

CHARLES RENNIE MACKINTOSH SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THIS WAS A VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

**SATURDAY 5 June 2021 at 10.30am**

## **1. CHAIR'S WELCOME**

David Cairns, Chair of the CRM Society, welcomed members to the 16<sup>th</sup> annual general meeting of the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society, and hoped this would be the last virtual meeting.

This has been a difficult time for everyone, and his sympathy went out to those that have suffered during the pandemic or who have lost dear ones. The effects on businesses and charities have been severe. Charities have suffered badly but reported that the Society is in a fairly good position financially thanks to the government furlough scheme, covid business grants and two generous bequests. Stuart will give a more detailed account of this later.

David said he would like to thank all the staff for sticking with us during this difficult period and he made a special mention to our Outreach Coordinator, Jade who is leaving us. She has assured us she will remain in touch and help as volunteer. Jade was a very welcome face at Queen's Cross and we will miss her. Stuart is currently looking for someone to fill that role. David also mentioned that our Honorary President, Sir Kenneth Calman is standing down this year. We are tremendously grateful for all the support and help he has given the Society, but he was delighted to say that Roger Billcliffe has graciously accepted the position of Hon President. Roger may wish to say a few words later.

David's last vote of thanks was to our volunteers, who again have stuck with us. We are planning to organise events next year, focusing on Mackintosh Queen's Cross, and involving the volunteers.

What have we been doing at Queen's Cross, well during lockdown we have moved ahead with certain things:

- The Final committee under stewardship of Prof. Frank Walker and Prof Pamela Robertson have completed extensive research into the final and we are now in a position to go to planning and then go out to tender.
- The kitchen has had a total revamp and we now have in place a commercial kitchen with stainless steel units, professional cooker and oven etc. He has been aware that as we are not in Glasgow city centre and that people must make the trek out of the city it would be rather nice to show a little hospitality at QX. We now can do that.
- David summarised some of the other Mackintosh buildings, which Stuart will cover in greater detail:

Glasgow School of Art, Scotland Street School, Queen Margaret College and The Hill House. We are actively involved with all of these in the form of discussion. There is a limit of what we can do, as we are not the owners, but we can certainly make our presence felt. He felt it was incredibly important that we are there as a supervising body for all of these buildings. Now a case in point is SSS, where big changes are going on and it is absolutely vital the Society is there, letting the people in charge know that we are keeping a watchful eye. Our Raison d'être after all is the preservation of the Mackintosh heritage. And if we were to step back and focus purely on QX, and let the rest manage on their own, that just would not happen. People do not regard the importance of Charles Rennie Mackintosh's Legacy to

Glasgow and Scotland in the same light as we do. We really do you have to be there. How much and how aggressive we are, I would like to hear from the membership. If they would like to see the Society take a more aggressive role in monitoring what is going on in Mackintosh buildings or are they quite content for us to sit back and try to participate without ruffling feathers. He was not entirely convinced which is the best approach, think we are probably doing the right thing on sitting back and letting them know that we are keeping an eye, but if anyone feels strongly about this, please let us know.

## **2. APOLOGIES**

The Chair reported that apologies had been formally received by a number of Council and Society members.

## **3. MINUTE OF THE SOCIETY'S 15TH AGM**

The minute was proposed by Peter Ranson and seconded by Andrew Mackie

## **4. DIRECTORS REPORT**

Stuart Robertson thanked David. He also thanked all the trustees for their continued devotion and commitment to the Society. Stuart extended his own welcome to the 16th AGM of the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society (Limited Company). Despite not being at Queen's Cross it was great to see so many members join us from around the world.

In the autumn of 1918, as the First World War approached its end, a far more deadly killer was sweeping the globe – the Spanish influenza. Back then there was no National Health Service, so the response was decentralised and uncoordinated. By the end of summer 1919 when the pandemic had subsided a quarter of the British population had been affected and 250,000 people in Britain had died. We know it infected half of London, but we have no information on how the Mackintoshes coped with the pandemic.

**It is only 9 months since our last AGM and it is still surreal not being in our home at Queen's Cross.**

David has covered a number of key points and the people involved in making this happen.

### **Covid19**

Like many organisations, the Society is continuing to follow the latest advice from the Government on the situation. During these exceptional times, the health and safety of our staff, volunteers and visitors is our number one priority.

### **Last year we decided at an early stage:**

- To cancel all events, tours and walks until further notice.
- Closed Mackintosh Queen's Cross until further notice.
- Setup regular catch-up meetings on Zoom
- The building continues to be monitored.
- Members and Public were informed of all the changes.
- Society staff have been furloughed or part furloughed during lockdown.

Despite the lockdown the Society has continued its advocacy role and ensured Queen's Cross has remained secure and safe. Ongoing maintenance and restoration work has been undertaken, including the refurbishment of the kitchen.

### **After Lockdown**

We have looked at various scenarios that may happen as the current lockdown is scaled down:

Looking at the current regulations it only allows us to have around 60 attend a concert and at most 80 for a non-singing event. We are looking at a softly, softly approach to reopening, with small prebooked tours taking place at QX.

We have been extremely fortunate that we do not rely on large visitor numbers and have manageable overheads. We might not be able to have any events or concerts, but we have kept our costs under control. Compared to many organisations we are in a strong position to withstand a prolonged period of closure.

### **Staffing**

The operation of the CRM Society and Mackintosh Queen's Cross relies on core of 4 staff and volunteers who give generously of their time.

Dylan, Ewan and Jade are great assets and provide a diverse range of roles for the Society and Queen's Cross.

Unfortunately, as David highlighted, we have had to say goodbye to Jade, who moved on to pastures new last month. But she will still be around to help on a voluntary basis.

Stuart asked everybody to give a thumbs up to all of them.

