



RIAS Quarterly

Winter 2024/2025 Issue 60

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CONTACT

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Contents

Regulars

- 4 From the President
- 5 An Appreciation
- 58 Sustainability
- 81 Books

Cultural Connections

- 6 Cultural Shorts
- 10 Within These Walls
- 14 Forms of (cultural) exchange
- 19 Reimagining Perth City Hall
- 24 V&A Dundee's architecture
- 29 The National
- 33 Provand's Lordship
- 38 Reimagining Cultural Hubs
- 43 Leith Theatre
- 46 Turning to Face the City
- 50 Bristol Beacon
- 54 Losing the ABC
- 56 RACC in Theatres

Awards

- 60 RIAS Andrew Doolan Award Winner 2024
- 69 RIAS Awards Shortlist 2025

Technical

- 86 Practice Update

Chartered Architect

- 85 Chapter Contacts
- 94 Membership Report
- 95 Obituaries



Contacting RIAS

By telephone

+44 (0) 131 229 7545

By email

info@rias.org.uk

By post

15 Rutland Square, Edinburgh EH1 2BE

Credits

Contributors

- Scott Abercrombie
- Karen Anderson PRIAS
- Rodrigo Bandini dos Santos
- Leonie Bell
- Zoe Black
- Nick Brett
- Maya Buechner
- Rob Campbell
- Mark Chalmers
- Mark Cousins
- Peter Drummond
- Aisha Fatunmbi-Randall
- Alexander Gowing
- Dip CII
- Thomas Hamilton
- Stuart Hay
- Chaja Heyning
- Ben Hopkins
- Natasha Huq
- Bobby Jewell
- Alex Liddell
- Sandy Liddell Halliday
- Mark Lewis
- Thomas Longley
- Rowan Mackinnon-Pryde
- Niall Murphy
- Donald Shaw
- Andy Summers
- Julie L Tait
- Katherine Watts

Photographers

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Cover Photograph

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Quarterly Editing Team

- Nina Buechner
- Mark Chalmers
- Sean Kinnear
- Veronica Low
- Trudy Lynn

Editorial Assistance

- Joanne Hall
- Joanne.Hall@rias.org.uk

Design

- Jon Jardine
- mail@jonjardine.com

Print

MacKay & Inglis Ltd

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From the President of the RIAS

Building a Strong Culture

This edition of the *Quarterly* focuses on culture and highlights how the best architecture not only accommodates our cultural life – whether it is in projects for local communities or to house our national collections – but the quality of our architecture in itself is a reflection and part of our culture. How and what we build tells of our national priorities and values, whether it is in the design of new buildings or rejuvenating existing ones. In their text Natasha Huq and Rowan Mckinnon-Pryde reference this as an ‘inherent reciprocity’ and frame the appetite for discussion and a strong culture of exchange of ideas in Scotland.

Sandy Halliday outlines how our present culture is far from a serious and proper valuation and response to the wider environment and it is clear to me that this calls for an immediate discussion on how we influence future work within the building industry. Bluntly we have to move much more rapidly to ‘future responsible’ practice and this means if we are to change the existing development culture we need to ‘do differently’ immediately.

Reflecting this need for cultural change, the RIAS organisational culture has shifted

too. The staff team has re-structured to better support our members in this critical challenge and to advocate for the profession’s values and skills in this time of necessary change. The RIAS governance has changed to be more agile and responsive. Going forward the charity will be overseen by a smaller Board, rather than a large Council of Trustees, enabling the RIAS to more effectively continue to develop the work already begun in support of what I’ll call ‘21st Century Practice’.

This new structure, and culture, prioritises members’ needs as learned through the open-floor quarterly Member Forums and by working closer with our Chapters. Our aim is for a culture of strong connection and a louder voice in Scottish society. To support that we are also about to refresh our Committees’ remit to ensure we benefit even more from members’ collective professional expertise and best use the voluntary time of Committee Members to focus on what we know, and learn, the profession wants us to do.

In considering the future working of RIAS I reflect that it is an ‘incorporation’, in effect an early 20th century version of a ‘collective’,

formed to bring architects together nationally to work in fellowship and support each other. Working together is even more important now, in particular for the next generation. I note too that the Architecture Fringe’s theme this year is ‘Reciprocity – Architectures of Exchange’. Their programme outlines that “Reciprocity is the practice of exchanging things with others for mutual benefit, to aid one another in self-interest or in solidarity, to give as well as to receive, and to invest in and improve conditions, situations and relationships.” This definition of ‘reciprocity’ to me does well to capture what the RIAS embodies: as members working together and supporting each other we can exchange ideas and knowledge and advocate for change. As a strong, coherent profession collectively we can build our contribution to Scotland’s future culture. ■

Karen Anderson PRIAS
President, RIAS

An Appreciation

Joe Dagen, Convener of the RIAS Planning Committee

Since the early 1980s, Joe has provided a service to the RIAS Planning Committee. He has brought to the committee his wide experience in teaching and practice; he has worked in the committee as vice convener and currently as convener. Working with the RIAS staff, Joe gives assiduous attention to the government consultations and skilfully draws in the views of the Committee members.

Through regular attendance and contact with the Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA), Joe stimulated the setting up of a seminar on design trainings for Reporters to bring Design training to decision makers, to help in making good design judgements. As a practising Architect and Town Planner, Joe is well equipped to do that.

With an awareness of a recent, well-considered study of the effects of climate change over the next hundred years, Joe has presented these important ideas to the planning committee and is making further arrangements to explore these considerations as may apply to Scotland’s coastal and island communities.

Joe’s professional skills have been learned in private practice in the work of a practice in Edinburgh and in his own business based in Dundee and Perth. Joe was one of the first lecturers to serve in the newly created Planning School at Dundee.

It was there that Patrick Geddes laid the foundations for his work in developing the Planning methodology as we know it. Joe has a keen knowledge of the local academic background where Geddes developed his skills in the Professions and still to be seen and appreciated, the Geddes Teaching Garden.

Joe has most recently presided over the discussion in the Planning Committee when there was a presentation by the Chief Planner

and Chief Architect at the Scottish Government, to examine current issues and the bedding of the National Planning Framework 4. These discussions point the way to closer links with the RTPI and Landscape Institute.

In 2014 the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISoCaRP), with the support of the RIAS and RTPI, chose to hold an international workshop in Dundee. As a local practitioner, Joe was the go-to planner. An experienced practitioner who attended from Holland has a keen recollection of Joe’s local guidance in the city and surrounding area. Mrs Heyning, one of the Netherland’s most experienced Planners has the following recollections of Joe’s guidance and insights into the redevelopment resurgence of Dundee as a vibrant place with his guided tours of the Harbour area and key features of the city centre. ■

Hugh W J Crawford RIBA FRIAS FRTTPI

The International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISoCaRP)

We were looking to the future of the City of Dundee, Scotland’s fourth largest city, with a focus on the Waterfront, and with the knowledge of the past as a backing.

That was the task for participants at the ISoCaRP Dundee Workshop, May 2014 including The Realism of Implementation & Engagement of Local Resources. Dundee is a key regional centre with the Scottish Highlands at its back and the estuary of the River Tay at its feet. That Waterfront called for new positive interventions, reconnecting the City with the Waterfront – and so that’s what ISoCaRP examined and discussed, May 2014.

What more do you want as an ISoCaRP member? Especially when the workshop was led by colleague Joe Dagen, Architect and Town



Planner in Dundee. Joe who showed us the city in all its historical beauty, but did not shy away from showing what could be better, and , on request, took us for a day to the region beyond Dundee to enjoy the villages and landscape; not least of all Kirriemuir with its connection to Peter Pan. Dear colleague Joe, many thanks for these moments and memories and best wishes for your continuing work with the RIAS Planning Committee.

Chaja Heyning
Amsterdam
Past President of the BNS

Cultural Shorts

King's Theatre, Edinburgh Bennetts Associates



Since its opening in 1906, King's Theatre has been a cherished part of Edinburgh's heritage. Now over a century old, the building's manager and Scotland's largest theatre charity, Capital Theatres, recognised the critical need for up-to-date performance facilities and democratised access for visitors.

Sensitively designed by Bennetts Associates to both revitalise the existing heritage and create new spaces that optimise the use of the original building, the theatre is set to be an inclusive and inviting destination. With some areas of the building open to the public for the first time, substantial works are being undertaken to achieve this transformation. Passers-by may have noted the crane lifting steel structure to form the fly tower extension, new stage floor, new stairs and lifts, and reclaimed front of house space.

Works on site are now past the midway point, with most structural changes completed. As a result, new and remodelled spaces are now emerging that will allow Capital Theatres to bring the theatre back to life with an all-day buzz of activity.

Scapa Flow Museum, Isle of Hoy LDN Architects

Scapa Flow Museum at Lyness on the island of Hoy had at its core a former Pumping Station, serving in wartimes to draw fuel from tankers, store it, then send it out to naval vessels. It was intended to be temporary, acting as a shield for amazing machines.

What it could not do was show all of the Museum's collections responsibly. That was resolved through adding an extension, one that is deferential in form, using mute materials with minimal openings. Glazing is confined to the new entrance, the café and a frameless strip of glass that both connects and separates as it travels from ground, to soffit and back to ground along the full length of the building.

Above all, it was designed to be lightweight in the extreme. A forensically designed and hyper-efficient steel frame forms the skeleton, which is wrapped in lightweight cladding. All to minimise material mass. At the same time, the fabric and contents of the wartime structures were curated and conserved. The Museum reopened in September 2022. It preserves an irreplaceable piece of our national history, frozen in time, and presents opportunity to understand and interpret that through a contemporary addition.



Citizen's Theatre, Glasgow Bennetts Associates

The Citizens Theatre is one of the most acclaimed producing theatres in the UK, but over time its home in the Gorbals in Glasgow became dilapidated and was no longer fit for purpose. It was clear that while the Victorian auditorium was much loved, the surrounding buildings and supporting spaces were not.

The much needed and extensive redevelopment designed by Bennetts Associates is now almost complete and will give audiences back their auditorium along with a new studio theatre, dedicated participation spaces, new technical workshops and a fly tower extension. This will enable shows to continue to be enjoyed by more audiences and the outreach work of the theatre to grow.

The renovation opens access to view one of the last working historic paint frames, and the historic stage machinery, allowing visitors unprecedented access to the history and workings of this cherished theatre. The new and refurbished spaces are united by vibrant foyers and circulation that reveal the original sandstone auditorium building, creating a sense of drama reflecting the creative productions being showcased within. While the main construction works are complete, the Citizens Theatre is currently completing its fit out works in readiness to welcome audiences back for the first shows in the autumn.



Timespan Helmsdale Architects Assemble and Office Corr Higgins



Timespan is an inspirational and vital cultural resource for the North of Scotland, combining fascinating local history with an ambitious and vibrant art programme. The new project, commencing in February 2025 following an RIAS-led competition, will provide a comprehensive revitalisation of the existing buildings in order to realise Timespan's full potential as a cohesive, accessible, and sustainable museum and cultural institution. Aligned to Timespan's values, Assemble and Office Corr Higgins will deliver an engagement-led and ecologically responsible feasibility study that will prioritise sustainability, accessibility, and community involvement. The process will begin with a series of community consultations with the wider Timespan community, the outcomes of which will form the detailed brief for the project. In their application the team highlighted as their key principles:

- **Local materials & sustainability:** They will map local material resources and tradespeople to minimise the environmental impact of the redevelopment.
- **Building for the long term:** Focusing on local resources will ensure the long-term resilience of the project. Relying on skills and tools available in the area will ensure the project and its maintenance is sustainable.
- **Community-driven:** The team will collaborate with local communities, youth partners, and experts to define the project's guiding principles and create a space simultaneously connected to local histories alongside a global outlook.
- **Accessibility:** Assemble and Office Corr Higgins have demonstrated a thorough understanding of Timespan's practical necessities to tend to its multi-faceted cultural offerings. They will support the organisational commitment to inclusivity by prioritising the building's accessibility for current and future audiences, making it navigable and enjoyable for a variety of individuals.

Cultural Shorts

Cnoc Soilleir, South Uist John Renshaw Architects



Cnoc Soilleir, meaning Bright Hill, is both the name of the building and the place. Nestled on a bend in Daliburgh South Uist, it is somewhere for everyone to engage with and learn from wider Gaelic culture, including language, arts, and heritage, with music and dance at its heart.

Cnoc Soilleir is an innovational joint venture between Ceòlas Ubhist and UHI North, West and Hebrides, whose shared vision is a home for learning placed in the heart of the community, bringing people together and integrating student and local facilities.

Phase 1 was opened in September 2022, and provides offices, learning spaces, a recording studio and space for small gatherings and performances. Phase 2 completes the overall vision and is currently on site due to complete in spring 2026. Its main feature is a state-of-the-art auditorium that will seat up to 200 people and will enable delivery of high-quality professional performances to inspire and build confidence within the local community, to act as a beacon of excellence to engage with a wider audience, and to attract people to Uist.

The building is designed and constructed to meet the stringent PassivHaus standards, a first for a building of this scale in the Western Isles.

Local Contractor MacInnes Bros Ltd are the main contractor for both phases, with a professional design team lead by John Renshaw Architects. QS: Ralf Ogg Partners; Structural Engineers: Narro Associates; M&E Engineers: Irons Foulner Consulting Engineers Ltd. Arup Fire and Acoustic Consultancy; Progression AV: Audio Visual Specialist Fitout Design.

Text provided by Cnoc Soilleir

The Briggait Clydeside Market Halls, Glasgow Wasps with Collective Architecture

The Briggait, designed by Clarke and Bell and resembling Paris's Les Halles, opened in 1873 as Glasgow's fish market. Expanding in 1889 and 1904, it served the city for over a century before closing in 1977 and faced demolition by 1980.

Saved by The Bridgegate Trust (now Glasgow Building Preservation Trust), The Briggait saw various uses before Wasps, with architects Nicoll Russell Studios, redeveloped the original 1873 hall in 2010. This transformation created public and private spaces, including 69 artist studios and offices, establishing The Briggait as a hub for Glasgow's creative community.

Today, Wasps' sustainable business model supports around 200 Briggait artists and welcomes 30,000 visitors annually to markets and events. However, 1,200 sq.m. of market halls remained derelict and unused, until now. The Briggait Clydeside Market Halls project, led by Wasps with Collective Architecture, has secured Scotland's oldest surviving market halls, reconnecting them to the River Clyde and restoring one of Glasgow's Category A listed architectural landmarks to public use for the first time in almost 50 years.

The Briggait project is typical of Wasps approach to cultural regeneration, repurposing heritage buildings into thriving creative hubs as seen in the award-winning Inverness Creative Academy and Perth Creative Exchange.

The main contractor is Clark Contracts, with funding provided by Scottish Government, Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Glasgow City Council, Historic Environment Scotland, Glasgow City Heritage Trust, EB Scotland, Architectural Heritage Fund, Scottish Enterprise.



Belmont Cinema, Aberdeen Alexander Ellis and Robert Gordon Wilson



The importance of The Belmont Cinema to Aberdeen cannot be understated. Its status as an independent cinema of local, national and international significance before its closure was indisputable and its loss has been keenly felt.

The C listed building was originally constructed in 1896 as a trades hall designed by local architects, Alexander Ellis and Robert Gordon Wilson. The tall and narrow venue with clasping bartizan towers is architecturally significant and unique in Aberdeen.

The first film was shown on the premises in 1898, establishing a tradition of hosting cinema shows. In 1910, it was converted into a permanent cinema- The Coliseum. It was refurbished and reopened as the New Kinema in 1921. In 1935, it was renamed the Belmont Cinema. It closed in 1953, and converted into a warehouse, reopening as the Belmont Picturehouse in September 2000, after a major refurbishment by Aberdeen City Council. It closed again in October 2022.

This striking granite building has played a vital part in the city's architectural and cultural life for generations and through the Trustees and Staff of the Belmont Community Cinema and with the support of the people of Aberdeen will do so again.

If you'd like to donate, please visit: belmontcinema.co.uk/how-to-support.

Text provided by Matt Buchanan

Broadway Cinema, Prestwick Alister Gladstone MacDonald

The Broadway Cinema is one of the greatest surviving examples of an Art Deco golden-age cinema in Scotland. The Broadway was designed by Alister Gladstone MacDonald, the eldest son of James Ramsay MacDonald, the UK's first Labour prime minister. After studying skyscraper design in New York and sound and lighting design in Hollywood in 1930, Alister returned to the UK to become one of the nation's leading architects in newsreel cinemas, with his most famous designs at Waterloo and Victoria railway stations in London. He also designed several cinemas for the Caledonian Associated Cinema circuit in Scotland, and a selection of independents including the Broadway.

Friends of the Broadway Prestwick are a charity aiming to re-open the Broadway, bringing the golden-age cinema experience back to life and incorporating facilities for live performances, an inclusive community hub, and a fully accredited Museum of Scottish Cinemas. The charity brought the Broadway into community ownership in 2024 and are now beginning the first phases of building development, with the aim of restoring Alister MacDonald's original design throughout, including the re-opening of the original 1,060 capacity auditorium. The charity has over 1,600 members, with the community in Prestwick fully behind the project."



Within These Walls – Bringing Celtic Connections to life



Donald Shaw is an acclaimed Scottish musician, producer, festival director and award-winning composer. He has recorded and collaborated on over 100 albums with musicians in all styles of music, created Bafta winning soundtracks and directed large-scale live commissions. He has been the Artistic Director of Celtic Connections since 2006.



There is an old quote attributed to many philosophers, which goes along the lines of: 'To know a people you must know their songs and music'. Architecture should probably be added to that theory, though of course most European cities like Glasgow owe much of their buildings' heritage to ideas soaked up by intrepid designers returning from their worldwide journeys on the trade routes - (a similar story to the DNA of traditional music). This is very evident across the spectrum of venues that host the huge and diverse list of artists who come to perform at the Celtic Connections festival in Glasgow every winter. This annual festival of traditional, roots and folk music has just completed its

32nd year, with over 200 events, 30 venues, 2000 musicians and 100,000 attendees, making it one of the biggest music festivals of its kind in the world today. It could be argued Glasgow is the only city within the geographical regions of the Celts that could create this success story - partly because of its huge, settled populations of Irish and Highlanders within the city - but also because of the varied and unique performance spaces from the 100-capacity music hall the Panopticon, through to the relatively recent Hydro Arena for up to 12000.

As a musician who left school to begin travelling the world with the Gaelic folk band Capercaillie, I was lucky



to experience early on in my life how much a performance space inhabited its own unique atmosphere that made all the difference when you walked on stage and played the first opening bars of the concert. Often there was mysterious magic to an old run-down village hall that could be missing from a state of the art acoustically designed auditorium, maybe through the ghosts of past performances lingering in the crumbling rafters. To choose a favourite venue from the 40 countries we toured in would be a big ask, but certainly ones that spring to mind include The Great Mosque of Córdoba in Spain, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon in Iraq (a stage built amongst ancient artefacts!), the Circus Krone in

Munich, and Berneray village hall in the Hebrides (including a home-made breeze block stage!).

So, back to Celtic Connections and the festival's main assets (along with the music of course) - the iconic & varied venues of Glasgow.

Let's start with the oldest spaces we use at the festival, which are of course adapted churches. There is something unique about the spiritual feeling performing in an old church, even when the acoustics can be a challenge with random reflections from stone interiors. The high ceilings invoke a sense of being in a concert hall, and of course some of the most beautiful music created has been for the church

Above
All Star Ceilidh Dance at Fruitmarket, 2025
© Kris Kesiak

Above
KT Tunstall at Barrowlands, 2025
© Kris Kesiak



Above

John Metcalfe at The
Tramway, 2025

© Gaelle Beri

so there is already a feeling of history and cultural reverence within the walls.

This year at the festival we had concerts in the beautiful Barony Hall (1799) close to Glasgow Cathedral, The National Piping Centre (the old Cowcaddens Church 1872), The Mackintosh Church at Queens Cross (1899 - the only Charles Rennie Mackintosh designed church) – and Cottiers Theatre and Oran Mor in the city’s west end.

Similarly, though not a church but every bit as religious in feel, we also presented a number of shows in the iconic stature of the Kelvingrove Art Gallery – including a night with the otherworldly *Mystery of the Bulgarian Voices* choir which was sonically perfect within the big entrance hall -

even though by keeping the venue open as normal to the public till 5pm meant our set-up of stage, sound and lights was a technical miracle.

For an example of a more contemporary space that was definitely not built with music in mind, we should highlight our use of the Emirates Arena in the east end of Glasgow. 10 years after it opened as a bespoke sports venue for the Commonwealth Games, Glasgow Life wanted to explore the possibility of finding other purposes for the space, including concerts, encouraged by the venue’s capacity of around 6,000 which doesn’t compete with much bigger OVO Hydro. The resulting premiere use of the hall at CC featured Hebridean band *Peat & Diesel* and, against the odds



Above

Gretchen Peters at
Barony Hall

© Kris Kesiak

logistically (along with gambling on the unknown acoustics for a large-scale concert), the show was a huge success and opened up the conversation around other large inner-city sports spaces working as music venues.

Other profile venues used at CC across the city further highlight how well-placed Glasgow is to celebrate its stature as a UNESCO city of music – beautiful, seated spaces like Glasgow Royal Concert Hall and Glasgow City Halls, along with Glasgow’s oldest theatre – the Theatre Royal (1867), and the Pavilion Theatre (opened 1904).

But as I hinted at previously, sometimes the beauty of architecture and music is in the hidden or unheralded design that shapes a room in a way that almost surprisingly

works for the artist and audience - an ingredient that is hard to repeat other than by chance! With that in mind three of the most cherished venues for artists at Celtic Connections right now are the Old Fruit market in the Merchant City, The Barrowlands at Gallowgate, and the relatively new RSNO auditorium (within the concert halls). The magic that happens on these stages is inspired by elusive factors like unique character of surroundings, the expectation of reputation, and acoustic excellence. Not necessarily in that order! ■

Donald Shaw

Celtic Connections

Forms of (cultural) exchange



@MurrayOrlforGRAS

Natasha is a Senior Associate and RIAS conservation accredited architect at GRAS. She is co-founder and co-producer of Talks at the Lane and has had various educational and engagement roles such as university tutor, mentor and broadcaster.



@LauraMeek

Rowan is co-director of STUDIO NIRO and lecturer in architecture with the University of Dundee, where she teaches on their joint programme with Wuhan University, China. She is a director of the AE Foundation which was founded in 2011 by Dr Penny Lewis and Samuel Penn, and is a former co-producer of Talks At The Lane.



There is an inherent reciprocity between architecture and culture: architecture is informed by cultural values and, in turn, contributes to shaping cultural identity. Culture develops through continuity and disruption – common values, practices, and attitudes are challenged, redefined, and shaped over time. Public discussion serves as an important forum for this process, giving a voice to this collective thinking.

