



MULTILATERAL EXCHANGES: INTERPRETATION CENTER NANCY, 23 X 2007

The Lighthouse – Mackintosh Interpretation Centre (Glasgow)

Julia Fenby

Mackintosh, born and grown up in Glasgow in a working class tenement in an old part of the city, studied at Glasgow School of Art, got his first job as an apprentice architect in the city and went on to design his most important work there.

He would have been influenced by the changing city, the noise and vitality, wealth and poverty of turn of the century Glasgow.

The building which is now known as The Lighthouse, was originally the Glasgow Herald printworks and was designed by CRM when he was an apprentice with Honeyman and Keppie Architects.

It was CRM's first public building and although its interior is largely functional (print rooms, offices, plant works, water tank etc), its exterior displays many of the characteristics which were to become so familiar in his later work.

The Herald building (1893-1895), completed when Mackintosh was 25, was used by The Glasgow Herald for almost 100 years - until 1981 - when the newspaper moved to another building. It then lay empty in the city centre for 18 years.

In the 1990's the British Arts Council funded a number of national arts festival's and invited cities across the UK to bid to be host cities. Glasgow's bid for the Festival of Architecture and Design was successful and was celebrated in the city in 1999. The work on The Lighthouse could begin.

Why an Interpretation Centre?

Mackintosh was already one of Glasgow's biggest cultural tourist attractions, but there was no single place where people could go to find out about his work.

So, it made absolute sense for The Lighthouse, Scotland's Centre for Architecture, Design and the City to house an Interpretation Centre about Mackintosh, in one of his own buildings, which would provide visitors with a good introduction to the architect/designer, his life and work and which would orient them to the rest of his work in Scotland and the UK.

Glasgow looked to other cities which had similar centres - the Gaudi Centre in Barcelona was a key inspiration. The Mack Centre is the only permanent city centre based exhibition looking at the life and work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the building itself is obviously the primary exhibit.

The Tower is the most distinctive element of the building. It originally housed an 8000 gallon water tank which was to feed a sprinkler system which operated inside and outside the building in the case of fire.

The public entrance takes visitors into Page and Park's 1999 extension.

The design also brings a lot of light down into the narrow gap site.

As you go up through the building, you are rewarded not only with great views of other city buildings and the city skyline, but also, close up views of Mackintosh's original design.

Again you can see how the new building sites right up against the old one.

On the third floor, visitors are met by friendly and well-informed staff who are able to answer any questions about Mackintosh, and also to provide information on other Mackintosh buildings in Glasgow and beyond.

The Centre was designed by Gareth Hoskins Architects who have gone on to design the new Architecture Galleries at the V&A in London. Their design guides the visitor into the exhibition, and gently introduces them to the subject without overwhelming them with information.

The Mac Guide contains illustrations and top line information on 14 of Mackintosh's buildings - mostly in the west of Scotland, one in Northampton, England.

Opposite is a long curving glass wall which contains several small windows housing small models of some of the buildings. The exhibition is designed to be self-led and visitors can absorb information in a number of different ways according to their personal preferences: models, photographs, films, text, objects, architectural plans and drawings. At the end of this wall we keep a number of folios containing

newspaper clippings with stories pertaining to Mackintosh for visitors who want to spend time studying more closely.

Next stop the Lighthouse model and through the doors to the Mack Tower where visitors can watch a video about this and other Mack buildings through interviews with academics, architects and enthusiasts. The Mack Tower is one of the highlights of a visit to The Lighthouse. There are 135 steps to the top where visitors can go out onto a balcony for 360 degree views of the city. It is possible to see the Glasgow School of Art. For visitors who can't take the stairs, there is a 'periscope' style camera, with controls in the exhibition connected to a camera on top of the Mack Tower, which can be controlled from the gallery for views across the city.

The exhibition contains a number of original objects and replica exhibits and shows Mackintosh's work in context with his contemporaries: Alexander 'Greek' Thomson, John James Burnet, John Archibald Campbell, James Salmon.

Photographs of each architect's work are mounted on a floating perspex screen which hangs in front of a map of the city.

In the years around 1900 the city's buildings were amongst the most progressive in the UK - its designers, craftsmen and women made 'Glasgow Style' famous.

The Timeline Wall shows Charles Rennie Mackintosh's life from his birth in 1868 to his death in 1928. Importantly it shows Mackintosh in the context not only of what was going on in the world of architecture and design, but also in society. The top line shows key inventions and historical events which happened throughout CRM's life and may well have influenced him: from the invention of the world's first escalator and the Lumiere Bros invention of motion picture camera in the early 1890's. To the first modern Olympics in 1896 and the discovery of penicillin in 1928.

