

The GSA Fires

for

u3a Helensburgh

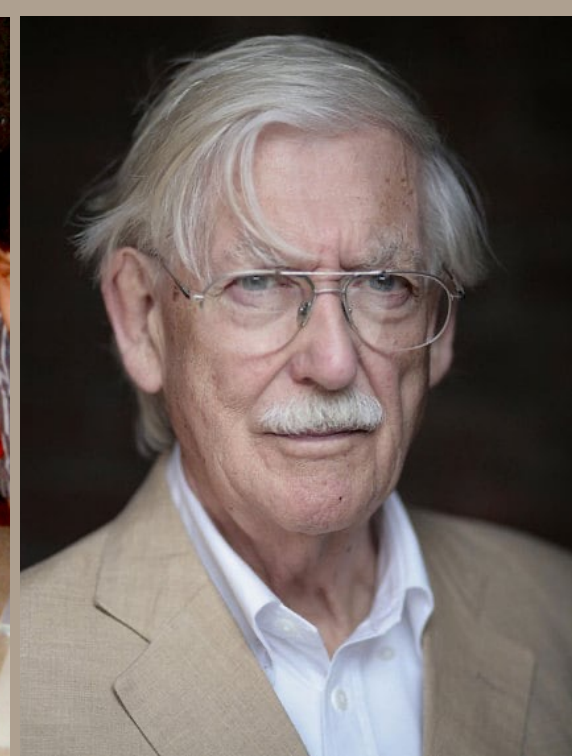
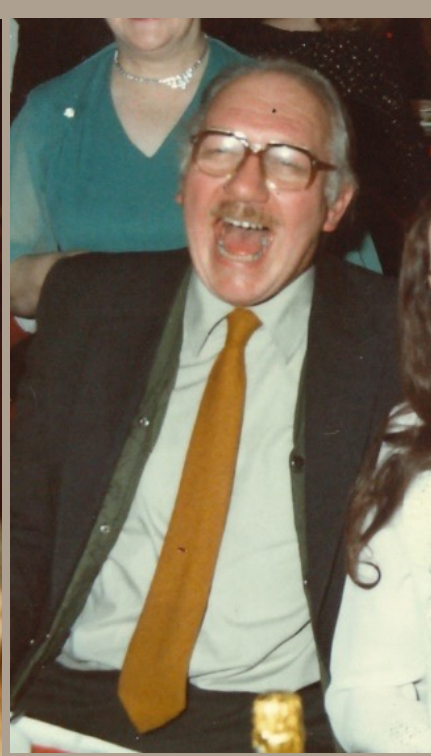
by

Professor Gordon Gibb

B Arch Dip Arch LLM FRIBA FRIAS MCI Arb

7 September 2026













Thursday, July 23, 2015

HYNDLAND SCHOOL - 1977



"There was a flashover."

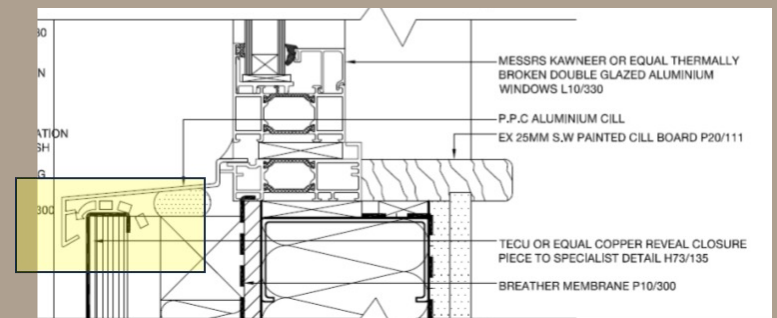
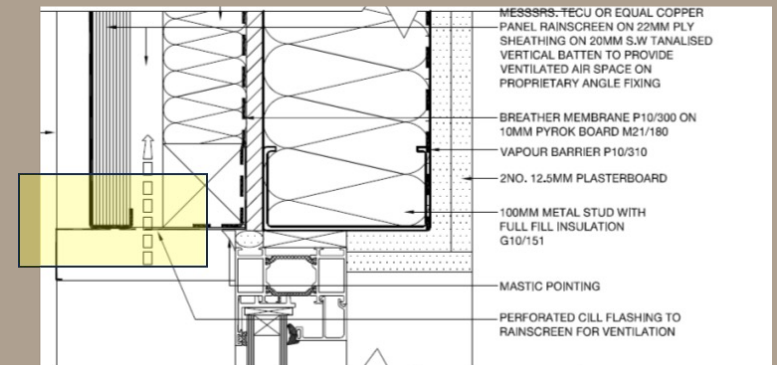
On Oct. 12, 1977, flames destroyed Hyndland Secondary School, Glasgow.

The fire brigade contended with low water pressure.

The West End News reported: "The Water Board were carrying out work within the area" and "urgent requests were made to have the pressure increased."

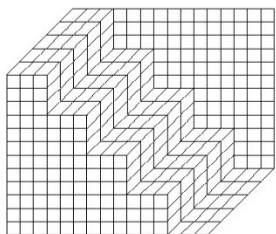
"That was the longest ten minutes of my life as we tried to think of some way to escape if the water was too late coming back on."

"If I remember correctly workmen had been in the roof space with an acetylene cylinder working with tar before they went for their lunch that day."









Buro Happold
F E D R A

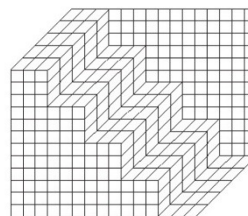
021072 1909

Glasgow School of Art
The Mackintosh Building

Stage 3 - Fire Protection Strategy Options Summary

July 2006

Revision [0]



Buro Happold
F E D R A

024289 3809

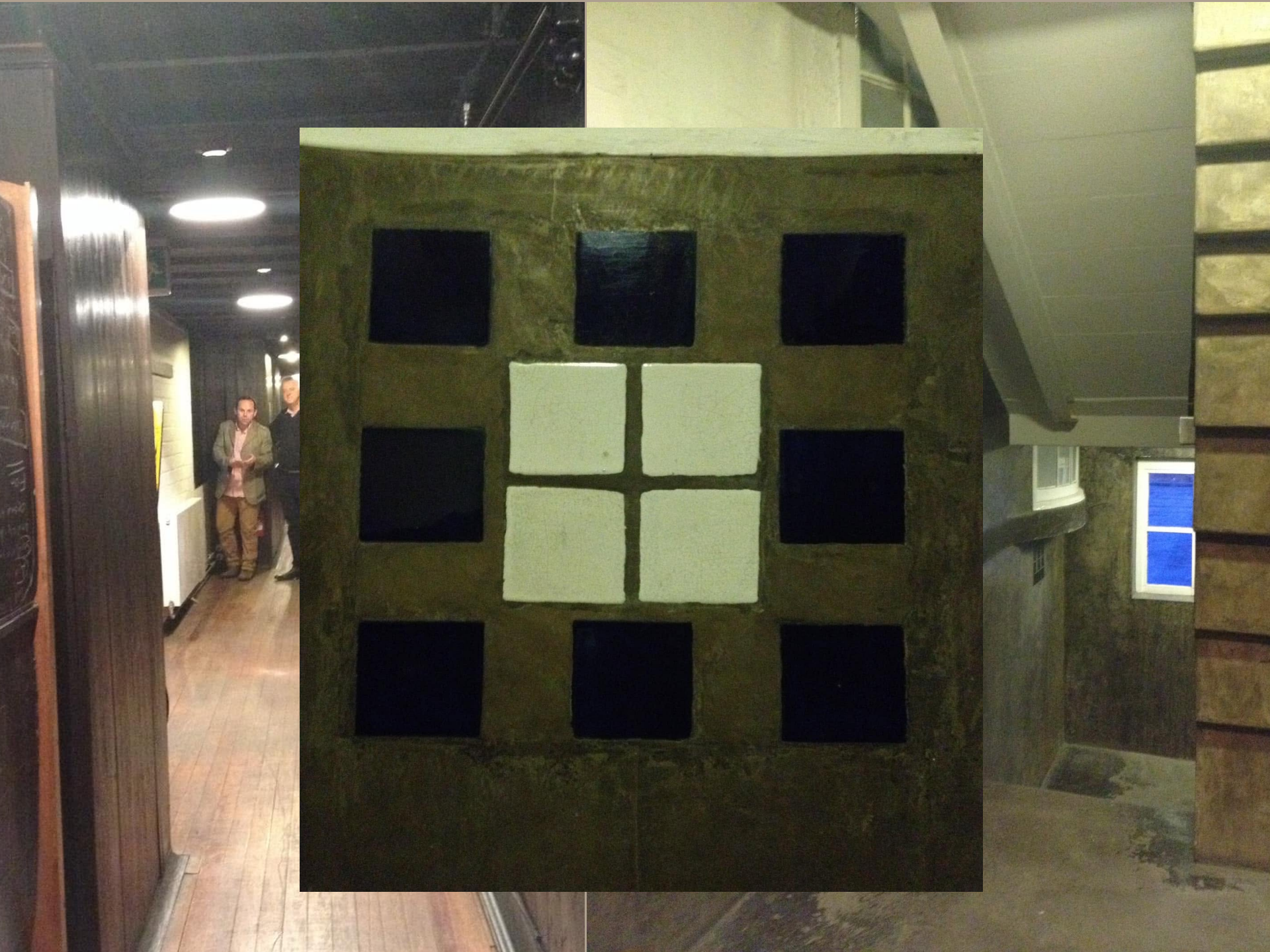
GSA Mackintosh Building
Property Protection Feasibility Study