There is an appetite in Scotland for architectural discussion, illustrated through the variety of activity across multiple platforms and highlighted by Andy Summers in 'The Mosaic of Architectural Culture in Scotland', RIAS Quarterly Autumn 2020.

Form plays an important role in how ideas are exchanged in public discussions. The familiar format of a lecture followed by Q&As tends to reinforce a hierarchy, with the speaker's knowledge positioned above the audience's. Whilst this serves a purpose, there is also a need for a more discursive format that allows for a deeper, more collaborative exchange of ideas. Such discussions can encourage the critical examination of ideas, not just in terms of 'what' and 'how', but also 'why'.

These forums help to explore perspectives, challenge existing views, and encourage collective thought, nurturing a deeper understanding of architecture's role in culture. Two examples of public discussion platforms



active in the Scottish architecture scene are Talks at the Lane [TATL] and The Foundation for Architecture and Education [AE Foundation].

TATL offers an inclusive and dynamic programme of events that nurtures cross-disciplinary dialogue and encourages conversations. Its format is fluid and carefully designed to generate discussion among participants. TATL appeals to a broad audience of creative disciplines, positioning itself between architecture, design, and making. It is practice-based and place-based, creating an informal space for hosting ongoing conversations where familiarity and warmth help to cultivate engagement and continuity.

The AE Foundation takes a structured approach, creating a forum for an international community of practitioners, educators, students and graduates to discuss current themes in architecture and architectural education. The intention of each event is to develop a critical dialogue between speakers. The AE Foundation aims to provide a platform for both introspection within the discipline and for the expansion of the public's understanding of architecture without oversimplifying complex ideas. Through its digital and print presence, The AE Foundation challenges its audience to engage with architecture through nuanced and informed conversation.

Both platforms, whilst different in form and structure, create the circumstances for a two-way exchange, and highlight the importance of making space for meaningful dialogue and critical discourse as a part of a broader campaign to foster a stronger architectural culture in Scotland. ■

Natasha Huq and Rowan Mackinnon-Pryde

With thanks to Nicky Thomson and Paula Szturc

Above right

TATL Event, Custom Lane, June 2024

© Jaroslaw Mikos

Opposite page

AE Event, Fruitmarket, January 2024

© Laura Meek

Present Company



Andy Summers (he/him) is an architect, educator, curator, and public-programmer specialising in architecture and the built environment. He is interested in cultural democracy and expanding the role of architecture in wider public discourse. He is a co-founder and co-director of the Architecture Fringe, a Teaching Fellow at the Edinburgh School of Architecture & Landscape Architecture (ESALA) at the University of Edinburgh, co-pilot for Stage 4 Architecture at the Mackintosh School of Architecture at the Glasgow School of Art, and a Trustee of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland.



In thinking about cultural venues there are those that could be categorised as the official, the sanctioned, the public, or the national. There are also those which could be described as being of the grassroots, the radical, the self-initiated and the local. Cultural venues are, of course, not always new and shiny but sometimes well established with a patina accrued from decades of previous uses.

Within my work I'm very interested in cultural ecologies - the networks of people, organisations, institutions and venues that I am both surrounded by and a part of - which help constitute and inform the world of architecture, design, civic, and civil life in Scotland. Hinterlands, too, are an interesting realm of perception and activity when reflecting upon how a venue might operate, who it supports or collaborates with, and who its audience is. Its approach, or practice, to how it goes about these things is also of keen interest and an appropriate way of benchmarking values and contribution to the wider ecology within which it rests.

One such venue within the ecology that possesses a robust hinterland to the overall ethos is Custom Lane in Edinburgh.

Anchored in Leith the eponymous Custom Lane was originally built as stables for the old Category A listed Custom House immediately to its south fronting Commercial Street. Principally accessed via Customs Wharf to the east overlooking the last stretch of the Water of Leith and entered through a formal arched carriage gateway, invitation and conviviality immediately come to the fore with shared seating and a long extended table sheltered beneath a tasteful awning accompanied by fire pits (season dependent). Inside, the ground floor is open to the public, with a cafe, shop, workshop, event and exhibition spaces. Upstairs hosts an array of creative businesses, including architects GRAS who imagined, created and manage Custom Lane itself.

Conceived as a collaborative centre for design and making, Custom Lane summarises its mission as to 'connect, collaborate, create'. In a world of corporate smoke and mirrored jargon, words like these can easily be deployed as a veneer or inauthentic front, with actual activities and behaviours falling far short of the dictionary definitions. Not so with Custom Lane, which, in my experience and reflecting upon their work for this article, not only talk the



talk and walk the walk but do so as best they can with care and camaraderie, and an enviable commitment to classy quality which is warm, open and inspiring.

The aforementioned anchorage is a good metaphor for Custom Lane's grounded dedication to the creative scene in Leith, with the workshop, event and exhibition spaces in particular offered with generosity and subsequently well-used by a range of locally-based grassroots initiatives, emerging designers, high-quality makers, producers, and established design companies putting on talks, workshops, exhibitions, book launches, markets, sample sales, pop-up restaurants, and various, well-attended celebrations.

Within this overall field of activity and principally supported by GRAS, the Talks At The Lane programme of beautifully produced lectures and conversations is an important contributor to discourse on architecture between practitioners based in Scotland and those further afield. Structured around themes such as making and materials, the programme has featured architectures of intelligence and fine detailing from studios such as Scotland-based Izat Arundell, STUDIO NIRO and O'Donnell Brown alongside

international practitioners Clancy Moore, Graux & Baeyens and WHY Architecture. The 2024 programme closed with an inspiring but poignant presentation by Palestine and Paris-based AAU Anastas. In Scotland a joyous culture of architecture relies a great deal on a pluralised input and output, and the Talks At The Lane are a key contributing factor to that plurality together with events and presented commentary produced by the schools of architecture, civic groups, Architecture & Design Scotland, the RIAS and the Architecture Fringe.

Within the ecology of architectural culture, to me, the best way to summarise Custom Lane is that it feels present. Present in relation to being active, to being available, to being aware of what's going on, to being ever-ready to 'connect, collaborate, create'. Architecture in Scotland - inclusive of our design, building, educational, historic and cultural territories - sorely needs this energy and commitment to doing things, and doing things well, together. ■

Andy Summers

Above
Custom Lane Shore
© Gunnar Groves-Raines

Opposite page
Custom Lane
© ZACandZAC



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The Survey School, 79 Waterworks Road, Worcester WR1 3EZ

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Reimagining Perth City Hall: A Dialogue Between Past and Future



Rodrigo is a project architect at Mecanoo, involved in both international design competitions and the delivery of projects from design through to realisation. Since joining the firm in 2015, he has worked on a variety of projects across Europe, Latin America, and Asia. His experience includes design competitions for the Tainan Public Library, the Perth City Hall Museum, and the Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi. Rodrigo focuses on public projects, working closely with clients, local architects, and consultant teams to ensure successful outcomes from the initial concept through to completion.

Above

Perth City Museum exterior

© Greg Holmes Photography



Architecture is, at its core, an act of storytelling – a dialogue between time, place, and the people who shape it. The transformation of Perth City Hall into a museum encapsulates this philosophy, weaving together the city’s past and future in a narrative of conservation and reinvention. It is a project that reflects not only the heritage of Perth but also its evolving cultural identity, demonstrating the power of architecture to bridge historical continuity and contemporary vision.

At Mecanoo, we believe architecture should both honour its context and define what is to come. The redevelopment of Perth City Hall presented a dual challenge: to respect

the rich history of the building and its surroundings while crafting a design that would herald a new chapter for the city. It was an opportunity to create a space that speaks to the past while inviting future generations to engage with it in fresh and dynamic ways.

For years, City Hall stood frozen in time. Once a bustling social and cultural hub, its imposing Edwardian façade had become a silent witness to the passage of time, awaiting either demolition or renewal. When Perth & Kinross Council envisaged a museum to house the Stone of Destiny and showcase the city’s history, the potential of this dormant



space became undeniable. Our task was to unlock that potential, striking a delicate balance between preservation and transformation.

Balancing Heritage and Innovation

The fabric of City Hall told a story of ambition – grand stone staircases with wooden balustrades, plastered ceilings stretching towards elegance – but also of limitations, with inconsistent craftsmanship and awkward spatial arrangements. Deciding what to preserve and what to adapt required a careful interrogation of historical and

architectural values, ensuring that the essence of the building was not lost in the process of modernisation.

Stonework became a centrepiece of our conservation efforts. Scotland’s tradition of stone construction is unrivalled, yet the scarcity of skilled craftsmen necessitated a precise and considered approach to restoration. Original elements were meticulously reintegrated to retain the building’s historic character, while new materials were introduced to harmonise with the past and meet the demands of a modern cultural venue. The interplay between old and new materials was essential in preserving the

Above
Perth City Museum
interior
© Greg Holmes Photography



building’s integrity while equipping it for contemporary use.

A key aspect of the redesign was the concept of permeability. Previously, City Hall stood as an imposing monolith, closed off from the ebb and flow of the city. To counteract this, we introduced a central vennel – a passageway inspired by Perth’s medieval street patterns. This new route physically and symbolically reconnects the building with its surroundings, transforming it from an isolated structure into an integral part of the public realm. The vennel serves not only as an architectural feature but also as an invitation, welcoming residents and visitors to experience the space in an entirely new way.

Internally, the spatial strategy prioritises clarity and adaptability. The Lesser Hall has been transformed into a bright, welcoming café and event space, with floor-to-ceiling windows flooding what was once an introverted area with natural light. This openness contrasts with the Main Hall, which has been reoriented to house exhibitions. At its heart sits an oak-clad pavilion, home to the Stone of Destiny. The pavilion’s warm materiality establishes a tactile dialogue with the surrounding stone and timber, reinforcing a sense of continuity while marking a significant moment of renewal.

Above
Perth City Museum
exterior
© Greg Holmes Photography

Opposite page
Perth City Museum
interior
© Greg Holmes Photography



An Imperfect Triumph

No transformation of this scale is without compromise. The decision to repurpose rather than replace the building, while environmentally and culturally commendable, comes with inherent limitations. The spaces are not as large or as flexible as those of a purpose-built museum, and the constraints of the existing structure required ingenuity to navigate. Perth Museum is not a slick cultural powerhouse like the V&A Dundee, nor does it command the grandeur of the Scottish Parliament. Instead, it is something more modest yet arguably more vital – a building that serves its city without pretension, anchoring it in both heritage and progress.

Equally significant is the revitalisation of the surrounding public realm. The square around the museum has been reimagined as a vibrant, flexible space for markets, gatherings, and everyday encounters. Thoughtful landscaping – new paving, planting, and seating – ensures that the building does not stand apart but rather integrates seamlessly into the urban fabric. By designing a setting that encourages social interaction, we have helped to re-establish Perth Museum as a focal point of public life in Perth.

A Living Legacy

Ultimately, this project is more than just the creation of a museum or an exercise in adaptive reuse. It is a statement of intent, a commitment to the city's identity and cultural evolution. Perth Museum now stands as a testament to the power of architecture – not merely to preserve history, but to reawaken it, to engage with the community, and to inspire what comes next.

By marrying conservation with innovation, the revitalised Perth Museum bridges the gap between past and future. It does not erase its history but amplifies it, ensuring that the stories embedded within its walls continue to be told for generations to come. As the doors open to visitors, the building's next chapter begins – one that is not just about looking back, but about stepping forward into a shared cultural future. ■

Rodrigo Bandini dos Santos
Project Architect, Mecanoo



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V&A Dundee's architecture: changing the story through design



Julie Howden
Leonie is an Honorary Professor of Design at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, University of Dundee, a Royal Society of Edinburgh Fellow, a Design Economy Ambassador with the Design Council, a member of the Bonnetmakers Craft, one of the Nine Incorporated Trades of Dundee, a member of the Policy Evidence Centre for Creative Industries Advisory Board and a trustee of the Edinburgh International Festival.



All architecture is an expression of culture. It's one of the most visible and lasting ways whereby the ideas, values, traditions, innovations and achievements of an era are expressed. Our failings are also told through the buildings and places we don't protect, adapt or design well enough.

Culture occurs everywhere from castles and classrooms to clubs, cinemas and community halls, in our homes and on our phones. Many buildings are designed and refurbished specifically for culture to be shared with audiences. Some are for creating, or for the care of collections, and some do all these things. Scotland, and its cities, towns and villages have distinct and diverse identities that are embodied in and emitted from their architecture. From these places, meaning radiates and resonates.

Cultural spaces and places often make villages, towns and cities what they are, encapsulating history and identity, generating positivity and energy, creating connections and community, and providing places to gather, as well as sharpening skills and providing work. They are often the scenery of our lives and the reasons we live in, fall in love with and feel we belong to places. Culture, heritage and landscape are key drivers of why we visit places, and they tell the stories of who we are to ourselves and around the world.

The buildings from the past that need our care, that are being repurposed, or designed and built now, will matter for generations to come. The galleries, museums, libraries, theatres, cinemas, clubs, dance and music halls built in the 19th and 20th centuries shape our understanding of what

Scotland was, is and can be. What we design, redesign and look after now provides precious buildings that serve our times while telling future generations what we were like.

I am lucky enough to work in a young Scottish architectural icon designed for culture. V&A Dundee stands on the site of Dundee's docks, a site of innovation and industry where world trade and travel arrived and embarked. Our six-year-old building occupies the site of the former Olympia Leisure Centre, a bold 1970s modern civic leisure centre for all to enjoy. The history of the site is deep, and its past is reflected in our architecture and our vision.

V&A Dundee was designed by Japanese architects Kengo Kuma and Associates (KKA). The brief was ambitious: to create a catalytic focal point for the city's waterfront regeneration; to drive cultural, economic and social growth and to connect river, waterfront and city. Its underpinning mission was to establish a 21st century design museum and public plaza of international significance that would draw and inspire visitors from near and far in large numbers, all within a small city too often overlooked, but addressing its challenges by creating opportunities.

KKA created an instantly recognisable building that is context-specific while referencing ideas inherent within Japanese architecture. V&A Dundee was designed with great deliberateness yet remains full of endless possibilities as a cultural space that we learn from and evolve with. From the outside, the building's gentle brutalism blurs the edge between the water, sky and land, echoing the region's coastal cliffs. The serrated public archway that frames the river and city evokes Japanese torii gates, structures that mark the boundary between the everyday and the sacred. In this instance, the sacred spaces are nature and culture: the archway framing the river, the rising and setting sun, and the winds, rain and clouds as they roll over the river.

V&A Dundee is designed as a series of large connected public spaces and plazas, inside and outside, with galleries, cafe, terraces, learning studios and shop extending from them. These spaces are accessed via a dramatic staircase with seated landings or from glazed lifts. Intimate spaces to dwell, combined with carefully framed views, rhythmically



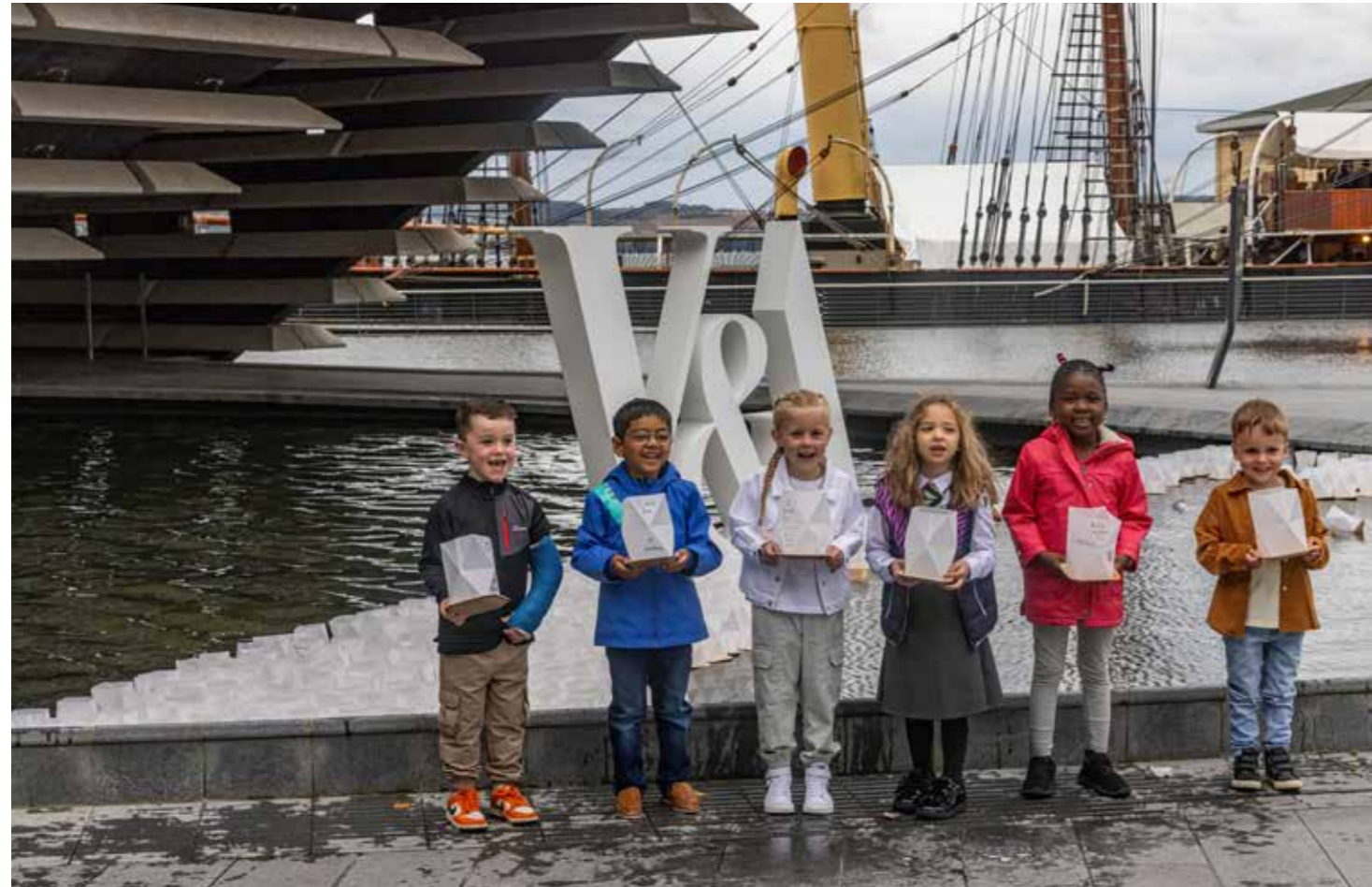
Above
Tartan opening night, 2023
© Ross Fraser McLean



Left
V&A Reggae Klub Revisited, 2019
© Erika Stevenson



Left
Young People's Collective Design Day
© Erika Stevenson



punctuate the overall experience of being connected to, and in conversation with, design and its wider environment.

We like to think of V&A Dundee as a building that is not only located in a city but a living part of it, attuned to its ebbs and flows: a young design museum that is still growing, providing indoor and outdoor gathering places full of design activity, creativity and energy.

V&A Dundee's architecture is generative. Around half of our visitors cite the architecture as a factor for visiting. Each day we learn from how visitors react to and move through the building. The architecture is also a generator of opinions, predominantly positive. The building encourages people to express views on the ways our spaces are designed, engineered and used. Our generous atrium and the open expanse of the upper and lower foyers makes some

visitors question the generosity of space that has, they feel, ambiguous purpose. Others revel in the scale and sight lines, appreciating the way the upper floor rises, pivots and reaches out to increase the museum's footprint, or the ways the light changes the building.

As a design museum we are learning from our audiences and we celebrate the architecture, leaning into it, not away from it. We have ideas, big and small, for what we can do to keep investing in the life of the building as something organic. Like the approach a gardener would have to cultivating a garden's growth through seasons, our building is in a constant state of change too.

The value of the architecture of our cultural venues, spaces and places is vast, but too often underplayed, as are the value and skills of the architects that work with clients

Above

V&A Dundee fifth birthday celebration, 2023

© Frame Focus Capture Photography



to create, adapt and care for them. These spaces are sites for people, ideas and culture that are often the civic foundations of community, and of our future.

V&A Dundee's architecture has changed Dundee. It has created indoor and outdoor public spaces that delight and inspire learning, play, reflection, research and innovation. Dundee's waterfront was for years lacerated by roads, bridged walkways and car parks, severing the relationship between river, people and the city's shipbuilding and trading past. Today, the museum, combined with the wider waterfront and Slessor Gardens, provides new public gardens, playparks and indoor and outdoor spaces that promote harmony between city and river. The waterfront once again belongs to people.

Hundreds of thousands of people visit V&A Dundee each year, a mix of those who travel to Dundee for the first time to see the museum and lots of others who come regularly. Our architecture is a key narrator of what we and the city represent, and it expresses a contemporary view of Scotland to the world. Having the UK's only Kengo Kuma-designed building in a place that many previously viewed as peripheral creates a sense of wonder. V&A Dundee's architecture is a pivotal part of a city changing, a symbol of Dundee's bold cultural ambitions as UNESCO's only UK City of Design. ■

Leonie Bell

Director, V&A Dundee

V&A Dundee is currently showing *A Fragile Correspondence*, Scotland's exhibition from the 18th Venice Architecture Biennale which is on until 25th May 2025.

From the forests around Loch Ness, to the seashore of Orkney to the industrialised remnants of the Ravenscraig steelworks, *A Fragile Correspondence* is a journey through three Scottish landscapes mapping a collection of creative responses by architects, artists and writers.

The story of the architecture and construction of V&A Dundee is told in a free display, *Stories from the Building*, which explores Kengo Kuma's design from the photograph of the Scottish cliffs which inspired his first sketch through to the completion in 2018 of Scotland's design museum. Free tours of the museum's architecture are also available daily.

Left from top

Creature Collective, 2024

© Grant Anderson

V&A Dundee interior

© Grant Anderson

School visit to V&A Dundee

© Alan Richardson

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The National at the Scottish National Galleries

© Stephen Lister



Thomas Hamilton is a founding Director of Hamilton Hay Van Jonker; he has designed and directed several high-profile developments across the Arts and Heritage sector, including museums, galleries, and visitor facilities.



Introduction

Arriving at Edinburgh Waverley, look up to the classical temples atop the Mound, and beyond to the Castle and castle rock. In the foreground sits the verdure of the gardens, giving the impression of a fixed, unchanging scene.

However, these key features of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, the listed temples, the Mound and the gardens have been in a process of change since they came into existence. The Mound accreted from rubble and rubbish, oyster shells and clay pipes in the 18th century, and later skewered by Victorian railway lines. The gardens were won from the draining of the Nor Loch, and reconfigured and adorned ceaselessly since their creation.

Above

Scottish National Gallery
exterior

© Dapple Photography

The temples, which now house the Royal Scottish Academy and the National at the National Galleries of Scotland, were built during the 19th century, then subsequently altered and reconfigured. Galleries and connections between them were burrowed into the Mound during the latter part of the 20th century.