The Timeline Wall therefore gives visitors information which will help them place CRM in the context of their own understanding of key happenings in history.

2nd line - CRM's sketches and watercolours

3rd line - models and architectural plans and drawings

4th line - Interiors and furniture design

Bottom line - Life story - student travelling scholarship; GSA; friendship with McNair & MacDonald sisters; marriage to Margaret; early work; successes and failures; war years in Suffolk and London; bleak years, travels in South France, finally illness and death.

Opposite the Timeline Wall are 4 'booths' each providing the visitor with detailed information on a specific CRM building: Glasgow School of Art, CRM's masterpiece, The Hill House, The Willow Tea Rooms - one of the most fashionable tea rooms in Glasgow in the early 1900's, 78 Derngate

Each booth is laid out in the same way with:

- A short introductory text panel with photographic images and key facts - client; location; date; materials; cost

- So, you can see that the Glasgow School of Art cost £48.5K, The Hill House £6.2K and Willow Tea Rooms £6.5K

- A touch screen computer with more detailed information
- A model of the building or façade
- Objects relating to the building such CRM-designed Blackie's Books covers and a replica of a stencil used to decorate one of the Hill House bedrooms; CRM's cutlery and MMM's menu card design from the Willow tea rooms; and a lampshade from the library at GSA
- Pull out drawers with architectural plans and drawings of the building
- An animated film showing the building in detail - a tour of spaces plus close up details of interiors, furniture, textiles, panels

Linking with the stories in each of the booths, there is additional information on the reverse side of the booths and also along the back wall of the gallery:

Buildings and Interiors

- The type of work CRM did: houses, schools, print works

- The interior design work by CRM and MMM (CRM admitted that his work was 50-75% inspired by Margaret)

Furniture and Designs

- CRM's versatility: Cutlery, furniture, interiors, stencils, light fittings, carpets, clocks, jewellery, book bindings, metalwork, posters, stained glass, textiles
- Mass produced designs - posters, textiles

Painting and Drawing

- An important form of expression for CRM throughout his life
- Sketches from early travels around Europe, watercolours of plants and flowers, later landscapes of South France

Each booth has its own colour theme, and floor panels provide a visual and physical link to the related information on the back wall.

Along this wall there are several animated films on themes including "Glasgow, City of Industry", "Glasgow Architecture c 1900 - CRM and his contemporaries", "British Architecture"

The final section of the exhibition is about Mackintosh's reputation - The Mack Legacy

A high proportion of the local, national and international visitors to The Lighthouse come because they want to learn more about Mackintosh. These include professional visitors, such as architects, designers, artists ; Study tours looking at regeneration projects (eg Liverpool and Newcastle) ; Visitors from other arts venues, such as the V&A.

Public: Individuals and families, National Trust visitors, Senior Citizen groups, Weekend city break tourists, Conference delegates, School and college groups

A couple of education projects to show how we use the building for learning.

Children a taken on a tour of the building - exterior and interior and encouraged to explore and investigate, using all of their senses: Light, materials, forms, shapes, colours, Touch...

In this project, children used the information they had gathered on their tour of the building to create patterns which were then made into snowflake designs for our Christmas snowflake wall.

This recent project took place on Doors Open Day in September when many buildings across the UK open their doors to the public for free.

This was a drop in workshop which attracted visitors of all ages to work together to create designs for a Mackintosh Team Room.

Designs could be photographed and scanned in to the computer and then digitally manipulated

Resulting Mackintosh inspired images were then projected in public areas of the building.

Mackintosh venues attract in excess of 380,000 visits to Glasgow per year.

Jugendstilsenteret – The Art Nouveau Centre of Norway (Ålesund)

David Aasen Sandved

Norway is quite a huge country but only counts 4.7 million inhabitants, so it is not very densely inhabited. A lot of visitors come in cruises trips (to see fjords etc.). Main tourists are German, Spanish, English, American, French, Swedish, Dutch and Italian. Russians are a growing market.

1904: the wooden city of Ålesund burnt. It was rebuilt in bricks around the canal (to protect boats from the sea). Ålesund counts nice houses but not built by genius architects. A complete Art Nouveau city is a unique heritage though. It is a historical document on what did architects build at the turn of the century. Milestones of establishing of Jugendstilsenteret.

1992: the idea of a Jugendstilsenteret is launched.

1996: the local municipality established the working committee for a national Jugendstilsenteret in Ålesund. 12.500€ were granted for a first draft. Idea: think big. They asked for the help of two consultants in museology. Experts were invited to seminars to bring ideas on the projects.

