

Lens on Legacy: Saving Glasgow's Architectural Heritage Designer Brief

Summary

Glasgow has a long and rich tradition of urban photography that captures pivotal moments in the city's evolving history. From the Victorian streetscapes photographed by Thomas Annan for the City Improvement Trust, documenting the slum clearances and the transformation of the city's core, to Oscar Marzaroli and John Hume's powerful images of Glasgow in the 1960s and 70s, photography has played a crucial role in documenting the city's shifting landscape.

These photographers immortalised Glasgow's architectural and economic transitions, from the demolition of tenements to industrial decline. Their work serves as both a historical record and a reminder of the importance of documenting the city's architectural legacy.

Following in their footsteps, we aim to develop an exhibition to continue the tradition of using photography to reflect on Glasgow's urban identity, with a focus on at-risk buildings and how we can care for and maintain the city's built heritage. Working in partnership with Queens Park Camera Club, we hope to use photographs to create a tribute to the city's past and a call to action for its future. The exhibition aims to not only raise awareness about architectural conservation but also inspire real efforts to conserve the city's built heritage for future generations.

In addition to the elements needed to install this exhibition, part of the brief is working with GCHT on expanding how we use our exhibition space and make it more available for wider community use. We will create simple and adaptable exhibition fittings within which content can be adapted to create exhibitions that are engaging and tactile.

Glasgow City Heritage Trust

Glasgow City Heritage Trust (GCHT) is an independent charity supported by Glasgow City Council and Historic Scotland. Established in 2007, we champion the city's unique architecture and built environment and promote and encourage the understanding, appreciation and conservation of Glasgow's historic buildings for the benefit of the city's communities and its visitors, now and in the future.

Aims of the exhibition

- To encourage discussion and debate about Glasgow's historic built environment
- To empower visitors to learn more about the care and maintenance of the city's built heritage
- To engage new and existing audiences with GCHT
- To promote Glasgow's built heritage

Proposed outcomes of the exhibition

- Increase understanding of and engagement with Scotland's historic environment
- Enhance communities use of the historic environment in placemaking
- Strengthen the resilience of Glasgow's historic buildings and places so they are protected and more sustainable

Our Vision

GCHT will work in partnership with Queens Park Camera Club to curate an exhibition of photographs that focus on at-risk buildings in Glasgow, taking in multiple different elements of each site, including risk factors (weather, vandalism etc), what defects or issues the buildings are facing, how these could be addressed, and why it remains so important to invest in the repair and maintenance of Glasgow's built heritage.

Rather than narrow the exhibition's focus to specific buildings, the aim is to highlight typologies around at-risk buildings and the common issues they face. It will also offer suggestions for how to tackle the issues, and what people can try to do to their own properties when it comes to repair and maintenance. It is hoped that by taking this approach, the exhibition will encourage broader learning, avoiding a "blame game" about specific buildings, and demonstrating positive solutions to these challenges

We aim to create a visually engaging, accessible, and interactive environment that informs but does not overwhelm visitors. The exhibition should be self-explanatory, welcoming, and accessible, avoiding overly

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academic or text-heavy interpretation. We are particularly interested in simple, tactile methods to present image commentaries, encourage dialogue, and capture visitor perspectives.

The exhibition will take place in GCHT's exhibition space at 54 Bell Street, with content provided by GCHT. Contractors will be responsible for the design, production, and installation of all exhibition elements.

Beyond this specific exhibition, we want to expand how we use our space to better support community-led exhibitions in the future. Many community exhibitions rely on static wall panels, limiting creativity and visitor engagement. As part of this brief, we seek bespoke, reusable exhibition fittings that:

- Encourage interactive, engaging, and tactile displays
- Are simple, analogue, and easily updated for new content
- Maximise space efficiency

Examples could include:

- Moveable/Foldable Hanging Frames – Lightweight, freestanding structures that create additional display space in the middle of the room, allowing for interchangeable content.
- Stackable Display Cubes – Modular plinths that double as seating or display cases, adaptable to different exhibition layouts.
- Sliding or Rotating Panels – Wall-mounted panels that can be rotated, slid or otherwise opened to reveal different content, encouraging interaction, and allowing visitors to uncover hidden stories, images, or historical comparisons.
- Portable Sound Pods – Small, self-contained audio stations where visitors can listen to oral histories, interviews, or sounds from the past.

The design should balance quality, durability, and flexibility, ensuring the exhibition is robust and low-maintenance while remaining easy to adapt for future use. Consideration should also be given to potential touring options, with elements that are transportable and adaptable to different spaces.

Audiences

We aim to attract an increasingly diverse audience representative of Glasgow's population as well as reaching new audiences through a contemporary, engaging exhibition.

The project will benefit the following main audience groups:

- People interested in learning about how to care and maintain the city's built heritage.
- People interested in photography and using art to explore how the city is constructed and cared-for.
- Professionals and students in architecture, planning etc interested in the development of the city and how to ensure its future sustainability.

Practical considerations

- The total budget for the exhibition is £8000 inc VAT.
- The exhibition is due to be installed by late Spring (May) and will remain in place for approximately 6 weeks.
- The proposed installation should be robust & require little to no maintenance from GCHT staff. There is potential for the exhibition to tour after its initial show, which should be borne in mind in the design ie. it should be relatively easy to transport and adapt.
- The exhibition should include a graphic identity to be applied to the window to attract passers by.
- Visitors to the Trust's exhibitions usually arrive in pairs and small groups and stay approx. 10-15 minutes.
- Feedback from the exhibition will be a key part of our evaluation of this project, so mechanisms for encouraging this should be considered as part of the overall design.
- All fire/alarm panels and light switches must remain accessible.
- The designer will work closely with the GCHT Activities Team who will provide the necessary support and input to the project.

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Tenders are invited for professional services to:

- Prepare and manage the design, production & installation of the exhibition as outlined in this brief.
- Issue production information to printers and appointed sub-contractors.
- Ensure the works are carried out within the agreed budget.
- Communicate regularly with GCHT to monitor progress.

Tenders must include the following information.

- Your understanding of the brief.
- A description of how the brief will be delivered to achieve our aims, including an indicative timetable for the work.
- Proposed costs for design, production and installation.
- Qualifications and experience of the personnel delivering this project (please provide links to previous projects if desired).
- Your full contact details.

Enquiries and submissions should be made by email to: info@glasgowheritage.org.uk