July 2008

Revision 0 Draft





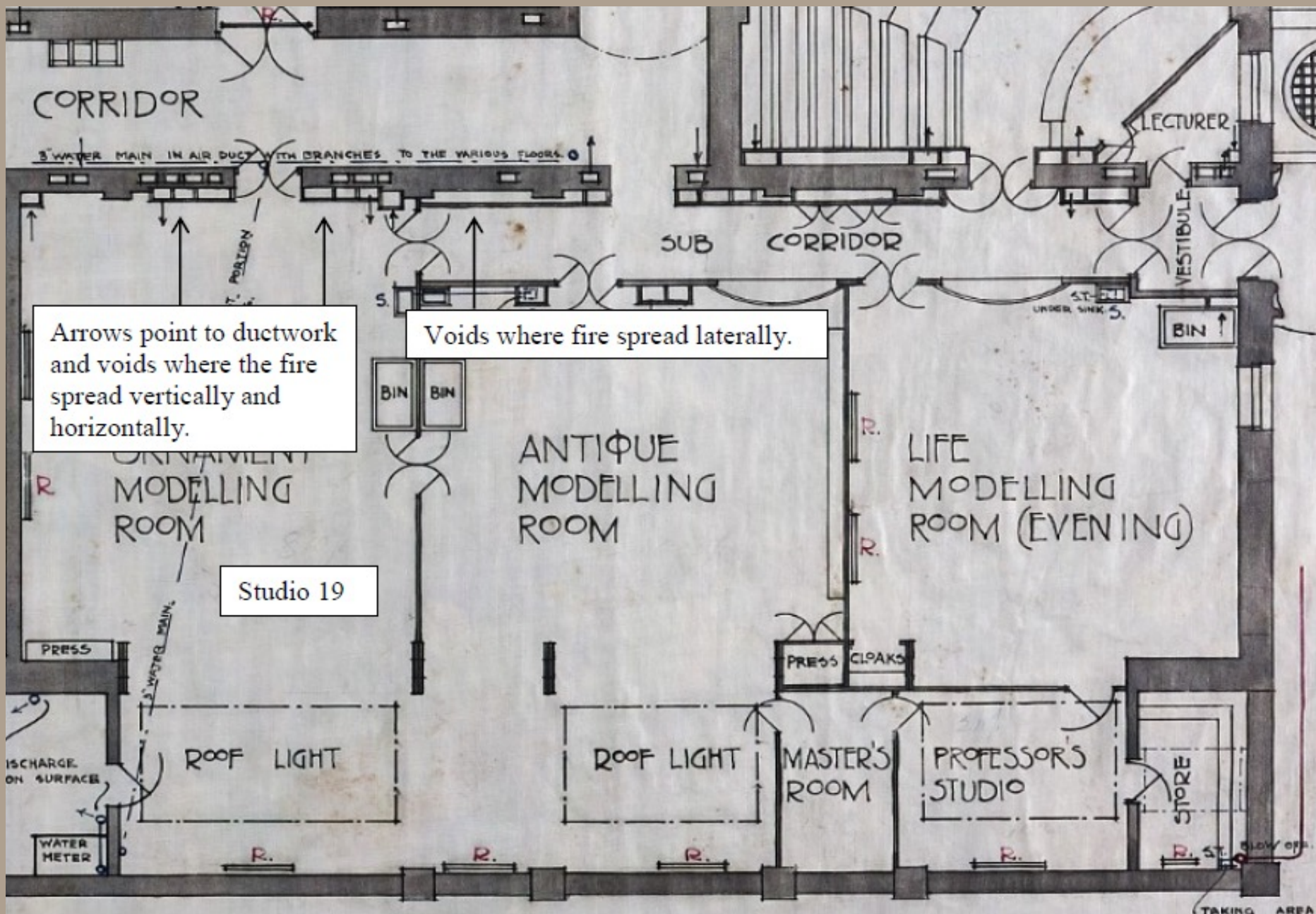








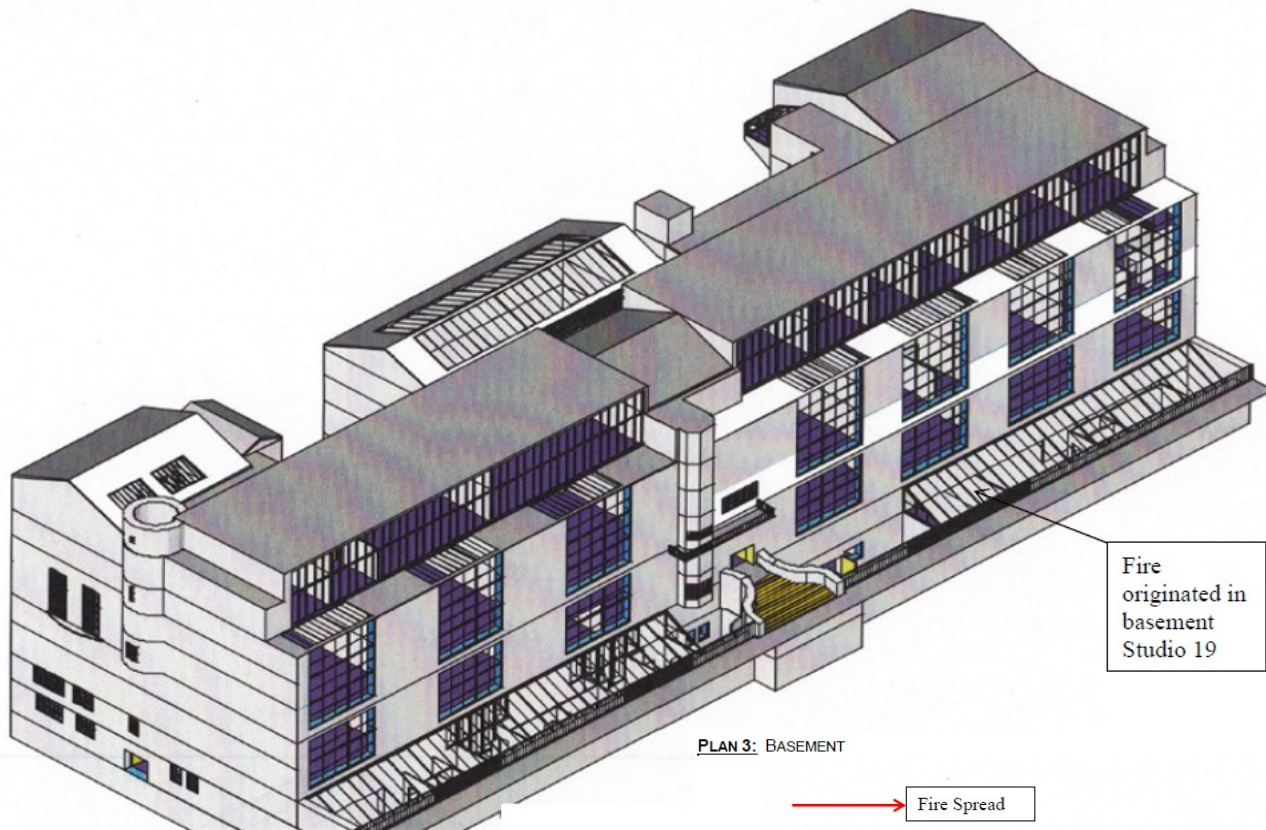




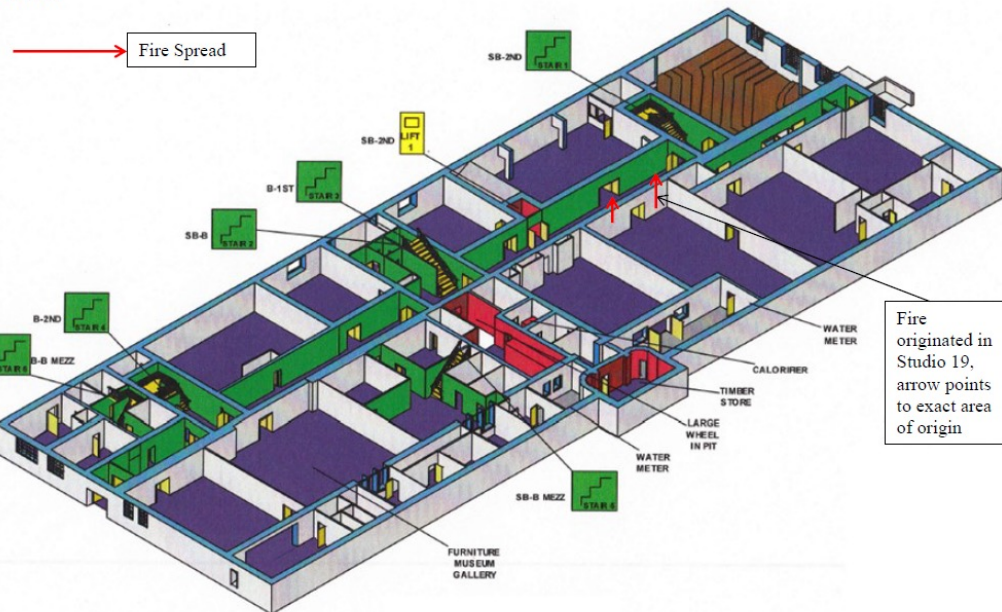
Arrows point to ductwork and voids where the fire spread vertically and horizontally.

Voids where fire spread laterally.

Studio 19



PLAN 3: BASEMENT

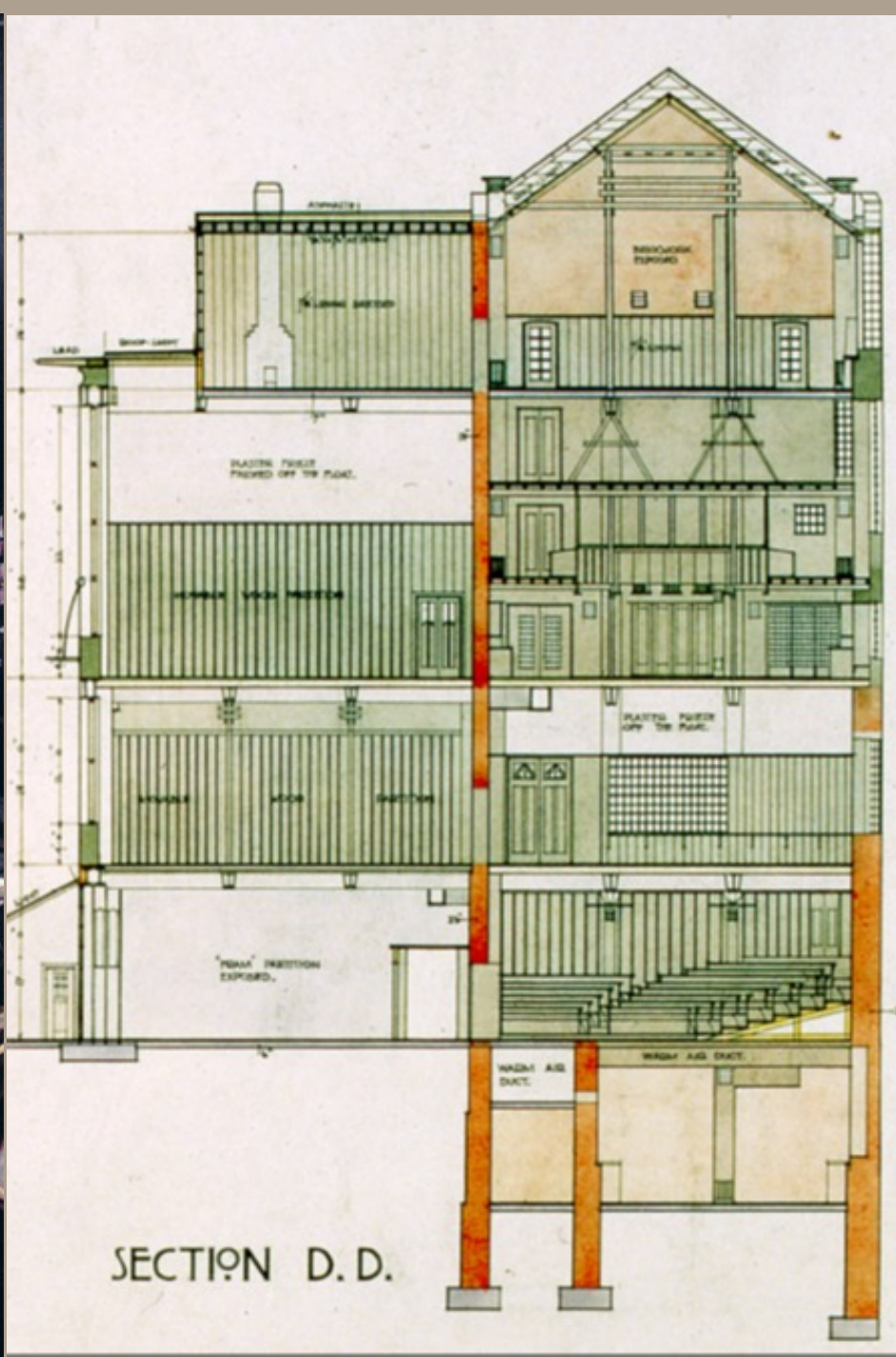






















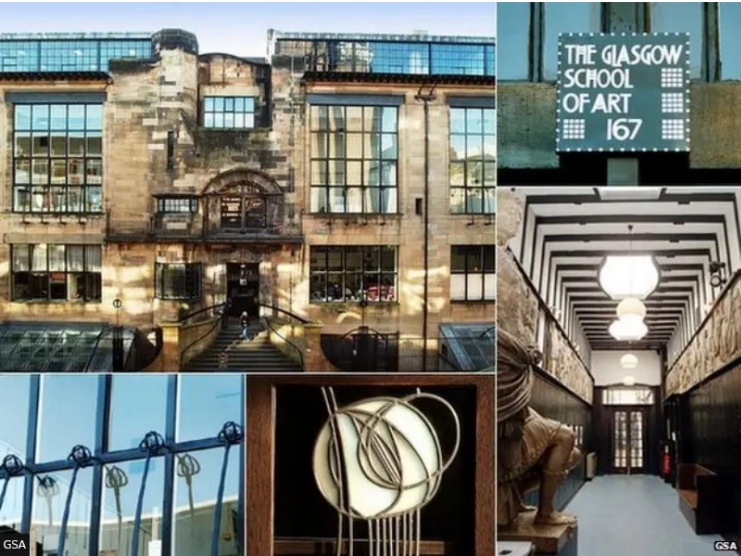






Venice meeting over fire-hit Glasgow School of Art plan

© 3 September 2014



Brad Pitt is a huge fan of Charles Rennie Mackintosh (Image: Getty)



- NEWS COMPETITIONS BUILDINGS SPECIFICATION ARCHITECTS PRACTICE MAGAZINES LIBRARY EVENTS ASK AJ
- Opinion ↓ Good Homes for All Podcasts Competition wins RetroFirst Climate change Building safety Scotland RIBA Saudi Arabia

Mackintosh restoration gets £450,000 donation

20 DECEMBER 2016 · BY [ELLA BRAIDWOOD](#)

Independent charity The Wolfson Foundation has donated £450,000 towards the restoration of the Glasgow School of Art’s fire-ravaged Mackintosh Building



Near verbatim copy and paste

Fire Spread

Para 5,
page 8

As flames and hot gases reached ceiling level of Studio 19 they spread horizontally, igniting further timber panelling and entered voids in the walls on both sides of the doorway of Studio 19.
omitted "...when these failed, hot gasses and smoke ..."

Para 6,
page 8

Flames then travelled through the voids in the walls into Studio 31 on the ground floor, directly above Studio 19. Fire spread vertically either side of the doorway and also horizontally behind the timber panelling, in a westerly direction, in Studio 31. At least four voids run vertically in the walls of Studio 31 and these allowed unchecked fire spread to areas above, as well as on the same level.

Paras 7-9,
page 8

One of these voids allowed lateral access to Studio 32 at ceiling level. From Studio 32 the fire spread through voids to the Mackintosh Library above. The construction, layout, and high fire loading (timber furniture, panelling and books) meant that the room and its contents became totally involved in the fire. From the Library the fire spread vertically via voids to the Library Storage Space above and then into Studio 58 via these same voids.

Para 10,
page 8

Returning to the ground floor within Studio 31, fire spread via all four vertical voids to the first floor Studios above 43, 44 and 45. The fire achieved this by breaking through timber panelling which cover the voids, allowing access into the corridor outside the studios.

Para 2,
page 9

Fire then spread laterally from the Professors' Studios to Studio 57. From here, the fire also spread into Studio 58.

Para 1,
page 8

A major contributory factor for the fire spreading throughout the building was the number of timber lined walls and voids, and original ventilation ducts running both vertically and horizontally throughout the building. The vertical ventilation ducts consisted of both brick-lined, (located within the walls), and timber ducts (mounted on the wall surface). The brick-lined ducts were formed within the structure of the walls. Horizontal ducts were constructed of timber and, in some instances, sheet metal. A vertical service void ran the entire height of the building to roof level and acted like a chimney. It allowed flames, hot gases and smoke to travel vertically.

← modified from para 4, page 8
- no reference to location in building or missing boarding.

A fire suppression system, designed to enhance existing fire protection measures, was being installed and was in the latter stages of completion; at the time of the fire the system it was not fully commissioned and was not operational.

Moving forward

In the immediate aftermath of the fire the GSA implemented its business recovery plan. This has ensured the School was able to maintain effective operations, including the annual Degree Show and graduation, and maintaining postgraduate taught programmes over the

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Void to the rear of studio 19

On the south wall of studio 19 there is a void that runs upwards to studio 31 above and then to the 1st and 2nd floors. Timber used to cover this void were lengths of Canadian redwood pine. Some of these panels had been removed in studio 19 to allow access to the void in order to run sprinkler pipes. The panels removed were almost directly above the location of where the projector was located.

As fire took hold and developed within studio 19 it spread easily to the studio above rapidly and unchecked via this void.