The Norwegian parliament gave a 50.000€ state budget to make a project (national scale).

The regional group was enlarged with more national bodies. John Aage Gjestrum, consultant, made the pre-project. There were 4 different houses that could be used for the Jugendstilsenteret, but only one with many original interior features still in situ.

The Norwegian parliament gave 300.000€.

During an international seminar, the idea of a network amongst Art Nouveau cities was brought.

Thor Bjørlo has been chosen as a full time project leader.

1999: co-founders of RANN.

2000: money raised to buy the Swan Pharmacy to house the Jugendstilsenteret.

2001: Historian and Art Historian employed.

2002: Final choice of exhibition team.

2003: the Jugendstilsenteret was opened by the Queen of Norway.

The Centre was established in the former Swan Pharmacy. It is located in the centre of old town. The canal is the heart of the city. Until 2001, the building was still functioning as a pharmacy. It was the first building listed in Ålesund in 1986. The entrance is not very welcoming because of the counter and there was no possibility of sale-enhancing self-service. Today the visitors can actually go beside which is a thing you normally can't do.

- Exhibition "City fire and reconstruction of city".

"Ride": the time machine (elevator): costs two sports cars which is very expensive, but it functions very well as a portal to take people out of the reality of daily life and into the story we communicate. It shows film clips going back on time (made by Kay Fridstrøm and Jack van Domburg). Many screens:

you have the freedom to choose the screens you want to see: the city fire (8 minutes), reconstruction (7 minutes), which makes 15 minutes as a whole.

- Basement: an exhibition about craftsmanship and architecture. Biography of representatives of each craft from the period of rebuilding of the city. Reconstruction of a typical wall in Ålesund, a didactic model aimed to enhance the knowledge of the local property owners. Jugendstilsenteret is also engaged in restoration projects at the moment.

Screens with different works of craftsmen.

There is a room for children to play but also exhibition rooms for children.

- The upper floors were the private home of the pharmacist: one of the best preserved interior in Ålesund (the only one that people can visit). In the pharmacist dining-room, the wall-papers were renovated etc.

The only original parts of the kitchen area are tiles and ventilation from the stove. There you can see a 15 minutes presentation entitled "The New Art" (description of local heritage in a European context).

Then in the other rooms, you can find original furniture in a traditional exhibition: silver, china, glass etc. The applied arts museums lent some objects (most expensive pieces) to the museum. Since 2000, the Jugendstilsenteret has been collecting Art Nouveau objects to put in their exhibition space, beginning with relative inexpensive objects and then more expensive ones to enhance the collections quality. And then came the idea of not owning anything.

First temporary exhibition: Mackintosh (20 chairs: 12.000.000 £ insurance value!).

Since 2005, the Art Museum "The Cube" is connected to the Jugendstilsenteret (building next door).

Jugendstilsenteret and The Cube are sharing more exhibition space after the fusion with the art museum.

Example: exhibition on Mucha this summer.

Guest book: very useful for feedback.

Jugendstilsenteret won national Design Award for our graphic programme.

Total investment: 4.8 million €. The restoration of the building was even more expensive.

Exhibition: 1.4 million €.

Funds: 60% from the state, 20% from the county, 20% from the municipality + loans and savings.

Annual budget 2004: 3,4 million NOK (5,6 million NOK in 2008).

Which means with the income 0,53 million €.

Profit: new projects (no big business).

Challenges: from private to public building; elevator for disabled. The building was not meant to welcome 20.000 visitors a year, so it has somehow to be preserved.

Space and structure: multi-media is perfect for limited space; size of objects (proportions); limited capacity: no large groups (no more than 45 persons); no busses. Climate control: stable C°RH% (humidity), good for objects but not for the building.

Security measures.

Casa Milà or "La Pedrera" (Barcelona)

Silvia Villaroya

The Espai Gaudí is the interpretation Centre of Gaudí at La Pedrera.

La Pedrera was built by Antoni Gaudí i Cornet from 1906 to 1912, and from 1986 is owned by Caixa Catalunya that acquired the building with the purpose of restoring and rehabilitating it, in order to convert it into a cultural centre open to all. Caixa Catalunya is a savings bank which is required to devote a major part of its profits to social, educational and cultural projects. La Pedrera is at present the headquarters of Caixa Catalunya Obra Social, integrated by four specialised foundations, in charge of different programs and activities.

The Espai Gaudí, located in the attic, is an interpretative centre dedicated to present greater understanding of Gaudí's architecture, works and life, opened in 1996 as the culmination to all the restoration work carried out on the building.

