

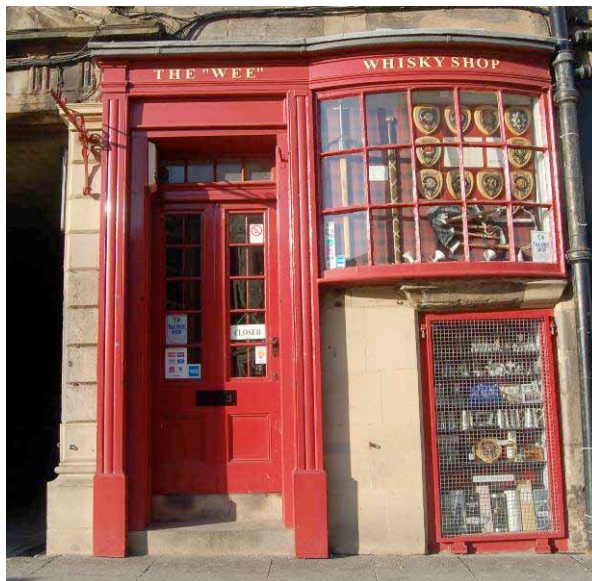
Conserving Scotland's Retail Buildings

Monday 22nd September 2008
The Lighthouse, Glasgow

This seminar was organised by Technical Conservation Group, Historic Scotland to bring together expertise from Scotland, England and Ireland involved in the conservation of historic retail buildings. Delegates were from a variety of backgrounds including architects, planners, conservation officers and other conservation professionals.

This document is an edited transcript of the talks given and includes images from the presentations.

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Conserving Scotland's Retail Buildings

Programme

Morning Session: Architectural History and Materials

Opening Address:

Roger Curtis, Technical Conservation Group, Historic Scotland

Researching Scotland's Retail Buildings

Lindsay Lennie, Research Fellow, Historic Scotland

Scotland has a rich history of retail buildings. This session will examine how fixed shops became established in the late 18th and early 19th century and their associated architectural styles. There will also be an overview of the aims of the Research Fellowship project on historic shopfronts.

Timber Shop Frontages and Their Details

Paul Beaton, Conservation Architect, Historic Scotland

Timber plays a crucial role in the design of shopfronts. This talk will examine the design and detailing of timber shopfront joinery.

Use of Ceramic Tiles in Shops

Tony Herbert, Senior Lecturer, School of Art & Design, University of Wolverhampton

A discussion of the use of ceramic materials in shops in late 19th century and early 20thC together with a consideration of the issues which arise in their conservation.

Shop-front Design and Construction: the Use of Iron and Other Metals

Ali Davey, Project Manager, Historic Scotland

Scotland was a world leader in the production of architectural cast ironwork during the 19th Century. This talk will look at how the growth of the architectural iron industry affected the design and construction of shop fronts and will also touch on the use of other metals such as bronze.

Vitrolite: The Study of Shopfronts, the Study of Culture

Katriona Byrne, Conservation Officer, Roscommon County Council, Ireland

This session will examine how the study of a single material can illuminate a whole chapter in the social and cultural history of a nation.

Afternoon Session: Shops- Issues and Solutions

Protecting the Legacy: a Window on the Listing of Shops and Shopfronts

Debbie Mays, Head of Listing, Historic Scotland Inspectorate

This paper will look at the designation of shops and shopfronts for Listing and the process of selection from local shop to department store.

Case Study: The Shop in the Lawnmarket and other Edinburgh Shop Frontages

Ian Riddell, Ian Riddell Architects, Edinburgh

Edinburgh Old Town Renewal Trust provided grant assistance to allow the conservation and repair of the last surviving late Georgian bow-fronted shop front. The shop, located on Edinburgh's High Street, is part of a Category A listed building built in 1690.

Big Pictures/ Small Details

Ross Hunter, Director, Graven Images, Glasgow

This session will consider a contemporary approach to shopfront design (from the point of view of the shopper).

The Role of Design and Shop Frontages in Urban Regeneration

Liz Davidson, Project Director, Merchant City Initiative

This session will give an overview of the Merchant City THI shopfront improvement programme, its aims, successes, spin offs and lost opportunities.

Maintaining Local Shop Identity

Mark Douglas, Principal Officer (Heritage and Design), Scottish Borders Council

The Scottish Borders have some of the best surviving examples of traditional shopfronts in Scotland. In this session, Mark will examine the difficulties in maintaining that identity in the face of changing retail habits with examples from various Border towns.