On the same south wall, fire at ceiling level of studio 19 also broke through timber panelling allowing fire to spread unchecked to the same studio above but on the other side of the entrance door into the studio. In effect flames were entering studio 31 in multiple areas along the south wall.

gases and smoke to travel vertically

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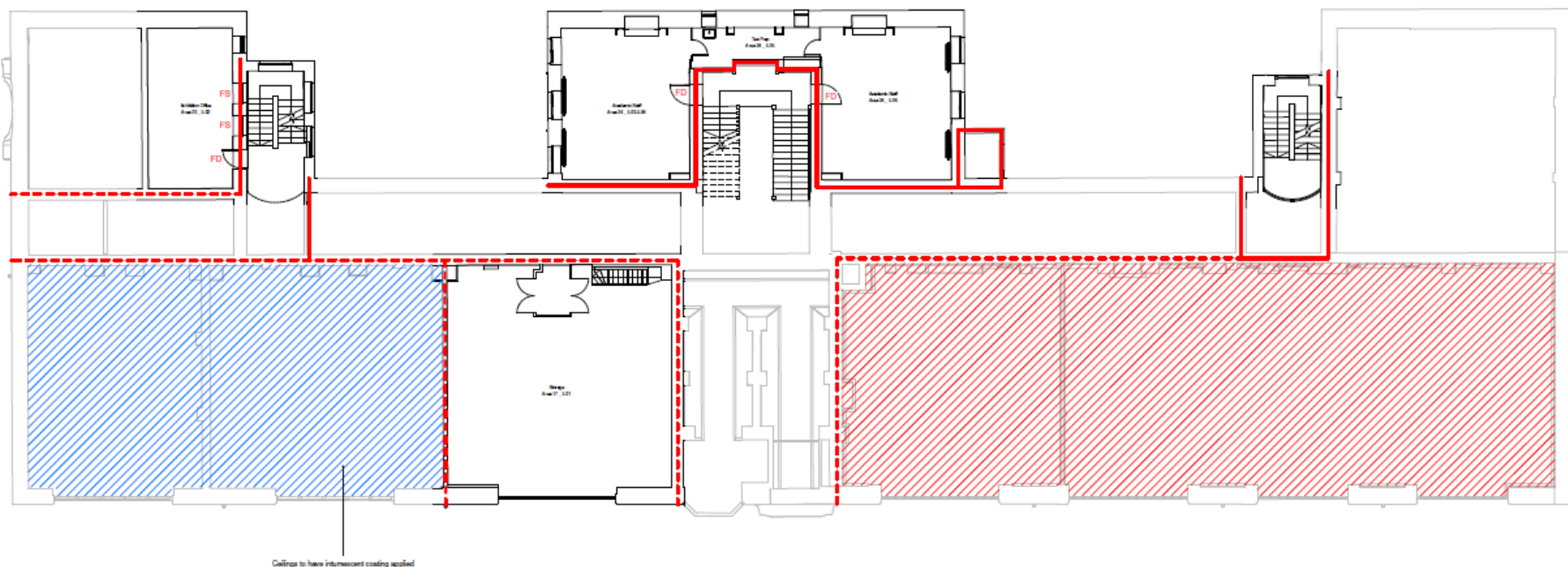












Legend

- 60min FR Compartmentation
- - - 60min FR Sub-Compartmentation
- /// Compartment Ceiling/Floor above
- /// Upgrading of linings - Intumescent coating
- Natural Smoke Vents
- FD Fire Door
- FS Fire Screen
- Single Direction Travel
- - - Two Direction Travel

Revisions: TENDER ISSUE

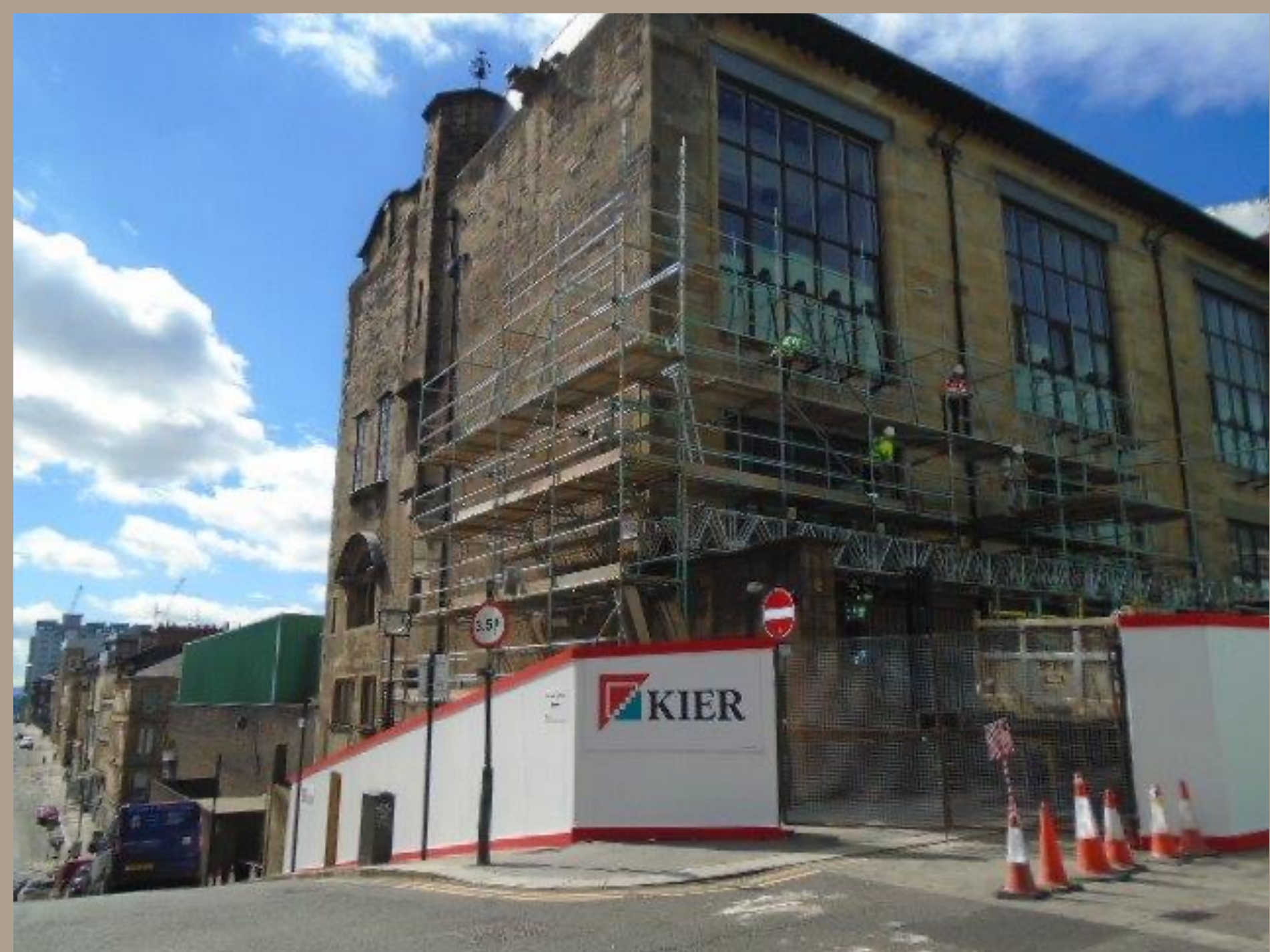
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Fire Strategy Plan
Project: GSA Mackintosh Reconstruction
Client: GSA
Drawing No: L/P-1405
Scale: 1 : 100 @ A1
Date: February 2016

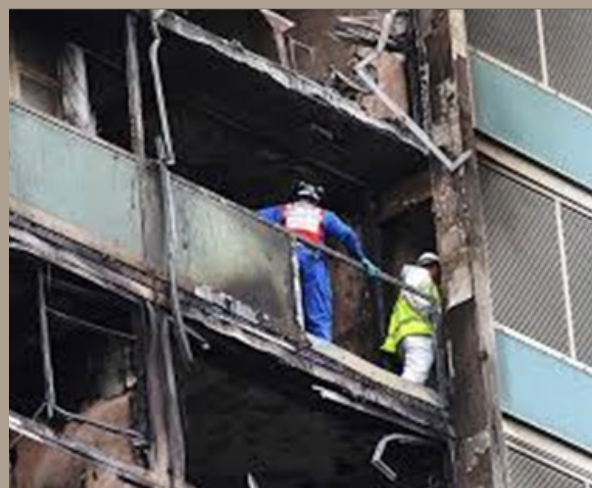
PAGE \ PARK

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Eventually the council's patience ran out and it began a long-running legal battle with construction firm Kier Northern.















Art school's fire safety system was 'weeks away'

A SAFETY system that could have saved the Glasgow School of Art from a devastating fire was just weeks away from being activated, it emerged yesterday. The British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association said pumps needed for the water mist mechanism arrived on site the day before the blaze.

By **DAVID SCOTT**

22:40, Sun, Jun 24, 2018 | UPDATED: 22:49, Sun, Jun 24, 2018

But it would have taken “a few weeks” to test and install the fire suppression system, experts said.

“What they were going to do was put all the parts into the space and then reassemble the pumps there. It would have to be connected to water tanks and tested so it was a few weeks away from being completed.”

Mr MacGillivray said it was “about the normal time” for such a system to be installed in the building but added that a temporary system could have been in place in the meantime.

“During reconstruction we recommend that you should put in a temporary system, particularly where you’ve got a building of such value.

“In fairness, they had put in a temporary smoke detection system as far as I’m aware but they hadn’t done that with a sprinkler or mist system.”

In fairness, they had put in a temporary smoke detection system as far as I’m aware but they hadn’t done that with a sprinkler or mist system

Keith MacGillivray

Glasgow School of Art chair says building management 'exemplary'

Muriel Gray regrets not doing more to communicate with local community after fire



📹 Muriel Gray was being questioned by the Scottish parliament's culture committee at Holyrood. Photograph: Ken Jack/Corbis via Getty Images

The chair of Glasgow School of Art, Muriel Gray, has defended the management of the Mackintosh building - which was gutted by fire in June - as “exemplary”, while acknowledging she could have done more to communicate in the immediate aftermath with local residents and businesses affected by the **second blaze in four years**.



Image: The first Mackintosh Memories Tea Party, via GSA Archives on Instagram

In December, the GSA hosted the first Mackintosh Memories Tea Party. The event was attended by a cross section of GSA alumni. Held in the Furniture Gallery in the Mackintosh Building, the event was organised by the GSA Archives and Collections team, Liz Davidson – Senior Project Manager of the Mackintosh Restoration Project and Kate Hollands, Alumni & Events Manager.

Many of the alumni in attendance at the event are now in their 80s, and had studied in variety of different disciplines at the GSA including Mural Design, Textile Design, Calligraphy, Commercial Art & Design, Architecture, Drawing and Painting and Sculpture.

The object of the event was not only to welcome back former students but also to gather their memories and stories of the Mackintosh Building to further inform the restoration project.

Kate Hollands said "Over tea and cake, guests related all sorts of amazing information about things that have gone on in the building over the years. It was lovely to meet them and share a few hours of conversation. It was a pleasure to welcome so many alumni who obviously hold the Mackintosh Building and the GSA in such affection. We are so pleased they came and shared their interesting and entertaining stories. Professor Tom Inns welcomed everyone to the event and we hope to plan more events of this type for other alumni year groups.

By Mark Aitken
mailto:mark@undaypost.com

Students were being taught inside the Glasgow School of Art months before a second devastating fire at the iconic building.

Despite restoration work being carried out on the Charles Rennie Mackintosh building at the time, students still visited the building as part of their studies.

It was described by one lecturer as part of an "in-depth educational experience" for art students.

Photographs on social media show students inside the building in November 2017, just seven months before the second fire, while restoration work was still being carried out.

Architect Gordon Gibb, director of professional studies at the GSA's architecture department, said the grade-A listed building would have been in a "vulnerable and dangerous" condition at the time of the visit.

Mr Gibb, who has criticised the



Students inside furniture gallery

art school board's management of the building said: "It is clear to me that the GSA regarded the use of the building, with some restriction, to be akin to 'business as usual', with the construction site seen as an attractive resource, rather than a dangerous, vulnerable enclosure that needed to be respected and avoided."

The building, known as the Mack, was heavily damaged by fire in 2014 after a projector ignited gases from a foam canister used in a student project.

It was due to reopen this year after a £32 million appeal headed by Peter Capaldi and Brad Pitt raised the money needed to restore it.

But it caught fire again a year ago in a far more devastating blaze. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service have not yet identified the cause.

GSA students were photographed posing in hard hats, high-visibility vests and protective gloves, glasses and boots next to scaffolding and ladders in a part of the building in November 2017.

But they were also pictured without protective clothing in a room known as the furniture gallery.

It was previously revealed that the room was also used to host a "Mackintosh memories tea party".

Businesses had also been taken on tours of the building as part



Picture posted on social media shows students posing inside the Mack as renovation work goes on in November 2017

So why were students being taught inside art school during rebuild?

Experts question site access between blazes



A second damaging fire rips through Glasgow School of Art in June 2018, and inset, overhead view of stricken Mackintosh building



of fundraising efforts. Mr Gibb said: "The extent of use was more restricted after (contractors) Kier were involved but, during their contract, the GSA used the building for their project office, held staff meetings, social gatherings and fundraising events and teaching was carried out in the building.

"It is also clear that personal protective equipment was not worn

all of the times. All of this occurred in a vulnerable and dangerous building without the benefit of the required compartmentation and without the benefit of the sprinklers that would have saved the building and reduced the risk to its users."

He added: "I don't believe allowing students within the building was appropriate in any circumstances."

Holyrood's culture committee

has said the board did not give sufficient priority to safeguarding the building and has called for a full public inquiry into the two fires.

According to a submission to the committee by a GSA lecturer, site visits to the Mack were made by GSA third year students as part of a "Rediscovering Mackintosh" course and an "in-depth educational experience" of the project.

Glasgow School of Art said yesterday that public access via the contractor to construction and restoration projects "under strictly managed conditions and health and safety protocols are both common and encouraged to engage the wider public".

A spokesman added the art school had "engaged in this activity for the benefit of our diverse range of stakeholders with an interest in the Mackintosh restoration".