### **Membership**

Despite the pandemic the membership has seen a slight increase over the last 9 months. So a big thank you for your continued support, your membership helps raise awareness and support for the Society's work.

Also more members are choosing to renew by Direct Debit and we now have over 100 who have signed up for the scheme. This makes it easier for renewing membership and saves a lot of time on administration.

We still need to gather more emails from members, as this makes communications much easier and cheaper.

It certainly has been tough over the lockdown period, so thank you for your patience and understanding.

### **Gift Aid**

Stuart thanked Trish Ingram for managing to process our Gift Aid claims during the pandemic.

### **Website**

All the online events are now available on the website.

### **Journal**

Stuart was pleased to say that at last the Journal is now with the designer and that it will be a double issue.

Work continues with National Libraries of Scotland to have all our Newsletters and Journals digitally scanned. Currently on hold due to Covid.

We have also been involving volunteers in this process.

### **Mackintosh Travelling Scholarship**

Stuart mentioned last year that we were looking at creating a Travelling Scholarship with the wonderful gift donated by Deirdre and Stan Bernard. SDR has discussed this with Stan, and he is very supportive.

We have since held meetings with GSA about setting up the award.

- A general academic connection between the GSA and the Mackintosh Society is to be explored, and possibly Strathclyde University.
- It was felt that travel to undertake academic research would be more beneficial than travel for the purposes of work. Submissions could be based on research proposals, as per the Norman Foster Scholarship.
- It was discussed that the Society may be best placed to administer the scheme. In these circumstances GSA would provide support to promote the scheme and provide advice on judging criteria and grant reporting. While the identity of the award would be associated with the Society.

### **Education and Volunteer Outreach**

Despite the social distance restrictions, Jade has managed to keep the volunteers informed and motivated during the pandemic.

With the implications of Covid-19 from March - October 2020 it had become evident that our current volunteering and outreach offering needed to be adapted in order to reflect the current climate. During this period we had to pause all face to face volunteering for the safety of our volunteers and staff. We trialled a series of digital volunteering activities (with reduced staff capacity) during this time. This included a 'Letters to Mackintosh' project, Research and Interpretation Tasks and Digital Doors Open Festival and Zoom catch ups and quizzes. Volunteers were involved in activities such as writing their own letters to Mackintosh or helping with judging, building and recording tour stops for DDOF, doing research for the new QC visitor leaflet, working on translation sheets and more.

Despite the challenges of being unable to provide physical volunteering roles, it has become clear that many of these digital activities have been enjoyable and proven hugely beneficial for volunteers.

A digital volunteering programme was drawn up, this included:

- Building a programme of volunteering activities
- Digital engagement and social media training
- Research, Interpretation and design
- Tour guiding skills
- Facilitating Art Workshops and online Education Workshops
- Skills Training

**A special thank you must go to all volunteers for continuing to support the work of the Society.**

### **Digital Doors Open**

Last September the Society was pleased to be involved in the Digital Doors Open Festival. We managed to create a number of tours and programmes around Queen's Cross, including a presentation from Professor Pamela Robertson and other Mackintosh experts about the current final restoration project and view the usually inaccessible tower at Mackintosh Queen's Cross.

For Doors Open in 2021 we are planning several events.

Stuart thanked Jade and the volunteer team for creating this programme.

### **Obituaries**

We sadly lost Dr. Helen Cargill Thompson in December last year. She was a long-standing supporter and Life Member of the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society and a well-known figure to the staff and students at Glasgow School of Art (GSA), being an early supporter of the Friends of GSA (established in 1990) and a constant visitor to exhibitions and events.

### **Concerts and Events for 2020/21**

Over the past year we have not been able to get together in-person, however Zoom has come into our lives and been a saviour in the era of social distancing. As an alternative way to stay in touch and 'see' each other, one-to-one and collectively, is a great way to keep your spirits up. It has also allowed us to keep in touch with volunteers and develop a series of online talks that have reached out to our members around the world.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh's Italy was our first online talk. Discussion around the new book by George Rawson, with George's son Ashley standing-in. For those who did not know much about this early adventure by Mackintosh, I am sure they found it a great insight into the trip. From the 140 who attended the talk we had a lot of good feedback. I am sure sales of the book must have benefited from the talk.

In February Robyne Calvert joined us to discuss the unique working relationship of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and his wife and artistic partner Margaret Macdonald. Again this had excellent feedback and was really well attended with around 250.

In April we had around 150 attend the talk on Chelsea and 49 Glebe Place. Both Richard Burrows and Stuart giving an insight into Chelsea and the wonderful connections and the amazing art collection in 49 Glebe Place.

Stuart thanked Richard and Angela Burrows for their continued support and hospitality in allowing the Society access to the Studio.

Hopefully once social distancing starts to ease we can organize some more visits to Glebe place.

Delighted to say all these talks are now available online.

Stuart announced that Lachlan Goudie will give a talk on the Story of Scottish Art after the AGM. This will be a lively talk, brimming with fascinating characters and historical events.

In September we hope to have an international theme, with talks on Darmstadt, Barcelona, Vienna and possibly Brussels.

On reopening we plan to relaunch the exhibition by Sylvia Richardson, which was cut short last March due to the pandemic.

### **Tours**

We continue to provide a wide range of tours, giving visitors an authentic and knowledgeable insight into the creative genius of Mackintosh and his contemporaries.

Pre-lockdown, Peter Trowles was in the process of organising a series of group study tours to Brussels. Hopefully we can resurrect this tour at a later date.

## **London Group**

Once social distancing has relaxed we will restart the events programme in London & SE.

## **L'association Charles Rennie Mackintosh en Roussillon**

A new website has been created in English and French. A link is available from the Society website.

