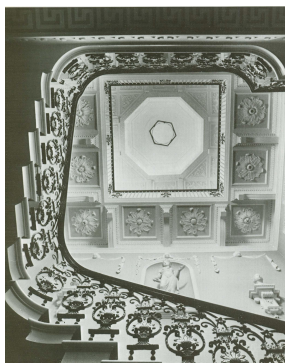


160 High Street was the home of the influential Hull merchant family, the Maisters. The house which we see today is the second to be built on this site as the original house significantly damaged by fire on 13 April 1743. The fire consumed the family house killing Henry Maister's wife, infant son and two maidservants. It had spread so dramatically due to the beautiful wooden central staircase. When the house was rebuilt in 1744 the new staircase was built from stone to prevent another tragedy of this nature.

The facade of the building is designed in the Palladian style, which uses symmetry and simplicity, while inside the walls are richly ornamented with stucco (plaster) work.

Maister Family Timeline

- The Maister family settled in Hull, from Kent, in the sixteenth century and were involved closely with the mercantile development of Hull.
- William Maister (d.1664) served as chamberlain in 1637, Sheriff in 1645 and in 1655 was mayor and was responsible for the direct trade in iron between Sweden and England with other members of the family organising trade overseas.
- His son, Henry Maister (1632-1699), was the only Hull merchant whose business was comparable to the big merchant traders of London.
- His son, William Maister (1662-1716), was elected as Whig MP for Hull in 1700 and sat in eight successive parliaments.
- His sons, Henry Maister (1699-1744) and Nathaniel Maister (1703-1772), ran the family business from the house in High Street. After the death of Henry Maister, Nathaniel Maister continued to run the business, but future generations of the Maister family failed to match his success. In the early nineteenth century the family built two additional houses in Winestead and Skirlaugh, but the expense put the business under strain and as a result was sold along with the houses by the middle of the nineteenth century.



The house is now owned by the National Trust. The rooms within the property are currently used as offices although access to the staircase can be gained by ringing the bell.