

POLLOKSHIELDS HERITAGE

Hon President: Sir John Maxwell Macdonald Bt

April 2018

Dear Pollokshields Heritage supporters,

Pollokshields Heritage Chair's Annual Report and letter of resignation

Having been Chair of Pollokshields Heritage for ten years, I am writing both to give you an update on what we've been up to for the last year, but also to let you know that I have decided to step down as Chair and from the committee. However, before discussing my reasons for doing so I want to first tell you about our year.

Pollokshields Heritage Lecture Series

Now into its 9th season the Lecture Series has continued through the winter and spring months of 2017 -18 with lectures on the following:

Tuesday, 14th November 2017 - From Roses to Squares - Interior stencilling from the turn of the century to the Deco period – with stencilling expert Elisabeth Viguie Culshaw of the Lansdowne House of Stencils conveying her passion for stencil work by discussing her work on the recreation of the stencil for Charles Rennie Mackintosh's 'House for an Art Lover' in Bellahouston Park, more recent work recreating the complex stencil work in what had been a derelict George Walton Glasgow style house in Dunblane, and her work celebrating the centenary of 78 Derngate in Northhampton where Mackintosh's stencil work has a proto art deco quality.

Tuesday, 16th January 2018 - Alexander Thomson's 2017 bicentennial - Sally White, Director and Secretary of the Alexander Thomson Society, looked back over the Bicentenary events of 2017 and the scope of the Alexander Thomson Society's achievements in extending awareness of 'Greek Thomson' and his architecture. The challenge now facing the Society is how to build on this past year to achieve its aims and respond to the interest that has been generated. Pollokshields Heritage has played its part in this by assisting on the judging panel of the international ideas competition for a contemporary Double Villa to be located on the Kildrostan Street triangle.

Tuesday, 20th February 2018 - Going Round in Circles - John Yellowlees, who led ScotRail's 'Adopt a Station' programme before retiring last year into an honorary role, talked us through the history of the Caledonian Railway and the development of Glasgow's South Side via the Cathcart Circle. John's talk was the more enjoyable for the extraordinary Q&A which followed, with John showing his stamina by enduring a well-intentioned grilling from Pollokshields Heritage members on all aspects of Glasgow's and the nation's railway network.

The talks have been well received with good Audience turnout.

There is still a further talk to go for our AGM on Tuesday, 24th April 2018 when Karen Mailley-Watt and Rachael Purse - The History Girls Frae Scotland - will delve into the fascinating history of the South Side through its female inhabitants. Rachael and Karen will discuss the colourful, energetic and powerful female personalities of Glasgow's South Side including artists and designers, as well as activists and wealthy philanthropists, in order to create a HERstory of this side of the city.

POLLOKSHIELDS HERITAGE

Hon President: Sir John Maxwell Macdonald Bt

Karen and Rachel are both former members of the Glasgow City Heritage Team who are passionate about Scottish heritage, culture and history. So much so, both women were awarded scholarships in 2016 to continue their research at PhD level at the University of Glasgow and The Glasgow School of Art on separate projects.

Doors Open Day 2017

For the 2017 Doors Open Day event we hosted two walking tours of both East and West Pollokshields, a walking tour of Dumbreck, and, due to popular demand, Bus Tours of the whole Garden Suburb on both the Saturday and the Sunday. All events were busy with good feedback. Indeed, this year I was lucky enough to be awarded the Glasgow Doors Open Day Excellence Award for Inspiring City Tour for these along with my two city centre walks - something which wouldn't have happened without the excellent support of the Pollokshields Heritage Doors Open Day team!

Maxwell Park Station

While some progress on the water ingress has allowed us to start re-using Maxwell Park Station for committee meetings, the issues with the lack of re-painting and general poor state of repair have not gone away. Following a visit by railway contractors CPMS on 4 May 2017 I prepared a brief report on the issues observed during the visit. In summary this noted that:

While Pollokshields Heritage remains keen to see the 'B' listed Maxwell Park Station building properly and completely repainted as per the planning and listed building consents of early 2016, and to see the ageing canopy attended to, the major issue discussed during the site visit was the impact of water ingress on the Victorian steel structure of the 'B' listed building which supports the concrete deck of the pedestrian bridge. The water ingress is causing considerable damage to both the steel frame and the fabric of the ground floor of the station which reeks of damp.

The report was supplied to CPMS and Network Rail along with Andy Savage of the Railway Heritage Trust - who has advised us to be realistic given Network Rail's funding constraints. Nevertheless, we have been reassured by reoccurring isolations to allow works at the station to take place; however, these works have yet to include the re-painting of the building. The issue hasn't gone unnoticed by the neighbours in the tenements overlooking the station. They arranged a meeting on 8 November 2017 to discuss the issue with Stewart McDonald MP who agreed to investigate the matter given his contacts having previously been a member of Westminster's Transport Committee.