Two weeks ago, Scottish Fire & Rescue said several hundred tonnes of debris still had to be removed from the remains of the building.

Art school contractor had an office in 'unsafe' site

Mike Wade

The main contractor at the Glasgow School of Art maintained an office within the doomed building while it was in an "unsafe state", it has emerged.

Kier Construction's office was built into the east end of the Mackintosh building at the time of the fire that completely destroyed the structure in June.

Gordon Gibb, director of professional studies at GSA, raised Kier's presence in evidence to a Scottish parliamentary committee, questioning "why the contractor's own offices were in the building when it was in an unsafe state, and why no effective building protection

measures were prioritised by the contractor or by those in the school in charge of this project".

Presented with Mr Gibb's evidence by *The Times*, Kier declined to comment, but a source representing the company said that "on some building projects it is typical to base a site management office and team on the premises of the project".

The Grade-A listed building was totally destroyed by the blaze, the second in four years. As was the case in 2014, fire suppression had been partially installed but was not operational.

"You cannot set up a site office inside a building known to be so compromised

for fire safety," said Mr Gibb, who added the Kier response was "inadequate". He went on: "Once the building is safe to be inhabited for its main function, then you can establish a site office within it. That was not the case in 'the Mack'".

"The function of a site office is no different from the building functioning safely as a building. How can you set up your site office in a building that you know is not yet safe, without providing adequate measures to ensure the proper level of safety?"

At a meeting shortly after the fire, Tom Inns, the principal of Glasgow School of Art, is understood to have told staff that it broke out in the east

wing of the building. Kier Construction declined to make further comment. The company has previously said that a fire strategy, with a smoke and heat detection system and round-the-clock patrols, was in place.

Last week, Holyrood's culture committee heard that Kier's fire safety record was "irrelevant" to its work at the school of art, according to the architect leading the refurbishment project.

David Paton, the head of reviews and resource management at Page Park architects, said he had "no concerns" about an expert report in April which highlighted Kier Construction's "extensive failures" in the installation of fire

prevention measures at a £17 million DG One leisure centre in Dumfries. The findings were published nine weeks before the second fire at the art school. Mr Paton said Kier carried out standard procedures on the art school project.

"The contractor was asked to carry out a risk assessment of that and, once it had done that, to prepare a fire safety plan. That is what the contractor did, and it then issued that plan to the team and to the client for comment," he said.

Brian McQuade, managing director of Kier Construction Scotland, said that his company has followed "good practice" throughout the Mackintosh contract.

7. Insurance Issues:

GSA elected to take out Owner Controlled Insurance Policy (OCIP) to cover the contract works on the Mackintosh Building and the undamaged parts of the building under one policy. This allowed the School to maintain full control of the insurance cover for the whole building.

Construction insurance encompasses the risks associated with property development, both new build projects and alterations to existing structures. The contract conditions operative for each project drive the insurance requirements – complex projects particularly those involving substantial existing buildings such as here with the Mackintosh are often structured so that the employer arranges the requisite insurance protection. The resultant insurance cover arranged is generically referred to as either an "Employer", "Owner" or "Principal" Controlled Insurance Programme. By controlling their own insurance programme, the employer can benefit from broader cover, better costs, greater peace of mind and more control in the event of a claim.

The Glasgow School of Art
Statement of Rebuttals

It was considered that it would assist Members if we would respond to points raised in evidence so far. We have reviewed the Committee transcripts to note the substantive points not already addressed in our written submission. This statement contains our response to those points.

1. *There has been a lack of transparency on the part of GSA:*

Since the 2014 fire, we have endeavoured to respond to the public interest in the situation as well as responding to issues raised by our students, the local community and other stakeholders. After the 2018 fire, the demand for information escalated to such an extent that we set up a website¹ to keep people up to date with developments. There has been no intention to exclude people who want to know what has happened or what happens next. Our Chairwoman has acknowledged that her Board was not entirely successful in communicating with the public in the immediate aftermath of the 2018 fire. She explained that the Board thought they were doing so but it is clear from some public feedback that the information was not getting through to everyone. Should Members conclude that the public sector would benefit from Guidelines on effective stakeholder engagement during emergency situations, we would be willing to share our experience and our processes for dealing with major incidents.

2. *The 2014 Fire Report was redacted:*

The Fire Report issued by SFRS in 2014 was only redacted to the extent that it concealed the identity of the individuals involved in the incident. The extent of the redaction was restricted to a single image, which may have identified the individuals. We have written to SFRS seeking clarification and they have stated "The Scottish Fire and Rescue Fire Investigation Report into the 2014 Glasgow School of Art fire was fully compliant with Information Governance standards at the time of its publication". For the avoidance of any doubt, GSA will continue to take all appropriate action to protect the identity of the individuals.

3. *Why was a temporary sprinkler system not installed during the construction works? "An average person looking at the situation would see it as extremely unfortunate that in both fires you were just about to put in a sprinkler system".*

This question was answered at the Hearing on 23 October by Page\Park. We confirm that, to the best of our knowledge, there is no temporary fire suppression system suitable for a building of the scale and complexity of the Mackintosh Building that could have been installed during the construction period.

Glasgow School of Art

Dear Gordon

I attended, as a member of the public, the Culture Committee Meeting when GSA(Liz Davidson, Muriel Gray, Irene McAra McWilliam) were questioned by the committee.

As you can imagine, the theatrical experience is quite different from the video recording. I have no doubt in my mind that the committee were not, in any way, convinced by the GSA answers.

I have been following your courageous (given you are a member of staff but not silenced) forensic reports and responses, as have many others, and you have my backing and a much larger world out there reading the evidence and asking important questions.

In a separate development Gordon Gibb, the school's director of professional studies, hit back at criticism made by GSA in a recent submission to the Holyrood's culture committee.

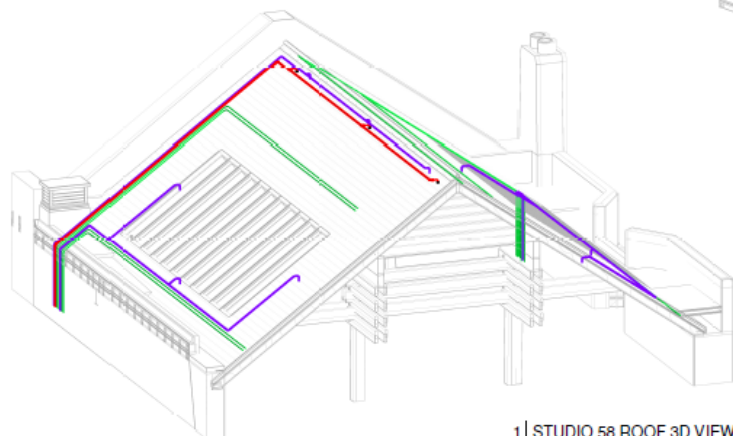
Mr Gibb, a working architect with specialist knowledge of fire regulations, rejected the school's claim that it was not possible to adapt an existing fire protection system for use during the restoration of the building.

GSA's treatment of Mr Gibb, announcing its attack on his evidence in a message to staff, was denounced by another academic. The lecturer, who asked not to be named, said: "GSA is incapable of self-reflection or awareness of any failings it has as an institution."

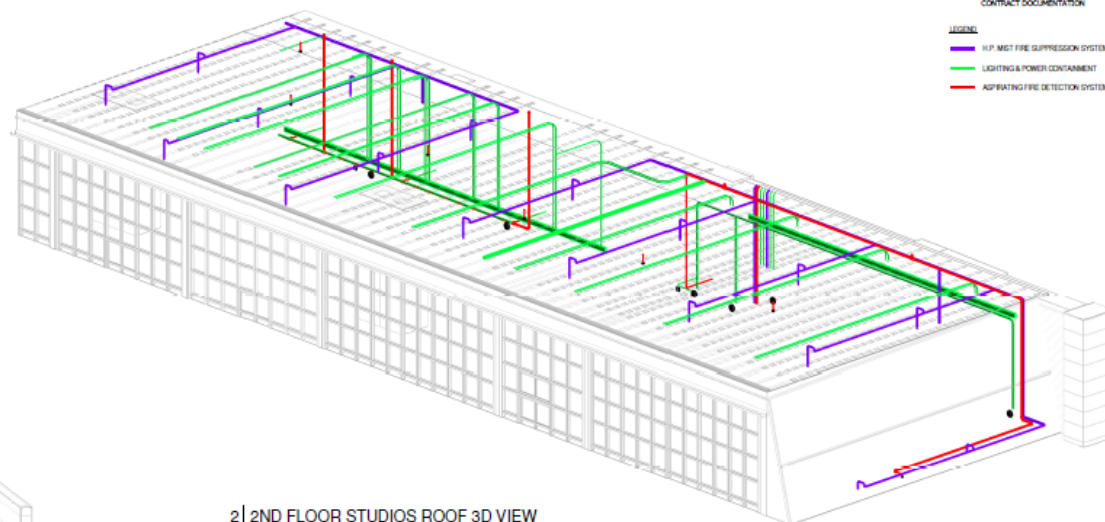
A GSA spokesman said: "Our submissions to parliament were circulated by us, internally and externally reflecting the interest of our staff, students, alumni and wider public in the work of the parliamentary committee."

LEGEND

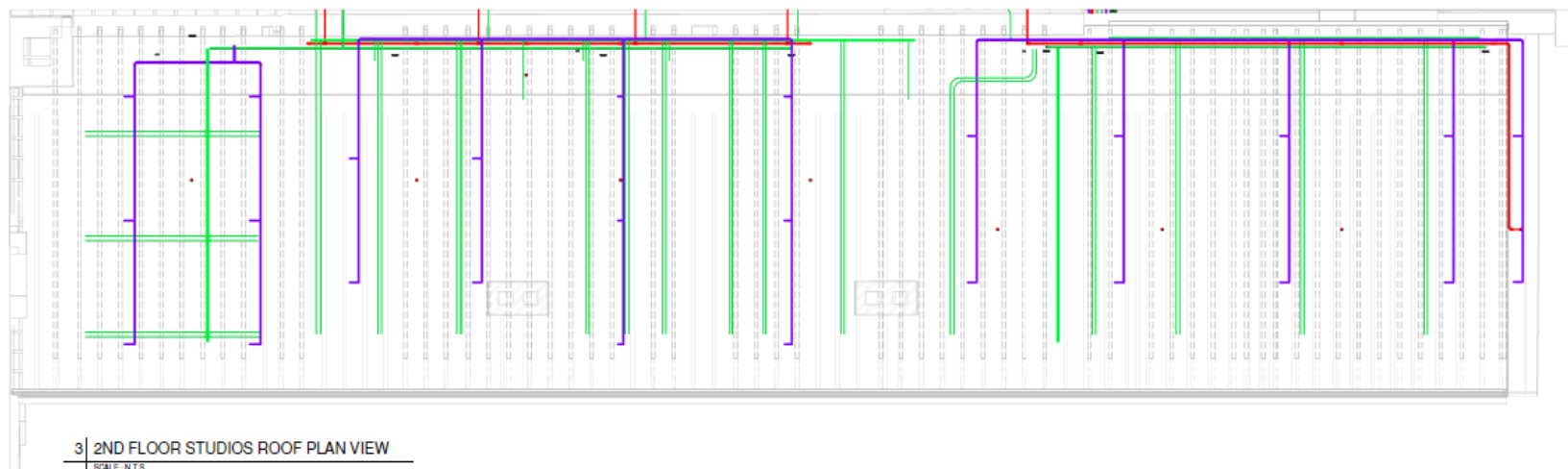
- MIP, MIST FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEM
- LIGHTING & POWER CONTAINMENT
- ASPERATING FIRE DETECTION SYSTEM



1 | STUDIO 58 ROOF 3D VIEW
SCALE: N.T.S.



2 | 2ND FLOOR STUDIOS ROOF 3D VIEW
SCALE: N.T.S.



3 | 2ND FLOOR STUDIOS ROOF PLAN VIEW
SCALE: N.T.S.

TENDER			
HARLEY HADLOW CONSULTING ENGINEERS 100-100 Farnham Road Farnham, Surrey GU10 2AA T: +44 (0)1253 328 1021 E: info@harleyhadlow.com www.harleyhadlow.com Registered in England and Wales Registered Office: Farnham, Surrey, GU10 2AA			
Project: 300011 GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART RESTORATION			
Drawing Title: MEP & FIRE SUPPRESSION CO-ORDINATION LAYOUT			
Scale: A1	Date: 09/12/15	Engineer: CH	
300011(00)001			T1

Fire expert 'puzzled' over art school mist system

© 17 January 2019



GETTY IMAGES

The building was undergoing restoration works after the previous fire in 2014

An expert said he is "incredibly puzzled" as to why a fire suppression system that survived the first Glasgow School of Art blaze was ripped out.

Holyrood's culture committee has been taking evidence on the circumstances surrounding the second blaze.

On Thursday it heard from independent fire, security and resilience adviser Stephen Mackenzie.

Speaking about the equipment, which relies on cooling mist to extinguish flames, committee member Tavish Scott asked Mr Mackenzie: "The committee wasn't told it was removed after the first fire and we are all puzzled as to why it would have been removed. Why would it have been removed?"

Mr Mackenzie said: "I'm also puzzled as an expert."



ANDREW COWAN

The committee heard from independent fire, security and resilience adviser Stephen Mackenzie

The MSP asked whether the system should have been retained until a replacement was developed.

Mr Mackenzie replied: "Categorically I've stated there should have been a temporary or phased installation and that could've been part of that basis.

"I'm incredibly puzzled to now hear that this has occurred."

The art school said it was advised the system was unusable following the blaze.

The committee also heard ventilation ducts which allowed the fire to take hold in 2014 were still in place at the time of last year's blaze as they had been due to be rectified at the end of the restoration project.

MSPs were also told by Historic Environment Scotland representatives that they could not offer any financial support for a new build of the Mackintosh building as grants are for the repair and conservation of existing historic fabric.