The Mackintosh Trail and the signs and their supports have aged, and some have deteriorated or disappeared. The association has set itself the objective of renovating the panels of the path with a link to the association's website by means of QR codes.

These QR codes will be systematically printed on the panel. By flashing on the code with a smartphone application, the visitor will be able to consult directly the corresponding website page that describes the work and its context.

The rehabilitation of the path requires funds and a number of actions have been setup.

## **Arts & Humanities (TaNC)**

The Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society (QX) is a partner with GSA, and the NTS (The Hill House) for the AHRC bid for the Discovery Project under the Towards A National Collection call: "Connecting Contexts: Linking Biographies of Objects and Spaces across National Collections", led by Prof. Tim Weyrich of University College London.

The proposed research would benefit the Society by enabling us to increase access to both Queen's Cross Church, and our collection and research materials. Although our holdings are small, they are unique and not yet digitised, and so not currently accessible outside of visiting our Mackintosh Resource Centre. This includes our historic scholarly Journal; and a recently completed condition survey of all extant Mackintosh buildings, not available in any other location. It will also enable broader access to our unique building through 3D scans to be made by Historic Environment Scotland and developed for digital engagement through this project. This research project will also have wide-reaching community benefits, including for researchers and school groups, by making our unique collection and archive available online for the first time.

The bid has been shortlisted and we should know the result by the end of the year. SDR thanked Robyne Calvert for her work on this project.

## **MONUMENT LEGACY PROJECTS**

### **Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society and Mackintosh Queen's Cross**

As outlined last year we have a strategy to undertake a new conservation and development project on Queen's Cross using the Monument Trust Grant as match funding. This needs scoped with potential funding from HLF, HES, Pilgrim Trust, Glasgow City Heritage Trust etc.

A number of projects have already started:

#### **Finial**

The Society has long held the ambition to replace the metal cross installed in 1958 with as accurate a replica as is possible of the original Mackintosh-designed finial. Extensive research of Queen's Cross related church records, Mackintosh archives, local history and photographic collections was undertaken by Dylan Paterson, Elizabeth Crawford and Prof. Pamela Robertson between November 2019 and March 2020, to locate additional documentary evidence and images of the tower with the original finial in situ. The best surviving record comprises two photographs by Thomas Howarth c. 1948 held in the Howarth archive at the University of Toronto archive.

A project group has been setup to include: Prof. Frank Walker, Prof. Pamela Robertson, David Cairns, Ruairidh Moir, Dylan Paterson and Stuart Robertson. Jo Hormuth, Chicago Architectural Arts, a highly experienced researcher and maker within late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century building and interiors, including the Willow, was commissioned to prepare a report as to whether there was sufficient information to proceed with a replica.

The conclusion from our research was that Mackintosh had again treated an established format with an individualistic approach, and the cardinal points served other intent, perhaps to locate the church, to signify the reach of the church, and/or reference William Lethaby's Architecture, Mysticism and Myth (1891). Confirmation of the lack of a pointer subsequently materialised in a watercolour of 1900, from the illustrated celebration of the freedom of the church, housed at Queen's Cross.

Having reached agreement on this point, Jo was commissioned in late May 2020 to prepare design drawings. She was able to progress by mid-June 2020 to the point of making a model, prior to preparing drawings for final approval by the Group and Council, and modelling by Ruairidh Moir. Further modelling and investigation, including examining the GSA east finial have taken place, and currently drawings are being prepared for Listed Building Consent and Planning.

#### **Noticeboards**

The original Mackintosh sign boards are near the end of their life. Last year we commissioned Bruce Hamilton to replicate both boards. They are now finished and are awaiting signwriting before being installed.

#### **Kitchen Upgrade**

One of the legacy projects was to bring the kitchen up to date. Work started in January and was completed in February. Stuart thanked RH Morton and HF Electrical for making this possible during the pandemic. What a transformation and we look forward to seeing the benefit once we can have events at Queen's Cross. A big thank you must go to the Hugh Fraser Foundation for contributing to the costs.

Internal paintwork was also completed in February.

#### **QX Building Maintenance**

In May maintenance work was completed on the roof. Also the lightning conductor around the building was completely overhauled and upgraded and now has a test certificate. This is especially important for the finial.

#### **Boiler**

Last October we had a major component fault with the gas boiler. Possibly lack of use during Covid, but this has now been repaired and is working fine.

Within the Monument proposal we allowed funds for a replacement boiler. This may be a good opportunity to look at more efficient ways of heating the building. Once we have this information, we can then look at the best options for planning a replacement over the coming years. This might be a three-year plan and it would be good to start now.

#### **Other proposed work at Queen's Cross**

- Improve sound and lighting for small weddings, plus mixer or ipad control, a more discreet plug and play system
- Install double Cat 6 ethernet cable for future concerts
- IT Improvements, office and shop etc.

- Improve wi-fi around the building, especially the Hall
- New interpretation – more digital and less paper
- Repairs to floor outside kitchen
- Investigate heat pipes under floor in front of the Chancel
- Stone repair on main Garscube entrance

### **MACKINTOSH 150 EXHIBITION**

Glasgow Museums has announced that the 2018 Mackintosh 150 exhibition recommences its tour of the USA after being halted by the pandemic for a year. *Designing the New - Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Glasgow Style*, co-organised by Glasgow Museums and the American Federation of Arts, opens at the Frist Art Museum in Nashville, Tennessee on 11 June 2021.

You will have seen by the e-newsletter there are online events to coincide with the tour relaunch and opening hosted by AFA:

The next one is on Friday 11 June, the day *Designing the New: Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Glasgow Style* opens in Nashville, Tennessee, Frist Art Museum present a lecture by Alison Brown, curator of European Decorative Art and Design at Glasgow Museums, and curator of the exhibition.

