

# CROSS PARTY GROUP ON ARCHITECTURE & THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

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## MINUTES

**Meeting: “ A Design Model for Rural Tourism and Economy - Learning from Norway”**

At Scottish Parliament on Wednesday 6th February 2013 @ 5.30pm

## PRESENT

Ewan Anderson	7n Architects
Maggie Anderson	Scottish Tourist Guides Association
Dr. Jim Arnold	New Lanark Trust (Retired)
Neil Baxter	RIAS
Ruairidh Campbell Moir	RIAS
Lorna Davidson	New Lanark Trust
Christopher Dingwall	Guidelines
Linda Fabiani MSP (Convenor)	Scottish Parliament
David Fleetwood	Historic Scotland
Neil Forrester	Smith Scott Mullan Associates
John Gerrard	A.P.R.S
Anne Gray	Scottish Land and Estates
Cliff Hague	BEFS
Alex Hobday	Strathclyde University
Graham Hogg	Strathclyde University
Helena Huws	Scottish Canals
Alastair Kyte	Architect
Pat Lally	RIAS
John Lawson	City of Edinburgh Council and ALGAO Scotland
Catriona Macdonald	Strathclyde University
Mike Mackenzie MSP	Scottish Parliament
Ingval Maxwell	COTAC
Deborah Mays	RIAS
Asuka Mckenna	Robert Gordon University (Student)
Craig McLaren	RTPI
Euan Millar	ICOSIS Architects
Eugene Mullan	RIAS
Kevin Murray	Kevin Murray Associates
Kirsty Murray	Planning Aid Scotland
Hamish Neilson	Landscape Institute
Bill Pagan	BEFS
Gwen Raez	Visit Scotland
Drew Smith MSP	Scottish Parliament
Tom Smith	Strathclyde University
David Somervell	Edinburgh University
Craig Stirrat	Fife HA
Charles Strang	RTPI
Dave Thompson	DPT Urban Design

Ruth White  
Peter Wilson  
Keith Winter  
David Wood  
John Wright

Geddes Consulting  
Edinburgh Napier University  
Fife Council  
Planning Aid Scotland  
Strutt and Parker

## **APOLOGIES**

Arthur Acheson

Ian Appleton

Petra Biberbach

Andrea Faed

Tony Fitzpatrick

Julia Frost

Michael Holliday

Jack Hugh

Keith Irving

John Knight

Andy Leitch

Dave Liddell

Jim Macdonald

Suzanne Macintosh

Ann Packard

Harry Phillips

Colin Proctor

Graeme Purves

Doug Read

Jenny Roe

Alistair Scott

Harry Smith

Nathan Ward

Apple Forth

Planning Aid Scotland

Faed & Browne

University of Glasgow

Turley Associates

Roots Design Workshop & Tog Studio

RIAS

Living Streets

Tog Studio

Scottish Government

A + DS

Suzanne Macintosh Planning

RSA Fellows' Media, Creative Industries, Culture and  
Heritage Network

Holmes Miller

Scottish Futures Trust

Scottish Government

Dignan Read Dewar

Institute of Building and Urban Design

Smith Scott Mullan Associates

Institute of Building and Urban Design

Geddes Consulting

## **1.0 WELCOME**

Linda Fabiani MSP welcomed all present to the meeting.

## **2.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE MEETING THEME – Mike Mackenzie MSP, Scottish Parliament**

**Introduction:** Mike was elected in May 2011 as the member for the Highlands and Islands. Prior to this he was a builder and furniture maker. He lives on the tiny island of Easdale.

### **Presentation**

- Architectural Tourism is currently not very present in Scotland. Architecture and design are very important to tourism as they reflect the way we live our lives. People are interested in people so we need to consider how tourism interacts with architecture and vice versa.

- Unnatural development and suburbanisation can be viewed as a threat to settlements. This can taint their character and unique Scottish qualities that tourists wish to see.

### 3.0 **PROMOTING VISITS TO SCOTLAND THROUGH THE YEAR OF NATURAL SCOTLAND** - Gwen Raez, Senior Marketing Manager, UK & Ireland, Visit Scotland.

**Introduction:** Gwen has worked at VisitScotland for over 12 years and has a wealth of experience in promoting Scotland to visitors from the UK and Ireland. Acting as marketing lead for the UK team on the Year of Natural Scotland, she has developed new campaigns to maximise visits to Scotland this year.

#### **Presentation**

- VisitScotland are always aiming to enhance Scotland's reputation; to promote the diversity of activity on offer; to inspire participation and economic benefits; and to increase joint working across agencies and organisations. VisitScotland sell Scotland's qualities to visitors through multimedia techniques such as TV advertisements and their website. They send around 450,000 emails a month and these are tailored to suit the recipients' interests. They are very aware of the importance of word-of-mouth so try to capitalize on the social media element also.
- 2013 is the Year of Natural Scotland and this leads into "Homecoming 2014:Scotland Welcomes the World". Scotland is a well known destination throughout the year and throughout the country so there is a seasonal and geographical spread in terms of tourism. They have links with organisations such as National Rail and CityLink to provide offers and incentives to tourists.
- There is an architecture page on their website but they are always after more information as they consider the built environment to be integral to tourism.