The subgroup, which comprises John Thomson, Karin Currie, Ann Laing and Hilary Stanger, continues to liaise with the Railway Heritage Trust, ScotRail and Network Rail over these matters, while the platform planters continue to be nurtured by our Head Gardener, Ann Laing with help from Karin Currie and John Thomson.

Pollokshields Heritage's representation over the Reconstruction of the Springkell Avenue Bridge over the Cathcart Circle.

Ironically, given our concerns about the potential damage to the pedestrian bridge at Maxwell Park Station, in the latter part of 2017 a much more serious issue emerged with the neighbouring road bridge over the railway at Springkell Avenue. This had been reconstructed during the 1970s electrification of the Cathcart Circle but was now found to be suffering from incorrectly specified concrete thereby reducing its carrying capacity and making it unsafe for vehicles.

Though we fully appreciated the urgent need for the reconstruction of the bridge, we strongly felt the new pre-cast concrete design would be detrimental to both the East and West Pollokshields Conservation Areas - and so was contrary to City Development Plan Policies CDP 1 - The Placemaking

POLLOKSHIELDS HERITAGE

Hon President: Sir John Maxwell Macdonald Bt

Principle and SG9 Historic Environment as well as City Development Plan Supplementary Guidance SG1 - The Placemaking Principle (Part 2) and SG9 - Historic Environment.

Network Rail's intended design was like a smooth version of the Crossmyloof Bridge – reconstructed prior to the Commonwealth Games and not widely admired locally. Unlike the Crossmyloof Bridge, as the new bridge is over an electrified railway line, the proposed parapets are significantly higher - at 1.8m high a good 300mm higher than the existing stone parapets - which will remove views along the Cathcart Circle and be more prominent. Therefore, the design had to be good and sympathetic to the character of the conservation areas.

Fortunately, Glasgow City Council listened to us and has imposed a condition such that the bridge parapets must be constructed out of stone. While this is good news we have still to see what the final design will be like, so this is very much watch this space.

Pollokshields Heritage's representation over the redevelopment of Mount Carmel at 61 Hamilton Avenue.

Having previously objected to applications in April 2017 to demolish and redevelop the former St Dominic's Monastery site (now known as Mount Carmel) in the West Pollokshields Conservation Area, a completely revised scheme was submitted in early December 2017 just in time for the Christmas holidays when neighbours might be away. The new scheme had 24, rather than 27, flats formed in two rather than three buildings.

We strongly objected to this revised scheme as we did not feel it to be an effective piece of placemaking, as set out in the interim Supplementary Guidance IPG1 Placemaking which provides the context and approach to Placemaking established in Policy CDP1 Placemaking – the overarching policy in the new City Development Plan.

Not only do the two proposed three storey + attic buildings, which the applicants referred to as villas, look more like detached tenements than a typical Pollokshields villas, they are also to be clad in brick and step in front of the building line – a key characteristic of the West Pollokshields Conservation Area – in one case by seven meters so would be very prominent compared to the surrounding stone built villas in Sutherland and Hamilton Avenues.

There have been 83 objections to the proposal which gives an idea of the strength of local feeling over these applications which are now pending consideration by the planners. That the planners are accepting swept path drawings to show how refuse vehicles can access the redeveloped site suggests that they may be prepared to accept this revised scheme – something which would be a considerable worry to us and the surrounding neighbours.

This is particularly frustrating given Pollokshields Heritage's response to Glasgow City Council's consultation on the draft Historic Environment Supplementary Guidance back in 2016. Our offer that we would like to work with GCC on the commissioning and production of design guidelines for the neighbourhood so that situations like this could be avoided was ignored and the Supplementary Guidance adopted regardless.

Pollokshields Heritage's continuing involvement in a Major Planning Enforcement issue in the West Pollokshields Conservation Area

As I predicted at the last AGM the large scale unauthorised works at 57 Hamilton Avenue have continued to vex us. Despite the refusal of the application in late March 2017, the applicant did not appeal. Rather in October 2017 he submitted yet a further application, this time for the removal of

POLLOKSHIELDS HERITAGE

Hon President: Sir John Maxwell Macdonald Bt

the front garage but with the retention of all the other unauthorised items while the spoil heap from the demolition of the garage would be left and turfed over in the front garden. Though the removal of the front garage was a step in the right direction we, along with the neighbours, objected yet again.