Speaker Profiles

Paul Beaton BArch(Hons), MScEurUrbCons, Reg. Architect, IHBC

Paul was formerly a Project Executive with Edinburgh Old Town Renewal Trust where conservation led regeneration of the urban fabric exposed him to the delights of traditional shopfront detailing. He is currently a District Architect with Properties in Care Division, Historic Scotland

Katriona Byrne BA MA Post-grad Dip (Conservation) MUBC

Katriona currently works as a Conservation Officer with Roscommon County Council in Ireland. As part of a Masters in Urban and Building Conservation at University College Dublin, Katriona submitted a thesis investigating the history and conservation of vitrolite in Ireland which included a survey of vitrolite shopfronts in Leinster and Counties Tipperary and Roscommon. She was awarded the Rachel McRory Prize for this research and was subsequently given an Architecture Research Grant by The Heritage Council for the extension of the survey to the whole of the country.

Ali Davey BA (Hons) MUBC

Ali Davey completed a Masters in Urban and Building Conservation at University College Dublin in 2006. As part of this Masters Degree, she wrote a thesis examining the conservation of architectural ironwork in Ireland. Ali joined Historic Scotland's Technical Conservation, Research and Education Group in 2006 as a Research Fellow to study architectural ironwork in Scotland and recently set up an exhibition and co-authored a Historic Scotland publication on architectural ironwork in Stornoway.

Liz Davidson BA(Hons) PGDipArchCons IHBC

Liz is currently the Project Director of the Merchant City Townscape Heritage Initiative – a multi agency urban regeneration programme which seeks to address the issues of declining physical, economic and environmental performance in the historic heart of the City of Glasgow. Over the past year, she was seconded to Historic Scotland to set up and manage a new grant programme – the Historic Environment Regeneration Fund, which involved the assessment of bids from Scotland's local authorities to an £8 Million fund for area regeneration schemes in some of Scotland's most historic burghs.

Previously Liz was Director of Glasgow Building Preservation Trust delivering projects such as the Tobacco Merchants House, St. Andrews in the Square Centre for Traditional Music and Dance, Wellpark Women's Enterprise Centre, the St. Francis Centre in the City's Gorbals, and the 'Tardis' Police Boxes in addition to the launch of the UK's first Doors Open Day in the City in 1990 – now a UK wide event which celebrates access and enjoyment of all forms of the built environment. She has also worked at the Scottish

Civic Trust, Edinburgh New Town Conservation Trust and the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland.

Liz has formerly held the post of Chair of the UK Association of Building Preservation Trusts, is a past member of the Historic Buildings Council for Scotland, advisor on the Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland in Heritage Skills and Training and a member of the RIAS Conservation Accreditation Panel.

Mark Douglas BArch, Dip ArchCons, PGDip T&CP IHBC

Mark trained at Edinburgh College of Art/ Heriot-Watt University, specialising in architectural conservation in his diploma year and qualified as an architect. He subsequently worked for Simpson and Brown Architects, Edinburgh on historic buildings, followed by five years in Carlisle as a director of a firm of architects. Mark then returned to Scotland as Conservation Officer for Scottish Borders Council and qualified as a planner. He is currently heading a small specialist team dealing with archaeology, ecology and conservation and design. Mark also set up and ran the "Heart of Hawick" Townscape Heritage Initiative and is currently working on a proposed Kelso THI, which will include specific measures to support the retention and enhancement of traditional shop fronts.

Tony Herbert BSc DipCons

Following a decade working in nature conservation and interpretation, Tony moved into museums as Special Projects Officer for the Ironbridge Gorge Museum. After developing a particular interest in tiles and architectural ceramics he was involved with the establishment of the Jackfield Tile Museum and became the first Curator of Ceramics at Ironbridge. Tony has also worked as a freelance consultant and adult education tutor. His special interests are 19th and 20th century architecture and design, especially industrial buildings and ceramics. He has worked as a consultant on historical tiles and has worked on major Victorian buildings including the Foreign Office.

Tony is currently Senior Lecturer in Contextual Studies at University of Wolverhampton and is also a lecturer for the Ironbridge Institute, Heritage Management course. His publications include "*The Decorative Tile in Architecture and Interiors*", co-authored with Kathryn Huggins and 'The Manufacture and Design of Victorian Tiles in Relation to their Conservation', in "*Architectural Ceramics their history, manufacture and conservation*".

