

# CROSS PARTY GROUP ON ARCHITECTURE & THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

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## MINUTES

### Meeting: “A Landscape Charter for Scotland?”

At Scottish Parliament on Tuesday 17th September 2013 @ 5.30pm

Our Ref: EM R10-Landscape Meeting Notes 2013-09-17

#### PRESENT

Ailsa Anderson	Scottish Land & Estates
Ian Appleton	
Sarah Barron	Sarah Barron Landscape Architects
Neil Baxter	RIAS
Graham Bell	University of Edinburgh
William Cairns	Cairns Intersphere Consulting Ltd
Alan Cameron	Landscape Institute
Julie Candy	Historic Scotland
Christopher Dalglish	University of Glasgow
Sue Evans	Central Scotland Green Network
Linda Fabiani MSP	Scottish Parliament
Lewis Field	
Neil Forrester	Smith Scott Mullan Associates
Maggie Gilvrey	Planning Aid for Scotland
Marc van Grieken	LUC
Nigel Hackett	URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Ltd.
Cliff Hague	BEFS
Robin Harper	SWT & NTS
Jack Hugh	RIAS
Rebecca Hughes	SLR Consulting Ltd.
Pat Lally	RIAS
Euan Leitch	Built Environment Forum Scotland
Deborah Mays	RIAS
Fiona McLeod MSP	Scottish Parliament
Paul Morsley	IGLU
Eugene Mullan	RIAS
Kirsty Murray	Planning Aid for Scotland
Hamish Neilson	Landscape Institute Scotland
Peter Riddoch	.....P.Riddoch Architect
Emily Smyth	Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture and the Built Environment NI
David Somervell	University of Edinburgh
Karen Stevenson	City of Edinburgh Council
Craig Stirrat	Fife Housing Association

Charles Strang	Charles Strang Associates
Lynda Thomson	Optimised Environments Ltd.
Mark Turnbull	Landscape Institute Scotland
Robin Turner	RCAHMS
Jean Urquhart MSP	Scottish Parliament
Julie Waldron	City of Edinburgh Council
Ann Wilkie	Canadian Building Consultants Ltd.
David Wood	Planning Aid for Scotland
Jonathan Wordsworth	Archaeology Scotland

**APOLOGIES**

Sarah Boyack MSP	.....Scottish Parliament
John Knight	New Town & Broughton Community Council
John Lawson	CECAS
John Mayhew	The Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland
Suzanne McIntosh	Suzanne McIntosh Planning
Miles Ogelthorpe	Scottish Government
Ann Packard	RSA
Bill Pagan	BEFS
John Pelan	Scottish Civic Trust
Dr. Richard Simpson MSP	Scottish Government
Drew Smith MSP	Scottish Government
David Thompson	DPT Urban Design
Susan Torrence	Scottish Federation of Housing Associations

**1.0 WELCOME**

Linda Fabiani MSP welcomed all present to the meeting.

**2.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE MEETING THEME – Jean Urquhart MSP.**

Jean is an Independent Highlands and Islands MSP elected in 2011. She highlighted that the area she represents makes up 42% of the land mass of Scotland and includes some of the most stunning areas of landscape. Jean introduced the theme of the meeting with a quote from Scottish Government ‘Creating Places and Architecture Policy’ stressing the point on value of space and promoting good landscape design.

- She highlighted that the task ahead is much bigger than just having a Charter. There is a need to make all of Scotland realise the quality of what we have both in terms of urban and natural landscape
- We should avoid ignorance on both sides and filter the knowledge through to future generations by educating about our landscape as young as primary age. Future generations should not be able to ask the question “How come nobody told us?”
- The quality of the environment in Scotland is one of our most important assets and we must

do what we can to let people enjoy the landscape in every corner of Scotland.

### **3.0 SCOTLAND'S LANDSCAPES** – William J Cairns, Chairman and Chief Executive of Cairns Intersphere Consulting Ltd.

William was educated at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), MCP; Durham University DipLD, and RBG, Edinburgh (DHE and MHort) He is a Fellow of the Landscape Institute. He has over forty years professional and academic experience. His work is internationally recognised and he has received major design and environmental awards.

William began by discussing the previous two landscape conferences in 1962 and the fiftieth anniversary conference in 2012, and gave an overview of the key findings and points of principle summarised from the Proceedings. From these key points there were several strong themes:

- 1) Developing a coherent, flexible and implementable policy for landscape as a nationally recognised mandate;
- 2) Communicating the meaning and values of Scotland's landscapes as a national resource to be understood, conserved and enhanced;
- 3) Integrating landscape principles into the development planning and design process at the outset;
- 4) Public realm and place-making reflect differing environmental conditions and challenges and where in each, the goal should be to create a 'sense of place', individual and community belonging and pride;
- 5) The interdisciplinary nature of development planning and design, calls for integrated solutions where the role and expertise of landscape professionals must be an essential component;
- 6) Collaborative team working is key to the achievement of high quality design and cost effective solutions;
- 7) Raising awareness and promotion of the level of investment needed to enable the further development of academic and CPD programmes in landscape architecture and land resource management;
- 8) Recognising that the majority of landscape architectural practices are relatively small and specialised, procurement policies in public bodies should allow access for skilled professionals regardless of the size of the organisation or balance sheet.