Referring to the mist suppression system, a Glasgow School of Art spokesman said: "As a result of the 2014 fire, considerable elements of the system were destroyed or damaged. The GSA sought expert advice which indicated that this system was unusable.

"As you would expect, the GSA wanted to take advantage of improvements in the technology and install the best system for the building.

"The installation time for the replacement system in the post-2014 restoration would have been broadly similar irrespective of the type of system commissioned."

Committee convener Joan McAlpine said members would now consider all the evidence they have heard and publish their findings and conclusions in due course.

Glasgow School of Art sought to undermine Mac fire evidence, MSPs claim

3 JUNE 2019 . BY GREG PITCHER



Source: Peter Drummond

A row has erupted between the Glasgow School of Art (GSA) and the MSPs investigating the fire that largely destroyed its famous Mackintosh Building

The argument centres on a report published by the panel of politicians **in March**, which called for a full public inquiry into the fires at the Mac in both 2014 and 2018.

Glasgow School of Art **challenged this**, saying the demands for an inquiry were premature. It stressed instead 'the importance of exploring and interrogating the expertise, knowledge and credibility of all parties involved in the production of the evidence on which the recommendation is based'.

Now the culture committee has **responded** with a hard-hitting criticism of the school's approach.

'The committee is extremely disappointed that the Glasgow School of Art's response seeks to question the credibility of the evidence provided by some of the witnesses,' said the panel. 'In reaching our conclusions, it is right that the committee takes evidence from a range of experts, all of whom have significant experience in their respective fields.'

The director of the Glasgow School of Art was forced to leave work against his will by the school's chair Muriel Gray as he led the response to a second devastating fire, we can reveal.

The turmoil at the very top of school is exposed in emails between Tom Inns and Ms Gray, who told IT staff to close his computer accounts when he refused to stop work.

The exchanges reveal how the relationship between Mr Inns, who was chief executive of the school, and the leader of the board broke down after the second fire at the iconic Charles Rennie Mackintosh building in June last year.

Broadcaster and writer Ms Gray returned from a two-month leave of absence from the art school in October and met Mr Inns days before a crucial board meeting.

Emails show that after the meeting between them Mr Inns was told he was unwell, unfit for work and should go home until school's occupational health advisers could assess him. When he refused, his IT access was suspended.

Mr Inns, responsible for 400 staff and 2,500 students, then used a personal email account to tell colleagues of the "totally bizarre position" and warned "should there be an emergency or critical incident over the weekend, our normal email communication links have been compromised".

The emails, seen by The Sunday Post, have been sent by a whistleblower to the Scottish Funding Council, which gives the art school £1.5 million in grants a year.

Calls for a public inquiry into the management of the art school have intensified in recent weeks after a Sunday Post investigation revealed how millions of pounds donated to the school after the first fire, in 2014, were used to fund the expansion of the college after insurance covered the cost of restoring the gutted building.

Yesterday Glasgow North East MP Paul Sweeney said the apparent rift among the senior leadership team exposed in the emails demands investigation, adding: "It is dismaying to see this level of dysfunctionality at the top of the management of the art school."

"It only adds to the need for a thorough public inquiry into the management of the art school and the rigour of the governance there."

Architect Gordon Gibb, director of professional studies at the GSA's architecture department, said: "There are now very clear and very serious questions about how the director left his position."

"I cannot see how the school can move forward without all those involved in his removal being held properly to account and giving the answers these questions demand."

Mr Inns was director of the art school for five years. He earned a salary and pensions package in excess of £180,000 a year, but sources suggest he received £250,000 when he left suddenly on November 2 last year. It is thought he did not return to his job after being sent home by Ms Gray three weeks earlier.

During his time in office, the building designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh and known as The Mack was twice devastated by fire.

When his resignation was announced, Ms Gray said he had "the most challenging tenure at the helm of GSA and we are truly grateful for all his enormous commitment and hard work - especially over the course of the past few months".

But behind the scenes, Ms Gray suggested he was suffering from stress after



Muriel Gray, chair of Glasgow School of Art, pictured in the Reid Building overlooking the gutted

Forced out: Emails expose turmoil at top of ravaged art school as director is told to go home against his will

Dear Tom,

I have tried to call you but have been unable to get hold of you. You are continuing to work despite being explicitly instructed to stop working until OH input regarding your fitness to work can be obtained. This is unacceptable. If I do not receive positive assurance from you by 6pm that you have ceased working, and will not carry out any work activities until you have attended OH, then I will arrange for your IT access to be temporarily removed. I do not wish to take this step but given our concerns about your fitness to work and your continuing refusal to stop working I feel I must take that decision. I would ask that you call me as a matter of urgency to discuss this.

Kind regards

Muriel

The director of the Glasgow School of Art was forced to leave work against his will by the school's chair Muriel Gray as he led the response to a second devastating fire, we can reveal.

The turmoil at the very top of school is exposed in emails between Tom Inns and Ms Gray, who told IT staff to close his computer accounts when he refused to stop work.

The exchanges reveal how the relationship between Mr Inns, who was chief executive of the school, and the leader of the board broke down after the second fire at the iconic Charles Rennie Mackintosh building in June last year.

Broadcaster and writer Ms Gray returned from a two-month leave of absence from the art school in October and met Mr Inns days before a crucial board meeting.

Emails show that after the meeting between them Mr Inns was told he was unwell, unfit for work and should go home until school's occupational health advisers could assess him. When he refused, his IT access was suspended.

Mr Inns, responsible for 400 staff and 2,500 students, then used a personal email account to tell colleagues of the "totally bizarre position" and warned "should there be an emergency or critical incident over the weekend, our normal email communication links have been compromised".

The emails, seen by The Sunday Post, have been sent by a whistleblower to the Scottish Funding Council, which gives the art school £1.5 million in grants a year.

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Kind regards

Muriel

From: Tom Inns

Date: 12 October 2018 at 23:21:10 pm BST

To:

Subject: In confidence

I am very very concerned about the position GSA has been put in this evening, I met Muriel Gray yesterday and she told me that based on her judgement I was to be signed off on sick leave due to stress and could only resume working when I had been assessed and deemed fit to work by GSAs occupational Health advisor, an interesting move when Muriel is not actually the functioning Chair of the Board at the moment and I am completely well. As a result She has told me I cannot attend GSAs Board of Governors meeting on Monday.

This is a totally bizarre situation to be put in, although the last 16 weeks have been stressful I am totally capable of fulfilling the role of GSA Director.

As a consequence of coming to work today Muriel has instructed GSAs IT team to suspend my IT access, see email below. As a result nobody can communicate with me as of this evening and I am sending you this email from my personal email account.



COMMENT

Mack's managers must accept blame for fire — and quit

Gordon Gibb

Monday May 27 2019, 12:01am, The Times

Share



Saved



Last week Glasgow School of Art's senior management claimed that they were not responsible for the two fires that destroyed the building. In response to a report by the culture committee, they claimed that their processes were faultless and the blame lay elsewhere. Behind this wall of arrogance is a different truth.

The fires spread because of management failings by GSA. Ten years after it was advised to install a high-pressure mist fire suppression system, which would have saved the building in both fires, it was still not in place.

In that period, GSA prioritised expanding the campus instead with the Reid Building and the purchase and redevelopment of Stow College.

NEWS SPECIAL

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

How art school diverted Mackintosh fire millions to fund expansion

By Mark Aitken
POLITICAL EDITOR

A global fundraising campaign raising millions of pounds to rebuild Glasgow School of Art after the fire of 2014 is under scrutiny after the school collected more than £50 million from insurers, we can reveal.

At least £20m was donated to help restore the world-famous Mackintosh building after the devastating blaze, but the rebuilding costs were covered by insurance. Two years after the fire, the art school announced a huge expansion plan and politicians are demanding a public inquiry to establish exactly how the millions of pounds donated were spent. One former senior staff member said: "The clear impression was that these donations were needed to rebuild The Mack. That was not the case."

Firefighters tackle blaze in May 2014

By Mark Aitken
mailto:aitken@sundaypost.com

More trouble at top as art school loses finance chief

Exodus as donations row rages

Glasgow School of Art has lost another executive after the finance director resigned.

Alastair Milloy is the latest senior figure to leave the school, which is facing criticism on several fronts over its stewardship of the iconic Charles Rennie Mackintosh building.

His resignation follows an exodus of 70 staff from the school since a second devastating fire last year. Forty have resigned and another 30 made redundant.

Milloy, 50, resigned as company secretary of the art school on August 31, according to official documents at Companies House, the government's register of businesses.

His resignation also came the day before The Sunday Post published the contents of emails showing art school director Tom Inns was forced to leave work against his will by chair Muriel Gray.

It is understood that Milloy, who started work at the art school in 2016, has not been at his desk since the end of last year.

Glasgow School of Art board minutes also indicate that he has not attended a board meeting since December.

Politicians have called for a



Finance director Alastair Milloy

public inquiry into the management of the school board and two fires at The Mack building in four years.

Last month, we revealed millions of pounds donated to the school after the first fire were used to fund the expansion of the art school's estate after insurance covered the cost of restoring the building.

Sandra White, MSP for Glasgow Kelvin, said: "The finances of the

art school have to be part of a public inquiry and the board has to be held to account.

"It is shrouded in secrecy and it is high time a spotlight is shone on it."

Seventy staff have left the Glasgow School of Art since the second fire in June last year.

Six have signed confidentiality agreements while payoffs to departing staff total £210,000.

Staff have privately complained of bullying and a lack of leadership from the art school board.

When approached by The Sunday Post, Milloy declined to comment.

Glasgow School of Art also refused to discuss the reason for his resignation.

A spokesperson said: "We can't comment on specific circumstances relating to individual members of staff, past or present."

Inquiry launched after donations spent on buildings untouched by fire



How we broke the story

By Mark Aitken
POLITICAL EDITOR

An international fundraising appeal launched by Glasgow School of Art after a devastating blaze is being investigated by watchdogs, we can reveal.

The inquiry has been ordered after we revealed how the art school raised at least £20 million after the fire in 2014 despite restoration costs already being covered by insurance.

Instead, the money raised from donors was spent purchasing new buildings and renovating parts of the famous Mackintosh building untouched by fire.

An investigation is now being carried out by the Scottish Fundraising Standards Panel, which adjudicates on complaints about charities.

A senior member of staff at the art school said: "The art school can forever insist that donors were clearly told where the money was going but many, if not the vast majority, clearly thought their donations were helping repair the fire damage."

"In our teaching, by act and by example, we must engender a culture of honesty and integrity."

"It is atrocious that our reputation has been thrown into question by how this appeal for funds was presented and prosecuted in Scotland and around the world."

After the 2014 fire, which was far less destructive than last year's blaze, GSA launched a celebrity appeal led by Brad Pitt and Doctor Who star Peter Capaldi for £20m to restore the iconic building designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

Two years later, after millions had been received in donations, a £32m Mackintosh Campus Appeal was launched, which now included upgrading



A forensic expert sifts through ashes of the art school library after 2014 fire

Watchdogs probe art school's £20m fundraising drive

Heads should have rolled at the GSA

the unaffected east wing of the building and burying nearby Stow College.

The art school said this new appeal reflected "that what the school needed to recover from the fire had become clearer".

However, fundraising continued to focus on repairing the fire damage even after the insurance money totalling more than £50m was received.

A fundraiser at a New York restaurant, where tables of 10 cost

£3,500, was held to help "the GSA recover from the almost catastrophic fire in its iconic and beautiful Mackintosh building".

A Christie's auction of works by 25 leading artists, including Turner Prize-winning Grayson Perry, raised more than £700,000. It was also intended to "raise funds and publicity for the rebuilding of the school".

Higher Education Minister Richard Lochhead confirmed the investigation last week when

he told MSPs: "I recognise that members are also concerned about the use of funds raised through public donations."

"I understand that the Scottish Fundraising Standards Panel is considering that matter at the moment, in light of many reports in the media."

Holyrood's culture, tourism, Europe and external affairs committee has been taking evidence about the art school fire and has called for a public inquiry.

MSPs praised The Sunday Post for our reports into the management of the art school, including £1.25m being spent on converting a building for students before the plan was abandoned, resignations of senior management and an exodus of 70 staff in the past year, some of whom were asked to sign non-disclosure agreements.

In the debate on Wednesday, MSPs said there were a number of questions still to be answered, including whether the fire alarm was on and the level of insurance cover.

Glasgow MSP Pauline McNeill criticised management for being unable to say if a fire alarm was on on the night of the second fire, which had been burning for up to an hour before firefighters arrived on the scene.

She said: "The management of the building did not know whether the fire alarm system was on on the night of the fire, and the fact that no one has been held accountable for that is one of the most damning aspects of the episode."

"For that alone, heads should have rolled at the GSA. That, in itself, should be the subject of a public inquiry."

Muriel Gray, who has temporarily stood down as art school board chair, insisted last September that the Mackintosh building was "absolutely coming back" and the restoration costs would be covered by insurance.

But the art school has refused to say how much the building is insured for. Some experts believe restoration could cost over £200 million, double the figure quoted last year.

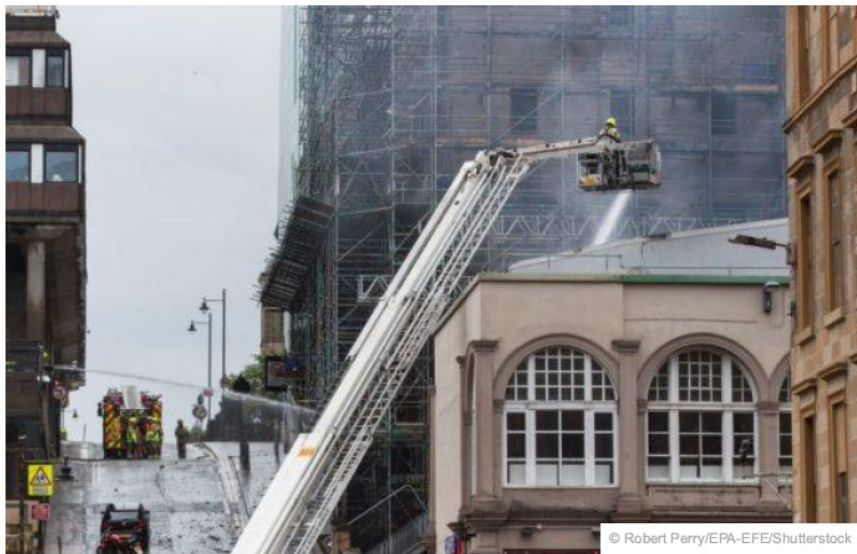
MSP and culture committee member Annabelle Ewing said: "Representatives of the GSA said that they would make the policy public, but subsequently refused to do so."