This building was Gaudí's last civil work. Gaudí (1852-1926) was born in Reus and studied architecture in Barcelona. Casa Milà (1906-1912). The building was commissioned by the Milà Family, one of the most distinguished Catalan families of that time. Pere Milà i Camps was a famous textile manufacturer. His second wife was the widow of a wealthy indiano (as Catalans who went to America to seek fortune were known) who left her an abundant legacy. They intended to occupy the main floor of the building and rent the other floors of the building, which was very common amongst wealthy families at that time. The official name of the building was Casa Milà but it is known as La Pedrera

because it looked like an open quarry. The construction was complex and fraught with financial problems and it was declared illegal because it was too high.

1947: the house was sold to an estate agency. The new owners decided to change the first floor into 5 apartments instead of the original 2.

1953: the architect Francisco Barba Corsini was commissioned to create 13 apartments in the attic of the building. From the death of Rosario Segimón in 1964, nearly no restorations or maintenance works were carried out during those years and the restoration works will take place only from 1987 (to 1996). La Pedrera is considered the most emblematic civil building for its constructive and functional innovations as well as for ornamental and decorative solutions, which broke with the architectural styles of its time. For these singularity has received official recognition and protection

1962: the house was featured in the catalogue of Barcelona Artistic Heritage

1969: the house was declared Monument of National Artistic Interest by the Spanish government

1984: declared as World Heritage Site by the UNESCO.

The project of interpretation centre was launched to highlight Gaudí's work and adapt the place to visitors.

1996: end of restoration and opening of the Gaudí space. Espai Gaudí (No translation)

2006: opening of the new Gaudí space Espai Gaudí (No translation)

The interpretation centre is open 7 days a week from 9 to 20h and welcomes an average of 3000 visitors per day. The restoration takes place during the only closing week of the year.

Different sections of Gaudí space:

Gaudí's short biography: images projected on glass supports

La Pedrera: models and audiovisual presentation

Geometry: explanation of Gaudí's geometrical arches

Hanging models

Emblematic works (Sagrada Família, Casa Batlló, Parc Guell and The crypt of the church at the Güell Colony)

Other important works (10 of his works)

Nature

Design: reproduction of Gaudí's furniture

The Pedrera Apartment, also part of the visit of the building is a reconstruction of a flat with period objects and furniture (mass-produce furniture: all objects and furniture are stuck on the floor to avoid thefts). The visit of the building finishes on the roof-terrace, one of the most amazing and incredible roofs of the world.

Being also part of the Espai Gaudí philosophy of approaching Gaudí and architecture to all, La Pedrera educacio is not only a website, if not the principal resource for the educational services. We have programs related to the buildings architecture, interior design, among others.

Films showing the neighbours (people living in La Pedrera) talking about their life in this building and showing their interiors. www.lapedreraeducacio.org/flash.htm

Visits organization:

The singularity of the building is not only for its constructive and functional innovations and by the ornamentals and decorative solutions, furthermore, for the variety of functions is now running. The variety of functions or the different uses of the building:

Administrative: Headquarters of Caixa Catalunya Obra Social and its four foundations

Residential: Apartment building with tenants

Tourism: Public visit

Cultural and social: Exhibitions, conferences and activities

The building was designed to be a private residential building. The same entrances and exits are used for all the buildings functions, and the most visited spaces are on the upper floors, with small elevators and stairs for going up and down. The Fundació Caixa Catalunya has always sought to attain compatibility between his huge influx of visitors and the quality levels of the visit, with the conservation of a world heritage site, thought:

Limiting the number of visitors per hour to permit a fluid visit, also set by security standards

Managing in advance the group visitors to avoid collapses in the accesses and to distribute rationally the groups between individual visitors, according to their characteristics and interests.

Having a great team in charge of the information, circulation and visitor attention

Using audioguides also for circulation purposes

Organizing the delivery of activities materials outside opening times

Placing signs

The Gaudi Centre (Reus)

Dominique Ruiz and Josep Maria Cabre Llaberia

Why to implement a Gaudi interpretation Centre in Reus?

- to highlight Gaudi architecture
- to explain who was Gaudi
- to make the relation between Gaudi and Reus

The exhibitions have been conceived by the Japanese architect Toshiaki Tange and the Catalan architect Joan Sibina and was opened in June 2007

The centre, which counts 1200m² of space, is open 361 days a year.