### **SENIOR MACKINTOSH GROUP**

At the last meeting in February we had an update on all the venues, but Scotland Street School was the main topic where we discussed the development proposals. SDR will cover this later.

#### **House for an Art Lover and Mackintosh at the Willow**

During the ongoing restrictions, both venues have continued to look at how they can diversify and have considered alternative approaches and product offerings.

#### **Hunterian**

The Mackintosh House have been working on repairing the water damage that occurred a year ago. Good news that remedial work that was done to prevent future water penetration seems to have been successful. Continuing to work on the Mackintosh Interpretation space, which will be an introduction to the Mackintosh House, but that has slowed down with people being furloughed etc. They have online a virtual tour of the house and the history of the house. We still do not know when the Mackintosh House will reopen.

### **MACKINTOSH HERITAGE UPDATE**

#### **Mackintosh Buildings Survey**

As part of our Monument legacy project we have allocated funding to continue our important role in keeping a watchful eye the Mackintosh Heritage.

The Mackintosh Buildings Survey is one of the best examples of the Society's value and contribution to conserving Scotland's heritage. The project would not have happened without the support and generosity of The Monument Trust.

#### **Some updates Stuart shares at the meeting:**

##### **The Glasgow School of Art**

David, Alison and Stuart were asked to participate in the Strategic Outline Business Case for the Mackintosh Building. Eleanor Magennis. Head of Estates at GSA went through a series of questions relating to the building.

Key points were:

- More transparency, better partnership, trust, more joined up approach with key groups.
- We all felt it was a very positive meeting. DC & AB agreed and thought Eleanor responded well to all our questions and answers and seemed to be transparent. AB said it felt like a very sound and tight approach that they are taking. PT said they have just hired a new Director of Communications, which clearly shows the new Director wants the message coming from her, and hopefully help improve the relationship with the local community etc. Definitely sounds more positive.

In February Scott Parsons reported that the fire service is continuing their investigation inside the building. The debris removal continues and it is likely this will go on until the middle of the year. Not likely anything will come out from the fire service until the summer at the earliest.

Eleanor Magennis, Head of Estates has been progressing work on the Mackintosh Building, including the appointment of Alison Young to complete the strategic outline business case work to determine what the future is. That is running in parallel with the stabilisation work and looking at reducing the size of scaffolding onsite. Also looking at robust ways they can communicate what is happening onsite over a rebuild that will happen.

Stuart's most recent conversation with Alan Horn is that the feedback from the various consultation events and individual discussions is still ongoing.

Alan also mentioned when we had discussed this previously and particularly when we met earlier last year with the former director, Irene McAra McWilliam, that this process was going to be a journey rather than a single point of consultation....so we can expect to be involved further.

### **The Hill House**

Last October, Moira, Alison and I paid a visit to The Hill House. We spent about 5 hours going round the house and looking at the various measures they had in place for social distancing etc. Visitors can book online and they have setup a one-way system which only allows 6 people every half-hour. The footfall is drastically down, and it will be harder to sustain in the winter months.

A lot of organisations are now faced with additional costs to open-up and with reduced visitor numbers the revenue is drastically reduced.

In November SDR had a Zoom meeting with Bryan Dickson, Head of Buildings Conservation (Policy) at NTS to discuss the conservation plans and what was happening at The Hill House.

Due to Covid and the NTS financial problems the project was put on hold at the beginning of the year. When Philip Long came on board in July and after budget reviews the project was resurrected.

HES are monitoring the drying out, through infra-red and microwave moisture testing. SDR showed a short film of this work.

LDN Architects who oversaw strategy have been re-appointed to assimilate all the data.

The Getty Funding is funding the conservation plan and all the data will be fed into this and published in the third quarter of 2021.

Sarah MacKinnon who was the Project Manager for the Mack restoration has now moved to the NTS and will be working on the project.

Replacing Harling: From discussions it looks like this will happen on the South and West facing facades. In the 1980s a saline solution was added to these areas. Don't know why this happened. SDR believed it was under the ownership of RIAS then.

All this work will determine the period the Box needs to be in place.

### **The Lighthouse**

It remains closed as The Lighthouse plays a key role in supporting the council in their rollout of laptops to employees for flexible working. They will reopen with a programme of exhibitions and events later this year, and will confirm this date as soon as they can.

### **We continue to monitor Queen Margaret Medical College, Daily Record Building and Martyrs' School.**

#### **Scotland Street School**

In January we got sight of the proposed plans to turn Scotland Street School into a nursery as part of Glasgow's early learning and childcare expansion.

Councillors were expected that week to approve the plans.

We reacted quickly to this news and SDR emailed all the councillors involved, plus the head of education, various MP's, MSP's, HES, Planning and DRS.

In principle we were pleased to see much needed investment in Scotland Street School. Mackintosh created this inspirational building for children to learn in. Aside from the second phase of the Glasgow School of Art, this school was Mackintosh's last major architectural commission, and shows evidence of the genius of the mature architect, with impressive leaded-glass towers, magnificent-tiled entrance hall, uniquely ornamented stonework and shows Mackintosh's mastery of creating interplay between light and space.

Over the last year there's been talk of using Scotland Street School for Early Learning. In December, Duncan Dornan, Head of Glasgow Museums contacted me to discuss the plans for the school, but said it was still at the early stages, they were proposing having early years use part of the building, and still have a museum offer and the work would include conservation and refurbishment and make the building more secure. The project was to be part of a Council investment programme, but details had not been fleshed out and there were no timescales.

The proposal papers up for discussion, including layout plans and elevations, were publicly submitted to committee by the Education dept. We felt extremely frustrated that there had not been any consultation with the Society in drawing up this proposal, especially after finding that the online plans were dated December 2019 and May 2020. We checked the planning portal and nothing had been lodged for this proposal in relation to planning or listed building consent which after looking at the plans submitted we were greatly relieved.

