

Architecture and Design

Paisley Museum and Art Gallery: “From the Past to the Future”

8th April, 2021

Paul Weston, Design Manager for the Paisley Museum Re-imagined Project (Renfrewshire Leisure), talked to an interesting and detailed presentation, compiled by Archie Henderson, Social History Research Assistant, on the architectural history of the Paisley Museum, Art Gallery and Library .

With roots in the Scottish Enlightenment and in Paisley’s strong intellectual identity, over the past 150 years the museum campus has been subject to many extensions on its very steep and architecturally challenging site at High Street, Paisley.

The Paisley Philosophical Society, formed in 1808 was instrumental in driving forward plans for the first museum building. Funded by Peter Coats, from the well-known thread production family, and designed by John Honeyman, Architect, the Paisley “Free Public Library and Museum” had its memorial stone laid in 1869 and was inaugurated in 1871. Extensions followed in 1882, 1883, 1904, 1915, 1935, 1955 and 1974 many of which were funded by the Coats family.

Paul also gave a fascinating insight into the future of the museum campus. The distinguished company A_LA, run by Amanda Leveté, Architect, was selected to design changes which will result in street level barrier-free access, a clearly identifiable main entrance, provision of public spaces, improved visitor pathways through the buildings and grounds and unification of the campus into a coherent whole. The aim is to provide a visually impactful facility that will be in keeping with the requirements of the 21st Century whilst continuing the long development history of a thriving institution.



Laying of the foundation stone of the Free Public Library & Museum, High Street, Paisley



Hanging out the flags, 1897



Paisley Museum Reimagined – Entrance Exterior

Creating Caring Places to Support our Ageing Population

11 March 2021

Presentation by Steve Malone

Steve Malone from Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS) gave a presentation on the work being done by them in conjunction with Scotland's Towns Partnership to ensure that redevelopment addresses the issue of Caring Places for all. [A&DS is part of the Scottish Government that works to promote excellence in design and engage with the development of the Built Environment in Scotland.]

Today's talk focused on the current work being done to ensure that town centre developments address sustainability, health of the residents and the ability to thrive by ensuring the input of the stakeholders. The current pandemic has changed the way people live, work, learn and shop and this has led to an ideal that the ideal town centre neighbourhood incorporates all our requirements within a 20 minute radius.

To achieve this goal these neighbourhoods must be designed in an holistic and collaborative manner ensuring an integrated approach that provides quality public realm, adequate transport links, good digital connectivity, inter-generational housing, local amenities such as healthcare services, places of worship, shops and other commercial premises.

The work being done by A&DS has involved workshops with the local community and development of typical personas modelling a range of residents and their stories, needs and wants.

Since the start of their Caring Places work the issue of Carbon Consciousness has come to the fore so they have now done a study which ties in with the current work especially regards localism (in urban, town and rural contexts) and the need to reduce unnecessary travel, ensure that brownfield site are used first and retrofit of existing structures are considered before demolition and rebuilding. Steve highlighted a number of ongoing or completed projects which ranged geographically from Shetland to the Dumfries.





Retrofit of Woodside High Rise Flats by Collective Architecture for Queens Cross Housing Association selected Glasgow practice

Steve concluded the meeting by inviting Club members to participate in the launch of the A&DS Corporate Strategy 2021-31 on 18 March.

Govan Waterfront Development

11 February 2021

This month's talk was given by Mairi Laverty, Project Architect and Employee-Elected Director at Collective Architecture. The company is owned by an employee-run trust and its main body of work is affordable housing, community projects, regeneration and conservation work as well as cultural projects. Mairi had recently completed the award-winning residential regeneration project in Sighthill (on which we had a talk in March 2019) and was now working on the Water Row regeneration project in Govan.

The site at Govan sits across the River Clyde from the Transport Museum and is bordered by Govan Old Kirk to the west and Govan Cross to the south. On the eastern edge is Water Row, which at one time led to the slipway for the Govan Ferry. There are no permanent buildings on the site currently but it was once occupied by Harland & Wolfe Shipyard and dense tenement housing, as well as shops and transport links.



Water Row slipway and Govan Ferry; Harland & Wolfe Shipyard

The Masterplan for the redevelopment of the site includes the following aims:

- Deliver a City-wide flagship project that puts Govan ‘back on the map’
- Ensure that Govan and its community are at the heart of the masterplan and its development
- Develop a vibrant new neighbourhood combining residential and commercial use
- Undertake a collaborative, design led approach with co-creation and stakeholder working at the centre of the design process.