"Therefore, we have no idea what cover is in place, the conditions that are set forth in the cover, the value of the cover, whether the policy will be paid out in full or at all, and when the policy will be paid out."

"That is simply not acceptable – not least because the public purse paid the insurance premiums."

The £807,000 Mack exodus: Payoffs to staff soar at ravaged art school as pressure builds on the board

By Mark Aitken March 1, 2020, 2:01 pm



Firefighters attending the scene of the 2018 fire at the Glasgow School of Art's Mackintosh building

More than £800,000 was paid to staff leaving the Glasgow School of Art after the second devastating blaze in 2018, we can reveal.

THE APPEALS

Glasgow School of Art supporters make a series of appeals for public donations stressing need to rebuild Mackintosh building after 2014 fire

We are determined to restore the building to its former glory, as the inspirational home for the GSA's creative talent and for the delight of visitors from across the UK and the world

— SCHOOL DIRECTOR TOM INNS, JUNE 27, 2014

Your donation will help the GSA to recover from the effects of the fire in the Mackintosh building

— MACKINTOSH CAMPUS APPEAL, 2016

As well as being a stylish and fun evening, you will also be helping the GSA recover from the almost catastrophic fire in its iconic and beautiful Mackintosh building

— INVITE TO GALA DINNER IN NEW YORK, 2016

Our plan was to send charcoal from the fire to world-famous artists, asking them to turn it into art. The art would then be auctioned to raise funds and publicity for the restoration of the iconic Mackintosh building

— ASH TO ART AUCTION PLANNERS, MARCH 8, 2017

For all of those who are passionate about architecture, fans of Mackintosh, sons of Glasgow, daughters of Glasgow, and are keen to support the creative talent of the future, whether that is artists, designers or architects, get in touch with me and tell me how they can help

— ALAN HORN, GSA DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT, 2017

By Mark Aitken
POLITICAL EDITOR

An international appeal that raised £50 million to rebuild Glasgow School of Art after a devastating fire is under scrutiny after it emerged insurance payouts covered the restoration work. Insurers paid out more than £50m to rebuild the world-famous Mackintosh building after the blaze in 2014 destroyed the iconic architectural masterpiece, we can reveal. Politicians yesterday demanded a public inquiry to establish how millions of pounds donated by the public to rebuild the world-famous building was spent by Glasgow School of Art (GSA), which launched ambitious expansion plans two years after the fire.

Senior sources say the art school failed to make clear where the donations were being spent and that cash given to rebuild the Mackintosh was, in fact, spent on purchasing new buildings and renovating parts of the building, known as The Mack, untouched by the fire.

One former senior member of staff said: "Donors were led to believe they were helping to rebuild The Mack but the insurance covered that. Between the insurance payouts and the donations, there was a huge surplus and that was diverted to finance wider campus growth."

The management and governors were obsessed with growing student numbers and expanding the estate. "The pictures of the devastation were very emotive and there was widespread sympathy for the Mackintosh building after the 2014 fire. People gave millions of pounds to help."

There is certainly a feeling that the board and management did not do enough to dispel the idea that public donations were needed to rebuild The Mack. Some would suggest they did nothing at all to dispel that idea. Others would, in fact, say they encouraged it.

That was the reason that so many people gave money. They believed their donations were needed to rebuild The Mack. They weren't. "If they felt it was appropriate to take the money specifically given to rebuild the Mackintosh building and spend it on other projects then they should have said so and asked every donor if they were happy with that or wanted their money back? That did not happen."

The 110-year-old Charles Rennie Mackintosh building was badly damaged in the fire in May 2014, with about 10% of the structure destroyed, including the famous wood-paneled library in the west wing, and a third of its contents.

Despite insurance policies being in place, GSA launched a star-studded appeal led by Mackintosh admirer Brad Pitt and Doctor Who star Peter



The insurance money covered The Mack. There was no need to raise a pound from the public. So why did they raise £20m?

— A FORMER SENIOR MEMBER OF STAFF

Art school's 'forbidden' events

Anger over decision to use Macintosh building as venue before fire

Mike Wade

Glasgow School of Art hosted "forbidden" events in the vulnerable Mackintosh building that lacked any fire suppression system, it has been claimed.

A photograph on the school's website shows alumni gathering around an audio-visual display in December enjoying a "Mackintosh Memories Tea Party". The 2014 fire that devastated much of

the building began when a projector ignited gases from a foam canister used in a student project.

The image appears to show the same type of equipment being deployed again in the partially restored A-listed building.

A senior figure at the art school said that he was flabbergasted by the image of guests in part of the building known as the Furniture Gallery while construction work was going on elsewhere

and with no fire suppression system in place.

Gordon Gibb, an architect and director of professional studies at GSA, said: "The art school didn't just occupy discrete offices but used vulnerable areas deep in the heart of the building and brought in large numbers of people with no adequate safety provision or PPE [personal protection equipment]."

"A client may not do so on a construction site, it is forbidden. This was a

historic building under reconstruction; they were forbidden to be in there. They lacked necessary respect for the Mackintosh building."

Mr Gibb added: "They stored flammable materials in it, they operated computers, cooking facilities and kettles. They even had a television and used an AV projector, the piece of equipment that caused the first fire when it ignited filler foam."

In an interview published today in

The Times, Muriel Grey, chairwoman of the art school's board, denied that industry guidelines had been ignored.

Professor Tom Inns, the principal, resigned on Friday, prompting Paul Sweeney, the MP for Glasgow North East, to call for the entire board to leave "en masse".

In a turbulent few days for the art school, it was revealed on Saturday that GSA had occupied the Janitor's House, Continued on page 2, col 3

MSPs to scrutinise claims of smoke and mirrors at devastated art school

By Mark Aitken
POLITICAL EDITOR

Holyrood will debate the management of an iconic art school accused of diverting funds – raised after a devastating fire – into expansion plans.

MSPs last week decided the issues raised in a series of Sunday Post reports demanded to be heard at the Scottish Parliament.

In addition to concerns surrounding the fundraising drive launched by the Glasgow School of Art after a fire in 2014, we revealed a schism in the executive team after the second fire last year, with the institution's director forced out of his job.

Earlier this year the Parliament's culture committee, chaired by Joan McAlpine, criticised the school in a report into the most recent fire at the building designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, saying managers did not do enough to protect the building.

Since then, The Sunday Post has revealed how insurance payouts



covered the restoration to The Mack after the first fire in 2014 while millions raised from donors was spent purchasing new buildings and renovating parts of the building untouched by fire.

The culture committee will now seek time in the main chamber for all MSPs to debate the revelations.



Culture committee chair Joan McAlpine, left, and, top, how we reported the story

Ms McAlpine said: "Our report raised serious concerns and, since then, The Sunday Post has revealed other areas of concern that I am sure many MSPs will wish to debate in Parliament.

"There are issues around the management of the art school, the decision-making process, the amount of attention paid to making

the building fire-safe and whether they sufficiently prioritised the Mackintosh building.

"Our committee did not look at the areas around fundraising and what funds were being used for but, given The Sunday Post's revelations since then, I would imagine a number of MSPs will want to bring that to Parliament's attention."

Politicians have also demanded a public inquiry into the management of the art school, with The Sunday Post revealing director Tom Inns was forced to leave work against his will by the school's then-chairwoman Muriel Gray.

Two weeks ago, the art school lost another executive after finance director Alastair Milloy resigned.

More than 40 staff have resigned since the second blaze and 30 have been made redundant. Pay-offs to departing staff totalled £210,000.

The Glasgow School of Art said: "If there is a debate in the full chamber before the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service report is published, it will be an opportunity for speculations and inaccuracies that have been circulating in the media of late to be addressed."

Asked to specify a single inaccuracy in Sunday Post reports, she declined to comment.

Because of the report issue, Muriel Gray was interviewed on Radio 4 on 8 March 2019 and this interview was repeated throughout the day on the PM programme and on the news. In this interview she made adverse comments about me, stating amongst other things *"Mr Gibb is not an expert"*. This was noted by a number of listeners who reported it to me.

On 11 March 2019, an "All Staff Question and Answer Session" was held in the school, which Muriel Gray and Professor Irene McAra McWilliam hosted in the Reid Lecture Theatre. In this event Muriel Gray claimed that the Parliamentary Committee had got it entirely wrong, that the GSA rebuttal had been issued setting them straight on all issues and that the restoration had been a "success". After six questions taken from staff members, I raised my hand. Muriel Gray then declared: *"We are taking questions from all staff members except Gordon Gibb"*. I questioned this approach and was told firmly that no questions would be taken from me, even though there were calls from other staff members for me to be heard. The meeting was then ceased with immediate effect after less than 20 minutes.

I commenced a grievance process with the school on 15 March 2019. After a two-month delay, a grievance meeting was held on 14 May 2019. Three days later, on 17 May 2019, the school issued two press releases stating that *"unsubstantiated speculation was accorded the status of fact"*. In the longer release, the GSA state that they *"strongly refute Mr Gibb's claim that the GSA did not comply with the Joint Fire Code and maintains its position ... That there was not a 95% complete mist suppression system following the 2014 fire"*.

Subsequently, I was advised by a member of the panel at 9.00 am on 26 May 2019 that the grievance process had been delayed. On that same day, a further press release communication was issued to the press by the GSA, again naming me and criticising me. It was intended for publication, issued at 2.00 pm under the instruction *"We'd ask that the full quote be used please"* and reads as follows:

"A spokesperson for The Glasgow School of Art said:

"It is to say the least disappointing that both as an architect and an academic Mr Gibb has seemingly failed to read and understand the expert submissions made to the CTEEA committee, and made public, regarding the installation of first mist suppression system and the GSA management of the Mackintosh Building. To be clear, this system was being introduced proactively by the GSA as an additional measure into what he should be aware was a fully fire complaint building.

Given his position as Director of Professional studies it is particularly important that he not only understands, but teaches the next generation of architects the roles of the client and the contractor. He should be aware that under the laws of Scotland, the client has to hand the site over to the contractor, in this case Kier, who had full day to day responsibility for it up and until the time of the 2018 fire.

Any questions he has concerning the fire system which the GSA had planned for when the building was handed back by Kier and became an art school once more will be fully addressed in the parliamentary information. Any questions he has regarding the fire plan from 2016 – 2018 should be addressed to Kier who have yet to release this either to the committee or the public."

By Mark Aitken
mailto:ma@kitten@sundaypost.com

Critics have questioned the appointment of a director at the troubled Glasgow School of Art to the board of the country's higher education funding body.

Art school director Irene McAra-McWilliam is one of seven people appointed by further education minister Richard Lochhead to join the board of the Scottish Funding Council.

But, in August, the body was asked by a whistleblower to investigate the management of the art school.

The funding council – which gave the art school a grant of £17 million this year – received from the whistleblower copies of emails revealing how art school director Tom Inns was forced to leave work against his will by chairwoman Muriel Gray.

Meanwhile, Inns resigned in November last year and was replaced by professor McAra-McWilliam, who has worked at the art school since 2005. She was appointed deputy director (innovation) in 2016.

The Charles Rennie Mackintosh building has been left in ruins since a second fire last year, but at a Scottish Parliament committee last November professor McAra-McWilliam

Clear and present conflict: Critics on art school director's board role



Irene McAra-McWilliam

joined then chair Muriel Gray in defending the art school board's custodianship. In a Scottish Parliament debate 10 days ago, Lochhead refused to commit to a public inquiry.

Glasgow Labour MSP Pauline McNeill said: "It is as if the Scottish Government don't appreciate it is a public institution. It is like they are washing their hands of it, and they have compounded it by not seeing the absolute conflict of interest here.

Muriel Gray back to lead troubled school of art

By Mark Aitken
mailto:aitken@sundaypost.com

Glasgow School of Art chairwoman Muriel Gray is to return to the institution this week.

The broadcaster and writer temporarily stood down from her role last June, almost a year after a second fire engulfed the iconic Charles Rennie Mackintosh building.

Staff became aware of her return when she sent an email inviting them to meet the school's new governors on Thursday.

She said it would be a "great opportunity to find out more about our new governors and their plans for working with the board".

Ms Gray temporarily stood down last June for personal reasons. She said at the time: "Given the challenges the school has faced over the past 12 months this was an incredibly difficult decision to take."

Three months previously, MSPs on the Scottish Parliament's culture committee had accused the art school of failing to protect the Mackintosh building which was devastated by two fires in 2014 and 2018. Professor



Muriel Gray

Nora Kearney, who was vice-chair, took over as interim chair in Ms Gray's absence.

The art school is currently searching for a new director. Former director Tom Inns was forced to leave work after a rift with Ms Gray, as revealed in emails first published by The Sunday Post.

Two weeks ago, leading architect and academic Gordon Gibb was sacked as director of professional studies at the GSA's architecture department after criticising the school board in The Sunday Post and social media.

A Glasgow School of Art spokesperson said yesterday: "We are delighted to have her back."

Fired: Art school board sack director, architect and fierce critic

Academic will fight dismissal

By Mark Aitken
POLITICAL EDITOR

Glasgow School of Art's under-fire board has sacked one of its biggest critics.

Leading architect and academic Gordon Gibb was sacked for breach of contract after criticising the school board in The Sunday Post and social media.