He suggested there are five key recommended key actions which take priority:

- The signing by government of Scotland's Landscape Charter.
- Definition of the terms of reference, constitution and funding of the establishment of a Scottish Landscape Forum.
- Introduction of a National Landscape Review body on lines similar to those seen in the Netherlands.
- Appointment of an independent Landscape Advisor to government who would oversee all of the above.
- Appointment of a leading landscape architect to the board of Architecture + Design Scotland.

#### 4.0 **CENTRAL SCOTLAND GREEN NETWORK AND PLACE-MAKING** – Sue Evans, Central Scotland Green Network Support Unit

Sue is Head of Development at the CSGN Support Unit and an employee of Central Scotland Forest Trust, which will become the CSGN Trust in 2014. She is a Fellow of the Landscape Institute and a member of the LI's Policy Committee.

Sue began by discussing the vision for Scotland. By 2050, Central Scotland has been transformed into a place where the environment adds value to the economy and where people's lives are enriched by its quality. Design is about solving problems but it also about beauty and all landscapes have importance. The Central Scotland Green network has five main themes within their vision:

- A place for growth
- A place in balance
- A place to feel good
- A place to belong
- A place for nature

Some Green Network outcomes are:

- Supporting sustainable economic growth
- Tackling vacant and derelict land
- Addressing health inequalities
- Encouraging community action
- Mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Encouraging active travel.

In short - **Making liveable places**

Sue provided many examples of the economic and social benefits of investing in our landscape and green network. There is a direct correlation between vacant/derelict land and life opportunities. Investing in our landscape can create economic growth and employment. To take one example of the City High Line in New York. The project cost £96 million and is the second most visited tourist site in New York. Property values in the area have increased by 103%; therefore the property tax has seen a huge economic return.

We must not underestimate the contribution of elements such street trees or green roofs etc. Our industrial heritage is not to be overlooked either, it is an asset which can generate nature, economic return and employment. We must view the green network as an asset and not a liable. Together we can make the changes that will improve our lives for the better.

In closing, Sue concluded:

- Green Networks make a major contribution to place-making
- Land used for Green Networks should be seen as an asset, not a liability

- (Preventative) spend on Green Networks will deliver excellent economic and social returns on investment
- Landscape Architects have the training and skills to deliver green infrastructure masterplanning, design, delivery and management/maintenance.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION ON THE TOPIC

There was significant discussion on the subject involving a number of people from various professional backgrounds highlighting some of the following aspects.

- We need to appreciate the beauty of the urban, agricultural and natural landscape equally and without preference it is all to be desired and advantageous. Landscape is one of Scotland's unique selling points with strong links to tourism industry.
- Need to identify the various skill sets and professions available. We must find out where they exist and what they are currently being used for and then distribute to where they are really needed.
- Landscape is sorely misunderstood by developers as well as many communities and individuals. This is a common theme which needs to be changed.
- It is not about spending more money but spending what money is available more efficiently and not 'cutting the grass because the manual says to'.
- Unable to justify investment without return, however the evidence shows there is return to be made from investing in our green network and our landscapes.
- So far there has been very little response from government and the Landscape Charter must be accepted by the government in order to be fully implemented.
- There is clearly a key role missing in government and we need a qualified landscape architect engaged in government. It is surprising there isn't a landscape architect in Architecture + Design Scotland or government already.
- A Scottish Landscape Forum needs to be set-up to take into account all the landscape. The forum does need a degree of expertise and understanding. An official body which comprises of professionals.
- Public bodies are required to promote biodiversity and produce land use strategies and so forth in the Climate Change (Scotland) 2009 Act, is there a way of including landscape architecture into these duties?
- Locally producing strategies and combining funding, for example agricultural and renewable being looked at as an entirety, it's all public money from the same pot.
- Emily Smith from the Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture and the Built Environment Northern Ireland. Noted that they have been having a very similar discussion in NI and in Southern Ireland they introduced a Landscape Strategy in 2011

### KEY POINTS

The following are the key points which were identified during the meeting

- A call for the government to sign Scotland's Landscape Charter.

- Re-establishment of the Scottish Landscape Forum with definition of the terms of reference and constitution.
- Appointment of a landscape architect to the board of Architecture + Design Scotland
- Introduction of a National Landscape Review body on lines similar to those seen in the Netherlands
- Appointment of an independent Landscape Advisor to government who will oversee all of the above.
- Hold public bodies to account to fulfil the current duties under the Climate Change (Scotland) 2009 Act in relation to landscape.
- The major contribution Green Networks make to place-making
- Land used for Green Networks should be seen as an asset, not a liability
- (Preventative) spend on Green Networks will deliver excellent economic and social returns on investment
- Landscape Architects have the training and skills to at masterplanning, design, delivery and management/maintenance of green infrastructure.

The meeting agreed that Linda should send a letter to Fiona Hyslop MSP, the Cabinet Secretary enquiring about the possibility of action on a number of these key points.

## **6.0 Close of meeting**

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