The plans showed that the redesign of Scotland Street School for nursery use had not been undertaken by an accredited Conservation Architect with experience of working on listed buildings and understanding the complexity, care and consultation required. Scotland Street School is an A-listed building of international importance and one Mackintosh argued passionately over during its design and construction. He had a definite vision for it, and it was the building he cited in his application of membership to the RIAS. It is an important building of significant heritage value that Glasgow needs to cherish and respect. Everyone in the city needs to ensure any adaptations for

change of use is sympathetic and has minimal permanent impact on the building's original design so that we honour Mackintosh's legacy.

A number of aspects in the proposed plans were extremely worrying:

- Most significantly, the proposed plan to create two new doorways in the south façade would be like vandalising a work of art, and would totally destroy the symbolism and abstract form created by Mackintosh in his overall design. We asked why can't the children use the original CRM doors in the north as originally intended?
- On the ground floor the addition of a partition in the long corridor affects the visual impact and experience of Mackintosh's drill hall. The drill hall and adjacent corridor and mezzanine landings leading to the foot of the massive stair towers are a significant suite of uniquely interlinked interior spaces that Mackintosh devised for the school. None of these areas should be subdivided from the other by any screen, partition or door that obscures the view. The 1984-1990 works were extremely sympathetic in these areas, keeping the spaces open as far as possible, or barriered using only clear glass to absolutely minimise impact on Mackintosh's design.
- The location of the sprinkler tanks in the Girls playground was a strangely prominent new block in the grounds very close to the school, and impacts significantly on the setting and context of the listed building. Stuart was sure a more creative solution could be found to hide this from view. There are currently no details of the proposed sprinkler system this unit serves, and where and how they will be installed into the building. There seems to be no mention in the plans of restoring the Janitors House or the toilets and shelters in the rear playground.

The two catastrophic fires that destroyed the Mackintosh Building at the Glasgow School of Art was a devastating blow to the world of Mackintosh. This leaves Scotland Street School and Queen's Cross in Maryhill as the only two almost pristine original Mackintosh Buildings in Glasgow. It would be a travesty for Glasgow if another key part of Mackintosh's legacy was purposefully and detrimentally altered so quickly after the loss of his greatest and most acclaimed built achievement.

We said we did not object to Scotland Street School housing a new education provision, it was designed to be a school and comes alive when there are children within its walls. And clearly this project is a means for this internationally important building to get much-needed and long-overdue investment in its care and fabric. But in light of the impact of the current proposals on Mackintosh's intended design we had to object to these plans tabled.

We asked if we could have a consultation on this, and work together with all interested and knowledgeable parties to reach a suitable design resolution. We were sure with dialogue we could find a solution that would work for all parties and would do Mackintosh and Glasgow proud.

Alison was also notified by Glasgow Life to attend a Zoom meeting on SSS. From AB's knowledge of SSS she responded internally, with a whole series of issues. She hoped this petitioning from both sides would have a positive effect.

Following up on the email to all the Councillors regarding plans to turn SSS into an early year's school SDR received a response from Maureen McKenna, Executive Director of Education –

*"I am sorry that the plans gave an impression of final – this is the first paper out into the public domain so they couldn't possibly be final as there are so many processes to be gone through. However, I can see how easily this could be interpreted. We are nowhere near planning permission. A survey has been commissioned which is needed prior to drawing up plans as well as the need to*

*engage with interested parties. We won't be able to take on all the suggestions, for example, when we discussed how visitors might engage with the building one of the ideas had been that we would leave the front of the building with access to the public and think about how an outdoor visitor experience could be developed so I wouldn't want children playing in the front playground which would totally restrict that. I also want school children from both within and outwith the city to still get access to the museum experience on the upper floors and enjoy the dressing up. We believe we can do this simply in terms of access without disrupting the nursery children.*

*Glasgow Life still has to consider where they will relocate some of the exhibits and what needs to stay for the right experience to be maintained.*

*Importantly we are on the same page about the importance of retaining the building and all its glory".*

SDR responded to Maureen's email, "to say we would like to meet up with her and Lisa Le Grove, Group Manager – Architecture, GCC, and look at how we can take this forward with other interested parties".

Alison met up with Lisa on a site visit and discussed all the issues relating to the project.

Alison and Stuart also arranged a Zoom meeting with Brian Park to discuss the various proposals.

It was agreed we would continue to have dialogue and involve all interested parties.

In February at the Senior Mackintosh meeting the team from Scotland Street gave an update on the project.

- They were going out to Tender for Accredited Architects
- Through Citybuild will go out to tender for specialist contractors
- Gutters are rusty, but intact. Main issue is the joints which are leaking. They are needing to be infilled in some way with new material.
- Vast majority on stone is in fairly good condition.
- Behind the cement mortar there is very good lime mortar. Not sure why this happened.

At the end of March SDR was asked to attend a Teams meeting with Lisa and the Scotland Street team to give them an insight into the refurbishment of Queen's Cross Church. Again this was another productive meeting and showed their growing interest and understanding of what was needed to conserve SSS. SDR has also offered to take them round QX.

In April, Alison, Liz Davidson etc and myself were invited on a site visit to SSS. It was an excellent visit, although very cold on the scaffolding. It was a real treat to see the carvings and details at close quarters. On the whole the building has stood up well to the elements. There has been some movement which has affected some of the stonework, especially sculpturing details on the east and west sections of the south façade. They have already started to mark up the stonework. The guttering as highlighted is in need of attention. Certain areas have been badly stained due to water coming through the guttering joints.