The new application went before the Planning Applications Committee on 16 January 2018; however, before it did both ourselves and the neighbours noticed something odd. Despite the last date for representation on the application being 20 October 2017, within the report to the committee the Planning Officer had accepted letters of support which had arrived after this date and all sharing similarities in cadence, style and font suggesting they may have been authored by the same hand. As this is contrary to the Council's guidance on representations this flagged up concerns about a potential abuse of the planning process. Therefore, we raised this with Councillor David Meikle who agreed with us that it should have been made clear to the members of the Planning Applications Committee right at the outset of the report that these letters were received after the deadline for representations and therefore should be discounted.

Councillor Meikle wrote to both the Council's Chief Executive and the Convener of the Planning Committee about this resulting in the withdrawal of the planning officer's report and it being re-drafted for the next Planning Applications Committee with the reference to the letters of support removed. Nevertheless, the report still recommended approval and despite a request for a site visit, so the councillors could see just how bad the breach was, the application was approved by committee but with stringent conditions including the removal of the Juliette balcony to the first floor of the rear garage which overlooked the rear garden of 53 and 55 Hamilton Avenue. Unfortunately, it is now three months later, and it remains unclear if the applicant has acted on this condition.

Pollokshields Heritage's continued involvement over the McCarthy and Stone development on Springkell Avenue

Though the planning process has now concluded Pollokshields Heritage has continued from time to time to be involved with the McCarthy and Stone development. This has mainly stemmed from the impact the activity on site was having on the surrounding neighbours. This was particularly true for the vibrations resulting from the demolitions which gave rise to real concerns about the impact the pile driving for foundations might have on surrounding buildings. Ultimately, a meeting was hosted by Stewart McDonald MP to get the point across to the developers that they needed to up their game.

Pollokshields Heritage's objection to the Sauchiehall Street Student Housing development that risked obscuring the South Elevation of Charles Rennie Mackintosh's Glasgow School of Art

As a follow-up to what I reported last year the Planning Applications Committee Hearing on the application was a fascinating exercise in local democracy. The hearing went on for three hours with both applicants, opponents and councillors getting the chance to air their views before the committee voted to decline approval.

Nevertheless, in the Autumn the applicants decided to appeal and, just before Christmas 2017, the reporter delivered his verdict again rejecting the proposal largely due to the impact on the setting and 'special character' of the Glasgow School of Art. Primarily this was due to the concealing of the south elevation of the Art School as the view of it along Dalhousie Street is noted as a key city centre view in the Glasgow Central Conservation Area Appraisal - something we had warned the applicants about during the Glasgow Urban Design Panel's discussion over the proposal back in Autumn 2016.

POLLOKSHIELDS HERITAGE

Hon President: Sir John Maxwell Macdonald Bt

Pollokshields Heritage's continued involvement over the development of the key Gasworks site on Maxwell Road

Further to our pre-consultation work last year trying to get a better result for the proposals for the large Gasworks site opposite 129 Maxwell Road, we've had a much better experience on the neighbouring site to the east otherwise known as 60 Maxwell Road. At the pre-application consultation in January and February 2018 with O'Donnell Brown and Nick Wright Planning for developer New City Vision it was clear that the design team had paid close attention to the Design Code in the Make your Mark East Pollokshields Charrette report producing a scheme with a welcome urban form and structure that picked up the urban grain of East Pollokshields while readily connecting to the AS Homes site to the west.

The design of the new tenements and townhouses reflected the regular rhythm and proportion of windows to echo/emulate the traditional proportions of Glasgow tenements. We've pointed the architects in the direction of good Glasgow style tenements within East Pollokshields and are trying to encourage them to clearly denoted close entrances by subtle use of ornament. This could pick up on the Glasgow tradition of tiled wally closes - though as a contemporary interpretation of this. We are hopeful of a good outcome to this application though we are also conscious that the council needs to pay attention to Education provision in the neighbourhood as the population increases.

Progress on the adoption of the Make your Mark East Pollokshields Charrette report

Progress on the adoption of the charrette report as supplementary guidance by Glasgow City Council has been painfully slow. Unfortunately, we are not unique. How to get community led charrettes adopted into policy by councils does seem to be the Achilles Heel of the process with the risk of thwarting community enthusiasm which could descend into cynicism and distrust - something sadly flagged up by the survey results for Barriers to Community Engagement in Planning - thereby undermining the efforts of the Scottish Government towards the Local Place Plans they desire as an outcome of the recent Planning (Scotland) Bill.

Nevertheless, if we've learned anything it is tenacity! Therefore, we welcome a positive overture from GCC, at an October 2017 meeting hosted by Nicola Sturgeon MSP, to work collaboratively with us and the Scottish Government on a pilot scheme to ensure that community led charrettes can slot into the development plan process. Will we succeed? We hope so and have made a point of reporting on this in the call for evidence on the Planning (Scotland) Bill.