I began working on the National at the Scottish National Galleries over ten years ago; the project's design and realisation spanned my career at Hoskins Architects.

Our approach stemmed from the careful analysis of the historical significance of the buildings and landscape, together with a thorough exposition and exploration of the building's many issues. Lying on a circulation dead end,

too few people visited the Scottish Collection Gallery in its gloomy 1970s basement, and most visitors still accessed the Galleries via the narrow entrance at Mound level. Our analysis identified these issues, and our design addressed the project's challenges.

Strategy

Our strategy involved the reconfiguration and rationalisation of circulation around the National, increasing the space allocated to the collection of Scottish art, and bringing a new order and presence to the plinth and Gardens level entrance.

The Princes Street East Gardens were reconfigured with an accessible ramp and widened stairs which lead visitors down from the street to a new plaza at the Garden entrance level. A new bronze canopy disrupts the rhythm of the Weston Link, which was designed by John Miller and Partners in 2004, and signals entry into the National.

Modern galleries housing Scotland's art were won from the conversion of former office spaces over the railways and the refurbishment of tired exhibition space. A new sandstone façade was applied to unify the plinth running under both temples, creating a quiet wall in the garden which affords views out of the new Scotland's Art Gallery to the city. We believe it provides a refreshing contrast to the introversion of the historic top-lit galleries at the Mound level.

On this new façade, we replicated the droved tooling of the stonework we'd studied on the masonry of the Royal High School on Calton Hill, subtly differentiating the planes of the walls and adding interest when viewed at close-quarters. By drawing the stonework plinth across the valley, a unity lost over time is regained beneath the temples.

A terrazzo-lined grand staircase with bronze handrails rises from the limestone of the Garden's entry foyer towards a contemplative space focused on the views of the Gardens, before entry into the Scotland's Art Gallery. A sister stairway rises to the historic galleries at Mound level to the south of the building; together with their attendant lifts, these two stairways complete a fully accessible loop through the reconfigured gallery complex.

These simple moves in the plan required complex and challenging engineering beneath the porticoes of the

temples above. Movement, noise and vibration monitoring ensured no harm occurred to the artwork or historic buildings, and the National remained open throughout the construction process.

Lessons from past projects

The work we undertook at the National built on our experience gained during the redevelopment of the Aberdeen Art Gallery. We used large-scale models and storyboards to understand how visitors would experience the new galleries, and what they would see and touch as they circulated. We used a reduced palette of colours and textures, detailing and materials to create a coherent approach throughout the galleries.

The lessons we learned about materials and detailing at Aberdeen Art Gallery included the use of precast terrazzo and tiles detailed to seamlessly encompass sculptural stairs and sitting places, bespoke grey veneers to doors and linings, and the use of bronze work. An understanding of these materials was honed through relationships with trusted artisans and craftspeople.

Lessons for future projects

Along with Melanie Hay and Nick Van Jonker, with whom I worked closely for over a decade, I founded Hamilton Hay Van Jonker in the summer of 2024. Our shared determination was to make projects which build connections between people, heritage and the built environment. We are exceptionally fortunate to be working with ambitious clients across a range of scales and project types, but supporting change in the historic environment is the common thread which connects them.

Our studio, now eight strong, is working on a diverse range of cultural and heritage projects including theatres in Glasgow and Edinburgh, St Giles Cathedral, the historic Britannia Panopticon, visitors centre for a heritage attraction and a castle in Midlothian. ■

Thomas Hamilton
formerly of Hoskins Architects

Opposite page

Scottish National Gallery
mid ramp, Gallery 5

© Dapple Photography



Opposite page

Scottish National Gallery
Gallery 9

© Dapple Photography





Provand's Lordship: Conservation and Restoration of Glasgow's Oldest House



© Katy Bridges/stock

Scott Abercrombie, Associate Director at CommonFuture Architects, is an expert conservation architect with RIBA, RIAS, and IHBC accreditation, specializing in adaptive reuse, conservation planning, and community engagement. In recognition of his contributions to conservation, Scott was named one of the RIBA's Rising Stars in 2021 and he was nominated for Young Architect of the Year at the Scottish Design Awards in 2022



Provand's Lordship, Glasgow's oldest surviving residential building, underwent a comprehensive restoration led by John Gilbert Architects. This article outlines the historical significance of the building, the challenges faced during its conservation, and the strategies employed to preserve its fabric while respecting its architectural heritage.

Introduction

Constructed circa 1471, Provand's Lordship is one of only a small number of buildings that survive from mediaeval Glasgow. Commissioned by Bishop Andrew Muirhead,

the building's historical roles have ranged from a manse associated with St Nicholas Hospital to its current function as a museum. This article discusses the recent restoration efforts, which focused on maintaining its structural integrity and ensuring that it was more resilient to climate change.

Historical Context

Provand's Lordship is Category-A listed and forms a critical part of the Cathedral Quarter in Glasgow. It reflects the city's mediaeval origins and has undergone numerous transformations since its initial construction. Significant additions in either the 1570s or 1670s shaped much of the building's current form, including the addition of the



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Right

The Castle Street elevation prior to the works

© John Gilbert Architects



Right

A historic fireplace awaiting consolidation and conservation works

© John Gilbert Architects



Right

The low level stonework had become heavily eroded

© John Gilbert Architects



western gables and a new roof. (The dating of this element relies on a stone carved with the initials WB and either the date 1570 or 1670; unfortunately, the carving is not clear and the building was owned by a William Baillie in 1570 and a William Bryson in 1670).

Project Background

The restoration project, commissioned by Glasgow Life and delivered by City Building (Glasgow) with John Gilbert Architects, addressed severe fabric deterioration. The initial brief involved a condition survey which highlighted urgent issues. The project scope expanded to include comprehensive repairs and upgrades, with a total budget of £1.6 million. The wider team included Narro (structural engineer); Luths Services (services engineer); Frew Conservation (harling specialist); AGM Stone (stonemason); and MBLA (landscape architects).

Methodology

Condition Survey

A thorough condition survey was conducted, referencing a detailed study by Historic Environment Scotland (HES). Historical research informed the understanding of the building's development and the identification of three distinct phases: pre-1570/1670, 1570/1670-1906, and post-1906.

Conservation Approach

The choices made on this project often fall more in the category of restoration than conservation, as it would be defined in the Burra Charter. However, in this case, we felt this was a valid approach to adopt on the basis of our on-site observations – namely that, whilst the endeavours of the Provand's Lordship Literary Society (who took the building on in 1906) almost certainly saved it from demolition, the changes they made and the projects that followed ultimately had a detrimental impact on the building fabric.

The alterations made had included the removal of harling, full external and internal repointing in cement and replacement of windows with poor-quality fixed units without sills. As a result, the building was not managing



Above

The view of the completed building from the Cathedral Precinct

© Tom Manley

Right

A view through the interior showing the mix of finishes including lime plaster and repointed stonework

© Tom Manley



“The reopening of Provand's Lordship has been warmly welcomed by Glasgow's residents and visitors. Thousands of people have visited the museum since the completion of a £1.6 million restoration and improvement programme in March 2024, with many commenting positively on its collection displays and new digital elements, which offer a unique insight into the oldest house in Glasgow.

The Provand's Lordship refurbishment programme by John Gilbert Architects supports Glasgow Life's commitment to protect and maintain Glasgow's built heritage. Congratulations to John Gilbert Architects for the thoroughly deserved Glasgow Institute of Architects Design Award for Conservation in recognition of their outstanding work at Provand's Lordship.”

Jane Rowlands

Head of Museums and Collections at Glasgow Life

Features

Cultural Connections

moisture well, and the stone was suffering from accelerated decay.

Key interventions the team made included: removing cementitious pointing, reinstating lime harling, and introducing new double-glazed sash and case windows. The restoration philosophy centred on returning the external appearance of the building back to its pre-1906 state, which we had good evidence of through archive drawings, photographs, descriptions and paintings. Another key factor was the understanding that re-establishing that original combination of natural and breathable materials, along with allowing the buildings environment to be better controlled through opening windows, would allow the building to better cope with a changing climate.

Key Challenges and Solutions

1. **Structural stability:** Inconsistent maintenance had led to structural weaknesses. The project involved reinforcing gables and addressing decay due to salt ingress and inadequate ventilation.
2. **Harling:** Reinstating the lime harled finish was critical for protecting the masonry. Frew Conservation provided expertise in specifying and applying traditional materials.
3. **Energy Use:** Replacement of non-original windows with double-glazed sash and case units balanced heritage considerations with improved energy performance, comfort and benefits to the collection through UV reduction. The lighting was renewed throughout with new LED units. Existing degraded loft insulation was fully renewed, whilst the repointing and harling work has served to improve the air-tightness of the building.

The works have only been complete for a comparatively short time in the grand history of this building, but the results we have seen thus far demonstrate a stabilisation in its condition, and much more stable and healthy internal temperature and humidity records. The project demonstrated the value of interdisciplinary collaboration and informed decision-making in conservation.

Conclusion

Provand's Lordship's restoration highlights the complexities of preserving historic buildings. By addressing past interventions that had compromised the structure, the project restored the building's integrity and enhanced its historical narrative. The work ensures that Provand's Lordship remains a vital link to Glasgow's mediaeval past, accessible to future generations. ■

Scott Abercrombie

Associate Director, John Gilbert Architects Ltd



Left from top

A series of interior views showing the improved internal lighting, the updated interpretation, and the new sash-and-case windows

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This transformation has restored the structure and protected the looms, ensuring its legacy lives on for generations.

For more on the case study and on VELUX Heritage conservation roof windows, visit

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Reimagining Cultural Hubs: The Pavilion, A Community Wealth Building Asset



Julie L. Tait is the Chief Executive of Rothesay Pavilion Charity, recognised for her dynamic leadership in business start-up, growth, and change management. With a proven track record in the arts, culture, creative industries, and tourism sectors, she combines commercial acumen with a deep sensitivity to the unique challenges of industries where social and cultural value is fundamental to financial success.



Above
Rothesay Pavilion exterior view
© Multivista

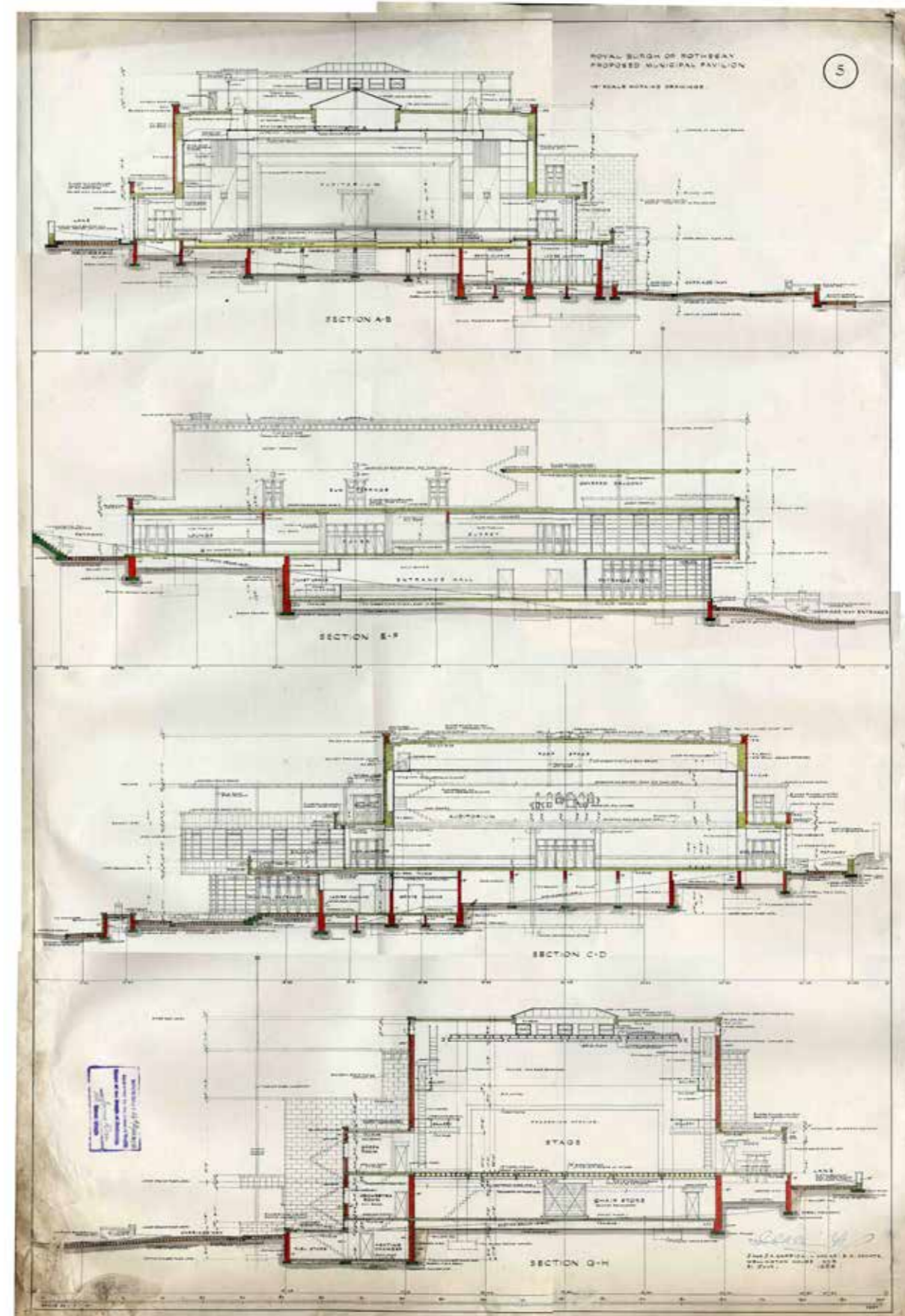
In an era marked by shrinking budgets, demographic shifts, and the urgent need for sustainable practice, the survival of cultural venues has never been more precarious. Yet, their importance to society – as centres of creativity, social connection, and economic activity – remains undeniable. The Pavilion is stepping forward with an ambitious vision: to redefine cultural spaces as engines of community wealth and economic regeneration, drawing inspiration from thinking around transformative models of practice, like those outlined in Polman and Pinson's *Net Positive*, Jim Collins' *Good to Great*, and *Rebel Ideas* by Matthew Syed.

The Cultural and Economic Crisis

Cultural venues have long played a dual role: nurturing the soul of a community while also driving economic vitality. However, many of these spaces are becoming financially

unsustainable, leading to closures that leave profound gaps in both the social fabric and local economies. Beyond their artistic contributions, these venues create jobs, reveal and nurture talent, attract tourism, and act as magnets for ancillary businesses. Their decline is symptomatic of a broader challenge: the inability to adapt traditional funding models to new economic realities and societal change.

Before its restoration, the Pavilion, a historic and cherished venue, found itself at these crossroads. Throughout the challenges it has faced, instead of succumbing to the pressures, it has embraced the idea of community wealth building as a path forward. This approach reimagines cultural spaces not merely as destinations but as active participants in the economic and social ecosystems in which they live.



Left
Dean of Guild Archive Section drawings
© Argyll and Bute Council

The Vision of Community Wealth Building

At its core, community wealth building is about choice – leveraging existing assets – money, skills, and relationships within a system to create lasting value that benefits everyone. It challenges the traditional, top-down, siloed economic models that prioritise scale and short-term gains over sustainability and long-term revenue generation. With a progressive, ‘people-centred approach’ to local placemaking and economic development, the Pavilion will leverage its combined heft as an anchor organisation to redirect focus back into the local economy, redistribute revenues, and build capacity that places control and its benefits into the hands and ingenuity of local people and organisations.

As outlined in Net Positive, this model seeks generational impact. The community wealth building model aims to leave the world better off than it finds it by fostering collaboration and shared purpose between commerce, government, the third sector, and local communities.

What sets community wealth building apart is its emphasis on creating self-sustaining ecosystems, a ‘cultural’ circular economy – rather than relying fully on precarious external investment or ‘build it and they will come’, top-down funding strategies.

Traditional cultural venue models often assume that once infrastructure is established, audiences and more public funding will follow or that the market will determine where cultural value lies. While cultural venues deliver social capital and experiences that are fundamental to innovation, economic growth and social cohesion, their impact is not fully understood or valued on par with others, such as statutory public services, commercial or industrial operations. Cultural spaces cannot just be seen as cost centres on their own; they are investments in human capital and societal well-being. As environments that inspire exploration, play, innovation and performance, their value remains largely invisible in this regard, despite their critical contribution and impact. In contrast, the community wealth building approach integrates the venue into the local economy from the outset and recognises the value of social and creative capital within it.



Left

Architect James Andrew Carrick

© The Carrick Family

A Vision for Industry

The Pavilion embodies an exciting frontier for the creative community, challenging us all to rethink the foundations of cultural venue design and function. Much like the Bauhaus school of the 1930’s, its radical, transformative vision and its practice pushing us to move beyond traditional models, we must now rethink how best to determine the broader social, economic, and environmental systems that creative work supports and inspires, and act on it.

The Pavilion’s success depends not just on being a destination, but on how its physical and spatial design, and everything taking place within it, actively advances this mission and purpose. True progress will lie in embracing evolution over revolution, where deep roots strengthen the innovative thinking that reshapes the future, and where fortune does indeed favour the brave. ■

Julie L Tait

Chief Executive, Rothesay Pavilion Charity

Recruiting
now...



Rothesay Pavilion is a Category A-listed building in the international Modernist style, commissioned in the 1930s by the Royal Burgh of Bute and designed by architect James Andrew Carrick of J & A Carrick of Ayr.

Owners and restoration project management

Argyll and Bute Council

Operations

The final stages of construction will see the building reopen early in 2027. Upon completion, the Rothesay Pavilion Charity will take charge of operations as the leaseholder under a long-term, 25-year lease.

Heritage Restoration

Elder and Cannon Architects

Main Contractor

Robertson Group

Finance

Argyll and Bute Council, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic Environment Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Scottish Government.

From top

Refurbished dressing rooms and green room

© Iseult Timmermans

Main ballroom and stage view from first floor

© Iseult Timmermans

Main hall views over Clyde coast (boarded protect in place)

© Iseult Timmermans

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Leith Theatre: A Civic Gem at the Crossroads of Heritage and Innovation



Aisha Fatunmbi-Randall is Leith Theatre's Marketing and Digital Coordinator, with nearly a decade of experience in Scotland's creative sector. Holding a BA Hons in Journalism, she has worked across marketing, communications and journalism. Passionate about the Scottish cultural industry, Aisha supports grassroots projects and contributes to publications, including SNACK Magazine.

Above

Throughout the process, there were several key interactions, including University of Strathclyde student site visits to Leith Theatre and personal engagements and presentations at the university.

© Aisha Fatunmbi-Randall



Leith Theatre stands as a testament to civic ambition and architectural elegance, embodying the spirit of community and cultural pride that shaped Edinburgh in the early 20th century. This Grade B listed building, originally unveiled as Leith Town Hall and Library in 1932, was conceived as a gift from Edinburgh to Leith, commemorating their union under the 1929 Edinburgh Boundaries Extension and Tramways Act. The act not only redrew the map of Scotland's capital but also mandated the creation of a civic complex dedicated to public services, cultural enrichment and communal gathering.

The architectural vision for the theatre was realised by the Bolton-based practice of Bradshaw Gass & Hope, one of England's oldest architectural firms. Their design blends classical grandeur with Art Deco sophistication, featuring a stately façade, a box office and a circular entrance that leads into a sweeping main auditorium. Inside, the theatre's U-shaped balcony, proscenium arch and barrel-vaulted ceiling reflect the artistry and ambition of the interwar years. With a main hall capacity of 1,500, the building was intended to host public meetings, performances and civic events, serving as a vibrant hub for the community.

However, the theatre's journey has endured a chequered history, with much of the building remaining closed for over half its life. Closed in 1941 after being one of the few buildings in Edinburgh to sustain bomb damage during the Second World War, it remained abandoned until 1961, when a wave of modernisation efforts restored its use. Repairs, led by the original architects, were finally made 20 years after they were first needed. Despite serving as a key venue for the Edinburgh International Festival every August, the larger hall closed again by 1983. In 1988, Leith Theatre's doors were shut to the public, remaining vacant for over 30 years.

Today, Leith Theatre Trust is writing the next chapter of this storied past. Since 2004, the Trust has worked tirelessly to secure a long-term lease and investment to transform the semi-derelict complex into a fully functional cultural asset. Their vision includes significant capital improvements to future-proof the building, ensuring its place as a mid-sized music and performance venue at the heart of Leith life.

Recent years have brought renewed momentum through new initiatives, such as heritage research collaborations with archives in Bolton and Edinburgh alongside contributions from institutions like The University of Strathclyde. These



efforts have not only deepened the understanding of the theatre's past but have also opened new avenues for community engagement and storytelling.

Throughout the last academic year (2023-24), Leith Theatre worked closely with the University of Strathclyde's Architecture Department as one of their "live clients" on the Architecture and Design course for Year 4 students. This innovative and dynamic higher education approach has provided a unique opportunity for the Trust to engage directly with architecture students and their tutors – all practicing architects. The collaboration provided a fresh and exciting way to share the Leith Theatre story, showcasing the venue's rich heritage and engaging with a new audience passionate about architecture and the future possibilities of historic buildings.

The students offered bold ideas to envision potential ambitions and blue sky thinking, incorporating concepts that explore how the venue can evolve while staying true to its roots, questioning and thinking about how spaces like Leith Theatre can not only be preserved but reimagined to meet the needs of the community in a context that is both sustainable and fit for purpose. Leith Theatre showcased the final projects at the venue as part of Doors Open Day 2024, sharing the creativity and hard work fostered through the partnership. Now in its second year, the initiative presents opportunities for further exhibitions, and Leith Theatre awaits more thought-provoking proposals from the great minds of architecture's future.

One particular project that has captured the essence of how restoration and regeneration can benefit Leith is Struan Morrison's Leith Central Arts project. This is a visionary project that re-imagines art as a catalyst for social interaction and community cohesion. Located on the historic site of the old central station, the design serves as a vibrant public platform, offering diverse spaces for art exhibitions, education, retail, dining and workplace. By leveraging art as a tool for community engagement, the centre aims to foster a robust cultural identity for Leith, complementing the historic Leith Theatre. Positioned as the creative nucleus of the capital, this initiative revitalises a neglected area, instilling a sense of pride in the local community. Central to the design is a symbolic water pool, reflecting Leith's deep connection to its maritime heritage.