He spoke out in August when The Sunday Post told how a global fundraising campaign raising millions of pounds to rebuild the world-famous Charles Rennie Mackintosh building after a fire of 2014 was under scrutiny after the school collected more than £50 million from insurers.

At least £20m was donated to help restore the building after the devastating blaze, but restoration costs were covered by insurance.

Mr Gibb wrote at the time: "At the most senior level, on the board and in the directorate, the poor decision-making and inept stewardship of this famous institution demands inquiry."

He previously told MSPs on the Scottish Parliament's culture committee that the Mackintosh building should be taken out of the hands of its board after two devastating fires in four years.

Mr Gibb was director of professional studies at the GSA's architecture department for 16 years.

He said yesterday: "I shall appeal. I intend to take this all the way. I

want my job back and those who have done this must go."

A former colleague of Mr Gibb said: "This decision to instantly dismiss Gordon was made by managers in haste and in secret without due process."

"For that to happen at a time when ongoing professional studies support is required for the students engaged in the courses and just before critical examinations, with no contingency in place, smells of desperation."

"One has to wonder if there are scared staff and board members needing to remove dissenters in advance of the arrival of the new GSA director."

Last month The Sunday Post revealed director Irene

I shall appeal. I intend to take this all the way

McAra-McWilliam was quitting the role and returning to her previous position.

Since the second fire in June 2018, the art school has seen the resignations of director Tom Inns and finance director Alastair Milloy.

According to a leaked report for the crisis-hit art school last year, one in three staff feels "unduly stressed" at work and one in eight feels harassed or bullied.

The Sunday Post also revealed an exodus of 70 staff from the school since a second devastating fire at the building in 2018. Forty resigned and another 30 were made redundant.

A GSA spokesperson said: "We don't comment on members of staff, current or past."

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Muriel Gray back to lead troubled school of art

By Mark Aitken
mailto:maifken@sundaypost.com

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Muriel Gray

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The art school is currently searching for a new director. Former director Tom Inns was forced to leave work after a rift with Ms Gray, as revealed in emails first published by The Sunday Post.

Two weeks ago, leading architect and academic Gordon Gibb was sacked as director of professional studies at the GSA's architecture department after criticising the school board in The Sunday Post and social media.

A Glasgow School of Art spokesperson said yesterday: "We are delighted to have her back."

Fired: Art school board sack director, architect and fierce critic

A GSA spokesperson said: "We don't comment on members of staff, current or past."

"A spokesperson for The Glasgow School of Art said:

"It is to say the least disappointing that both as an architect and an academic Mr Gibb has seemingly failed to read and understand the expert submissions made to the CTEEA committee, and made public, regarding the installation of first mist suppression system and the GSA management of the Mackintosh Building. To be clear, this system was being introduced proactively by the GSA as an additional measure into what he should be aware was a fully fire complaint building.

Given his position as Director of Professional studies it is particularly important that he not only understands, but teaches the next generation of architects the roles of the client and the contractor. He should be aware that under the laws of Scotland, the client has to hand the site over to the contractor, in this case Kier, who had full day to day responsibility for it up and until the time of the 2018 fire.

Any questions he has concerning the fire system which the GSA had planned for when the building was handed back by Kier and became an art school once more will be fully addressed in the parliamentary information. Any questions he has regarding the fire plan from 2016–2018 should be addressed to Kier who have yet to release this either to the committee or the public."

SFRS Investigation Report and the Glasgow School of Art

Background

The Committee's predecessor – the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations (CTEER) Committee – undertook an inquiry to ascertain what lessons could be learned from the second fire. The Committee's report, *The Glasgow School of Art Mackintosh Building: The loss of a national treasure*, was published in March 2019, and stated:

“The Committee considers from the evidence gathered that the Mackintosh fires raise a host of associated issues which go beyond the cause of the fire itself and as such require further examination.”

Furthermore, in its Legacy Report, published at the end of session 5, the CTEER Committee concluded:

“The Committee highlights the recommendation, to a successor Committee, that after the conclusion of the SFRS investigation, the Scottish Government should establish a public inquiry with judicial powers into the 2014 and 2018 fires at the Glasgow School of Art. The inquiry should also examine the risks posed by fire in historic buildings nationally and the ability of custodians to manage these properties, drawing on the lessons learned from the GSA. In response to the Committee's report, the Scottish Government committed to explore what options there may be to carry out a fire mitigation review of A listed buildings in public and major institutional ownership. The Committee understands this work is ongoing and is being carried out in conjunction with Historic Environment Scotland. Our successor may consider it appropriate to write requesting an update regarding this work.”

Inadequate risk management and compartmentation contributed to Glasgow School of Art fires: Parliament report



Ron Alalouff

6 years

The delayed installation of a water mist suppression system and presence of obsolete ventilation ducts exacerbated two fires at the Glasgow School of Art (GSA), Scottish MSPs have concluded in a [new report](#).

The report into the fires in 2014 and 2018 by the Scottish parliament's culture committee pulled no punches over what it called the GSA's attitude in taking precautions against the risk of fire at the Mackintosh building, especially during the restoration of the building after the first fire in 2014.

The committee also called for a public inquiry with judicial powers into the circumstances surrounding the two fires, examining what lessons might be learned from them and ascertaining the wider fire risks to historic buildings.

The MSPs also found that the GSA did not give sufficient priority to safeguarding the Macintosh building, and that its board had insufficient expertise in managing a building of this nature. They also recommend that the Scottish Government review the remit of Historic Environment Scotland to ensure it has sufficient powers to intervene to protect such buildings.

The committee found no evidence to back the assertion that fire safety measures went 'above and beyond' the standards required

Among its findings, the committee concluded that:

- In the period up to 2014, the GSA appears not to have specifically addressed the heightened risk of fire to the Mackintosh building
- It was not convinced that an adequate risk management approach to the Mackintosh building had been taken by the GSA
- It was concerned about the length of time taken for a mist suppression system to be installed, and questions whether more could have done in the interim period to protect the building
- The GSA has been unable to publicly articulate what lessons were learned from the 2014 fire
- The committee found no evidence to back the GSA's assertion that the fire safety measures it had taken were 'above and beyond' the standards required
- It was not convinced that GSA has taken an adequate risk management approach
- It could not determine whether the fire alarm system was switched on and fully operational on the night of the 2018 fire.

Glasgow School of Art after the second fire
(Credit: [Thomas Nugent](#) under [Creative Commons Licence](#).)

Mac fire report finally published

25 JANUARY 2022 • BY RICHARD WAITE

The Scottish fire service has finally published its report into the devastating blaze at the Glasgow School of Art (GSA) – but the cause remains a mystery

The landmark Charles Rennie Mackintosh building was gutted on 15 June 2018 while undergoing a £35 million restoration programme following an earlier fire in 2014.

However, after a ‘complex and resource-intensive investigation’, which has taken the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) more than three and a half years to complete, firefighters have finally admitted they still don’t know how it started.

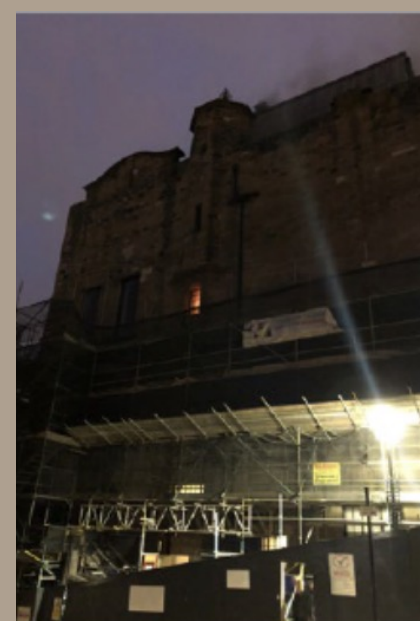
Ross Haggart, SFRS deputy chief officer, said the ongoing restoration and construction works, combined with other factors such as the air supply into the building, meant the fire was ‘unfortunately able to take hold, spread and ultimately cause catastrophic damage’.

A 72-page report released today (25 January) officially recorded the cause as ‘undetermined’. The SFRS said its inquiries had been hampered by the ‘extensive damage sustained at the site and physical evidence being destroyed in the fire’.

However, firefighters believe the fire began on the east side of the 1909 building on or above level four.



Figure 4 – Key points



Photograph taken at 23:19hrs

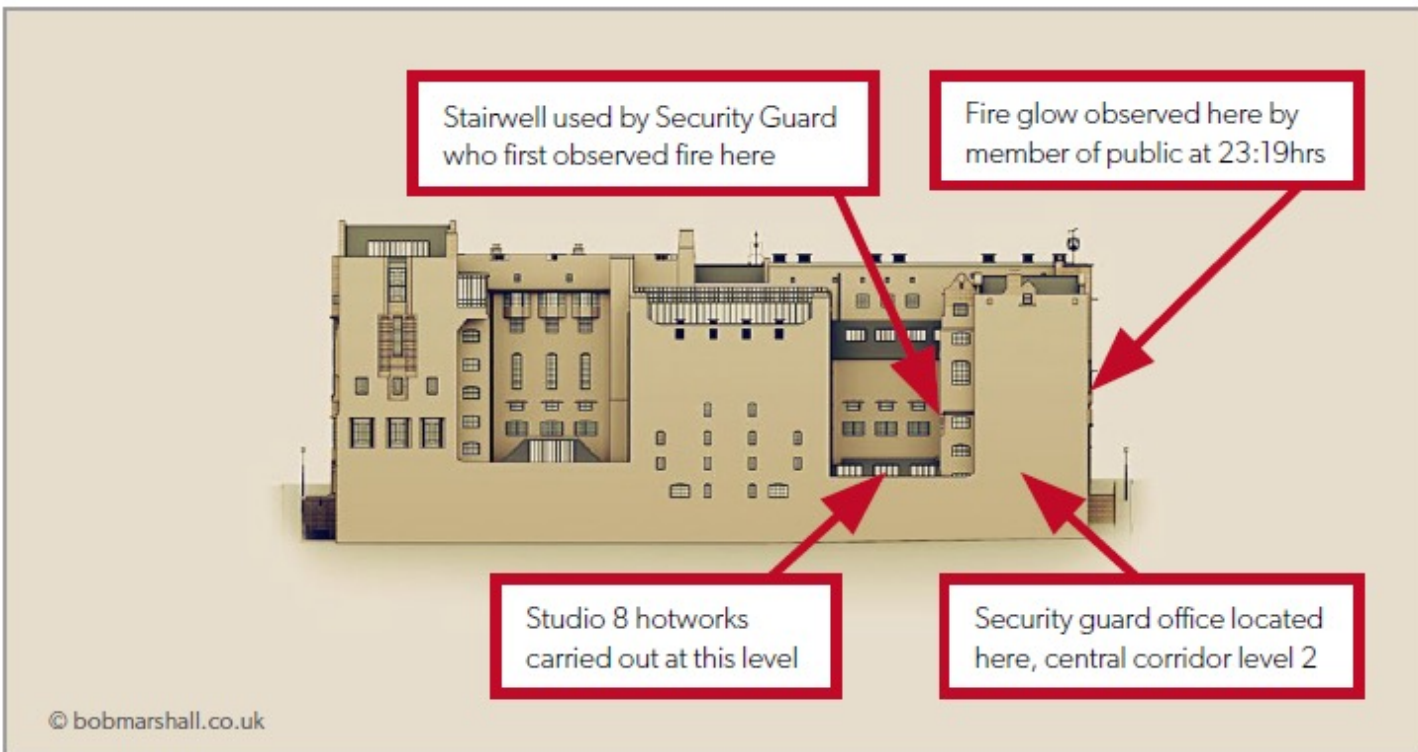


Figure 24 – Rear, South facing elevation



Photograph taken at 23:25hrs

NIGHT OF THE FIRE

The nightshift security guard completed his first, full walk round of the site at approximately 18:45hrs, checking that the external doors were locked and that internal doors were closed.

The nightshift and dayshift security guards had two further exchanges that evening. The first was at approximately 20:00hrs when the dayshift security guard returned for a personal item from the security desk, used the site toilet (adjacent to the security guards' desk) then left shortly afterwards.

The second exchange was at approximately 21:00 -21:30hrs when he returned, this time to collect a piece of building memorabilia for a friend, picking the item up from the security desk. Neither security guard noted anything unusual or had any cause for concern.

The first possible indication of fire in the vicinity was noticed 1 hour and 34 minutes prior to the first 999 call. This was detailed in a statement from a member of the public walking along Renfrew Street at approximately 21:45hrs. As he walked from east to west, he detected a smell of "burned material", but attributed it to the ongoing renovation works or a residual fire smell. He did not notice anything unusual as he passed by the east end of the building and made his way towards Charing Cross.

The first indications of unusual activity noticed by the nightshift security guard, were a series of noises at approximately 23:10hrs. His first instinct was that an

In terms of active measures, FWS are often scheduled to be replaced or decommissioned for the period of planned construction works. Likewise, any suppression systems or smoke, heat and ventilation systems are also unlikely to be active during the construction phase.

Verbal evidence from site and security staff, along with physical and photographic evidence, confirmed that a FWS was fitted throughout the site, consisting of a fire alarm panel, break glass call points, sounders, and detection units (smoke and carbon monoxide). This should have provided early warning in case of fire in unoccupied areas. It is unclear if the system met the requirements of British Standard (BS)5839 or if any testing or maintenance procedures were in place.

Active fire safety measures should have been subject to a through programme of scheduled maintenance and testing. It was confirmed by the main contractor that onsite records for testing and maintenance of the FWS were only retained on site and were consumed in the fire.

The Mackintosh Building has an additional inherent design feature that further compromised the passive fire safety measures and contributed further to the increased risk - ventilation ducts. The original Mackintosh designed ventilation system featured ducts throughout the entire building. The network of ventilation ducts varied in construction type, but have been observed as being brick, metal or timber lined. The legacy ventilation system was referenced in the 2014 fire report as a major contributor to rapid spread of fire.