Ross Hunter

Ross Hunter is an architect and founding Director of Graven Images, a design consultancy based in Glasgow established in 1987. Graven Images works internationally on interior and graphic design projects ranging from hotels to food packaging and place branding. Recent projects have included the Tinderbox, Ingram Street, Glasgow; signage for NTS Gladstone's Land in Edinburgh; and interior design for the new BBC Headquarters, Glasgow.

Dr Lindsay Lennie BA(Hons) DipBldgCons PhD MRICS

Lindsay has an undergraduate degree in geography from Durham University and worked for many years in the public sector as a Chartered Valuation Surveyor in both England and Scotland. In 2001 she completed the RICS Diploma in Building Conservation and subsequently undertook a PhD in building conservation at Heriot-Watt University. Her thesis was titled "*The Conservation of Historic Shopfronts in Perth and Perthshire*" and from this a booklet was published by Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust, "*The Historic Shopfronts of Perth*". Since 2006 she has been a Research Fellow with Technical Conservation, Research and Education Group (now Technical Conservation Group), Historic Scotland investigating the history and survival of historic retail buildings throughout Scotland.

Dr Deborah Mays PhD MA(Hons) IHBC

Deborah Mays is Head of Listing at Historic Scotland where she also has experience in handling consents. She took her PhD at St Andrews University and specialises in the 19th and 20th centuries. She is a full member of the IHBC, a Fellow of the RSA, and former secretary of the Society of Architectural Historians.

Ian Riddell BArch DipArch ARIAS RIBA

Ian established his own Practice in Edinburgh in 1991 from a background in commercial, housing and conservation projects. The Practice has gained experience in a wide variety of projects, for clients in both the public and private sectors, involving conservation and restoration, refurbishment and new build. Works to historic listed buildings form a large part of the work of the Practice. Ian's sensitive conservation work arises from a thorough understanding of traditional building materials and methods of construction, and this is also reflected in his contemporary design work.

Opening Address

Roger Curtis
Technical Conservation Group, Historic Scotland

Welcome to this event, which brings together various elements of experience and highlights the key issues. Within Historic Scotland, in Technical Conservation Group, our recurring themes of works are materials and skills, and how to combine them in maintaining the traditionally built environment. This takes many forms, from brochs to byres, sheds and of course, shopfronts, and this conference is the work of our Research Fellow, Lindsay Lennie, who has put this programme together to showcase the work of TCG, and of others in this important area. As various schemes get underway, set up by colleagues in the Investment Team of HS, there is a real need to understand what we are looking at when considering commissioning work in high streets and urban areas. I hope this seminar will assist in that appreciation.

Few areas of architecture are as accessible and immediate as the shops we use, and we sometimes form close associations with their arrangement and form. I, and many others, will have memories of early retail experiences, where we knew we were partaking of a process that felt fragile by its antiquity – be it waiting for change from a vacuum pipe from the cash room, watching some Edwardian scales in use or wondering at some faded gilded lettering below a cornice, and sadly this fragility was invariably confirmed by its absence at the next visit.

We take different forms of reassurance from the very fact of their continuity, and are invariably shocked when their defining details, with the renowned speed of shop fitters, disappear following sale or development. It is gratifying to know that the importance of such human level design is valued beyond the immediate community, by listing, by individual action and occasionally by commercial use that understands, and sometimes plays on its history (although this can quickly become parody). In times of increasing costs, and uncertainty, we must argue that the retention of such facades and elements has to be good – for reasons of cultural identity and sustainability alone, to say nothing of money saved in needless replacement of fascias and detailing. Retail fashion should alight gently upon what it occupies, leaving fabric and detailing intact – saving money in the process. However, I am not qualified to argue modern retailing theory, and will trust sufficient debate is encouraged.

There is an evolving theme to the day – speakers start with research, then the range and variety of materials and the cultural idioms they were seeking to convey in retail, and then moving on to protection and appreciation of the resource, with case studies of conservation work. To ensure a modern take in our considerations, we have views from a design perspective, the role that urban streetscapes play in regeneration projects, and the importance of local identity.

I hope that those here today will be able to develop their appreciation, better understand how things can be repaired or resolved, with the right consents were appropriate, and above all, ensure that the traditional make up of our towns and villages remains relevant with usable and desirable retail spaces for ongoing use.