

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

Media release

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The Glasgow School of Art selects Design Team

The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) is delighted to announce that Steven Holl Architects (New York) working with Scottish based JM Architects has been selected, as the result of an international competition, to lead the team to design a new building on the site opposite the world famous Mackintosh Building in Garnethill, Glasgow.

Steven Holl Architects is a leading New York based practice which has been recognised internationally with some of architecture's most prestigious awards and prizes. These include recent awards from the American Institute of Architects and the Royal Incorporation of British Architects for the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City and the School of Art at Iowa University. Awards have also recognised their commitment to sustainable design. Recent work includes the Herring Centre for the Arts in Denmark and a major development in Beijing where they also have an office. They will work with Henry McKeown and Ian Alexander, award winning directors from the Glasgow office of JM Architects.

The brief for Steven Holl's team is to work with GSA to refine the Masterplan for GSA's Garnethill estate redevelopment and to design and deliver Phase 1, a new building to significantly enhance the teaching, learning and research facilities available to GSA students and staff and the access which the public can have to their work. The building will sit opposite the Mackintosh Building, recently voted the UK's favourite building of the past 175 years in a national survey run by the RIBA Journal. The in principle support of the Scottish Funding Council has been essential in enabling the School to move to this stage.

It is particularly appropriate that this announcement comes just over 100 years after The

Glasgow School of Art held its first architectural competition when it invited submissions from 11 architects' practices for a new school in the centre of the city. The winner was 28- year-old Charles Rennie Mackintosh (then working for Honeyman and Keppie), whose Mackintosh Building, will remain at the heart of the new urban campus and the educational experience of every GSA student.

This 2009 competition, which was to find an architect-led team and not to select a design, received submissions from over 150 international firms from which seven were shortlisted (in alphabetical order): Benson & Forsyth (London, UK); Elder and Cannon (Glasgow, UK); Francisco Mangado Architects with ZM Architects (Pamplona, Spain and Glasgow); Grafton Architects (Dublin, Ireland); Hopkins (London, UK); John McAslan and Partners with Nord Architects (London and Glasgow); Steven Holl Architects with JM Architects (New York and Glasgow).

The final and unanimous decision was reached after a rigorous process, against set evaluation criteria, of submissions, presentations and interviews, by a Selection Committee chaired by Barcelona based architect, David Mackay. The Selection Committee considered that Steven Holl Architects' work showed a poetic use of light and their submission demonstrated a singular creative vision, scale of ambition, profound clarity and a respectful rivalry for the Mackintosh Building. The Committee believed that Holl's approach to the craft of building, his understanding of the opportunities of new technology and an enjoyment of the challenges of sustainable design, promised a great step forward in the development of architecture in an urban setting.

Seona Reid, Director of The Glasgow School of Art said: "This is the next major step in transforming Glasgow School of Art's rather poor estate into spaces for learning, teaching, research and engagement with the public which are fit for their purpose, meet the needs of our staff and students and support their ambitions. I am absolutely confident, as was the Selection Committee, that our collaboration with Steven Holl Architects and theirs with JM Architects will produce a world class building for the School and for Glasgow, an inspiring environment for our staff and students, an inventive and worthy companion to Mackintosh and a building of which we will all be immensely proud. The selection of the architect to lead this important project was a demanding process for all concerned. We have been incredibly

impressed by the hard work, creativity, and commitment given to it by all seven of the shortlisted teams and we thank them for it. I also want to thank the eight members of the Selection Committee, chaired by David Mackay, whose enthusiasm for their task and the insights they brought to the process were absolutely invaluable”

The Chair of the Selection Committee David Mackay said: “This has been an extraordinary and innovative international competition process to find an architect, rather than a design. In Steven Holl Architects, who demonstrated his poetic use of natural light to enhance the spatial itineraries of his beautifully crafted buildings, and sensitive response to this site, we have an architect ready to meet the challenges of designing opposite the Mackintosh Building”

Steven Holl, architect, said: “We are thrilled to be selected for this very important project for the new Glasgow School of Art. It is an honour to make a new architecture for a 21st century school of art across from Mackintosh’s inspiring masterwork of the early 20th century. Since my student days at the University of Washington the amazing Mackintosh building with its tremendous light and magical scale has been a seminal reference. Mackintosh’s manipulation of the building section for light in such a variety of inventive ways has inspired our approach toward a plan of studio volumes shaped by light and connected by a ‘Circuit of Connection’ which encourages the creative contact central to the workings of the school. 100 years after completion, Mackintosh’s building continues to inspire as a work of architecture and a place to make art. The invention of an original architectural language is a fresh today as it was then. Its intensity of detail, light and material calls for the highest aspirations of a phenomenologically-driven architecture of our time. We feel the urgency of recovering the integral action of “thinking and making” in the use of the highest new technologies available. We imagine the new Glasgow School of Art to be a
Knowledge: the phenomenological and experiential joys of perception supercharged by the techniques of tomorrow.”

Nick Kuenssberg, Chairman of the Board of GSA said: “The Board is excited by the transformational impact the selection of Steven Holl Architects will have, working with Scotland’s own JM Architects. This will create 21st century facilities which will benefit our students and staff and their educational experience, and will enhance both the setting of the Mackintosh Building and the wider community of Garnethil. This is a very significant day for

the GSA, for Glasgow and for Scotland”.

Malcolm Reading of Malcolm Reading Consultants who organised the competition

process said: “We are delighted that the competition has had such a successful conclusion. The Jury’s unanimous choice of an architect who is quite clearly on the brink of widespread international recognition is a wonderful endorsement of the competitive process. Steven Holl’s thoughtful and robust architectural approach has the potential to make a great building for the School and Glasgow”.

Councillor George Ryan, Executive Member for Business and the Economy, Glasgow City

Council said: “This new building is certain to reflect the fantastic architectural and design standards that have given The Glasgow School of Art a worldwide reputation for excellence. It will be another key feature of the regeneration of Glasgow city centre and a vital part of our creative industries.”

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Notes to editors:

- Glasgow School of Art’s Estate redevelopment plans

With the Phase 1 building set to open in readiness for the 2013/2014 academic year, and Phase 2 planned to follow soon after, the complete redevelopment of the School’s estate will transform the current incoherent and inefficient scatter of buildings across Garnethill which are no longer fit for purpose, into a coherent urban campus providing world-class teaching and research facilities and space for growth. When complete, the new estate will reinforce the GSA’s position as one of Europe’s leading art, design and