This was a very productive on-site meeting and the good news is they seem to be listening to our viewpoints and suggestions: They have fast tracked an accredited architect and taking onboard our suggestions and ideas for qualified contractors.

This week SDR heard that Fiona Sinclair was appointed as the conservation architect on the project. This is excellent news and Stuart spoke to Fiona and she is assisting with the building repairs survey and information gathering for the conservation plan. All very positive.

The only real issue we have is that they don't have a big budget for the project, (£800k from Community Assets Fund and a further £2m has been set aside from the early Years 1140hr Expansion programme to undertake the re-purposing works required for the creation of a fully registered and compliant early learning and childcare facility) but at least it is a step in the right direction to ensure the future of SSS.

### **Other Buildings at Risk**

Recently in the Scotsman they highlighted 11 buildings in Glasgow at risk of vanishing forever:

- Lion Chambers, Hope Street
- Former British Linen Company Bank, High Street
- Former Cumberland Street Railway Station, Laurieston
- Egyptian Halls, Union Street
- India Buildings, Bridge Street, Laurieston
- Former Caledonia Road United Presbyterian Church
- Former Leyland Motor Company, Laurieston
- Castle Chambers, West Regent Street
- Southern Necropolis Gate Lodge
- Springburn Park Winter Gardens
- Whitevale Street Public Baths and Washhouse

Looking back down the decades, it seems fair to say Glasgow has a patchy record when it comes to preservation of its built heritage.

The Society has a track-record of nearly five decades of caring for Mackintosh's wider legacy, and his Queen's Cross building in particular.

We cannot rest on our laurels; the buildings of Charles Rennie Mackintosh form a major component in the nation's cultural heritage and are celebrated internationally.

The legacy is small, vulnerable and irreplaceable.

With your continued support, we look forward to returning stronger than ever.

On behalf of the Board, Stuart thanked all the members.

## **5. TREASURERS REPORT**

SDR reported that the audited accounts were only completed this week. Every year more seems to get added and they always seem to take longer than you expect. He hoped everybody has managed to have a look them.

### **Grants and Bequests**

This year we received £9,500 as the third year of funding from the VAF grant and £11,700 from our Historic Environment Scotland grant of £66,600.

We received £15,000 from the Hugh Fraser Foundation towards work on the kitchen.

In 2020 we also received two large bequests from former members:

Heather Banfield, who died in February in California was a long-time member of the Society, and was friends with Sandy & Nance Tosh. The Society was named as a beneficiary and receive funds of \$50,000 (£37,858).

The other bequest is from the estate of Florence Naples Mitchell. Both Florence and her sister Elise were founding members of the Society. The Society was notified that the bequest amounts to £16,570.

### **Donations**

We also received £17,500 as Gift Aid from Edward Le Bas Properties Limited as part of our licence agreement for Glebe Place.

### **Funds**

The Statement of Financial Activities shows total incoming resources for the year of £332,607 generated in the year under review (2019: £222,949).

Included within the income for the year is £123,718 of one-off COVID-19 support funding. (This is made up of furlough payments of £55,218 and £68,500 of covid grants)

The Statement of Financial Activities shows net incoming resources for the year of £113,597 (2019: outgoing resources: £22,967) before investment gains of £23,051 (2019: £52,2385).

This includes £71,932 of restricted and designated funds that is largely a result of the timing of income and expenditure. The general funds surplus of £41,665 is a result of the COVID support received during the year.

At 31 December 2020 there were unrestricted funds of £2,076,921 (of which £177,570 was for general use and £1,899,351 was designated by the Trustees) and £26,901 of restricted funds held by the Society.

Included with unrestricted designated funds was £850,000 for the Legacy Project and £984,923 of tangible fixed assets and £64,428 for the improvement at Queen's Cross Church.

### **Reserves policy**

It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three and six month's expenditure. The trustees considers that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

This level of reserves has been maintained throughout the year.

At 31 December 2020 there were unrestricted funds of £177,570 for general use. This represents 8 months of the expenditure. This is higher than anticipated due to the level of support received during the COVID-19, which will be used to support the Society as it begins to restart its operations in full.

### **Investments**

Aldermore: £85,000

1 Year fixed rate investment at 1.09%

### **Barclays Wealth Fund**

The Society has invested a further £250,000 in the portfolio. At the end of December the total investment stood at £650,000.

At the end of December the valuation of the portfolio was standing at £737,801.84.

£708,389.57 invested in the moderate risk portfolio (and a current profit over cost for 2021 of £23,052) and £29,412.27 in accumulated income then sat alongside on the Society's Reserve bank account.

The Society's investments have fully recovered from the -17% fall seen in the first quarter of 2020, following the global lockdown-induced market correction. To date in 2020 the portfolio is showing a slight positive net return of +0.5% (ahead of the -2.8% benchmark and -10.5% from the UK's FTSE 100).

Taking a more medium term view, since the Society started investing in October 2018, there has been a strong and positive average (net of costs) annual return of +7.4%, achieving the portfolio's wealth preservation objective and outperforming the referenced benchmarks.

At the moment risk markets are reasonably happy with the outcome of the US Presidential election and the current Covid-19 vaccine rollout increasing opportunity for better global economic conditions into 2021. Within the portfolio, in order to seek the best moderate risk returns, the investment content has been continuing to become more global in manner and Developed Market Equity continues to be the dominant asset class.

Of the 29 direct companies held within the portfolio at the moment, US listed Alphabet (owner of Google and YouTube) is up nearly 40% this year while Royal Dutch Shell is down 40%, as it is an investment feature that digital platform stocks have done well in the current Covid-economy while traditional industry stocks have largely not done so well (that said, Howden Joinery have been strong, with a +20% gain, as many folks have clearly directed unspent holiday money on new kitchens!).