As the Trust looks forward, they are focused on a commitment to execute ambitious restoration plans. With a robust network of partners and a steadfast commitment to preserving the theatre's legacy, Leith Theatre is poised to reclaim its status as a cultural cornerstone of Edinburgh's vibrant arts scene. ■

Aisha Fatunmbi-Randall

Marketing and Digital Coordinator, Leith Theatre

For more information about Leith Theatre visit www.leiththeatre.co.uk. Follow @leiththeatre on Twitter/X, Facebook and Instagram

Above
Concept by Struan Morrison, University of Strathclyde
© Struan Morrison



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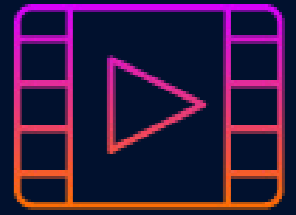
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Turning to Face the City: The National Portrait Gallery’s Architectural Renewal



© Olivier Hess

Thomas Longley is an associate at Jamie Fobert Architects, with extensive experience in cultural heritage projects. His passion lies in evolving historic architecture to meet contemporary needs while preserving each building’s essential character.



Above
National Portrait Gallery forecourt and accessible entrance

© Olivier Hess

Opposite page
National Portrait Gallery interiors

© Jim Stephenson

Introduction

When we first began work on the Inspiring People project at the National Portrait Gallery in London—the world’s first portrait gallery—we discovered a fascinating building whose heritage merited special care. Built in 1896 as a home for the nation’s portrait collection, this handsome and highly decorated edifice held innumerable stories waiting to be uncovered.

The architectural interventions can be understood as a number of parallel projects, from a new public forecourt which leads to a generous entry hall, to the creation of a dynamic new learning centre. By forming a new accessible entrance in the historic façade, the building has been

reorientated to face the city, presenting a generous welcome and connecting the Gallery with the vibrant area of London on its doorstep.

A Building Rooted in Cultural Value

When the Gallery moved into its Victorian-era home in 1896, Ewan Christian’s design felt splendidly grand. Ornate facades, tall windows, and stately galleries were perfectly suited to highlight significant historical figures. But by the time our team arrived, we discovered that decades of modifications had left the building unable to fully serve the visitor experience. Skylights had been sealed, windows boarded up to make way for more hanging space, and



foot traffic channelled through a rather modest door on St Martin’s Place. As with many cultural institutions around the world, the question was how to reconcile current operational needs—such as better climate control, improved circulation and inclusive design—without diminishing the historic character.

Turning to Face the City

One of our central motivations was to turn the Gallery outward, reorienting it toward Charing Cross Road. Historic records revealed that the Gallery’s first donors had dismissed the north side as “unappealing,” prompting Christian to place the entrance on the side façade. Consequently, the impressive north elevation languished for well over a century, its forecourt a somewhat neglected zone.

When we converted three tall, north-facing windows into entrances, bridging the Gallery’s lightwell, it was a moment of genuine excitement. As Jamie Fobert, our director, put it:

“The project was primarily driven by the desire for the Gallery to turn to face the city. No longer awkward or overlooked, the National Portrait Gallery can now stand confidently facing the city: the great historic building Londoners never knew they had.”

We carefully repositioned the statue of actor Henry Irving, reinstalled old railings, and shaped a gently-inclined plane for step-free access. That once-quiet frontage instantly became a welcoming public plaza, comfortably knitting the Gallery into the urban fabric.

Interweaving Past and Present

Throughout this process, we partnered closely with Purcell, whose heritage expertise was critical. Liz Smith, Chairperson and Regional Partner at Purcell, summed up our ethos by saying: “Working with a significant heritage asset like the National Portrait Gallery requires a high degree of creativity and inspiration to stay truthful to the original design intent, whilst also allowing the building to evolve and remain relevant for today... Our intention from the outset was to put ourselves in the mindset of Ewan Christian... to upgrade the visitor experience.”



Our team worked diligently to restore ornate mosaics and terrazzo buried under 1970's raised floors, re-opening sealed windows so that daylight could once again illuminate galleries. Structural engineers Price & Myers installed concealed steel beams to support the newly-created entrances, while Max Fordham carefully integrated modern lighting and climate controls. These updates sought to respect rather than overshadow the historic fabric, ensuring that Christian's legacy remained intact yet thoroughly revitalised.

Community, Learning, and Inclusivity

The Gallery's learning spaces were under-served, confined to cramped basement areas dating back to the 1980's. Our solution was to reveal a lost double-height courtyard, bathed in natural light, to house the Mildred & Simon Palley Learning Centre. Its two levels are joined with a dedicated lift and a new, curving stair within a volume cut out of the building. Freeing it from decades of infill has fundamentally changed how workshops, talks, and family programmes unfold – allowing this basement-level area to flourish as a bright hub of cultural participation.

Above
National Portrait Gallery
interior
© Jim Stephenson



Revelations in the East Wing

Our team also addressed the East Wing – now known as the Weston Wing – a section that had been converted to offices and storage over the years, leaving its original grandeur lost to time. We reclaimed nearly 960m2 of space, restoring it for new galleries and a café. This included adding a steel-and-timber stair and accessible lifts, along with reintroducing natural light to upper-floor galleries that had long sat in semi-darkness.

Bringing the Original Galleries Back to Life

To regain Ewan Christian's original vision, we re-opened blocked windows and rooflights that had been shuttered since World War II. Previously-infilled arches were re-opened, and floors faded to a dull yellow regained the warm gleam of teak. Subtle lighting enhancements by Max Fordham highlighted the Gallery's Victorian detailing, while a fresh colour scheme from Nissen Richards Studio helped unify the spaces visually.

A Renewed Sense of Place

In the end, what began as a quest to reintroduce natural light and rationalise layouts turned into an opportunity to bring London itself into direct dialogue with the National Portrait Gallery. Where the building previously presented a reserved, even hidden, face to the city, it now extends a generous welcome through a gracious forecourt, improved accessibility, and revitalised interior spaces.

Rather than overshadowing the building's historic charm, each intervention complements and reveals it. It's immensely satisfying to see this nineteenth-century landmark not only preserved, but also re-energised to engage visitors in new ways. By bridging centuries of design while updating the Gallery's role in contemporary culture, we've ensured that it remains a living, evolving focal point of London's artistic landscape. ■

Thomas Longley
Jamie Fobert Architects



Left
National Portrait Gallery
interiors
© Jim Stephenson

Bristol Beacon: Reimagining a Cultural Icon for Future Generations



Mark Lewis is an architect and heads the practice's Arts Studio. He specialises in the design and refurbishment of cultural buildings, often in challenging heritage contexts. He is experienced in the creation of vibrant cultural spaces like theatres, music venues, dance centres, galleries, museums, and archives and has led many of the practice's high-profile works including the LSO St Luke's and Bristol Beacon, which entailed complex transformations of listed buildings into dynamic, contemporary venues. Mark has been a member of the Association of the British Theatre Technicians since 2015.



Bristol Beacon, synonymous with some of the greatest established names in music and emerging artists, has undergone a remarkable transformation that offers the city a beacon of cultural progress – nationally and internationally. This ambitious renovation serves not only as a restoration of an iconic arts institution but also as an imaginative response to contemporary societal needs, sustainability demands, and the ever-evolving landscape of creative expression. Originally opened in 1867 as a public assembly hall, Bristol Beacon has become one of the UK's most well-known music venues. However, by the millennium, decades of neglect had left its structural integrity compromised and the building's services were at the point of failure. Despite

various refurbishments over its extensive lifespan, none have matched the scale and aspiration of this latest conservation and renewal effort. The two-phased project commenced with the opening of a new foyer in 2009 – also designed and delivered by Levitt Bernstein – and has now fully realised the goal of creating a venue that meets world-class standards. Our approach has embraced historical character while innovating to accommodate the diverse programming needs of today's audiences. The entirely new Beacon Hall, with a capacity of up to 2,200, exemplifies technical excellence in acoustic and staging design. Its flexible interior can adapt to both amplified and unamplified performances, seated and



Above
Beacon Hall opening night
© ShotAway

Opposite page
Bristol Beacon exterior view
© Tim Crocker

standing audiences, whilst successfully hosting all kinds of music to equally high standards. Bristol Beacon is designed to achieve BREEAM 'Very Good' and aims to become the UK's first carbon-neutral concert hall by 2030. The renovation encapsulates a philosophy of circular design, evidenced by the reuse of materials like salvaged Chestnut panelling dating from 1951, which maintains a connection to the venue's past while ensuring long-term ecological viability. The strategic incorporation of energy-efficient systems – from controllable heating, ventilation and lighting to an array of photovoltaic panels – reflects a conscious commitment to mitigating the wider environmental impact.

We have designed Bristol Beacon to promote inclusivity and accessibility, addressing the specific challenges of its unique topography and historic fabric. The introduction of a single principal floor level, flush with the 2009 foyer and Beacon Hall stage, provides step-free access for performers, audiences and equipment between public areas, auditoria, stages and accessible dressing rooms. Additionally, the raising of the Lantern Hall floor and the installation of new lifts for audiences and artists, ensures seamless movement between all spaces. This accessibility opens the venue to a broader range of audiences and artists, increasing welcome and engagement for a huge variety of events – projected to exceed 800 annually.



The facility now houses four performance spaces, including the atmospheric Lantern Hall and the newly developed Weston Stage (or cellar venue). These complementary spaces foster an intimate atmosphere for smaller performances and emerging artists while also serving educational functions. Converted from previously disused cellars, the new fully accessible music education centre aims to have a profound impact on local communities, potentially reaching over 30,000 children, with access to music technology and innovation.

Public art has been central to Bristol Beacon's revitalisation, further enhancing the cultural richness within its walls. Collaborating with artists such as Linda Brothwell and Rana Begum, the team has ensured that artistic

expression remains at the forefront of the venue's identity, serving as a reminder of the rich social and architectural narratives embedded within the building's history. These artistic contributions complement the venue's architectural integrity, transforming spaces into immersive experiences for visitors.

The redesign of Bristol Beacon is not only about acoustic excellence or aesthetics; it emphasises the importance of creating environments that foster community engagement, artistic expression, and social change. By promoting a space where diverse cultural activities can flourish, the venue encourages local participation while establishing itself as a pivotal player in national and international music scenes.

At its core, Bristol Beacon aims to forge connections

Above
Bristol Beacon
© Tim Crocker



between people and the arts. The adaptability of its spaces ensures that it can host a variety of events, catering not just to established artists but also nurturing new talent. The multi-mode performance halls can adjust to diverse music styles and scales, allowing for orchestral performances as well as contemporary productions. This flexibility elevates the venue's status, as it invites a wide range of performances and audiences, weaving together the past, present, and future of Bristol's musical landscape.

In conclusion, Bristol Beacon has emerged as more than a concert hall; it is a cultural hub that embodies resilience, innovation, and community spirit. This thoughtful intervention balances architectural preservation with the imperatives of contemporary performance needs. By

incorporating sustainability, accessibility, and inclusivity, the venue stands ready to inspire the next generation of artists and audiences.

Bristol Beacon invites all to experience the symphony of music, history, and innovation within its extraordinary spaces. Its opening marks a new chapter in Bristol's arts scene – one that promises to enrich the community and foster creativity for years to come. As a true beacon of possibility, the venue stands as a testament to the transformative power of adaptive reuse, offering a harmonious blend of heritage and modernity for all who enter. ■

Mark Lewis
Arts Studio Director, Levitt Bernstein

Above
Lantern soft launch
© SoulMedia

Losing the ABC: Heritage battles on Glasgow's Sauchiehall Street



Niall Murphy is Director of Glasgow City Heritage Trust and co-chair of Glasgow Built Heritage Commission. With over two decades' experience as an architect, Niall is deeply involved in heritage, conservation, and community issues in Glasgow. He is currently the Chair of the Govanhill Baths Building Preservation Trust and was a long serving member of the Glasgow Urban Design Panel.

The problems with Glasgow's Sauchiehall Street are well documented. Not only has it struggled with shifting retail patterns leading to the closure of key department stores, it has also been blighted by two major fires. The first of these was the Victoria's Nightclub fire on 21 March 2018, while the second on 15 June 2018 destroyed the Mackintosh Building and badly damaged the former ABC Cinema, then a much-loved concert venue.

The combination of these events with the pandemic has caused significant blight to Sauchiehall Street. Its regeneration, which hinges on both the Victoria's and ABC sites, is therefore key to Glasgow's regeneration. Being supportive of this, in February and June 2024 I attended both pre-application consultations for the proposed 'House of Social' student housing replacement for the former cinema.

To my dismay, the applicants appeared reluctant to work into their design Charles McNair's grand classical entrance arch of 1929, despite it being largely intact and having great townscape presence. A quote from Historic Environment Scotland's Statement of Special Interest on the former cinema makes this clear:

"The ABC has a complex history however its various changes have resulted in a striking and unusual streetscape elevation which is an important feature of one of Glasgow's principal streets. The imposing full-height entrance, designed by C.J. McNair, one of Scotland's celebrated cinema architects, is typical of cinema design and was purposefully designed to advertise its presence and draw patrons into the building."

Therefore, I urged the applicants to reconsider. To me it seemed obvious that McNair's grand arch would make the perfect landmark entrance on Sauchiehall Street to their proposed food hall, and would also be well received by Glaswegians as a good example of place-mending.

I stressed to them that the huge arch was constructed from concrete and was bookended by two lift shafts, so it was structurally robust and had emerged unscathed from the 2018 fire. I explained that the arch was worth retaining because it was a symbol of Glasgow's golden age of cinema and incorporated one of the best surviving Walter Macfarlane & Co cast iron building frontages in the UK. Other examples of these include Sir John James Burnet's grand entrance to

Selfridges on Oxford Street in London. You don't want to lose something like that.

Not only would it be a handsome adornment to any new development, but the arch would also remind Glaswegians of the ABC's fantastic social heritage spanning 140 years. It would lend gravitas to the student housing block, thus making it desirable to potential tenants seeking an authentic experience. I made clear that retention would be an excellent fit with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Glasgow Life plans to turn Sauchiehall Street into a new Culture and Heritage Quarter for Glasgow. I urged the consultant team to speak to both bodies given that there may be funding available to assist.

Unfortunately, at the second consultation, my concerns were patronisingly dismissed. I was informed that: "It's all a cinema stage set built of timber, plywood and plasterboard. It wasn't built to last." Instead, the consultant team regarded the condition of the arch as dangerous and wanted it demolished. Thereafter, they would incorporate within the food hall some interpretation of the ABC's social history including some surviving fabric, if salvage was possible.

Having seen the Dean of Guild drawings for McNair's grand arch, I knew it wasn't a stage set. My concerns were such that at the June 2024 Mackintosh Symposium on 'Heritage Under Threat' I highlighted this to a range of other local and national heritage bodies. Sadly, the Planning Application submitted in June 2024 confirmed my fears and was met with dismay by those who care for Glasgow's heritage. Therefore, I was left with no choice but to object. To date there have been 158 representations with 136 objections and just 19 in support.

When the Dangerous Buildings Notice was served in August 2024, my initial thought was the game over. Nevertheless, I didn't want to give up without a fight even when the 2019 application to demolish the ABC was dusted off and rushed to the Planning Applications Committee. Having spoken to many of the Councillors on the committee, I knew they were as reluctant as I was to see the grand arch demolished. Like me, they feared it would damage the Glasgow Central Conservation Area and the city's reputation.

Handily, several of the objecting parties had sight of a second report from one of Scotland's highest conservation



accredited structural engineers which had been commissioned by a company which operated out of part of the ABC, after the 2018 fire.

In contrast to the reports provided for the Planning Application, this report did not condemn the remains of the ABC. Despite the fire damage, it indicated that the building could be brought back into use if the steelwork over the auditorium was replaced and the roof reinstated.

In particular, the report confirmed that McNair's grand arch was an inherently stable structure which was well tied into the building and had solid concrete floors. With the consent of the engineer, the report was circulated to the Planning Applications Committee by Paul Sweeney MSP, so they would have a different professional opinion to refer to in their deliberations.

Unfortunately, the wording of the Dangerous Buildings Notice gave the councillors no room for manoeuvre. If they had refused the application to demolish the ABC, the councillors would then have been liable should the worst have happened. Unsurprisingly, consent was given – but on condition that every effort was made to salvage the Macfarlane cast iron screen.

Demolition began at the start of September 2024. Weeks later the cynical 'stage set' phrase echoed through my head as I heard the staccato sounds of the jackhammers required to demolish the grand arch echo down Sauchiehall Street for – surprise – it had proven to be remarkably robust.

As we need to learn lessons from this unnecessary loss to Glasgow's built heritage, I have supported SAVE Britain's Heritage public petition calling on the Scottish Parliament to host a national debate to bolster safeguards for threatened listed buildings. The petition calls for the following policy controls to be introduced alongside existing public safety legislation:

1. Enhanced policy guidance setting out the minimum evidence and processes required by local planning authorities before making decisions on demolition of listed buildings under emergency powers
2. A mandatory policy requirement for local planning authorities to engage conservation-accredited engineers in all cases involving listed buildings

The petition was considered at the Scottish Parliament's Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on 9 October 2024. The outcome was the Committee agreeing to write to the Scottish Government about the matter, then invite relevant stakeholders to give evidence at a future meeting. What I want to see is conservation-accredited engineers embedded in Building Control teams. That way, they have in-house expertise to call on, rather than relying on consultants engaged by applicants.

In a city like Glasgow, which still suffers from the brutal urban clearances of the 1960s and 70s, and where there are nearly 150 buildings on Scotland's Buildings at Risk Register, I think that is imperative. ■

Niall Murphy

Left from top

The Grand Arch, January 2024

© Niall Murphy

Demolished site, November 2024

© Niall Murphy

RACC in Theatres: Bringing the House Down



Peter Drumond is a RIAS trustee and a past chair of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland. He represents the Incorporation at government level on a range of building safety and regulatory issues including RAAC, cladding, and fire safety. Peter is principal of PDA, an Ayrshire-based practice specializing in heritage-led regeneration.

In times of austerity, conservation, adaptation, and reuse of modernist 20th Century building fabric poses very difficult challenges for those involved in the care of Scotland's built heritage. Not least because innovative materials and construction techniques are often poorly researched and understood. Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) RAAC is one such product affecting buildings of special architectural and historical significance. This includes buildings valued by their communities as well used cultural venues and important local landmarks with architectural pedigree.

The B-listed Motherwell Civic Centre (Wylie, Shanks and Partners 1970) is the most publicised Scottish property, but further afield are Grade II listed St. David's Hall in Cardiff and the Grade II* "Ziggurat" buildings at the University of East Anglia. It is only a matter of time until more are found, and the heritage sector faces some difficult choices. Although not listed, Musselburgh Brunton Halls (Rowand Anderson Kininmonth & Paul 1971) has joined the club of buildings with uncertain futures.

Sadly, mothballing as a prelude to demolition appears to be the fate of Motherwell Civic Centre and The Brunton, not least in terms of uncertainties about risk. The characteristics RAAC pose a particular challenge in relation to accurately estimating costs of remediation. East Lothian Council have stated:

"Addressing the RAAC issues at the Brunton Hall is unaffordable and that the preferred option, following appropriate consultation, is to demolish the building. However, no formal decision on demolition will be made at this time, as consultation and further consideration of options will be required."

The challenge posed by RAAC?

RAAC is a form of lightweight precast concrete panels. In the UK it was used primarily in roof planks of some public-sector buildings built between the mid-1950s and mid-1980s, and it continues to be widely used abroad. It appears to have been used in the public sector, indicating the concept value-engineering and austerity is nothing new. Procurement decisions have repercussions years later, often of a scale

councils and cultural organizations are not financially equipped to handle.

Concern about defects first arose in the late 1980s and, in 1996, the Building Research Establishment published a report on the investigation of a number of schools roofs in Essex. A further study in 2002 included load tests. These highlighted a risk of sudden and potentially catastrophic failure. In 1999 the Standing Committee on Structural Safety reviewed the issue and recommended that owners of properties with such roofs should arrange for regular inspections, although they did not consider that this approach might jeopardise structural safety at that time.

In 2019, the Institute of Structural Engineers (IStructE) published a safety alert which identified concerns about the stability of RAAC panels. In 2013 they published *Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) Investigation and Assessment – Further Guidance* which set out guidance on how engineers should assess the issue.

The risks

Cultural buildings where RAAC forms a substantive part of the building face three main risks:

1. The end bearing support of the panels. If the steel reinforcement has not been properly designed or placed, or if the construction itself is poor, then there is a possibility of a sudden shear failure.
2. Water ingress. RAAC panels deflect more than others forms of construction. Where used for flat roofs, that can lead to ponding. If a leak occurs, then panels become saturated. This can lead to unseen corrosion of the reinforcement with adverse impact on the panel strength.
3. Modification of the panels through either original cutting of the panels or cutting. Even small diameter holes may adversely affect reinforcement or anchorage. Any one or more of these can contribute to a significant risk of structural failure, with consequent risks for building occupants. Moreover, as further research is undertaken it may be that further causes of potential failure come to light these include the effects of condensation under poorly insulated cold deck flat roofs.



Commenting on plans for Motherwell Civic Centre Councillor Jim Logue, Leader of North Lanarkshire Council, has stated:

"Several of the RAAC panels showed damage, including signs of water ingress that could weaken the roof's load-bearing capacity."

"We have explored all the options and have concluded that removal of the RAAC and replacing the roof would cost a minimum of between £10.5 and £11.65 million and likely considerably more."

"I recognise the huge part that the concert hall and theatre have played in the cultural life of Motherwell and North Lanarkshire over many years, and I have attended many wonderful performances in the building."

"However, demolishing the theatre and concert hall is the only economically viable option. This has been an incredibly difficult decision."

What this means for the heritage sector

Councils such as East Lothian and South Lanarkshire will face difficult decisions about where funding will be deployed within any remediation programme: it is all-too easy to see decision-makers faced with a choice between housing estates, essential facilities such as schools and cultural venues. The fiscal outlook for local government means some buildings may therefore fall by the metaphorical wayside,

"Even if the councils can repair the affected buildings, it may not be possible to maintain the aesthetic of the original lightweight slabs. Replacement with modern components and additional structural supports could all change the character of properties, especially large interior spaces which relied on impressive clear spans for their character."

erasing an important part of our recent architectural heritage from memory.

Even if the councils can repair the affected buildings, it may not be possible to maintain the aesthetic of the original lightweight slabs. Replacement with modern components and additional structural supports could all change the character of properties, especially large interior spaces which relied on impressive clear spans for their character. This year's Doolan award winning revival of Burrell Collection, including the notorious leaky flat roof, involving sympathetic installation of PV panels demonstrates solutions can be found by a skilled conservation architect, even for A listed buildings of modern construction.

Much work has still to be done by regulatory authorities to determine the best way forward and it is, unfortunately, too early to say what solutions we are likely to see. The biggest problems for Modernist gems such as Motherwell and Musselburgh facilities are uncertainty. What is the cost of remediation, and which public or private body has the means to underwrite the repairs.