Community engagement, key to the project, was achieved through public events, focused meetings/workshops and on-street mobile roadshows. This has been the largest consultation project undertaken by Collective Architecture and it will serve as a benchmark for future projects.

The site is to be developed in three phases and will focus on defining urban edges but with key views to significant landmarks, reinstating Govan Cross, creating a variety of open spaces including a new park and establishing a new civic landing point at Water Row- as part of the Glasgow City Deal, a new pedestrian and cycle bridge will open in 2022 to connect and improve links between the north and south of the river. The building materials will complement the existing blonde and red sandstone and slate roofing.



Water Row plans and proposed site of new bridge

Phase 1 of the project will comprise 91 residential units with commercial units on the ground floor. The initial planning application was to be submitted imminently, with development to commence January 2022. Members look forward to seeing the plans come to fruition.

William Morris and the Scottish Arts & Crafts Movement

14 January 2021

Simon Green of Historic Environment Scotland gave an illustrated talk on the work of William Morris, his company Morris & Co and the many architects that followed his design philosophy of denouncing modern industrialism and incorporating organic motifs into the furniture and fabric that became the byword for the early Arts & Crafts movement, of which Morris is regarded as the founder.

The aim of Simon's talk was to give us a greater understanding of Morris and his ideas to show how the arts and crafts movement influenced and continues to influence life in Scotland. The talk covered different aspects including:

Artistry which embraced murals, tapestries, stained glass and the wallpapers which are still in production today. The gathering of architects, artists and craftsmen to work together to create a unified whole is one of the main characteristics of this artistry.

Craftsmanship, in particular, to understand our architectural heritage, move away from industrialisation to the beauty of the hand made, and celebrate the craftsman and traditional techniques.

Philosophy and the idea of honesty of repair and understanding what you have got before you start, which led Morris to be one of the founders of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) fighting against the over restoration of medieval buildings.



Melsetter House, exterior and interior

Many fine examples were shown in illustration of Morris's work and of others who were influenced by him (William Leiper, Robert Lorimer, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Daniel Cottier) including the exterior and interiors of buildings, stained glass, tapestries, murals and furniture. These included:

- Melsetter House on Hoy, Orkney Islands, one of Scotland's finest arts and crafts buildings, by English architect William Lethaby
- Penkill Castle in Ayrshire which was frequented by many Pre-Raphaelite artists and writers, ,
- Old West Kirk in Greenock and St Luke's in Broughty Ferry

A key message from Simon's talk was that 'the influence of William Morris and the arts and crafts movement is still tangible and his legacy is so much more than simply lovely flowery wallpaper.'



Old Kirk West, Greenock – Burne-Jones stained glass window

Dr Helen Cargill Thompson – an appreciation

Dr Helen Cargill Thompson, Strathclyde University Librarian, and Art Collector and an important contributor to the Strathclyde University's art collection through the Collins Gallery.

Born: December 1933

Died: 28 September 2020

Dr Helen Cargill Thompson was a very faithful member of our 3Ls Architecture & Design Club and many of you may have seen the excellent [obituary by Clare Henry in the Herald on 13th October, 2020](#) but I wanted to add this appreciation of her from our own A&D Club perspective.

Dr Thompson regarded Strathclyde University as her social life, and our Club was part of that. She rarely missed a meeting or an outing, and was 'weel-kent' at all our Christmas get-togethers, where the mince pies and, in particular Diane's (our Secretary) Christmas cake was a star attraction. Many of you will remember her as a unique character, always happy to

contradict the speaker with a kindly interception from her vast knowledge of the buildings and people of Glasgow, the city she loved.

I remember our meeting in January 2013, which was a talk about the Buchanan Gardens Development (that included retail, flats and a unique sky garden) when Helen had a lengthy and erudite conversation with the architect, John Russell, about the original buildings in Buchanan Street his design linked into. He was a bit taken aback but interested nonetheless.

Another memorable occasion was at our Architecture & Design Christmas party on 12 December 2013 in the Victorian Bar of the Tron Theatre. Helen appeared at the door and said in her 'matter-of-fact' way and with a beaming smile – 'it's my 80th Birthday today!' We felt very honoured, and perhaps a little sad, that she should choose to spend it with us. So the A&D Christmas cake was taken to her table for her to make the first cut and all fifty of us sang 'Happy Birthday'.

She always said that she would leave her house and all the original contents to the National Trust for Scotland, and has now done so. Perhaps that would be an appropriate, future outing for the Club.

Clio Barr
Past President