Overall the Barclays Wealth investment outlook for the medium term is positive, and Barclays feel that the right assets are held in order to allow the portfolio to continue to achieve the Society's investment objectives. There are undoubtedly a significant number of concerns in the world, so we continue to mitigate such matters by focusing on global quality within the moderate risk multi-asset strategy, but believe that there is every opportunity to expect better returns and positive market performance in 2021.

We hope you will agree that the Society has invested wisely and is in a strong position to ride out this pandemic.

There were no questions.

The accounts were proposed by George Porter-Mutch and seconded by Andrew Mackie

## **6. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS**

### **Honorary Officers of Council**

Professor Sir Kenneth Calman is standing down this year.

Unfortunately, he could not attend, but he was thanked for his support over the last 4 years. A small gift is being arranged to thank him for his services to the Society.

### **New Honorary President**

Roger Billcliffe

The Society was delighted to announce that Roger Billcliffe has accepted the role of Hon President.

Roger Billcliffe was formerly a lecturer at Glasgow University, Assistant Keeper of the University Art Collection, and subsequently Keeper of Fine Art at Glasgow Art Gallery, and then Director of The Fine Art Society. He now owns and runs the Roger Billcliffe Gallery in Glasgow. He is the author of *The Glasgow Boys*, *Visiting Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Complete Furniture, Furniture Drawings and Interior Designs* and more recently, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Art of the Four*.

Roger has been a mainstay of the Society over the years.

He has held the post of Honorary Vice President from 1994 to present  
Chair of the Society from 1981-1983 & 2001-2002  
Vice-Chair from 1986-1989

This was approved by acclaim.

#### **Honorary Vice-Presidents**

Murray Grigor  
Dr James Macaulay  
Bruno del Priore  
Professor Pamela Robertson  
Professor Frank Walker OBE

This was approved by acclaim.

## **7. ELECTION OF DIRECTORS (Council Members)**

#### **Directors who served during the 2020-2021 Session**

- David Cairns (Chair)
- Alison Brown (Vice Chair)
- Ian Elliot
- Moira Hallett
- Ruairidh C. Moir
- Charlotte Rostek
- Garry Sanderson
- Peter Trowles

#### **No Directors stood down from Council at 2021 AGM**

#### **New Nominations for Council**

##### **Susan Swan**

She was co-opted onto the board as Hon Treasurer at the start of the year.

Sue is a Chartered Accountant and works with Charlotte at the Mount Stuart Trust, where she was the Finance Manager October 2018 - October 2020

She is Director at Macqueen Swan Ltd Rothesay

##### **Jo James**

A consultant who specialises in brand development, photography and human centred design. He has been delivering creative services for over 30 years. He was a past winner of the Scottish Design Award and was recognized as one of the best designers in Europe with the presentation of the

EuroPrix in Vienna for his work on 'Charles Rennie Mackintosh - Art, Architecture and Design - An Interactive Guide'. Following the launch, he was invited to deliver workshops at The Metropolitan Museum in New York, The Art Institute in Chicago and The County Museum in Los Angeles as well as the MAK in Vienna.

He is also very knowledgeable on the turn of the century book designer Talwin Morris? A selection of items from his personal collection are currently on loan to 'The Making of The Glasgow Style' exhibition.

**Both appointments were approved by acclaim.**

**Directors who are available for re-election at the AGM**

- David Cairns (Chair)
- Alison Brown (Vice Chair)
- Ian Elliot
- Moira Hallett
- Ruairidh C. Moir
- Charlotte Rostek
- Garry Sanderson
- Peter Trowles

All Directors were approved by acclaim

**Nomination for Council**

Chair of Council

- David Cairns

Vice Chair of Council

- Alison Brown

Hon Treasurer

- Susan Swan

These nominations were approved by acclaim

**Auditors**

SDR asked can we have approval for Consilium, as auditors for the Society.

Approved by acclaim

**8. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

**Questions from the floor:**

**Craigie Hall**

Pamela Robertson asked if there were any updates on Craigie Hall as she understood there is some work going on there. SDR said he had not had any updates, but would get in touch with Pollokshields Heritage. PR said that would be good.

## **Cop 26 and Environment**

PR also wondered with Cop26 coming to the city, has there been any discussions about a cultural offer for delegates. SDR said nothing has been mentioned at the Senior Mackintosh meetings, but there is still some uncertainty whether the event will take place.

SDR wondered if Alison had any ideas what Glasgow Museums are planning. AB said she knew nothing, but Glasgow Museums we're working on associated programmes, but in terms of any cultural representation in relation to the policy of the committee, then the answer is no.

DC thought the position just now is that no one has made an absolute decision whether it's going to happen. He has been approached by two separate bodies and asked to host a private dinner at Windyhill for participants. But it is very much on hold at the moment. PT has also been approached by a delegation from South Africa who are coming to Glasgow and was asked to organise a very simple welcome to Glasgow experience. But that has gone very quiet, so not sure if this delegation is still intending to come to Glasgow, or whether a person to person event takes place, it is still up in the air.

Evelyn Silber's impression was that everything is to do with environmental projects, so anything that relates botanical or natural heritage seems to be getting support as well as energy efficient, so it seemed to her that the whole of the city's attention is now on that. SDR said you could see a lot of this around the city with narrowing of streets and bicycle lanes popping up everywhere.

ES said there are lots of grants for small green projects.

## **The Hill House**

Peter Ranson made a point earlier about the presentation on The Hill House saying that the computer visuals and modelling are very good, but that doesn't replace the actual treatment and the work that is actually going to happen to the building. From his experience in Historic Buildings, so often a lot of reports and analysis are done on buildings, but not always transformed into actual work on the buildings. So his worry about all the analysis done by the NTS, it that as long as that transfers through to funded work on the building, that is the important part.