Peter Drumond

This article is adapted version of a contribution to AHSS journal in 2024 by Peter Drumond Chair of RIAS Practice Committee. Additional research, updates and edits by Stuart Hay RIAS Head of Outreach March 2025.

Above
Motherwell Civic Centre
SC 2619234 © Crown
Copyright: HES

When you win the Rat Race you are still a ^(Musk)Rat!

Lang may your lum reek! In Scotland our much beloved cultural blessing for a long, prosperous and healthy life says a lot about how we perceive our homes. Comfort and wealth and health have long been recognised as co-related. If not a pre-requisite for, then certainly vital components of our durability, our personal sustainability, and that of our genes.

There is an issue with smoke but in, say, 1200AD with a Scottish population under half-a-million and a global population of 300 million there would have been confidence in the benediction. Average Scottish life expectancy was about 30 years. Burning peat or timber in a confined space was doubtless problematic but being cold and poor was considerably less likely to enhance your longevity. Plus, a good chimney and a south-westerly wind sent combustion products to Scandinavia. Today a global population of nearly nine billion means we all breathe a dirty breeze and we have different problems. Domestic mould kills the vulnerable and climate payback strikes randomly.

Throughout most of my career my research into our natural environment has been a source of professional conflict. I met solid resistance to my disquiet about biodiversity loss, deforestation, climate change, toxicity, pollution, waste and community breakdown. I was bemused that environmental concerns drew such unfriendly fire despite the vast array of cultural evidence in our art, craft, music and poetry that such care was innate. I considered myself truly fortunate to have been taught engineering design in the progressive context of global limits and social responsibility. Others clearly thought these concepts an unacceptable restraint on design freedom. "Surely they are *the* design drivers" I reflected. "Buzz Buzz Buzz off with your environment" I was told. Real hostility often came in the language of Big Tech optimism. Solutions will be found. Eventually. The cultural bias, the norm, is that absolute freedom is our right. So any restraints, however justified, are countercultural and a nuisance. I was a nuisance.

I wasn't naïve. Ok, perhaps. A little! I knew that environmentalism only became a thing and gained a political voice in the countercultural revolution of the 1960's. And that it had long had a bad press. Mainstream culture in the 60's with the advent of mass TV was competitive consumerism.

Gadgets. Aspiration. The dawn of "The Rat Race". Then Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) and Hardin's *Tragedy of the Commons* (1968) changed the game and raised awareness of environmental harms. Add in the Vietnam war, nuclear power and the arms race and it was a heady mix. Support for civil rights, peace, women's rights and nature emerged and offered a countercultural path of genuine progress. This proved to be really aggravating to some people.

Did I mention there were also moon landings?

From all reports the highs of the 60's were stellar as hippies and folkies rejected many of the dominant mores of materialism in favour of nature, marijuana, free love and life quality. But the lows were exceedingly gloomy. Notably the Kent State massacre. On May 4th 1970 twenty-eight soldiers from the US national guard fired about 67 rounds over 13 seconds, killing four students and wounding nine. None of the students was over 20 years old or closer than 100 metres. The "crime" of these unarmed pesky kids was to protest expanding the Vietnam War into Cambodia. Clearly it was none of their business!! "Bang Bang Bang to your peace." No-one was ever held accountable for these state sanctioned cold-blooded murders. They happened only twelve days after the first Earth Day at which Ian McHarg, the Scottish environmentalist, landscaper and planner, gave the opening address. "You have no assurance of a future... Man is an epidemic. He plunders rapes, poisons and kills this living system, in ignorance of its workings and its fundamental value."

Bothersome countercultural architects emerged and built experimental structures to live within environmental boundaries. In London The Street Farm House (1974 Caine & Haggart) provided shelter, heat, food, water, cooking facilities and ecological waste disposal for a family. The wood-wool insulated timber frame incorporated a greenhouse to live in, grow food, collect rain and provide a heat source. A fishpond was fed from a methane digester. It is a precedent of circular economy, global gardening and autonomous buildings. *Lang may your methane be captured!?* The US architect Paulo Soleri with an absolutely galling anti-materialist philosophy, founded Arcosanti to demonstrate a "Lean Alternative" to hyper consumption. A precedent for permaculture, urban

Opposite page

Affordable health housing and place-making – Tubingen

© Sandy Halliday



ecology and the walkable city. *Lang may less be more!* Time passed. Sustainable architecture developed slowly. Vexatious 'A' class thinkers like Carson, Hardin, McHarg, Commoner and others who spoke in universal, if countercultural, truths were elbowed out by 'F' class techno-optimist-opportunist-nerds at the forefront of cut-throat consumerism and planetary abuse. Unsustainable architecture prevailed.

We have been rudely reminded that peaceniks and greenies, equal rights and feminism are still edgy, divisive and exasperating. Protesters with tree houses and barricades receive unjust sentences for promoting a Just Transition. Slopey shouldered executives and lobbyists with responsibility for so much abject failure, death and destruction are triumphing in the rat race. Hierarchical authority, high tech and WoMD rule. The moon landings, not the view back at our glorious, unique blue planet won the overwhelming public vote. Not Woodstock.

Those with unimaginable wealth still make the link between their homes and survival but there is no common blessing, more of a malediction. Their salvation plans involve grabbing hiding places for their elon-gated fortresses and

stealing from the commons to seek a home (really??) on another planet regardless of the survival needs of all the other irritating life that currently lives here. "Burn Burn Burn your DNA." It is particularly tragic when we could easily have affordable, healthy, energy efficient shelter now and so much more. Living well on earth really isn't rocket science. ■

**"... You poisoned my sweet water.
You cut down my green trees.
The food you fed my children
Was the cause of their disease.
... My world is slowly fallin' down
And the air's not good to breathe.
And those of us who care enough,
We have to do something.....
What you gonna do about me?"**

Quicksilver Messenger Service 1970

**Professor Sandy Liddell Halliday MPhil MCIBSE CEng FWES
Hon FRIAS Hon FRIBA
Principal, Gaia Research**



Sandy is a chartered engineer and internationally respected author, thought leader and communicator with extensive experience of interdisciplinary working in the field of sustainable buildings and places. She has been a researcher and educator in built environment issues and a sustainability adviser to the private, public and third sector since 1986. Sandy's ability to bridge gaps between sustainable architecture and engineering is recognised by Honorary Fellowships of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA, 2020) and the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS, 2018) and Fellowship of the Women's Engineering Society.



RIAS Andrew Doolan Award Winner 2024

In November, Glasgow's Burrell Collection was named the winner of the 2024 Andrew Doolan Best Building in Scotland Award, following a major refurbishment by John McAslan + Partners.

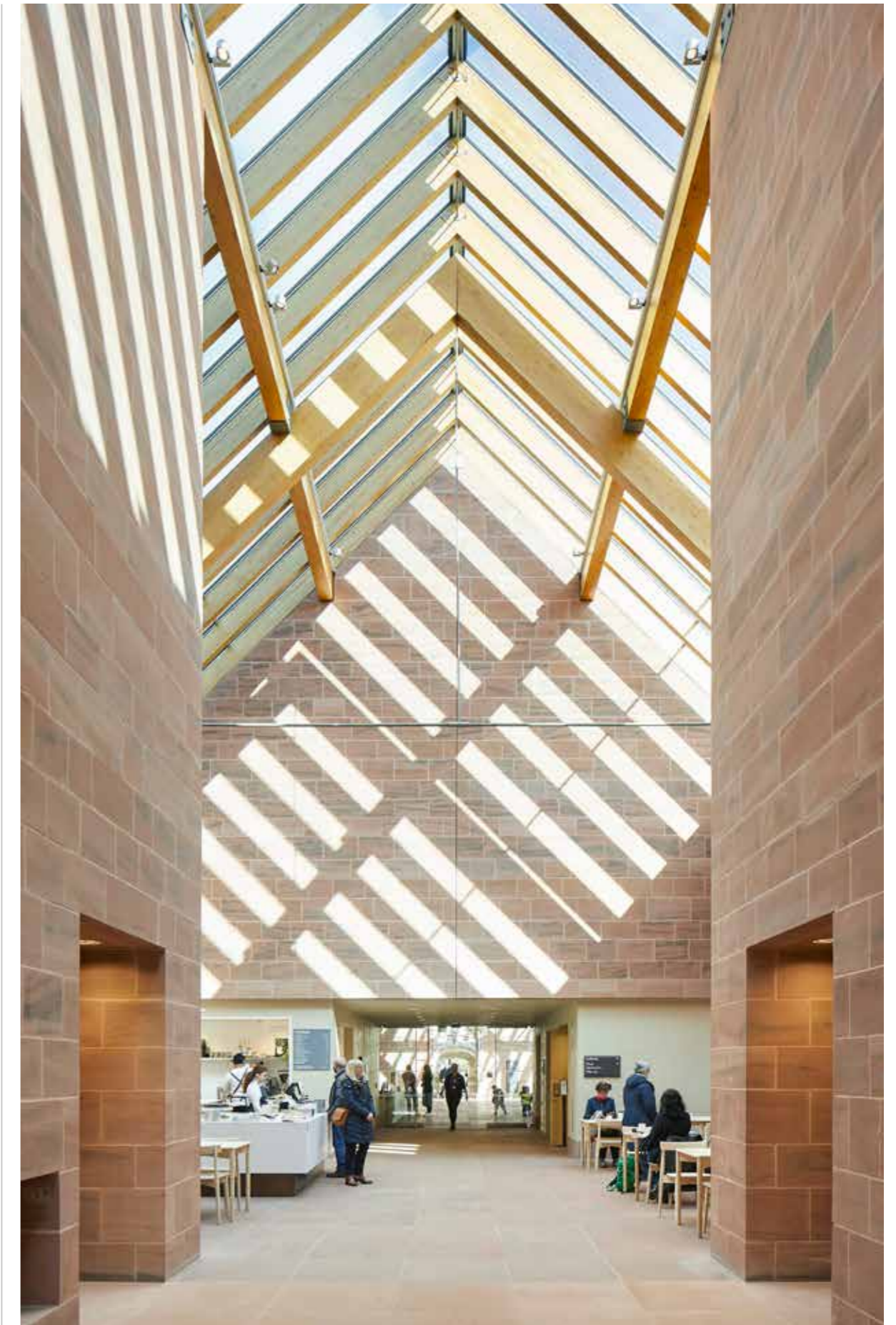
The Doolan Award was established in 2002, with a mission to find and celebrate the best building in Scotland, each year. It is named in memory of its founder and patron, the architect/developer Andrew Doolan, who died in April 2004, and the award would not exist without his extraordinary vision.

In 1944, the Glasgow-born shipping magnate Sir William Burrell and his wife Constance, Lady Burrell, gifted their private collection of art and £450,000 to the City of Glasgow. Beginning in the 1880's, Burrell amassed a collection of some 9,000 objects ranging from magnificent medieval and Renaissance tapestries, stained glass and sculpture to Chinese ceramics, Islamic textiles and European paintings.

In 1967, Anne Maxwell MacDonald and her family also

gifted Pollok House and its estate to the city. This offered an opportunity to house the Burrell Collection in the finest rural setting. An architectural competition was held in 1972, won by Barry Gasson, John Meunier and Brit Andreson and the museum opened to much acclaim in 1983. This marked a key turning point in the regeneration of Glasgow and its transformation from a failing industrial city into one of the world's top cities of culture.

The Burrell Collection is a rare modernist icon and, with its forward-thinking ideas of art in nature, it was very much ahead of its time. The original intention to create a relationship between inside and outside, to see the collection in the context of the natural environment was a step change in gallery design. It broke with the tradition of country house picture galleries, and built on new ideas such as the Louisiana Museum near Copenhagen designed by Jørgen Bo and Vilhelm Wohlert, where art is seen in spaces closely linked to the landscape.



Opposite page

The Burrell Collection, exterior at dusk
© Hufton+Crow

Left

The Burrell Collection
© Hufton+Crow

In addition, the semi-open plan, mezzanine structure and positioning of the café at the Burrell Collection offered a variety of scale, lighting and views through the building which enhance the experience of moving through the gallery. The building was constructed with an exceptionally high standard of craftsmanship, particularly in the making of the interior. Polished concrete columns, laminated timber beams with exposed steel shoes and fixing bolts, coursed pink sandstone, polished and unpolished stone floors are all evident to the visitor.

Every part of the building, many of its light fittings and display cases, together with much of its exhibition layout and furniture was designed by Barry Gasson's office as a single, coherent essay in design which had survived with very little alteration. The building is now listed at Category A, which is the highest category and very rare for a building of its age and an indication of its cultural value.

How did you approach the refurbishment of such an important modern building?

When we were commissioned in 2015, the building suffered from leaks in the roof and the displays were looking increasingly tired. Visitor numbers had dwindled down to 150,000 per year. In spite of all this, it was still held in very high regard by all who knew and loved it. We spent the first few months of the project really getting to understand the building. We spoke to the original architects, studied the archive drawings and spent much time in the building itself. Our aim was to bring the museum back to life by reinforcing the vision and values of the original building.

A key aspect of the Burrell's listed status is that it acknowledges the combination of a highly significant building which was designed to house a highly significant art collection. While the challenges were daunting, the need for change was pressing. The protection of the world-class collection was one of the key justifications for action, ensuring the artefacts remained housed in a suitable environment.

Conserving a modern building which is so well-recognised for its architectural excellence was a challenge. Ours was the first major refurbishment of the Burrell,

so almost all of the building fabric was original and undisturbed. It was a daunting task to begin with but, alongside that, the issues still needed to be addressed. There were sound reasons for intervention, and by focussing on the issues, we were able to restrict change to where it was really needed. Our aim was for the interventions to make the building functional without being excessive or gratuitous.

How did you meet the challenges posed by the client's brief?

The primary goal was to ensure the building could once again serve as a fitting home for its world-class collection of artefacts. At its core, this was a conservation project, with a focus on upgrading the building envelope to prevent water ingress, manage solar gain, and enhance energy performance. These measures were critical for enhancing environmental conditions to protect the artefacts.

Accessibility was a high priority, addressing not only physical issues but also psychological barriers to those unfamiliar with museums. The refurbishment also ensured that a much larger proportion of the artefacts is accessible to visitors, by housing the entire 9,000 object collection on site within accessible stores. Flexibility was key to the client's requirements so the building can be used in multiple ways, including an education wing which can be accessed out of hours, additional entrances for optimum accessibility, and a new temporary exhibition and events spaces with its own entrance which connects to an adjacent outdoor events space.

Rethinking the under-used and out-dated lecture theatre, alongside improved circulation to address the imbalance in footfall around the museum, led us to introduce the 'Agora' as an orientation space to link both vertically and horizontally. This space enhances visitors' understanding of the layout, making navigation more intuitive. These circulation improvements also provided an opportunity to enhance revenue-generating capabilities, supporting the museum's long-term sustainability.

A 'fabric first' approach, prioritising the improvement of a building's existing fabric over replacement, was adopted. This approach enabled significant performance

"A key aspect of the Burrell's listed status is that it acknowledges the combination of a highly significant building which was designed to house a highly significant art collection."

Right

The Burrell Collection interior

© Hufton+Crow



Right

The Burrell Collection interior

© Hufton+Crow





enhancements while preserving the integrity of the original architecture. Notably, operational CO₂ emissions were reduced by approximately one-third compared to pre-refurbishment levels, with improvements to the building envelope contributing 51% of these savings. Enhanced glazing for solar control and thermal performance reduced operational carbon emissions by 70 tonnes annually, while improvements in thermal insulation and airtightness contributed an additional 136 tonnes of annual carbon savings.

These efforts culminated in achieving a BREEAM Excellent rating – a remarkable accomplishment for a Category A-listed building. The combined interventions have modernised the Burrell, ensuring it remains functional, accessible, and environmentally responsible while respecting its architectural heritage.

How do you think this refurbishment and re-presentation of the Burrell Collection informs the future of museums?

Cultural projects present a unique set of challenges, demanding a nuanced approach that balances innovation with preservation. As demonstrated by the Burrell, the buildings or sites often hold significant historical importance, requiring careful stewardship and sensitive adaptation. The briefing process for the Burrell, like many cultural projects, was anything but straightforward, necessitating rigorous re-evaluation in collaboration with clients, civic leaders and heritage stakeholders.

Despite these complexities, their potential is extraordinary. Cultural buildings – including the Burrell – transcend their physical boundaries, serving as civic catalysts that inspire new energy and excitement within

Above
The Burrell Collection interior
© Hufton+Crow



Above
The Burrell Collection interior
© Hufton+Crow

Right
The Burrell Collection interior
© Hufton+Crow



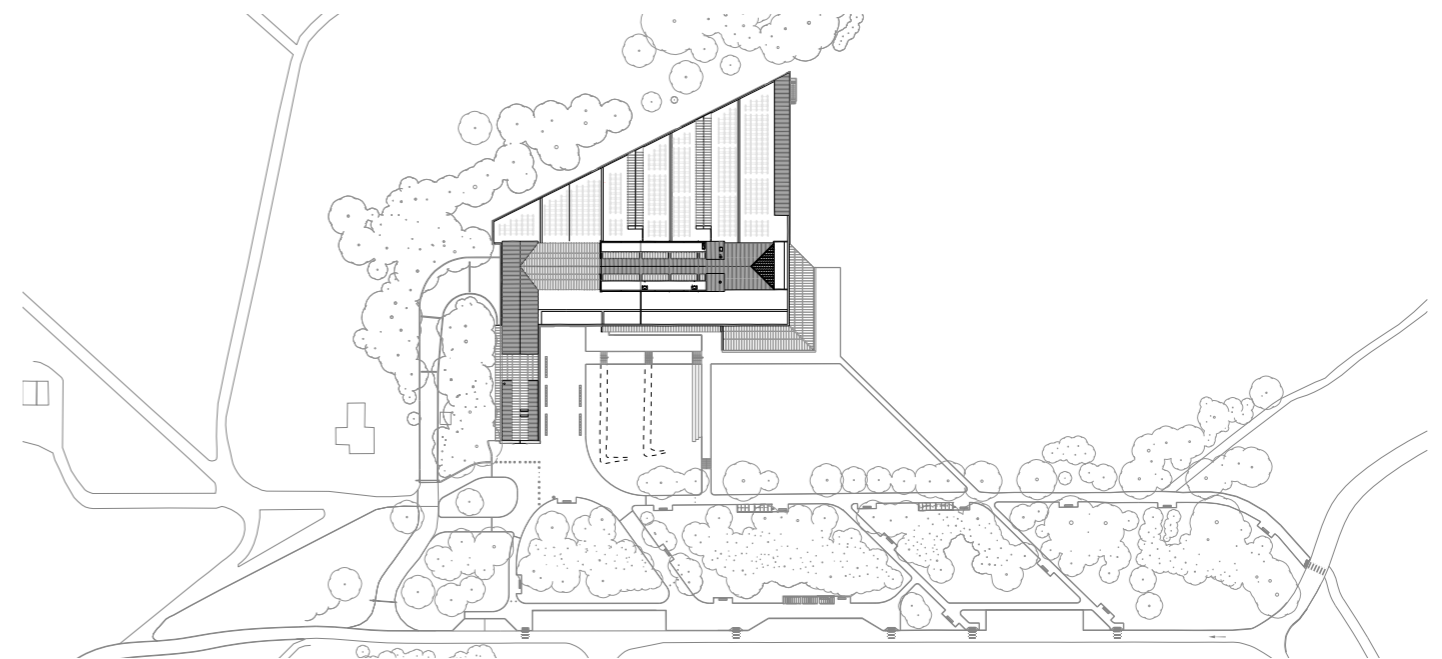
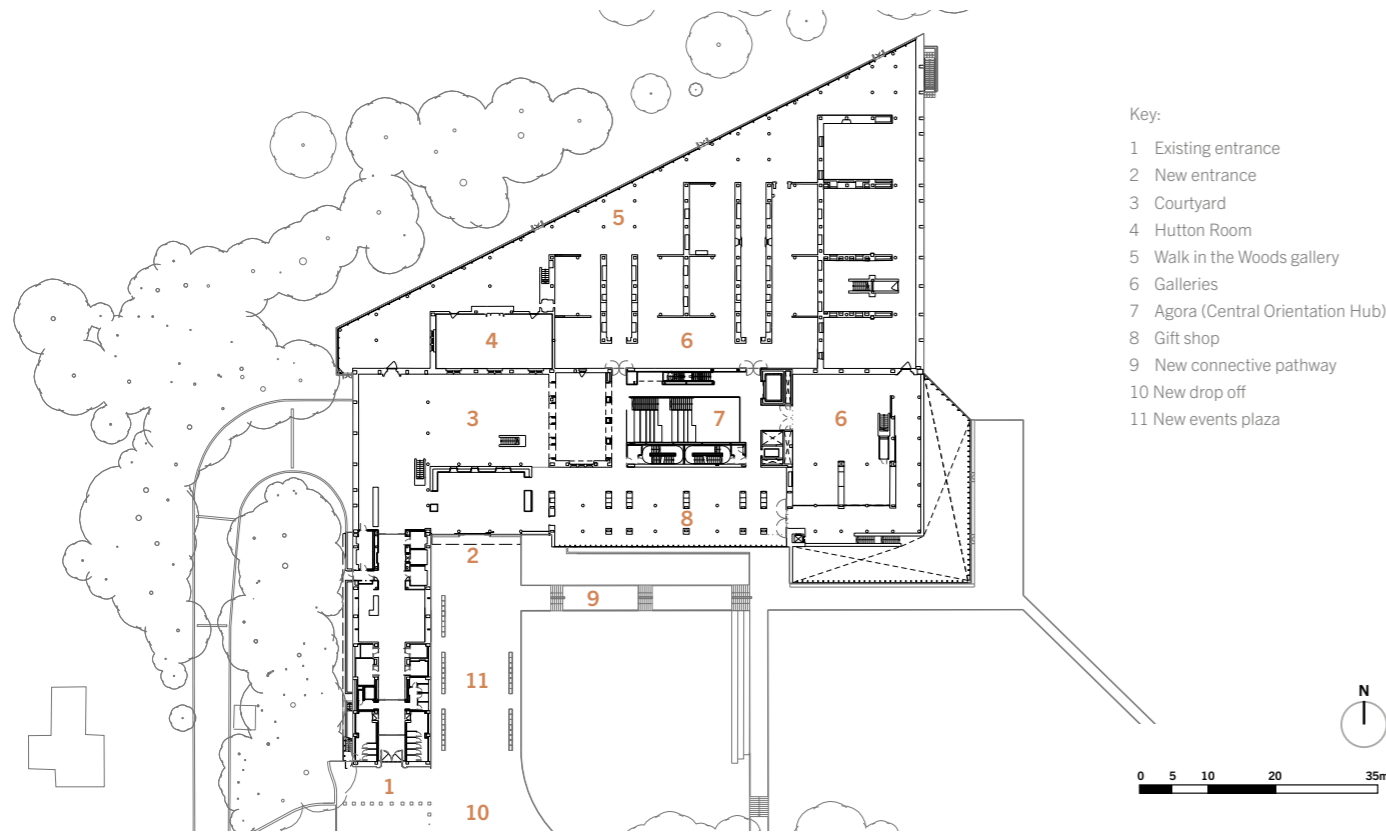
communities. They often play a pivotal role in urban revitalisation and regeneration, breathing life into surrounding areas. Cultural buildings embody the artefacts, skills, and ideas we value most, offering a space where these treasures can be shared and celebrated. They hold a unique responsibility in welcoming the public, fostering access and connection to the heritage and creativity that shape our collective identity.