Purchase building: 4 millions €

Adaptation of the building: 3 millions €

Exhibition content: 3,5 millions €

The annual budget is 500.000 € (50% coming from the contribution of local government; 50% coming from tickets sales and patronage)

The programme is presented on 5 floors:

- Floor 4: restaurant
- Floor 3: Universal Gaudi displays a 12 minutes audiovisual presentation about Gaudi and tactile models. Educational department (to be opened)
- Floor 2: "Innovative Gaudi" shows the architect's technological creativity, the shapes that were used by Gaudi and his inspiration of nature, replicas of Gaudi's works and room.
- Floor 1: Gaudi and Reus: childhood and youth in Reus. Exhibition showing the only surviving original manuscript by Gaudi (not the original anymore because of conservation). You can see the translation of this manuscript in the main languages. The Modernist Trail: a large street map on the floor featuring the main Art Nouveau building in Reus. Four audiovisual presentations.
 - Ground floor: reception, tourist office and gift shop

The visit lasts 1 to 2 hours. The audioguides are available in Spanish, Catalan, English and French.

Educational activities for children (8-16) are planned in the form of guided tours; there is also a show with an actor using theatre to offer insights into Gaudi

2008-2009: educational workshops

Until the end of October, 13.225 people have already visited the Gaudi centre.

The public mostly comes from abroad:

19% are residents of Reus

18% come from other places in Catalonia

20% come from other places in Spain

43% come from other countries (France, Russia...)

74% of the visitors found the visit very good and 26% good (only one person out of 400 said it was very bad)

There are still improvements to be made: a new signal system has to be found for audio-guides (old people do not know how to use it).

A lot of projects are now merging: a multimedia presentation and interactive models, audiovisual show, advertising campaign...

Tourism office (45% of tourists who come to the Gaudi centre are sent by the tourist office)

www.gaudicentre.com

Projet de centre d'interprétation à la Villa Majorelle (Nancy)

Valérie Thomas and Jérôme Perrin

An artist villa and the documentation centre of the Musée Ecole de Nancy. From history to now (Art Nouveau in progress).

1901: the villa was built by Henri Sauvage for the Majorelle Family (3 persons).

1926: the house loses its family function when Jacques Majorelle leaves for Marrakech

1931: park divided into parcels (offices)

Then punctual architectural additions were made: the terrace (semicircle) was changed into a bow-window; changes were made on the roof and the terrace of the last floor has been replaced by a roofed room.

Now: the house is used as an office by the Musée Ecole de Nancy (ground floor), the architects from the Departmental Architecture Department (first floor) and the association Les Amis de l'Ecole de Nancy (third floor).

There are visits on the week-end (about 20 visitors at a time) when the offices are closed.

The project in progress is more modest than the Gaudi Centre or La Pedrera. The goal is to restore a dwelling from the turn of the century and return main objects, but also to associate more closely the relation between architecture and Ecole de Nancy. Create more didactic spaces (Musée de l'Ecole de Nancy, atmosphere of the turn of the century but not too much information) and give a lot of factual information on Art Nouveau and its development in Nancy.

The archives of the Musée de l'Ecole de Nancy is a very tiny space. The common room can welcome the museum staff but there is no space left for students or researchers... It is essential to have another room to welcome people.

The project includes the renovation of the façades. The Villa Majorelle is entirely listed, so it does not allow many changes. The restoration will be identical to original (terrace, workshop and stained-glass window) but the decisions will be taken during the planning with the architect of listed buildings, guided by a scientific committee.

Restoration of the furniture already acquired by the Musée Ecole de Nancy: the dining-room furniture (acquired in 1996), the sleeping-room furniture (acquired in 1984).

Restoration of the bathroom.

Highlight Majorelle's work and return to the atmosphere of that time, taking visitors circulation in account.

Acquiring objects.

Furniture acquired and work on lights with a worker in wrought iron.

Opportunity of a furniture donation "pinetree style" (seats and sofas). No photos of the bathroom: it will have to be created from other bathroom photos.

Pedagogical information on Majorelle

Spaces: determine pedagogical space and original space

Other space: temporary exhibition (ceramics etc.) to emphasize different aspects of Majorelle's work

The last floor is not very interesting. Majorelle's workshop could be changed into a documentation center and the other rooms for archives storage.

The garden will probably be damaged during the works; the idea would be to hide the villa from its environment which is not really nice. The garden will be reshaped by a landscape gardener.

The first pre-project realized in 2006 must be agreed by a scientific committee, by the Direction des Musées de France and by the local council of the city of Nancy.

2009: writing and release of the architectural study – call of tenders

2010: preliminary study of the façade

2010-2014: exterior restoration (façade, roofs)

2013-2014: works and interior conversion

The visits will be limited to 15 to 20 persons.

The staff will be composed with caretakers, guides and archivists.

Budget: façade renovation: 500.000€; interior much more expensive (badly kept villa, electricity etc.).