### 4.0 **A DESIGN MODEL FOR RURAL TOURISM AND ECONOMY – LEARNING FROM NORWAY** Peter Wilson, Director The Wood Studio Forest Products Research Institute Edinburgh Napier University.

**Introduction:** Peter is an architect and director of the Wood Studio, a research centre within Edinburgh Napier University's Forest Products Research Institute whose remit is to promote innovation in the use of timber in architecture and construction. In October 2010 the Wood Studio organised a conference aimed at learning from Norway's use of high quality architecture to punctuate the country's main tourist routes and he has been hard at work since to establish and deliver a similar Scotland-wide programme of projects designed to enhance the visitor experience, stimulate rural employment and economies and provide opportunities for young architects to gain much needed experience.

#### **Presentation**

- Using Norway's 'Detour Project' as a case-study Peter explained the various opportunities that are available to enhance the tourism experience. The project has been ongoing since 1994 and has been very successful with approximately 200 projects completed and a further 200 planned. It is now central in Norwegian Architecture Policy and has internationally established young architects along the way. The Norwegian Roads Authority manages the

Detour Project and is extremely proud to be the biggest employer of young architects in Europe.

- This is transferable knowledge for Scotland. We need to look at tourist routes in a different way and get clever about them. Use our architecture to promote the landscape and help generate private sector investment (e.g. the Juvets Landskap Hotel).
- Local consultation is absolutely crucial in identifying appropriate projects and helps ensure good design. Design Panel mentoring of young architects reduces the design risk further whilst continually raising quality. A pro-active programme helps build sustainable rural economies! There is a need to identify a national programme for this proposal.
- All relevant bodies would need to get onboard with the project and this would help spread the financial risk. Keeping most projects below procurement thresholds allows young architects to be directly selected or chosen by limited competition. Keeping it low cost and simple. Could also reallocate or rethink existing money pots.
- Spreading the project(s) over a number of years spreads the overall cost. For example:

## 5.0 LOCH LEVEN BIRD HIDE – A WORKING EXAMPLE

Euan Millar, ICOSIS Architects

**Introduction:** Euan trained at the Mackintosh School of Architecture in Glasgow and undertook a postgraduate year in sculpture & painting at Cyprus College of Art, before completing a Conservation Diploma at Edinburgh College of Art in 1996. He worked with practices in Singapore and Edinburgh, including Simpson & Brown Architects for 5 years, before establishing Icosis Architects with Sarah Sutherland in 2003. The practice focuses on contemporary design solutions using natural materials and Euan has an RIAS Accreditation in Sustainable Building Design.

### **Presentation**

- Loch Leven Bird Hide was commissioned by The Rural Access Committee of Kinross-shire (TRACKS) and Scottish National Heritage. Loch Leven is a National Nature Reserve and the bird hide is part of the Loch Leven Heritage Trail. It was completed in October 2011.
- The project cost around £35,000 to construct and used local materials throughout. The bird hide took advantage of a natural break in the trees and used this space to highlight views of the loch with different height viewing apertures built in.
- Although something simpler and cheaper would have also satisfied the requirements the project reflects the benefits of being clever with our architecture. The bird hide has also won numerous awards:

Edinburgh Architectural Association Small Building Award 2012

Scottish Design Awards – Low Cost Project Award 2012

RIAS Award for Architecture 2012

Wood for Good/Forestry Commission Scotland Award 2012 – Commendation

## 6.0 DISCUSSION ON THE TOPIC

There was significant discussion on the subject involving a number of people from various

professional backgrounds. The discussion probed the Norwegian model in more detail and then investigated how this could be applied effectively to the Scottish context. Some of the following key points were noted:

- Tourism infrastructure can be marketed in itself, not just the destinations.
- The Norwegian model is primarily based on road/vehicle routes however we could encourage a more public transport orientated version, such as ferry terminals.
- Involvement of multiple public agencies spreads the financial risk of projects such as this.
- The challenge of multi agency working effectively together was acknowledged by all, with a general feeling that this is “improving but could do better”.
- Proactive programmes such as this help build sustainable rural economies.
- Local consultation is crucial in identifying and shaping the briefs for the projects.
- Relatively low levels of public investment can stimulate significant private sector investment in rural economies.
- The Scottish Government are the best placed to lead and direct a project such as this. It was suggested the project be included in the forthcoming National Planning Framework. This was very much supported.
- We should support Scotland’s sense of self with good, confident design. Create a sense of ‘Scottishness’ that helps support VisitScotland’s promotions.
- Nurturing our creative talent is essential. We put so much investment into education and don’t follow through. Need to be pro-active once they graduate as well. Scots are creating and designing elsewhere. We have the talent, we need to use it here.
- Projects such as this require a long term management and maintenance programme as part of the plan.
- The importance of our next Architecture Policy having a real impact on the delivery of projects (see CPG meeting on Architecture Policy Consultation)
- The challenge of the procurement regulations in implementing a project such as this (see CPG meeting on Procurement Reform Bill Consultation)

Interestingly the discussion broadened into the role of national infrastructure organisations such as Scottish Water, Scottish Canals etc in promoting excellent design solutions, an approach which has historically produced some very distinctive places.

## **7.0 Close of meeting**

Linda thanked all of the speakers and everyone for their involvement and attendance.