Key issues that currently affect work in museums – and will undoubtedly continue to shape their future – include sustainability, flexibility, and connectivity. Sustainability involves not only minimising the environmental footprint of cultural buildings but also ensuring their long-term operational viability. This means integrating energy-efficient technologies, using durable materials, and designing spaces that can adapt to changing needs over time without requiring significant intervention. Flexibility is equally crucial, as museums increasingly serve as multi-functional spaces, hosting everything from traditional exhibitions to dynamic community events, performances, and educational programs. This adaptability ensures that museums remain relevant and responsive to evolving societal needs and interests.

Connectivity, on the other hand, emphasises the importance of breaking down barriers – both physical and social. It's about creating spaces that are inclusive, welcoming, and engaging for all members of society, not just those traditionally associated with elite cultural institutions. By fostering meaningful connections with communities and embracing diverse perspectives, museums can become vibrant hubs of shared learning, creativity and interaction. Together, these priorities underscore the transformative role that cultural projects can play.

The Burrell Collection highlights the potential of cultural projects to contribute to sustainable, inclusive, and dynamic futures for cities and communities. It demonstrates how careful and considered interventions can help revitalise cultural landmarks, preserving their relevance and value for future generations. ■

Katherine Watts
John McAslan + Partners



Top
Ground floor plan
© John McAslan + Partners

Right
First floor plan
© John McAslan + Partners

Opposite page, top
Lower-ground floor plan
© John McAslan + Partners

Opposite page, bottom
Site plan
© John McAslan + Partners

Client Glasgow Life	Structural Engineer Narro Associates	Main Contractor Kier Scotland	Access Consultant David Bonnet	Exhibition Design Event Communications	Gross Internal Area 15,000m ²
QS / Principal Designer / Project Manager Gardiner & Theobald	M&E Engineer / Fire Engineer / Sustainability Atelier 10	Facade Consultant Arup Facades	Landscape Design / Conservation John McAslan + Partners	IT/AV and Digital Content Glasgow Life	



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RIAS Awards Shortlist 2025

We recently revealed the 21 projects shortlisted for the 2025 RIAS Awards, which represent Scotland's national architecture awards.

This year's shortlist highlights the wide range of architectural excellence we aim to recognise, showcasing a variety of scales, briefs, and locations. From the conservation of a Category A listed castle on the banks of Loch Ness to Scotland's first Passivhaus-certified primary school in Perth, and from a stunning new build home that wraps around an existing rockface in the Outer Hebrides to a mixed-use waterfront destination in Edinburgh with a fresh take on distillery design – these projects truly represent the diversity and creativity within Scottish architecture.

The 21 projects on the shortlist will now each be visited by our 2025 RIAS Awards jury,

which includes Ann Nisbet (founder, Ann Nisbet Studio), Craig Hamilton (founding director, Craig Hamilton Architects) and Caroline Grewar (Programme Director, V&A Dundee) – chaired by Jessam Al-Jawad (director, Al-Jawad Pike Architects).

Following this, the winners of this year's RIAS Awards will be announced at the end of May. As in previous years, the winning projects will also make up the 'longlist' for the RIAS Andrew Doolan Best Building in Scotland Award - the pinnacle of the RIAS awards programme. Recipients of the 2025 RIAS Awards are also eligible for recognition in the current Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Awards.

Tamsie Thomson, chief executive of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, said:

"I am thrilled to see such an exciting variety of projects on this year's shortlist. Year on year, we strive to encourage entries from all corners of Scotland, and these 21 projects offer a fantastic representation of exceptional design thinking in rural and urban settings. The strength of this shortlist is the diversity of project types, which provide people from all walks of life with high-quality, sustainable, and innovative architecture for working, learning, and living.

I am very much looking forward to joining our judges as they visit each of the shortlisted projects next month, as they have the undoubtedly tough task of choosing our winners. It will be an honour to celebrate our winning practices and projects at our awards ceremony in the spring." ■

**Adam Smith Building,
University of Glasgow**
Glasgow
Hassell



Arranged across six storeys, this flagship facility for the University of Glasgow Business School, marks a new era of excellence in business education.

The school and postgraduate hub is a gateway within the historic campus, serving as a central connection for students, staff, and visitors. The building is conceived as three interconnected structures dedicated to teaching, research, and professional services - nurturing a sense of community, collaboration and interdisciplinary practice. ■

Aldourie Castle Estate
Loch Ness, Inverness
Ptolemy Dean Architects



The Category A listed castle at Aldourie has undergone careful repair, conservation and extension, alongside the restoration of its derelict walled garden and steading range

The wider scheme focused on restoring and enhancing the garden landscape, designed by Tom Stuart Smith, to capture the essence of what was once a visually rich and significant Highland Estate. A new Home Farm, biomass building, boat house, gate lodge, and suspension bridge have been introduced, helping to reconnect and revitalise this remarkable historic composition on the banks of Loch Ness. ■

Athron Hill – Phases 1 & 2
Kinross
Fraser/Livingstone Architects



Formerly home to a Victorian hospital, Athron Hill transforms an abandoned rural brownfield site into a new community of homes, on the south-facing slopes of the Ochil Hills.

Inspired by the settlement patterns of Perthshire's historic clachans and villages, the homes are tuned to the climate and landscape. With its clusters of homes, gardens, bridleways and roads, the scheme stitches into the setting's mature woodland, while making the most of stunning views over Loch Leven, the Lomond Hills and the Pentlands beyond. ■

Caochan na Creige
Isle of Harris
Izat Arundell



With a name meaning "little hidden one by the rock", Caochan na Creige is a sculptural home set in the Outer Hebrides. The design is shaped by a prominent Lewisian Gneiss rock that dominates the site.

The living spaces wrap around this natural feature, to create a soft 135-degree angle which is used throughout the design. The home's integration with its environment reflects a deep connection to the surrounding landscape, creating a subtle dialogue between the building and its setting. ■

Chryston Community Hub
Chryston, North Lanarkshire
Ryder Architecture



Nestled within a parkland setting in the village of Chryston, the Chryston Community Hub brings together a primary school and primary care health centre in one innovative facility for North Lanarkshire Council and NHS Lanarkshire on a parkland site.

The project provides children and residents with a fun, inspirational learning environment that benefits from a sensitive health hub at its core. The new primary school accommodates up to 509 pupils and provides 17 health consultation rooms that serve the wider community. ■

Dundreggan Rewilding Centre
Glenmoriston, Inverness
Threesixty Architecture



Dundreggan Rewilding Centre is the first of its kind in the world - immersing visitors in an experience that "feels like the forest". Designed to interpret and integrate key features of a 'tree-scape,' such as the canopy, tree trunks, and open clearings, the building employs skylights to filter sunlight in a way that mimics the natural light variations within a forest. As a result, the building creates diverse atmospheres, reflecting the ever-changing weather outside and the dynamic spirit of rewilding. ■

Ellengowan Regeneration
Dundee
Collective Architecture



Ellengowan Regeneration replaces 124 post-war homes, with a mix of flats, houses, and a corner shop that focus on maintaining the green, leafy character of the existing development, to respect and preserve the strong sense of local community. Designed to make the most of the steep site, all of the scheme's living spaces enjoy stunning views over the Tay to Fife.

Phase 1, completed in Spring 2023, includes 70 dwellings and a kiosk. Phase 2, which will add 60 more dwellings, is scheduled to start on site in early 2026. Public artwork by Tom Pigeon features at each entrance, adding a unique cultural touch to the development. ■

Fairburn Tower
Muir of Ord
Simpson and Brown



Fairburn Tower is a rare example of a surviving tower house from the Scottish Renaissance. Originally built around 1545, the tower fell into ruin for over a century before being identified as a potential restoration project by the Landmark Trust. This thoughtful renovation strikes a balance between authentic restoration and creative retrofit - bringing this historic building back into use for modern visitors as a self-catering holiday let, while still respecting its heritage. ■

Gairnshiel Jubilee Bridge
Glengairn, Aberdeenshire
Moxon Architects



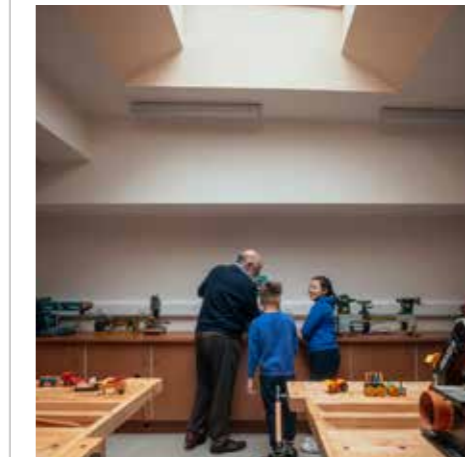
The Gairnshiel Jubilee Bridge was opened to the public in late 2023, after a design and construction period that included seven years of advocacy with heritage bodies and the local community. The new crossing is a simple but confident companion to the Category A-listed Gairnshiel Bridge immediately upstream – itself a masterpiece of 18th Century military engineering. As well as diverting traffic away from the historic bridge, the Gairnshiel Jubilee Bridge references the surrounding Cairngorms with its form and materials, and reflects the graceful profile of the original structure, which has now been safeguarded for future generations. ■

Gartnerichnich Cottage
Aberfoyle
Dualchas Architects



Gartnerichnich Cottage is a traditional stone cottage near Aberfoyle, reimagined after falling into serious disrepair and requiring a total rebuild. Subtle alterations to the house's proportions and a sensitive, timber extension have allowed for the creation of much needed additional internal space, resulting in a home that is suitable for contemporary living, yet filled with the original cottage's charm. This sensitive transformation will ensure that the cottage remains a beloved home for generations to come. ■

Harmony Outdoor Learning Hub
Balerno, Edinburgh
Loader Monteith & Studio SJM Architects



Located within a woodland estate of Harmeny Education Trust, this timber-framed building provides a nurturing and safe learning environment for students with complex additional support needs, particularly children who have faced early years trauma and adversity.

With the trust dedicated to providing therapeutic care and education for children, the Learning Hub enables them to accommodate students beyond the age of 14, instilling valuable vocational skills and setting the students up for future independent success. ■

HMP & YOI Stirling
Stirling
Holmes Miller Architects



HMP & YOI Stirling is a new 100 person justice facility for Women in Custody in Scotland, replacing the previous HMP Cornton Vale prison. The design is focused on wellbeing, with a therapeutic and gender specific response. The facility incorporates seven single storey buildings including a Front of House, Central Hub, Retreat, Animal Care and 3 House buildings. Each building has been designed around a well-considered landscaped environment, which takes advantage of views over the wider natural and historic surroundings in the area. ■

Kilmartin Museum
Kilmartin
Reiach and Hall Architects



Kilmartin Museum serves as an ambitious cultural hub, celebrating the remarkable archaeology and landscape of Kilmartin Glen and Mid Argyll. This significant renovation has expanded the exhibition space, enabling the museum to tell more of the area's stories, and has seen the creation of temporary galleries to accommodate a variety of cultural activities. The new research and dedicated educational facilities support both the curation of the museum's collections, and access to key outreach programmes - continuing to inspire visitors with quality interpretation and the conservation of the archaeological landscape and heritage. ■

Kinloch Lodge
Tongue, Lairg
GRAS (Groves-Raines Architects Studios Ltd)



Kinloch Lodge has been meticulously transformed from a dated and poorly-serviced sporting lodge into a comfortable, restful and more sustainable holiday home.

Originally built by the Sutherland Estates in the 19th century, it had undergone many piecemeal additions and modernisations over the following decades. As part of an ongoing masterplan for the wider estate, this project has revitalised the lodge; carefully and sensitively repairing, replanning and enhancing the existing building cluster to create a high quality and inspiring place to stay that is equal to the spectacular landscape in which it sits. ■

Riverside Primary School
Perth
Architype Ltd



As Scotland's first certified Passivhaus school, Riverside Primary School exemplifies how impactful well-designed healthy educational settings can be.

With energy efficiency at its core, Riverside's new building performs extremely well with exceptional air quality, consistent thermal comfort and minimal energy use. Combined with thoughtful design and a natural material palette, this has created an uplifting, inclusive, comfortable and calm learning environment that supports educational and developmental well-being. ■

Rock Cove
Helensburgh
CameronWebster Architects



Evoking a feeling of being suspended mid-air, Rock Cove is a dramatic new-build home that cantilevers over the sea on a rocky promontory on the Rosneath Peninsula. Located on a narrow strip of decommissioned MOD land, the bespoke single-storey house uses its site constraints as the main design driver for its long linear box form. Four sheltered bedrooms look towards the rear garden, and a spectacular sea facing living area benefits from floor to ceiling glazing and a decked terrace beneath a timber soffit. The result is a home that is half anchored in the landscape and half suspended in the air, offering unparalleled views of the sea. ■

Rosebank Distillery
Falkirk
MLA



Known as the 'King of the Lowlands,' Rosebank Distillery was established in 1840, but when the business closed in 1993, the distillery fell into disrepair. This extensive restoration project has now seen the distillery reopen as a working facility and visitor attraction, rejuvenating the site, creating new jobs, supporting local suppliers, and enhancing Falkirk's tourism offering.

In a nod to the building's heritage, many of the existing and original building materials were preserved and reused in the refurbishment - honouring its legacy while securing its future as a sustainable destination. ■

The Nucleus Building, University of Edinburgh
Edinburgh
Sheppard Robson



The Nucleus Building serves as the new heart of the University of Edinburgh's King's Buildings campus, expanding undergraduate teaching and offering a variety of learning environments.

It provides a much-needed focal point and meeting place for students and staff, creating an attractive space for study and enhancing the student experience.

The Nucleus Building fosters a vibrant environment that cultivates a world-leading community of excellence in Science and Engineering teaching, research, and industry, while proudly integrating into the heart of the local community. ■

The Port of Leith Distillery
Leith
Threesixty Architecture



An exemplar of waterfront regeneration, the Port of Leith Distillery is Scotland's first vertical distillery and sets a new standard of experience and accessibility. The mixed-use building embodies the ambition to present an exciting, modern face for the Scotch Whisky Industry. This innovative design has already created a symbiotic bond between architecture and the Port of Leith brand, as well as establishing itself as a new landmark in Leith. ■

The Seed
Dundee
Kirsty Maguire Architect



Set in a woodland garden near Dundee, the Seed is a co-living home with a vision for community and sustainability. Initially planned as a retrofit of a crumbling building, after careful analysis, this became an opportunity to create a new home, reusing much of the existing materials in the new-build. Technically confident, this eco-passivhaus is set within tight constraints and stands out for its deeper exploration of how people interact with buildings and landscape whilst being playful and calm. The Seed challenges conventional ideas of homeownership and how communities are formed and flourish. ■

Union Terrace Gardens
Aberdeen
Stallan-Brand Architecture + Design & LDA Design



Following an extensive engagement process, to ensure public and political support, this project sees the rejuvenation of Union Terrace Gardens - Aberdeen's key public space. Union Terrace Gardens is now a landmark public space that sits in harmony with its historic setting. Forgotten spaces have been repurposed, and contemporary architectural and landscape interventions enriched through sensitive restoration, creating a cultural and inclusive destination that strengthens the connection between people and place. ■



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EAA Retrofit Debate – Heritage: How to save the future without losing the past

Last year, the Edinburgh Architectural Association (EAA) held a thought-provoking discussion at GRAS Custom Lane base, exploring the theme “Retrofit - Heritage: How to save the future without losing the past.”

The panel included professionals: Gunnar Groves Raines (GRAS), Lorna Crane (Purcell), Hannah Dalton (Architype), Yann Grandgirard (Edinburgh World Heritage Trust), and Roger Curtis (Historic Environment Scotland), with Alex Liddell (EAA) chairing the session. The discussion was framed around the definition of heritage as anything created by people over time, encompassing tangible objects, places, and ideas.

A central point of the discussion was the relationship between sustainable and conservation design. Roger Curtis emphasised that sustainable design could draw significant inspiration from traditional architecture, particularly due to the durability of natural materials. Lorna Crane also stressed the value of attributing significance to existing buildings, retaining what is valuable and adapting the less valuable elements. “Sustainable architecture can adopt this process of attributing value to what is already there,”

The panelists agreed that many traditional buildings possess inherent sustainability due to their materials and construction techniques. Yann Grandgirard noted that these buildings could be maintained and repaired using traditional methods, making them naturally sustainable. However, they also discussed the challenge of designing new buildings with similar longevity and sustainability. As Grandgirard put it, “If the quality of the buildings is there, the building will last.”

The panel also highlighted the importance of retrofitting existing buildings to reduce the environmental impact of new construction.



“We should be making less new buildings,” Hannah Dalton stated, advocating for greater focus on retrofitting. This sentiment was echoed by other panelists, such as Lorna Crane, who stressed the need for new buildings to be designed to last for centuries, not decades.

The discussion also delved into the question of how far retrofitting should go. Roger Curtis suggested applying the “80% - 20%” rule, recommending simple measures that deliver substantial energy savings, while avoiding costly and technically risky solutions. The balance between performance, cost, and the building’s long-term health was also emphasised, as well as recognising the importance of maintaining historic integrity while doing so.

The discussion acknowledged that traditional buildings often cannot be heated in the same way as modern structures. Grandgirard advocated for decarbonising heat in these buildings, while Dalton pointed out that poor building conditions contribute to healthcare costs, so needed to be considered in retrofitting decisions.

When it came to adapting old buildings for new uses, the panel agreed that careful consideration was essential. Gunnar Groves Raines noted that while it is tempting to adapt any building to any use, the building’s original design and cultural context should guide these decisions. “We can find the right uses if we are led by the conditions and quality of the spaces,”

Alex Liddell attempted to pull together the spectrum of viewpoints expressed. The discussion format did not allow competing viewpoints to be explored, which could have advanced the debate.

Alex reflected that like the rest of contemporary society designers must choose between easy half-truths and inconvenient truths. As easy half-truths become the territory for popular discourse, it is more difficult to have meaningful dialogue not least between heritage and retrofit – including lessons from the construction traditions of the past. ■

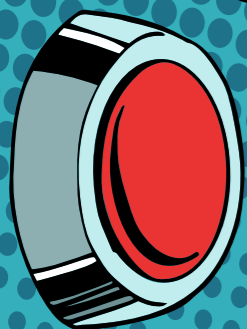
Edited by Joanne Hall, Stuart Hay and Alex Liddell

As the building was being designed, one important question kept being asked...



PANIC

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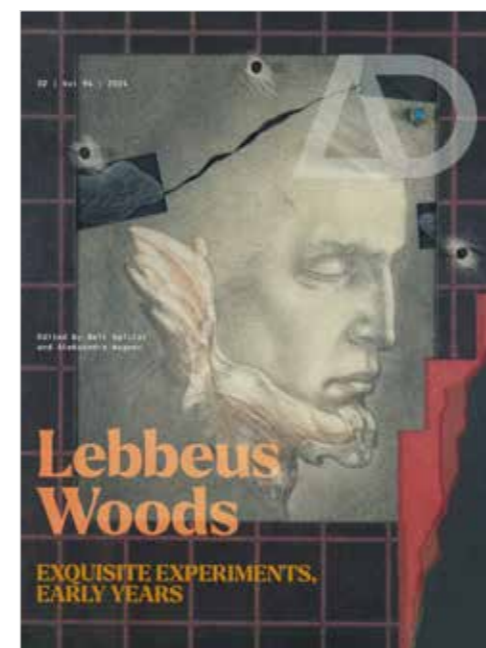
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Lebbeus Woods: Exquisite Experiments, Early Years

Aleksandra Wagner and Neil Spiller – Editors

John Wiley & Sons

£29.99 from RIAS Bookshop

Architectural visionaries have always been thin on the ground. To qualify, you need to combine radical thinking with virtuoso presentation skills – plus a sprinkling of the ineffable. The dedicated few who achieved that include “Mad” John Martin, Étienne-Louis Boullée and Archigram: they were joined during the 1980s by Lebbeus Woods.

Woods studied at the University of Illinois but left in 1964 without obtaining an architecture degree. He worked on the Ford Foundation project in Manhattan with Kevin Roche, then became Director of Design at Illinois Design Solutions. Later, he gave up practice to become one of the last professional perspectivists – known in the US as “delineators” – following in the tradition of Hugh Ferriss.

While Ferriss conjured a *film noir* Manhattan using Conté and charcoal, Woods’ vision was very different. His work evolved from cross-hatch drawings in ink which are rendered almost like etchings – to layers of coloured pencil built up over wash, a technique which he mastered completely. While Woods presented competition entries for leading New York practices during the daytime, he worked on his own schemes at night.

During the 1980s and 90s, Lebbeus Woods developed a drawing style and personal mythology which is impossible to confuse with anyone else’s work. He drew and wrote in depth about alternative futures which appear completely realised. His imaginary cityscapes, composed of industrial ruins and alien-like floating objects, were so convincing that Hollywood stole his ideas for science-fiction films.

Woods first came to notice with a proposal called Einstein Tomb, an outer-space cenotaph which was published in Pamphlet Architecture magazine, then exhibited on both sides of the Atlantic. As this book’s blurb notes, “When he burst onto the international architectural scene with a solo exhibition at the Architectural Association, London, in 1985, some wondered how anyone could emerge so fully formed, from nowhere.”

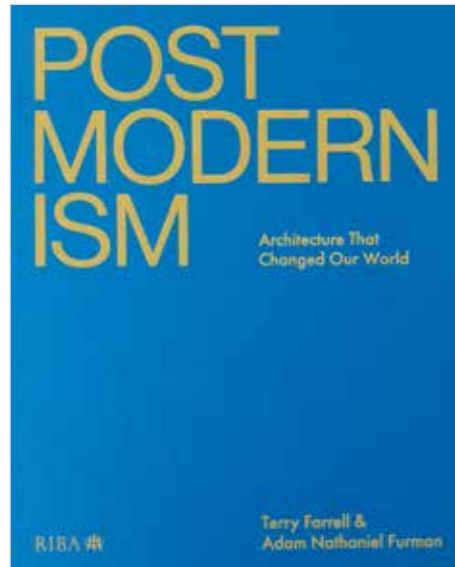
Of course, no-one rises without trace, and this book covers the making of the visionary, from his education in the 1960s through to the creation of Einstein Tomb. The book’s contributors were given unique access to the Lebbeus Woods archive, including his “Black Book” sketchbooks, and most drawings are

published here for the first time. The early work is very different to the drawings which made Woods famous, which means that Exquisite Experiments, Early Years provides an insight into where his ideas may have sprung from, rather than an overview of his career.