Now that it is established the Pollokshields Trust has used the £15,000 of Scottish Government monies from the 'Activating Ideas' Fund towards the return of the former Kingston Bowling Club as a space for the community with the bowling green being re-opened by Nicola Sturgeon MSP on 23 February 2018 – the first time the people have had access to it in many years. Keep an eye on that in the months ahead for further progress in advance of this year's Ready Steady Grow festival, on 23rd June, which is focused on the Kenmure Street corridor.

The Committee

As always, I want to take this opportunity to thank my fellow committee members for their energy and support in the past year. Like myself, many of them have served on the committee for a good number of years – and I think you know who they are! In response to a call for an archivist at last year's AGM, we were indeed fortunate to secure the talents of Penny Dade who, in collaboration with Karin Currie and Ann Laing, has successfully established the Pollokshields Heritage Archive at the Mitchell Library.

POLLOKSHIELDS HERITAGE

Hon President: Sir John Maxwell Macdonald Bt

Resignation of the Pollokshields Heritage Planning Convener, Helen Barnard

In particular, I very much want to thank Helen Barnard. Helen has been on the Pollokshields Heritage committee since the beginning - so 27 years! Helen has done sterling work as our planning convener for many years including attending planning hearings and inquiries into the City Plan and City Plan 2. I also recall her exemplary catering organisation during the many years of the summer Strawberry Social in Maxwell Park. She deserves a round of applause as thanks for such long service and a rest too!

Resignation of Chair

I appreciate that my resignation may come as a disappointment; however, I am doing this because at this year's AGM I will have been chair of Pollokshields Heritage for 10 years. I strongly feel that this is too long for anyone to be chair of a voluntary organisation and is an issue that should be addressed via Pollokshields Heritage's governance.

Put simply, we need new committee members to help with new ideas to take Pollokshields Heritage forward and the reason I want to step down from the committee is so I don't wind up being a back seat driver.

In addition, I am struggling to spare the time to give Pollokshields Heritage the focus it deserves - particularly when I am heavily involved in heritage and community issues across Glasgow via my role as Deputy Director of Glasgow City Heritage Trust and due to my also being Planning Convener for Pollokshields Community Council, the Vice Chair of the new Pollokshields Trust and a Trustee of Govanhill Baths Community Trust.

I also want to free up time to write a book as I have several subjects I want to tackle, one of which is a fuller examination of the evolution of Pollokshields as a garden suburb building on the work that went into the heritage trail leaflets.

Nevertheless, if you humour me, and I hope this doesn't seem cheeky, but I do have some suggestions as to where Pollokshields Heritage can go from here.

Firstly, I strongly feel that Pollokshields Heritage should be less diffident about its achievements. Over the last ten years we've achieved a lot and have a reputation for professionalism. Our achievements include the overhaul of the website into a real community resource, the lecture series has become a permanent fixture, the heritage trails have been well received and the delivery of the charrette, while the latter may have been through Pollokshields Community Council it was something we were campaigning for at the planning inquiry into City Plan 2 back in 2007!

Secondly, continue to build relationships with Glasgow City Council, Pollokshields Community Council and other Glasgow amenity societies through the Glasgow Civic Forum. Lack of awareness of the three Conservation Areas could be addressed by better signage. Pollokshields Heritage might want to get more involved in the Nithsdale Green proposals including the overhaul of the Kildrostan Street triangle, or it might want to work with the local primary schools on a debate series about the local environment.

My suggestion is that the committee engage a facilitator and have a development day where they can focus on where Pollokshields Heritage strengths are and what future projects to focus on. It may also want to canvas views of the membership.

POLLOKSHIELDS HERITAGE

Hon President: Sir John Maxwell Macdonald Bt

Finally, I also want to emphasise how much I have enjoyed the time I have spent working with the committee over the years be it at the various events and walking or bus tours we have organised, or problems, usually planning, we have had to combat, or in the production of the heritage trail leaflets. My experience with Pollokshields Heritage has exerted a considerable influence on me and the development of my career for which I remain most grateful.

Therefore, Pollokshields Heritage needs a new chair and some new committee members! If anyone amongst our membership has suggestions to offer which they believe they can progress then do please approach us through our secretary, Janet Lamb. Janet can be contacted through our website, just click on secretary@pollokshieldsheritage.org. As ever, we value your support and contribution. Thank you so much.

Yours sincerely,

Niall Murphy
Chair
Pollokshields Heritage
www.pollokshieldsheritage.org.uk