Scottish government says inquiry into Mac fires would be too expensive

12 JUNE 2024 • BY KIT HEREN



The Scottish government has said a review into the two fires that seriously damaged the Glasgow School of Art's Mackintosh Building would be too costly to justify

A committee of MSPs had called for a public inquiry examining the circumstances of the two fires as well as the fire risk at other historic Scottish buildings.

The Herald

Former Glasgow School of Art lecturer Gordon Gibb was recently made an Honorary Professor of Practice in architecture from Queen's University in Belfast *(Image: Colin Mearns)*

Exclusive by Caroline Wilson
Senior Reporter

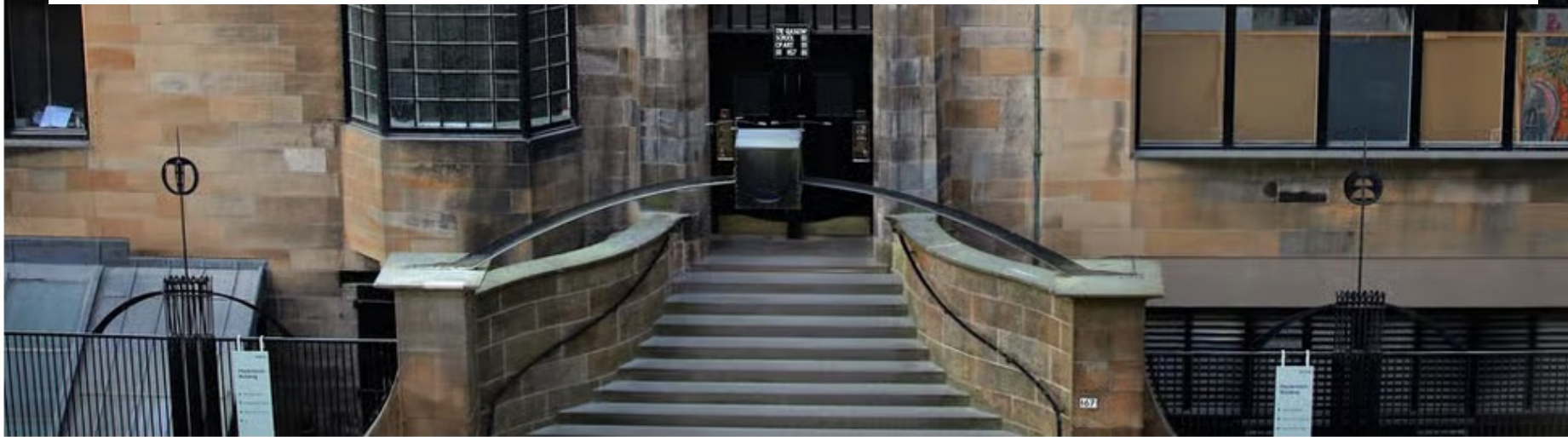
No Comments

Professor Gordon Gibb pauses when he is asked how he felt after being told Glasgow School of Art's prized 'Mack' had gone up in flames, a building he considered "the best in the world".





Reiach and Hall have been appointed with Purcell to “robustly test” the Art School’s existing rebuild plans before it begins the process of restoring the fire-ravaged Mackintosh building.



The Mack as it looked in March 2012 PIC: Jeff J Mitchell/Getty Images

In May, the school conceded that work to restore Charles Rennie Mackintosh’s masterpiece at the Glasgow School of Art, which was decimated by two fires in four years, will not be complete in the next decade. The stark admission came as work that has been undertaken since 2018 ground to a halt as legal wrangles took precedence and an arbitration process with their insurers began.



Gordon Gibb

12 May 2024 · 🌐



The rebuilding of Charles Rennie Mackintosh's Glasgow School of Art, lost to fire in 2018, is not covered by insurance. This latest revelation demonstrates further management incompetence by the GSA board, leading me to conclude that they should no longer have anything to do with the stalled restoration project. I say that as one who trained in the Mack, an architect, a former staff member and a professor, who passionately wishes for its early return.

My investigations fou... [See more](#)



THEGUARDIAN.COM

Glasgow's burned-out marvel: will the restoration of Mackintosh's School of Art ever happen?



GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART - AFTER THE FIRE BY RICHARD SUTCLIFFE

PROFESSOR GORDON GIBB IS GIVING HIS TALK TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC ON THE GSA FIRES AT THE MACK

Professor Gordon Gibb, a former student and lecturer in architecture at Glasgow School of Art, shares his insight into the fires that led to the loss of "the Mack", Charles Rennie Mackintosh's masterwork.

Professor Gibb studied and taught in the building during a period spanning nearly fifty years. As a forensic architect, he investigated the causes of the fires. This led him to be openly critical of the school's management. Thereafter he and the GSA parted ways.

If you have not heard Professor Gibb talk before, or if you have, please join him at 7pm on the 2nd June 2025 in the [Kelvinside Hillhead church](#) for a fascinating insight into one of the nations worst architectural heritage losses and the story behind the story



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BAKER FARMHOUSE

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PAGE
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The SUNDAY Post

SCHOOL OF ART

Betrayal of The Mack

Famous building won't be fully restored

By Mark Aitken

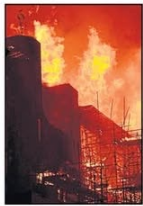
The Glasgow School of Art is to break the devastating news that its cherished Mackintosh Building will not be restored to its former glory – in a move critics are calling a “betrayal”.

The Sunday Post understands Art School staff will be told on Wednesday that the famous Mack will be replaced by a modern “soulless” building. Only the iconic facade is set to be retained, it has been claimed.

Leading architect Gordon Gibb said it “amounts to a betrayal of the Mack. Future generations will be unforgiving.”

He added: “The loss of the Mackintosh building would be catastrophic. Even a partial rebuild, or a soulless façade retention with highlights, would result in the loss of our heritage and in the further diminution of Glasgow.”

The building, which opened in 1910,



The second art school fire in 2018.

was damaged by fire in 2014 and left a charred shell after a second blaze four years later.

Previously, school director Penny Macbeth said she was committed to a “faithful reinstatement” But after a long-running dispute with insurers, which ended in arbitration in March, the A-listed building will undergo only a partial rebuild.

SEE PAGE 5

Former Yes Scotland chief: £1.5m fraud claim is personal vendetta

By Derek Healey

A former director of Yes Scotland responsible for handling the group's accounts has launched a blistering attack on complaints about its finances, which he says are a highly personal vendetta against him.

Speaking publicly for the first time since the allegations emerged, Scott Martin said he will consider legal action. The complaint centres on claims that more than £1.5 million recorded in Yes

Scotland's books cannot be accounted for. Of one of the people who raised concerns, former SNP branch secretary David Henry, Martin says: “He's completely obsessed with me.”

See Pages 6&7



Famous building won't be fully restored

By Mark Aitken

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But after a long-running dispute with insurers, which ended in arbitration in March, the A-listed building will undergo only a partial rebuild.



Gordon Gibb

22 July · 🌐



The GSA's latest self-inflicted calamity and extraordinary bad judgement thereafter is now being showcased in the New York Times.

No adverse comment being made as yet, but it will come. After all, why would you squander part of a redevelopment budget, or seed funding, on finessing the scaffolding for a future mothballing exercise? This decision is utter madness and to me demonstrates a total lack of vision or commitment to any rebuild, by the GSA.

It is worth reading within the article what is being said by GSA chair, Anne Priest. It is utter tosh. We are still in the middle of a cover-up. Terrible revelations are yet to come about the insurance failure, and these are going to throw the current GSA statements into sharp relief. GSA would be better saying nothing.



[NYTIMES.COM](https://www.nytimes.com)

Fire Ravaged the Glasgow School of Art. It May Cost Too Much to Restore It.



Gordon Gibb

29 July · 🌐



The Financial Times has taken up the cause now, in the expression of the imperative for the rebuild, in today's edition. I found the reporter, Eddie Heathcote, to share my passion for the building. I am really grateful to him for the depth of study of the history and for the FT's assessment of the past awful behaviour, lack of competence and current failings of the GSA board and management.

The article also repeats my previous assertion, that can be summarised as "Who would give the GSA any money after the way they destroyed any goodwill that may have existed in the past?"

It is time for the separation of the project from the people who have lied, covered up and failed to even have enough vision to see that the building needs to be rebuilt faithfully and in full.

And this article is being read around the globe. The Mack is Glasgow's present to the world. **See less**



FT.COM

Why the Glasgow School of Art deserves to be fully restored



Gordon Gibb

2 August · 🌐



Paul Sweeney MSP, with whom I agree on most things architectural, has made a very disagreeable proposal in the Architects Journal for the reinstatement of the Mack. He wants us all to forgive the GSA management, forget the harm they have done and protect them.

The article says, highly inaccurately, "The nature of the arbitration process meant that the art school had to settle for an amount less than the full reinstatement estimate of £265 million pounds" This suggests that ... [See more](#)



ARCHITECTSJOURNAL.CO.UK

Mac rebuild: National effort needed to restore 'Scotland's finest building'





Glasgow School Of Art

Màiri McAllan: Rebuild of Mackintosh Building is 'really critical'

Scottish Government to kickstart 'critical' Mack drive

Brian Ferguson

THE Scottish Government has pledged to kickstart efforts to rebuild the Mackintosh Building at Glasgow School of Art weeks after its board admitted it could not afford to pay for the work on its own.

Culture secretary Màiri McAllan pledged to get potential funding partners around the table as soon as possible to form a new "collaboration" to pursue the project and said it was "critical" to bring the Mackintosh Building "back to contributing to artistic life in Scotland".

Pledging her "my full support and leadership" to the rebuilding effort, Ms McAllan said the government would use its "convening power" to help "work out the art of the possible" on the fire-damaged architectural masterpiece.

She suggested the government was prepared to contribute to the cost of rebuilding "The Mack" but stressed that a first stage was bringing "interested parties" together.

She suggested Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Life and the UK government should all have a role in the reinstatement of the building, which was severely damaged in two fires, in 2014 and 2018. However, Ms McAllan insisted it was up to the art



An interior view

school to continue to take the lead on the restoration project and not the government.

The GSA board sparked controversy last month when it revealed that the insurance payout from the 2018 fire at the Mackintosh Building was not going to be enough to pay for a rebuild, which is now expected to cost at least £265 million.

The GSA has insisted that it wants a reborn Mackintosh Building to become a "catalyst for innovation, regeneration and economic growth in and around Glasgow".

However, Ann Priest, chair of the GSA board, said at the time: "We very much want to see this exceptional and globally important building rebuilt, but we cannot put the financial sustainability of the GSA at risk in doing so."

The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland and the

Royal Institute of British Architects issued a joint statement in the wake of the GSA's announcement demanding a "national response" to ensure there was a "faithful reinstatement" of the building.

They said at the time: "It is one of the most important buildings in Scotland and the UK: innovative, full of narrative, technically advanced and a piece of art in itself. Its recent history has been tragic, and every effort must be made to turn its fortunes around."

Ms McAllan was speaking after the Scottish Government committed £14m to kickstart the long-awaited refurbishment of the People's Palace and Winter Gardens in Glasgow.

She told The Herald: "The GSA has recently announced that it cannot afford to fund a reinstatement itself. It's now about getting partners around the table and working out the art of the possible."

"I have offered the Scottish Government's convening power to get this moving forward, because we all know the incredible significance of The Mack and the difficult history it has had. We are only where we are with the People's Palace because of cooperation."

"Really significant capital projects, with all the increasing

costs of recent years, can only really be managed by a collaboration."

"I'm not really concerned about leading on The Mack. It's about bringing interested parties together to work out the approach, what is required and what contributions can be made from where. I am really keen to bring impetus to the next stage of this."

"It is about making sure that all of the right people are round the table."

"We need to understand and move through the next phases of this as well and as quickly as we can."

The new £265m price tag for a reinstatement of the Mackintosh Building is believed to be around five times the turnover of the GSA.

It has risen sharply since the original business case was published in 2021, when estimates reportedly priced the project at £62 million.

GSA said the combination of rising build costs and constrained public funding had "significantly affected the affordability and deliverability" of a full rebuild carried out by the school alone.

While plans for a full reinstatement are being pursued, the GSA board has approved starting a process of "stabilisation and repair" of the building.



Glasgow School Of Art

Màiri McAllan: Rebuild of Mackintosh Building is 'really critical'

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27th August

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Building Construction is Dangerous for the Building

- Fires on construction sites are common
- Older buildings are at greater risk
- The risk increases near the end of the project
- Fire spreads quickly and unpredictably
- Incomplete systems can cause fires
- Dishonesty prevents analysis
- Heritage is more important than money
- Client wishes are not paramount



Guidance and Duties must be taken seriously

- The Fire and Emergency Plan has to be competent
- The Joint Fire Code needs to be understood
- Special HSE Guidance needs to be implemented
- The fire alarm has to be competent and tested
- Voids and cavities are areas of real danger
- Void-sealing may need to be done daily
- Temporary protection is required
- Sprinkler commissioning is a priority



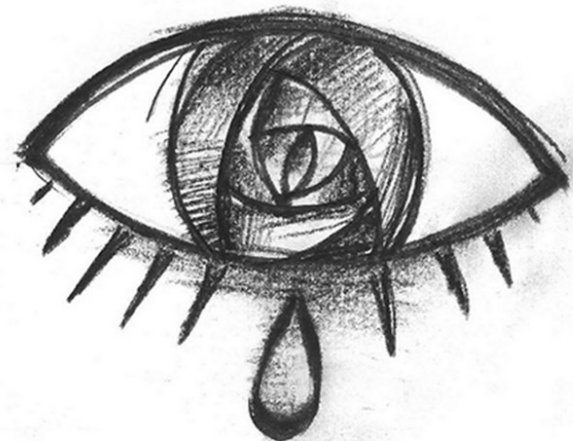
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■ WE SHALL REBUILD IT





Fiona Wilson