While I was at architecture school in the 1990s, Woods had become a cult figure. He inspired us, awed us and drove us to develop our own drawing skills. *Terra Nova* was the most-borrowed book on the architecture shelves at Duncan of Jordanstone’s library; when I graduated, I bought my own copy directly from A+U in Tokyo. In time, it was joined by *OneFiveFour*, *The New City*, *Anarchitecture*, *Radical Reconstruction*, *The Storm and the Fall*, amongst others. Most of these titles are long out of print, and nowadays increasingly sought after by collectors.

Lebbeus Woods lives on through his books (he realised only one building, at Raffles City in China), and *Exquisite Experiments, Early Years* is a fascinating and affordable companion volume to the others which cover his later work. ■

Mark Chalmers



Postmodernism: Architecture That Changed Our World

Terry Farrell and Adam Nathaniel Furman

RIBA Publishing

£45.00 from RIAS Bookshop

Architectural ‘styles’ are often contentious, short-lived and invariably polarise opinion. In any discussion regarding Postmodernism, we might also construe that architecture critics are fickle – certainly, at one time, any inflection towards Postmodernism (denigrated as PoMo) was greeted with sneers and ridicule. Indeed, it was often dismissed as glib, self-indulgent and facile, but fashions change and today’s pluralistic society is more accepting of the unconventional, more open to the transgressive nature of PoMo.

Postmodernism in architecture emerged in the 1970s with the aim of liberating the profession from the sterile confines of Modernism. It encouraged a magpie approach to history as a potential source book which could be plundered, adapted and assimilated to inform and enrich design culture.

There has been a renewed interest of late in this particularly catholic ‘style’ and no shortage of publications documenting its origin and evolution. A cursory search online will flag up the catalogue to the V&A’s expansive exhibition ‘Postmodernism Style and Subversion 1970-1990’ from 2011, Elain Harwood’s scholarly ‘Post-Modern Buildings in Britain’ (2017), and Owen Hopkin’s irreverent ‘Postmodern Architecture: Less is a Bore’ (2020). All of the above, of course, are indebted to Charles Jencks (1939-2019), the

esteemed cultural theorist, self-appointed high priest of PoMo, and author of a plethora of books promoting this ‘new’ paradigm.

Terry Farrell was one of the early adopters of PoMo and built up a substantial oeuvre ranging from the quirky TV-am studios (with its eggcup finials) to the rather leaden Edinburgh International Conference Centre. Adam Nathaniel Furman co-edited the book ‘Queer Spaces’ (see my review in RIAS Quarterly No.50) and was Farrell’s onetime research assistant before they co-authored ‘Revisiting Postmodernism’, published by Routledge in 2017.

The original edition is still readily available which prompts one to ask why RIBA felt the need to initiate a second edition? The first book featured a fragment of John Outram’s flamboyant Pumping Station as its cover image, whereas this new ‘refreshed’ edition presents a somewhat sober aspect (yellow text on a plain blue background). The book itself, however, is lavishly illustrated and organised into six chapters, divided equitably between the two authors. Farrell argues that “...we are all Postmodernists now” and adopts a largely autobiographical approach in his text. In contrast, Furman takes on a wider international remit and sets out a partisan polemic in praise of early pioneers such as Hans Hollein,

Ricardo Bofill, Michael Graves, James Stirling and CZWG. He writes with considerable brio and enthuses about a resurgence in PoMo – this ‘Second Wave’ of younger architects are conversant in the writings of Aldo Rossi, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown and comprise a diverse group of practitioners determined to eschew the sobriety of their peers. Featured work includes FAT’s jewel-like retreat ‘A House for Essex’ (in collaboration with Grayson Perry) and WAM Architecten’s collage of stacked gables ‘Inntel Hotel’ in Zaandam. In his closing chapter, Furman makes a plea for architects to embrace “...the chaos and mediated, saturated, complex and global nature of the contemporary world [and] throw themselves giddily into the whirlwind of the contemporary human condition.”

Essentially, there are two books in one here: Farrell plays the role of pioneering protagonist to give us an insider’s view on Postmodernism’s progress, whilst Furman (an unapologetic Millennial) offers us a more didactic critique of the contemporary scene. The book’s subtitle asserts that this is ‘Architecture That Changed Our World’ and the implication is that the sentence would end ‘for the better’. ■

Mark Cousins



Protest Architecture: Structures of Civil Resistance

Nick Newman

RIBA Publishing

£34.00 from RIAS Bookshop

image quality too poor!

Countries, NGOs and professional bodies have all acknowledged the climate emergency; there’s now numerous guides and campaigns to work to and get behind but how far would you go to campaign for real change? Submit a policy consultation? Bore someone’s ear off? March in a protest? Block roads?

Climate campaigners in recent years have increasingly turned to the role of protest, direct actions and installations to get their message across. Earning infamy, anger and support, it’s from the work of such groups as Extinction Rebellion that the book *Protest Architecture: Structures of Civil Resistance* emerges.

Written by architect Nick Newman of U-Build, who – along with his modular wooden blocks – has been a regular sight at climate protests since 2019, the book brings together a wealth of historical and inspiring precedents, championing underrepresented voices and refocuses the role of design through social causes.

A lot of care and thought has been put into the research and presentation of each form of protest architecture and the book is filled with compelling and innovative examples: from civil engineer Morgan Trowland’s suspension off the QEII bridge in Dartford, floating inflatable barricades in Germany, Sarah Ross’ anti-hostile architecture ‘Archisuits’, Kārlis

Johanson’s tensegrity structures and a ‘retrofit’ of Rishi Sunak’s second home covered with black drapes to name only a small handful of those covered.

Rendering these direct actions in various scales, elevations and illustrations is an excellent accompaniment to the engaging photography and one that feels uniquely architectural in its examination of these works. Speaking again to its architectural audience, the book also covers legality and professional standards, such as architect Tom Bennett justifying his protests in both court and to the ARB.

The book suffers a little from that very left-wing problem of an over-reliance on definitions, but does really well by going beyond just environmental circles to look at a diverse range of campaigners and how they’ve used protest and structures to make their point. It covers early Chartists and Suffragettes to Black Lives Matter, LGBTQIA+ groups and Hong Kong protestors. One notable example and another dramatic section drawing is the ‘The Capitol Crawl’ from 1990 which saw wheelchair users climb up the steps of the US Capitol to highlight uninclusive access.

I am left wondering how the featured groups feel about their utilisation of protest architecture and what that meant for their

campaigns and future actions. Did prison time for a PR stunt feel worth it? How did the public perceive them afterwards? What actions brought the most people to their cause?

Regardless of whether you yourself agree with these tactics or on their effectiveness, the book is no doubt an inspiring one for designers and campaigners looking to take action for their causes. *Protest Architecture* is a welcome publication and a continuation of the excellent titles coming from RIBA Publishing (*Queer Spaces*, *Inclusion Emergency*, *Everything Needs to Change*) that show how you can challenge the profession in a way that is both educational and empowering. ■

Bobby Jewell

New books in stock at the RIAS Bookshop

This quarter we have a brand-new collection of books available for the summer of 2025. We cannot wait to welcome customers and members to check out the selection on our website or in store. Here are a few on our shelves to have a peek at ...

Remember students, you get 10% off all our books online and in the RIAS Bookshop!



Building Culture

Julian Rose

Chronicle Books, £26.00

A remarkable collection of interviews from sixteen of the world's most celebrated, thoughtful, and innovative architects who have designed many of the world's greatest museums. Spanning generations, geographies, and methods of architectural practice, these architects share the complex and fascinating process of creating spaces for art.



After Spaceship Earth

Eva Diaz

Yale University Press, £45.00

An expansive look at the contemporary artists confronting, challenging, and reimagining R Buckminster Fuller's techno-utopianism to envision sustainable futures. Beginning with a focus on Fuller's iconic geodesic dome design and moving to the extraplanetary implications of his ideas, Diaz illuminates how artists draw from Fuller's mode of experimental design research to create provocative alternatives to corporate control and surveillance.

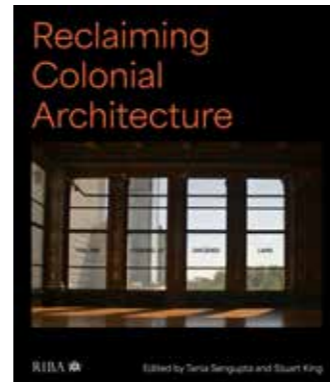


Is Architecture Art?

John Macarthur

Bloomsbury Publishing, £24.99

Questions of architecture, art, and aesthetics do not allow for simple answers. But by asking such questions, we can usefully reveal the ways in which the concepts and meanings of architecture have changed over the centuries, and how they continue to change in the contemporary era. *Is Architecture Art?* explores the key conceptual questions about the aesthetic appreciation of architecture and its persistently contested status as an artform.



Reclaiming Colonial Architecture

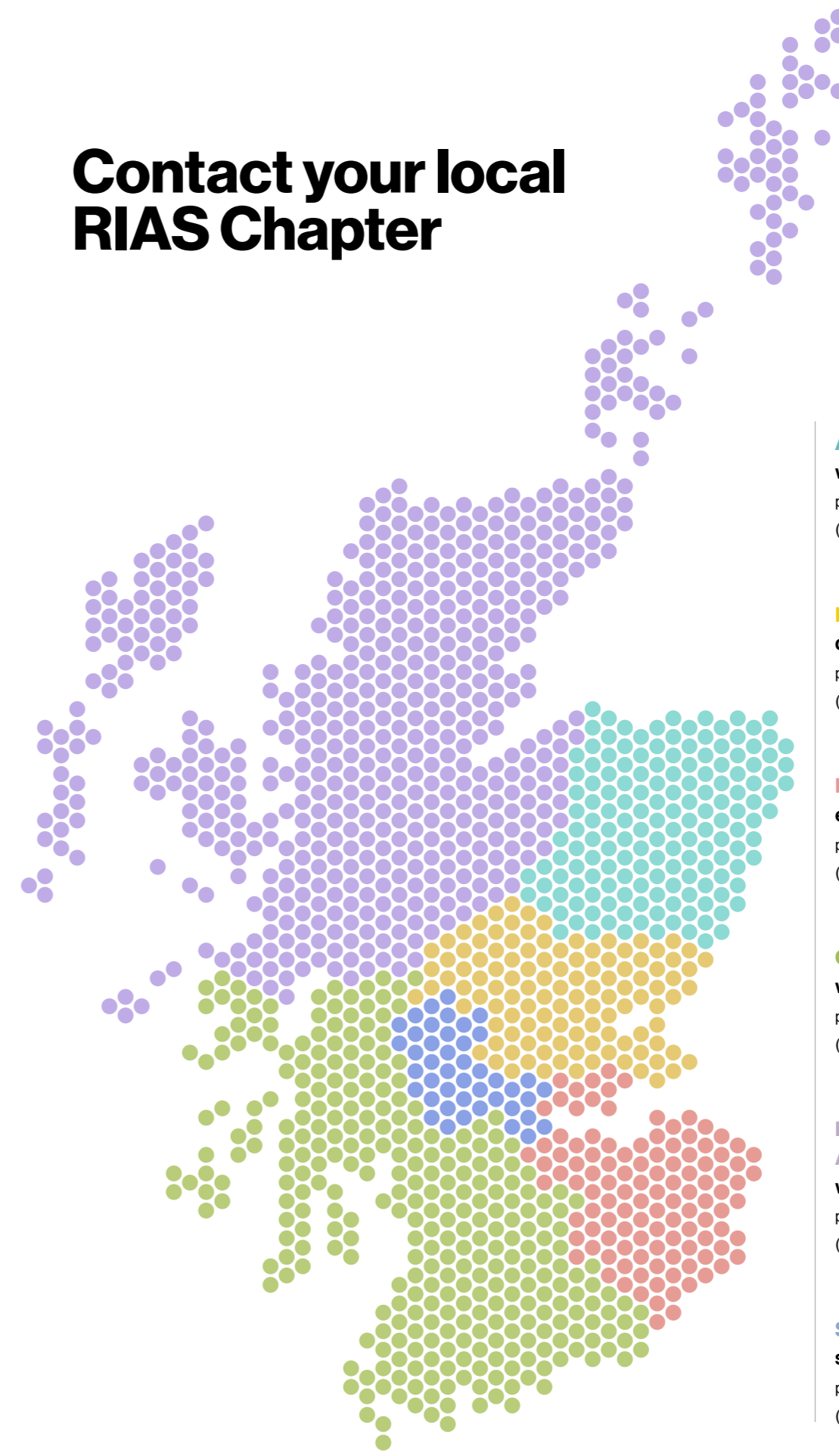
Tania Sengupta and Stuart King

RIBA Publishing, £45.00

Reclaiming Colonial Architecture unpacks the built inheritances of colonialism and re-thinks how we might understand, narrate, intervene in or act upon them as architects. Offering historical background, unpacking key concepts and presenting thematically organised and multi-scalar urban and architectural case studies, this accessible publication showcases how legacies of colonialism are being dealt with in real-world instances.

All books reviewed in *RIAS Quarterly* are available from the RIAS Bookshop at 15 Rutland Square, Edinburgh or online at bookshop.rias.org.uk. Please contact the RIAS Bookshop team at 0131 221 7502 or bookshop@rias.org.uk for any further information.

Contact your local RIAS Chapter



Aberdeen Society of Architects

www.aberdeenarchitects.org

president@aberdeenarchitects.org

(Andrew McNair RIAS RIBA)

Dundee Institute of Architects

dia-architects.com

president@dia-architects.com

(Fiona Canavan RIAS)

Edinburgh Architectural Association

eaa.org.uk

president@eaa.org.uk

(Neil Middleton RIAS)

Glasgow Institute of Architects

www.gia.org.uk

president@gia.org.uk

(Andrew Hadden RIAS RIBA)

Highlands and Islands Architectural Association

www.highlandarchitects.org

president@hiaa.scot

(Eilidh Izat RIAS)

Stirling Society of Architects

s-s-a.co.uk

president@s-s-a.co.uk

(Sandy Lees)

The latest news from RIAS Practice Services

Practice update

CPD

The Winter 2024/ 2025 RIAS CPD programme has included:

- The Minor Works Building Contract
- Ethical Architecture
- Fire Safety
- Leadership

CPD events in early 2025 include:

- Contract Administration and Practice business essentials
- Digital Transformation
- NEC Contracts

If there is a particular area of interest not presently covered by the RIAS members should contact the RIAS CPD co-ordinator Graham Gillan at graham.gillan@rias.org.uk.

Queries from members

In the last quarter the RIAS has fielded just short of 100 member queries. Queries from members have included:

1. Alterations to contract conditions on a sectional completion contract
2. PII and sub-consultants
3. Sub- contractor ceasing to trade and treatment of Extension of Tim application
4. Responding to client complaints
5. Appointing another contractor where the original contractor's appointment is not terminated
6. Contractor's obligation to advise of discrepancies and possible variations
7. Implications where a contractor indicates he is going to "walk away"
8. Contract administrators options where a contractor refuses to rectify defective work

9. Architect terminating their appointment - implications
10. Making changes to the building contract after work has commenced
11. Practical Completion and snagging
12. Alterations to contractor payment terms
13. Amending terms of a Sectional Completion contract

In total the RIAS has responded to over 400 member queries in 2024.

Practice Notes

Practice Notes have been recently published as Forefront Information (FI):

1. FI2418 ARB CPD requirements – online reporting
2. FI2420 Appointment creep
3. FI24xx Closing a practice
4. FI24xx Becoming a new partner/ director
5. FI24xx Right of "set off"
6. FI24xx Valuations and certification under SBCC contracts

Additional notes were published under Official Sources (OS), Business and Practice Matters (BP), and Energy, Sustainability and Conservation (SC) categories.

Clients and conflict management

Over the last couple of years the RIAS has received an ever increasing number of complaints from members on clients who they consider are unreasonable and whose expectations on what an architect can reasonably do is not what can be reasonably be achieved. Member client complaints include the following:

- Actual timescales not adhering to estimated timescales (particularly in relation to planning consent and building warrant approval, when work starts on site and when work will be/ is completed)
- Cost estimates not matching tender returns (even where a Quantity Surveyor is appointed)
- Increasing the scope of work but not accepting that this will lead to increased costs and possible delays to the programme
- Post tender client making changes but not acknowledging that this could have cost and time implications
- Clients who attempt to frustrate an architect who is appointed to provide contract administration services with Clients entering into arrangements out-with the Building Contract.

In certain situations members have sought advice on how to deal with a client complaint without affecting a project timeline. Additionally members have sought advice on how they can extricate themselves from commissions where the architect considers relations with the client have irretrievably broken down and the architect considers the only solution is to terminate their services.

Notwithstanding, the question has to be posed: could the architect have avoided conflict by not having accepted the commission in the first instance? What questions could have been asked, what investigations could have been carried out which could have resulted in the architect concluding that this client was not for them (or perhaps any other architect)?

The answer to the above question could depend on several different factors. Has the client (or more accurately potential client) previously commissioned construction

work. Is the client a private or commercial entity? Separately has the client previously commissioned construction work?

Where the client is a private entity who has not previously commissioned work it is unlikely that the architect will have access to publicly available material that might provide the architect with some insight into the character of the entity. Questions that an architect might ask could include:

- What style of design is the client looking for?
- Does the expectations of the client of what can be achieved in any way match with what they are willing to fund?
- What is the client attitude to risk?
- If dealing with 2 or more entities who will provide the architect's day to day instructions?
- What is the client's attitude to fees including stage payments?
- What is the client's attitude to entering into Standard Conditions of Appointment?
- Does the client have the funds to complete the project?

It is suggested that an architect treats a pre-commission meeting with client as a 2 way interview. Does the client want to work with the architect and does the architect want to work with the client both in harmony. It may well be that the client is happy to work with the architect but if the architect has any reservations about working with a client they should gracefully withdraw. Anecdotal evidence suggests that relations are best before any work is carried out but gradually lessen as a project proceeds even where the architect continues with a project through to a conclusion.

Where the client is a commercial entity the architect should be able to gather information which could assist in the architect including:

- Year end accounts
- References from other commercial entities they have dealings with
- Independent financial checks

Notwithstanding the above the questions that an architect might pose are very similar to that posed to a private entity.

Where the client is a private entity or a commercial entity both of whom have previously commissioned construction work the scope for obtaining information on the client is likely to be more fulsome and it is suggested that the architect may wish to consider the following:

- References from other architects
- References from other construction professionals
- References from contractors and sub-contractors

In seeking references it is suggested that the architect needs to consider what questions they might wish to ask and the following might be appropriate:

- What was the client like to work with?
- Did the client pay on time?
- Were there any disputes and if there were any disputes were they harmoniously resolved?

Despite the architect carrying out rigorous checks which resulted in the architect concluding that the client was an entity they were happy to be commissioned by it

is still possible that an architect will end up encountering disagreements or even disputes following appointment. It is suggested how an architect deals with those disagreements/ disputes is potentially crucial to satisfactory outcomes.

The ARB requires all registered architects to have a complaints handling procedure but it is suggested the procedures required by the ARB relates to timescales to deal with complaints not how complaints will be dealt with.

Initially an architect may not consider that a client query is not a complaint at all but well rue the architect who does not see the writing on the wall and how quickly a client query can escalate to a full blown client complaint requiring the architect to send their complaints handling procedure and onwards to a formal complaint to ARB. So how an architect deals with any query be could to be critical to any complaint being resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.

An initial query may arrive on an architects desk by written correspondence (usually email) or a phone call. Where the query arrives in writing it would be appropriate to respond in writing. However to avoid any misunderstanding it may be appropriate to call or even meet the client face to face. If on reflection the architect considers there is something (however small) that the architect needs to acknowledge that they have failed in some way the architect would be advised to acknowledge that failing. If the architect considers there is nothing that the architect has done which deserves critical comment then the architect should say so but in the most sensitive terms. Clients are most certainly not always right but they may think they are!

In a small number of cases an architect might conclude that client complaints

Practice Update

are unreasonable and unfounded and the architect's responses are not considered by the client to be acceptable. Having tried every avenue to appease the client the architect might come to the conclusion that the architect cannot fulfil the terms of their appointment and the architect considers the only solution is to extricate themselves from the project.

Under RIAS Standard Conditions of Appointment either the client or the architect can terminate the appointment of the other by giving reasonable notice of their intention to terminate. Architects wishing to terminate their terms of appointment should take great care and ideally leave the client at completion of a work stage. Any termination should permit the client to readily appoint another to carry on the work of the architect. Additionally the notice of termination should be sufficient for the client to appoint others without any significant delay to the progress of the project. The architect may also offer to provide project documentation and a project briefing which will enable the new appointee to readily further progress the project. Whether the architect should offer to provide drawings in electronic format is for the architect to carefully consider.

Notwithstanding how reasonably the architect has acted in terminating its services clients may feel aggrieved and the architect needs to be aware it could be pursued legally (eg for time delays or additional incurred costs) or through the ARB where the client claims the architect has acted in contravention of the ARB Code of Conduct. The architect cannot stop a client proceeding down any of the above routes and in offering any defences the architect needs to have maintained good documentary evidence which will help to protect the architect against such client action.

If the client complains that the architect

has acted in contravention of the ARB Code and the PII insurers of the architect have agreed that the architect should respond to such a complaint the architect should carefully consider which sections of the Code the client claims the architect has acted in contravention of the Code and respond clearly in relation to that claimed contravention. Market cycles affect near enough every area of the financial sector; the insurance sector is no exception.

Where an architect has received a client complaint through the ARB architect's should take care in how they respond to such a complaint. PI Insurers should be consulted at the earliest possible moment and architect's should carefully consider any advice given and Insurers may assist with any response or merely wish to be informed of any response. If possible architect's should consider asking for a peer review of any draft response from another professional. Well drafted and carefully considered responses can result in the ARB deciding the architect has no case to answer without the ARB instigating a formal investigation. ■

Rob Campbell

Culture and the NZCBS Bennetts Associates

"Culture" is a sector that is broader than most, encompassing a multitude of uses that have very little in common beyond being public facing buildings that bring people together. To support the sector and importantly set net zero standards for it, a clear definition needed to be determined. This was the first exercise of the UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard - to agree the typologies. They settled on theatres, concert halls, cinemas, museums, art galleries and libraries. The standard takes the view that these can be defined as buildings that are

used for performance, and buildings that are used for collections. There are many overlaps in the challenges and opportunities in carbon reduction for all of these building types, but the type that perhaps most exemplifies them is theatres.