SDR said he remembers a Conservation meeting on The Hill House over 10 years ago and Brian Park saying that only about 10 to 15% of the harling is original. Even at that time there seemed to be a fear factor of removing the harling.

DC agreed with SDR and thought this paralysis affects The Hill House and also The Glasgow School of Art. That digital presentation SDR gave is a good example of producing all sorts of stuff to show that something clever is being done, instead of undertaking proper old-fashioned remedial work. DC thought The Hill House would never be repaired until they take the brave decision to remove all the harling, as recommended by Murray Grigor and the late John Addison. SDR agreed and said there are other issues where the Portland cement harling attaches well to manmade materials, but there is a problem when fixing to stone. So there is great importance in the preparation work. DC said you travel up the West Coast of Scotland and see shepherds cottages and manses were harled three to four hundred years ago and are still watertight. SDR said but they were harled with lime mortar. Windyhill is a good case and point, with no water penetration, it depends on the constituents of the building. DC said both The Hill House and the Art School need a strong person in charge to make a decision. PT agreed that there was not a perceived timeline for the work to be completed. Depending on who you speak to The Box is celebrated as a wonderful addition to the building whilst work is going on. He thought there was a real risk that The Box as is will stay there for some considerable time, until that starts to rust away and then there will be a discussion how do we sustain The Box. PT said he could understand that it is problematic to set an end date. SDR said it will be interesting to see what the Getty Report says when it is published, and hopefully this will allow the conservation team to start work on the building.

### **The Burrell**

SDR asked Alison if she knew what the timescale on the Burrell reopening? AB said it is being worked on, but she did not know enough about it as there's nothing from her collection, apart from Lorimer.

### **The Glasgow School of Art**

Jane Cullingworth said it is good to hear that there is going to be a process but is there any real focus on what is going to come out of the process. Is the goal to try and reinstate it in its former glory or is there discussions about different types of options. Do you have a sense of that? SDR said the general mood is a replication of what was there, and this will be aided by the wonderful research and work that went on after the first fire. The bigger issue will getting the academic side of the school back on track after the recent criticism by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). Its main focus will be to fix this. So, the work on the Mackintosh Building will have to run in parallel with the academic side, but like The Hill House we are looking at being more involved in this process. I think one of the things that came out of the discussions that we had with the GSA was having a lot more openness and sharing information. From the Society point of view we have discussed the idea of a Trust or a specialist group taking responsibility of the rebuild. Jane wondered if that this would be the direction of travel, that it is overseen by a Trust? SDR said not definitely but they have said better partnerships and a more joined up approach. DC said in reply to Jane's question, there must be leadership changes at the school and that a Trust is formed to rebuild the school of art, that would be the sensible way forward, and let those in charge concentrate on running the education side. There are a lot of difficult decisions to be made, but it is essential that the Society remains in touch and on friendly terms and are included in any future discussions. It is a slow process.

### **Scotland Street School**

Evelyn Silber said she was very aware of the difficulty of the city council to do joined up thinking – the fact that the papers went forward to the educational committee and plans were drawn up without the input of any conservation architect or any discussion. But it does seem to her that the Society is very well placed to keep banging away at that, and that a joint office or working party which gets some ownership, so they can pull some of the officers in who might not be happy to talk to us directly, but will come forward if they have a Councillor on their tail, saying 'I am chairing this meeting and I want your input'. SDR said it was interesting the response he received from the letter sent to the Councillors prior to their meeting to approve plans to turn the school into a nursery. We had made the point that the plans were not accredited, we did get a reaction and they have now contracted Fiona Sinclair. They have also talked about Fiona mentoring GCC architects to become conservation accredited architects. This has now kick-started a lot of positive actions internally and hopefully in the future we can have conservation accredited architects working in the city. AB added to SDR comments; the papers went to committee and (AB put the link in the chat) if anyone wanted to look at them. Since then, they have been very open to our discussion and suggestions and have brought other people into the project and as Stuart said the latest is Fiona Sinclair. This is all very positive, and they are now not talking about putting doors in the south elevation. Glasgow Museums will be doing a public consultation on SSS museum offer, which will have some restrictions because of the nursery on the ground floor. But it is still the intention to have visitors, maybe only at weekends. DC asked if that had been decided? AB said there are going to have to be parameters to work in the building, but the nature of the audience consultation is being shaped over the next few months. DC said it would not be ideal if visitors or tourists can only visit at the weekend. But it would be good to see it operating as a school again. AB said as part of the consultation she will be putting forward the Society and Members as part of that consultation, so that will be an excellent opportunity for everyone to put forward their thoughts and opinions.

### **The Lighthouse**

Peter Trowles said following on from the commitment of GCC he wondered if anybody had any views on the future of The Lighthouse. A couple of months ago there was an article in the BBC about the new director of the V&A Dundee taking over from Philip Long and that it would be the new Scottish Centre for Design. Of course, The Lighthouse has been trading very much as 'Scotland's Centre for Architecture & Design' and he was concerned that there may be a redirection of that focus towards the V&A Dundee and wondered if that weakens the case for The Lighthouse and wonders what happens to the overall purpose of that building. It is often left off the radar anyway and its funding model has been problematic over many years. It is another building that its long-term future must be questioned. AB said it is a good question but don't have any answers. She thought there could be room for the V&A Dundee to work with The Lighthouse. And given the new director, Leone Bell is ex Lighthouse who began her career at Glasgow 1999: UK City of Architecture & Design it may be worth talking to her to get her thoughts.

DC finished off the meeting to say that Zoom has been very good for members around the world to attend the AGM and he hoped at the next meeting at Queen's Cross to have a hybrid meeting.

David thanked everybody for attending and to Stuart for guiding us through the meeting.

**Meeting Closed at 12.45 pm**