As a practice we have been involved in the theatre sector for over twenty years. From the Hampstead Theatre in 2003 (our only theatre with no existing fabric) to the Old Vic and Shaftesbury Theatre in London, the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and Chester Storyhouse, BEAM in Hertford that completed last year and the soon to complete King's Theatre, Edinburgh and Citizens Theatre in Glasgow.

Alongside this sector experience, we've become well known for our work in sustainable architecture, developing a reputation for low energy design. In the last decade we've focussed increasingly on material use and upfront carbon through the re-use of buildings and the efficient use of lower-carbon materials and have actively been involved in projects via the UKGBC and LETI developing the carbon targets and rating scheme for domestic and commercial buildings.

Sustainability has always been a factor in our approach to theatre buildings. At Hampstead Theatre, for example, we utilised a number of the low operational energy features that were innovative at the time from Powergen HQ, such as an exposed frame, naturally ventilated offices, CFD to test displacement ventilation in the auditorium etc. However, it was not until more recently that it has become a key driver for cultural projects as the sector and funders have begun to champion climate action in its operations and buildings.

Similarly to our work on commercial projects, we're keen to understand the carbon hotspots in theatre projects and work

Below from left

BEAM Theatre, Hertford, Bennetts Associates

© Hulston+Crow



towards creating benchmarks, using our LETI experience we've worked with Max Fordham and Cundall to produce our Net Zero Theatres research exploring upfront carbon in theatres. Most recently, we've been contributing to the new Theatre Green Book, which provides guidance for operators on sustainable operations and capital works and the recently launched UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard. A project supported by all the major institutions within the UK Built Environment sector and set up to provide a definition of net-zero for a large number of building types. Alongside sponsoring and contributing to the new standard we also led the 'cultural and entertainment group'.

The pilot version released in late 2024 sets out the key performance characteristics that

must be met by a building to consider it as being aligned with a net-zero built environment. This includes challenging but achievable limits for upfront carbon and operational energy usage which are aligned with a science-based trajectory for the UK. There are a number of metrics, but perhaps the most important and relevant for performance venues are those limits on upfront carbon, operational energy and in addition, a restriction on the use of fossil fuels on site.

With the right brief and design it is possible to meet the NZCBS for theatre projects, and from our involvement on the preceding Net Zero Theatres study we believe there are a series of three key challenges, best described as: Project Context, Existing Buildings, Expectations and Performance Criteria

Project Context

One of the main challenges relating to theatre projects is that they are rarely new-build projects, often split into multiple phases. Initially, this is often because the works require external funding through a mix of public grants and private donors, that often takes a significant amount of time. Once works start, the duration of works can often be stretched because the business case of a theatre project is often dependant on reducing the amount of dark time when shows are not on, so projects like Shaftesbury Theatre can take place in numerous phases over more than a decade.

This delay between design and delivery naturally forms a challenge when it comes to sustainability, because projects being delivered now will in most cases have been designed

Practice Update



Below from left
BEAM Theatre, Hertford, Bennetts Associates
© Hutton+Crow

when embodied carbon and real-in-use energy were less of a driver and technologies like heat pumps were less prevalent. Because of the nature of these projects targets must be built in that are fit for the longer term and consider modular parts of the scheme that can be returned to in the future. In rare cases, funding like the Levelling Up fund can create the inverse issue in that delivery is artificially compressed, which can lead to a poor environment for long-term decision making.

Procurement is another feature of the sector, in that projects are complex but often comparatively low cost for clients who are not undertaking the same sort of project day in day out. Add into this that aside from the larger commercial theatre groups in London, many of the clients are local authorities who are traditionally risk averse, procurement should be one of the biggest challenges for the sector but our experience has often been the

opposite. In terms of sustainability, clients may not come with rafts of corporate requirements, they almost always arrive with an openness and passion to do the best they can for their building, and increasingly a very good understanding of sustainability principles generally. Theatre clients especially tend to be unusually technically minded and used to dealing with complex challenges because that is what they do all day long, and so we have found that they make excellent partners on a sustainability journey. Similarly, the nature of the projects, their regional nature and the use of public procurement mean that they will rarely be let to the sort of Tier 1 contractor that is used to things like carbon calculations, but again we have found this to be a great opportunity to work collaboratively with the contractors and go on a journey together, learning from their expertise and upskilling them where required.

Existing Buildings

Though the new UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard differentiates between new build and retrofit, it incentivises the reuse of buildings by purposefully setting retrofit limits that are slightly less challenging than their new-build counterparts. New-build theatres and performance venues are vanishingly rare, and so this can often benefit the project by locking in large carbon savings from the start. In the rare circumstances where existing theatres have been considered for demolition and re-building we have pushed back on this, and generally been successful in showing how a revitalised existing building can overcome existing detractors. Unlike heritage driven retention, retrofit-first strategies driven by climate issues can be much more nuanced and pragmatic, trying to retain high carbon areas and revitalising or adding elements that unlock the retained building.



Could breathing new life into old buildings earn you valuable tax relief?

Established in the year 2000, the R&D Tax Relief has consistently offered tax credits to innovative UK businesses. Although the incentive has changed a lot in the past 18 months, the three eligibility criteria have remained largely the same.

Firstly, projects must seek to achieve a scientific or technological advancement, aiming to improve processes, products, or services beyond the existing industry baseline.

Secondly, projects must also demonstrate technical uncertainty, meaning the solution is not readily available or easily deduced by professionals in the field.

Finally, the work must follow a systematic approach to get to the final solution.

Businesses can recoup a percentage of the associated staffing, subcontracting, consumable and software costs. Whilst HMRC has reduced the rates which can be recouped, the incentive is still very lucrative reimbursing businesses roughly 20p for every £1 of eligible expenditure on R&D projects.

Due to the innovative nature of their work, architects have greatly benefitted from this form of government funding over the years. Projects include but are not limited to those focusing on sustainable design, innovative materials, structural systems,

smart technology integration, advanced construction methods, and work with historic buildings.

A brilliant example of this is the adaptation of historic, cultural buildings into a contemporary venue. Retrofitting historic buildings into modern spaces is a complex process that requires preserving, conserving, and innovatively adapting historically relevant structures for modern-day use.

One of the biggest challenges is the lack of a universal baseline or standard approach for converting historic structures without compromising their integrity. Each building presents unique materials, construction techniques, and historical considerations, requiring tailored solutions developed through extensive research and testing. To address these challenges, R&D explores new conservation techniques, innovative strategies for maintaining stable environmental conditions, and methods for integrating modern amenities without altering the historical character of the space.

The incentive is not only for architects working with historic buildings, but can also benefit architects creating new and innovative spaces altogether, so long as the projects meet the three criteria above.

Despite its benefits, many architects either struggle to access these tax reliefs or fail to utilise them fully. If you or someone you know requires assistance in this area, TCM Capital is here to help.

For a quick, no-obligation chat, contact Chloe Martyn at cmartyn@tcmcapital.co.uk or 07494 730 347.



Practice Update

Despite their obvious advantages, retrofit projects do of course bring challenges. The three main theatre-building booms in the UK (Late Victorian, 1960's arts council funding and 2000's lottery funding) did not tend to deliver the sorts of performance that we look for now in terms of sustainability. The buildings are also often layers of adaptations and additions, and so many problems (and opportunities) will only be uncovered during the strip out or construction stage, with the limited windows for decision-making potentially forcing teams down a route of business-as-usual. Existing buildings can also be incredibly restrictive, particularly heritage projects in city-centre sites which will often have limited options for improving fabric in cramped public spaces and very little space on roofs for plant needed for electrification or renewables generation.

Expectations and Performance Criteria

When we set out to develop the Net Zero Theatres report, the intention was to highlight carbon hotspots and also decisions during briefing which may be able to drive down carbon. During this and subsequent work on the Net Zero Carbon Building Standard we have identified a number of "abnormals" which are specific to theatres and performance venues. These are: Audience Comfort, Acoustics and Flexibility.

Audience comfort primarily relates to the auditorium space (and bars) and the fair expectation that an audience member will feel comfortable for the length of a performance. This is mostly dominated by ventilation for the purpose of cooling a densely packed audience, which drives a huge amount of the abnormal aspect of energy usage within theatres, particularly as the efficiency of stage lighting

and AV equipment improves. Whilst in smaller studio theatres where ticket prices it is more acceptable to have variation in temperatures, central London theatres where tourists may have paid a small fortune for a ticket there is a very high expectation of tight comfort conditions.

There's no magic answer to this challenge, but it should be the subject of discussion in early stages, particularly in terms of how ventilation can be ramped up and down as required and potentially relaxed comfort conditions being trialled during less critical showings. Outside of the auditorium there is traditionally a much higher acceptance of spaces being transitional, and so at the very least comfort criteria should be relaxed wherever possible, and the need for large amounts of space heating challenged.

Another aspect of audience comfort is introduced with multiple tiers of seating, and the structural gymnastics required to create raking structures that will either be unsupported along the stage edge or with columns as far back as possible to reduce the number of obstructed views. Our auditorium in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre took advantage of the historical precedent of using columns to create a more intimate stage experience but having balconies with no cantilevers is still a rare occurrence, and one that should be contextualised in carbon terms at the beginning of the concept phase.

Acoustics are the next challenge, and can often have huge impacts on upfront carbon through the requirement to decouple auditorium spaces from other areas, particularly in projects containing more than one venue. Decoupling the structure can lead to duplication of structure, and particularly if venues are stacked vertically will drive the use of heavy steel structures which are very high

carbon. Furthermore, the need for acoustic insulation and absorption will often require heavy materials and large amounts of acoustic absorbers which tend to be high carbon. In existing buildings many of these issues are removed by the nature of having to accept what is existing, but in new build elements the requirements should be challenged (where possible) and then the lowest carbon finishes specified.

In terms of flexibility, this is often focussed on the area around the stage. The stage area is often capped by a fly-tower which supports staging and equipment used for shows. Much like the environmental conditioning in a museum, for theatres that receive touring shows, the fly-tower's capacity can be one of the critical factors in what shows can be brought in. This will often be one of the most critical parts of a retrofit in terms of upgrading the venue, and so its important to balance the issue of upfront carbon with long-term adaptability. Due to the constrained geometry that often exists and the need for adaptability, fly-towers are almost always steel, but it is worth considering whether the primary structure could be changed to timber (though we have not managed this yet) and questioning how much flexibility needs to be provided on day one in terms of the suspension grid which adds a significant amount of steel in order to allow any configuration of staging below.

Similarly, AV infrastructure can be a significant contributor to upfront carbon. On a recent project a contractor was excited to tell us that the cabling installed within the auditorium would stretch all the way from London to Edinburgh and back. Much like the flytower its easy to see how flexibility and adaptability can be directly opposed to upfront carbon reductions, and so where possible,

decisions should be contextualised in terms of carbon in the same way they are financially costed.

Again, in recent years the theatre consultants who advise on this have become much more aware of sustainability and are now regularly challenging assumptions, driving solutions and contributing to public guidance like the Theatre Green Book.

Most of these challenges can only be partially mitigated, as they are inherent in large performing spaces like theatres, which is why the performance sub-sector has the largest upfront carbon limits of any building type in the Net Zero Carbon Building Standard. The challenge is not to remove all additional carbon completely, but to challenge and mitigate these hotspots in the same way that we do across all sectors.

Alongside considering these hotspots, it is important not to lose sight of the more "normal" spaces. A defining characteristic of our work in the cultural sector over the last twenty years has been to intensify the use of spaces, making sure that every square metre of space is used throughout the day. In some respects this is as important a part of the sustainability of the projects as the reduction in carbon, and is even hinted at in the various secondary metrics noted in the Net Zero Carbon Building Standard (visitor numbers, tickets sold etc.). These less onerous spaces should be following best practice, using timber structures, and lower carbon finishes (or no finishes) wherever possible.

Though theatres and cultural projects generally are incredibly challenging and complex, they offer a rare opportunity to create places that are both public and which can illustrate a low carbon built environment. Our most recently completed theatre, BEAM in

Hertford, is a perfect example of this, taking the original theatre and expanding it into an intensively used cultural centre for the community. The project works to a lean budget, retains large sections of the existing building (including the fly-tower), meets performance criteria and does so whilst using (and exposing where possible) low carbon materials. Though our most sustainable project will always be the next one, BEAM is a great example of what we think a net-zero theatre looks like right now, and though that can only be tested through in-use performance monitoring, we look forward to working with the client to review it against the new NZCBS. ■

Ben Hopkins

Senior Associate, Bennetts Associates

Marsh & PII Negotiation

In early 2025, we are currently experiencing a moderating market phase which began to develop in 2023 after the previous challenging market phase which followed on from various large claim incidents.

Having a broker who is able to navigate both challenging and moderating market cycles allows not only for the management of premium negotiation, but enables the insured to maintain their relationship with incumbent or prospective insurers who will be able to provide the most comprehensive cover available.

To begin, here are some characteristics of a challenging market cycle:

- Market reduce capacity & remediate portfolios to make an underwriting profit, also reducing their total acquisition cost. Markets will walk away from facilities.
- Rates go up & limits get cut.

- Clients need options and seek other forms of risk transfer i.e. Captives, self-insurance &/or alternative schemes.
- Coverage narrows, wordings tightened, sub-limits added especially for problem perils. Markets are more unwilling to negotiate.
- Markets improve profitability.
- Underwriters set the pace. Increased internal scrutiny, less flexibility, with a willingness to walk away from longstanding client relationships. Responses from insurers often take longer in addition.

In the current moderating market phase, the characteristics then change:

- Terms and conditions improve – broader coverage and rate reductions year-on-year.
- Domestic and overseas markets show increased appetite, which means greater competition.
- Increased opportunity to improve competition and existing products.
- Increased remarketing and placement options.

Cycles can be dictated by the onset of large losses, or by markets deciding to exit from writing a certain type of insurance.

At Marsh, through our use of data analytics and specialist placement teams, we can help navigate the challenging and moderating market cycles with confidence in order to secure the best coverage at the most competitive premium. ■

Alexander Gowing Dip CII

Alexander.Gowing@marsh.com

07385 403715

Membership update

RIAS Chapters

Aberdeen Dundee Edinburgh Glasgow Highlands & Islands Stirling Outwith

The following deaths were reported with regret:

- William Anderson RIAS RIBA
- Euan Colam RIAS RIBA
- Richard Connell RIAS RIBA
- Richard Gibson FRIAS RIBA
- James Johnson RIAS
- Scott Ledingham RIAS
- George Massie FRIAS RIBA
- Jim McColl MBE HON FRIAS
- Dermott Quinn RIAS
- Angus Roberts RIAS RIBA
- Gordon Wilson RIAS

Transfers to Retired:

- Alastair Baird RIAS RIBA
- Gordon Carswell RIAS RIBA
- James Crawford RIAS RIBA
- James Denholm FRIAS RIBA
- Jacqueline Forbes-Girvan RIAS RIBA
- Derek Law RIAS
- Farquhar MacLean RIAS RIBA
- Graham Martin FRIAS
- Thomas McDonald RIAS RIBA
- Douglas Murray RIAS RIBA
- Colin Paterson RIAS
- Matthew Pease RIAS RIBA

- Colin Porteous OBE RIAS
- Donald Reay RIAS RIBA
- Brian Robb RIAS RIBA
- Dennis Rodwell FRIAS RIBA
- Carole Small RIAS
- Michael Towers FRIAS RIBA
- Ian Wallace RIAS RIBA
- George Webb RIAS RIBA
- Simon White RIAS

Reinstatements:

- Moir Blane RIAS RIBA
- Alisdair Clements RIAS
- Shona Common RIAS RIBA
- Matthew Fan RIAS RIBA
- Callum Forrester RIAS
- Michael Gilchrist RIAS RIBA
- Mark Hall RIAS
- Jamie Hamilton RIAS
- Rory MacLennan More RIAS RIBA
- Steven Marshall RIAS RIBA
- Robin McClory RIAS
- Aileen McNicol McGann RIAS RIBA
- Simhika Rao RIAS RIBA
- Fay Stables RIAS
- Connor Steven RIAS RIBA
- John Stewart RIAS RIBA
- Luke Thurman RIAS
- Samantha Williams RIAS RIBA

Election to Chartered Membership:

- Craig Anderson RIAS
- Oona Boyce RIAS
- Neil Buchan RIAS
- James Carefoot RIAS RIBA
- Efstathios Damsas RIAS RIBA
- Emily Diez RIAS RIBA
- Ann-Marie Fallon RIAS RIBA
- Beverley Iredia RIAS RIBA
- Rebecca Irving RIAS
- Shawn Kay RIAS RIBA
- Daniel Lowe RIAS RIBA
- Suzanne Mackrell RIAS
- Dorothy Holmes Miller RIAS RIBA
- Kimberly Napier RIAS RIBA
- Kirstie Robbins RIAS RIBA
- Lucie Tinsdale RIAS RIBA
- Louise Urquhart RIAS

- Ann-Marie Fallon RIAS RIBA
- Beverley Iredia RIAS RIBA
- Rebecca Irving RIAS
- Shawn Kay RIAS RIBA
- Daniel Lowe RIAS RIBA
- Suzanne Mackrell RIAS
- Dorothy Holmes Miller RIAS RIBA
- Kimberly Napier RIAS RIBA
- Kirstie Robbins RIAS RIBA
- Lucie Tinsdale RIAS RIBA
- Louise Urquhart RIAS

Election to Academic Membership:

- Maritina Iliadi RIAS
- Ana Miro RIAS

Election to Affiliate Membership:

- Lucy Styles

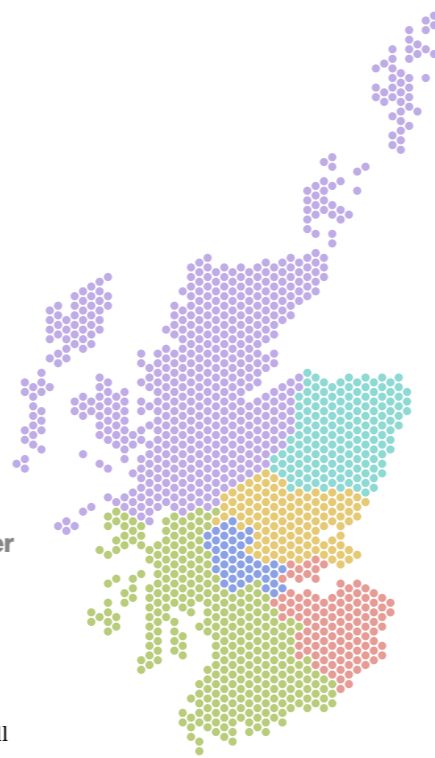
Election/Transfer to Associate Membership:

- Simy Abraham
- Kerr Arnold
- Catherine Campbell
- Minyoung Choi
- Robert Devennie
- Louisa Dunn
- Claudia Freeburn
- Dylan Gowing
- Nancy Marrs
- Nasim Mehrabi
- Sean O'Donnell
- Jo Rees
- Sadie Sanchez-Ruiz Malan
- Auguste Staknyte
- Mairi Watson

Elections to Student Membership:

- Sophie Allen
- Mariam Ammar
- Rachael Bell
- Alexandra Bicu
- Srivalli Bolisetty
- James Boncodin
- Fergus Broomfield
- Andy Chan
- Ruby Chaston
- Liangyu Chen
- Aedán Contier-Lawrie
- Alexander Curran
- Aidan Dempsey
- Jasmine Dima
- Julia Drozd
- Rachel Else-Jack
- Erin Ewing
- Eliana Fitzmaurice
- Joshua Gibbs

Maya Buechner
Membership Department



Obituaries

Richard Gibson FRIAS

RIAS Lifetime Achievement Awards 2010

November 1935 to December 2024

Richard and Victoria Gibson moved to the Shetland Isles in 1968. I am not exactly clear what initially drew them to the Isles other than having a spirit for adventure. In the early years they will have been locally regarded as having hippy values. While that local portrayal was largely inaccurate, they certainly presented a refreshing challenge to the embedded conventions and values of early 1970s pre oil Shetland. What is clear is that they brought colour to Shetland in both an abstract and literal sense.

At this time Shetland was already a busy place, with a thriving fishing industry. It had a new hospital, good education buildings, social housing and a recently built museum and library in Lerwick. Roll-on Roll-off inter-island ferries didn't exist. No one had dreamed of the investment in leisure centres, or arts centres that were to come. The establishment of the Sullom Voe Oil Terminal was in gestation rather than infancy. In later years Richard delighted in telling of the wheeling and dealing in the planning of the terminal that proved to have a massive impact on the Isles.

Educated at the Architectural Association and The Slade School of Art respectively Richard and Victoria left their self-designed house in a Camden enclave of rising young architects to then venture north and get the overnight ferry to the Shetland for Richard to take the job of Depute County Architect.

A couple of years later in 1972 he took the risk of setting up what proved to be a professionally well-respected and enduring Island based practice in Lerwick. Its varied body of work included several urban and rural schemes for a local housing association. The urban housing projects included award winning John Jamieson Closs, Grodians, and The Vadill. Projects for the Local Authority



included new build civic, education and care related buildings. Hamnavoe Primary School was the earliest nationally acclaimed work. Conservation work was approached with respect, accomplishing sensitive community reuse for listed buildings such as Haa houses and water mills.

Richard had a rather casual unhurried air about him, never pushy and always courteous and calm. He managed a remarkable alchemy of successfully entrusting employees with freedom and responsibility to design and run projects with care. Like the qualities of the man, the buildings that Richard's practice produced were understated and well considered. His design approach was primarily one of integration and context rather than the more rigorous modernism of London peers with whom he studied and identified. If there is value in making comparison, then his design approach was closer in influence to that of his late friend Ted Cullinan.

Richard's 50 years of practicing as an architect in Shetland has left a legacy of well-crafted schemes and buildings, dotted throughout the isles. The urban housing schemes and civic projects made a significant

contribution to the built fabric and townscape of Lerwick and Scalloway. This is a more meaningful legacy for the people of Shetland than Richard's tendency to frequently collect design awards.

The Vadill housing scheme in Lerwick was to be the last project that Richard personally job ran and it is a fine testimony to skill in resolving a complex and awkward site in the town with a deceptively simple radial layout.

Richard and Victoria were very much a team. Throughout their long marriage they supported one another in their respective Architecture practice and Victoria's successful knitwear business.

They and the family holidayed, messed with boats and barefoot played at their off-grid weekend "Tardis" of a bunkhouse on the west coast of Shetland. Much of this converted ruined croft house was hands-on built over a decade. The result is a building that has a delightful light touch. A credit to a decent capable man who lived a good life. ■

Obituary compiled by Nick Brett

Former employee and co-director of Richard Gibson Architects

Professional indemnity insurance

Risk solutions for today

We are dedicated to providing industry-leading professional indemnity insurance solutions to RIAS members, assisting architects in managing potential risk exposures.

For further information contact:

Alexander Gowing
+44 (0)7385 403 715
alexander.gowing@marsh.com

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