

19 December 2024

## **FUNDING WIN MARKS ANNIVERSARY OF MACKINTOSH ACQUISITION**

A generous £1.1 million package of development funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund has been pledged to the National Trust for Scotland as the first step towards a highly ambitious project to celebrate the genius of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald.

The news comes almost a year after the conservation charity worked with the Trustees of Mackintosh at the Willow and acquired the tearoom on Sauchiehall Street which was struggling due to the impact of the pandemic and two fires at the Glasgow School of Art.

After adding Mackintosh at the Willow to its portfolio, which also includes the Hill House in Helensburgh, the National Trust for Scotland cares for two of the couple's most important surviving, publicly accessible masterpieces of design.

These incredible places will be the focus of ***Mackintosh Illuminated***, a project, which the conservation charity says will put a spotlight on the design duo, sharing, celebrating and inspiring as many as possible with their creative genius and the beauty of their creations. The development funding announced today is the first stage towards a wider £7.3 million award from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The National Trust for Scotland says the project will help make Mackintosh and Macdonald better known and appreciated both internationally and at home through the creation of an online learning resource, and an expanded programme of property-based community and education work in both Helensburgh and Glasgow.

The project also aims to encourage more people to visit both sites to get a richer picture of the pair's skill and versatility. Through working in partnership with other Mackintosh stakeholders in Glasgow and more widely, the support will also help planning to celebrate the anniversary in 2028 of Mackintosh's death, and his birth 160 years previously.

Funding will also enable the charity to continue the vital conservation work at the Hill House which, since it was completed in 1904, has been afflicted with chronic damp. The pioneering chainmail Box which was installed in 2019 has been successful in allowing the house to dry out slowly. This new funding will enable the Trust to move forward with the full removal of the current render, to find a replacement which will resolve the longstanding damp issue, to remove the Box in 2028 and to provide updated, permanent visitor facilities including a café, shop and toilet facilities at the site on Upper Colquhoun Street in Helensburgh.

National Trust for Scotland Chief Executive Philip Long OBE said: "We are enormously grateful to The National Lottery Heritage Fund for this generous grant which will help us do all we can to make sure that Mackintosh and Macdonald get the recognition globally and at home that their brilliant design and creativity merit.

“As the charity privileged to care for some of the finest remaining examples of the couple’s work, we feel strongly that their contribution should be better understood and celebrated. With the Hill House and the Mackintosh at the Willow at the centre of all our work, we will engage with more people in person and online, to tell the story of their creation and the inspiring people involved in those visionary ventures.

“And, as a conservation charity, we will protect both buildings to be enjoyed and experienced long into the future. At the Hill House, this means, continuing our work to solve its century-long issue with damp, both preserving this masterpiece and pioneering methods that add to the global conservation sector’s knowledge of how to care for and repair 20th century buildings, and helping train new craftspeople who can carry out work like this in the future.

“At the Mackintosh at the Willow, that means ensuring that this excellent experience thrives under the Trust’s care and continues to grow and contribute to a much-needed revitalisation of Sauchiehall Street and to Glasgow’s heritage as a whole. It was just a year ago that the future was in doubt for the tearoom. Now this new funding means the future looks bright, both for the Mackintosh at the Willow and for the appreciation of Mackintosh and Macdonald and their unique take on, and place in, nature, beauty and heritage.”

Caroline Clark, The National Lottery Heritage Fund Director for Scotland said:  
"Conserving the architectural masterpiece of the Hill House and enabling the National Trust for Scotland to tell the story of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald’s creative collaboration is hugely important. Thanks to National Lottery players, the Hill House and the stunning Mackintosh at the Willow on Sauchiehall Street will together enable visitors to explore the work of these two artistic virtuosos whose influence stretches around the world."

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors**

**Images by Peter Devlin:**

<https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/8r7rFVzk36> National Trust for Scotland Chief Executive Philip Long OBE and President Jackie Bird receive the news that the charity's ***Mackintosh Illuminated*** project will receive funding support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

**1. About the Hill House** - the house was constructed in Helensburgh between 1902–04 based on a commission given to Charles Rennie Mackintosh by publisher Walter Blackie. The radical design of the house was a great influence on German and Austrian architects, including Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus movement, and in turn can be said to have been pivotal in the direction of modern architecture in the 20th century. Blackie lived in the Hill House until his death in 1953 and it was eventually acquired by the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) in 1972 (having been Grade A listed the year before) and the National Trust for Scotland in 1982.

The Getty Foundation awarded the National Trust for Scotland £95,000 in 2015 to come up with a solution to the water ingress that had been damaging the Hill House for decades. A 'containment' interim solution was arrived at in 2017 through a proposal to build a sheltering box over the property; ground was broken to construct a 165-tonne steel frame and chainmail structure in December 2018 and it was then opened to the public on 7 June 2019.

Surveys conducted in 2022 and 2023 have shown that the box is doing its job in drying out the Hill House and work is progressing to complete the process and employ a solution to water ingress with the box due to be removed by 2028.

Generous donors gave to the Box the Hill House campaign enabling its construction and supporters will have the chance to contribute to ***Mackintosh Illuminated*** too.

**2. About the Mackintosh at the Willow** – Mackintosh at the Willow formally became a part of the National Trust for Scotland's portfolio of properties on 19 January 2024. This followed a generous support package from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to enable the transfer, in addition to assistance given by the Royal Bank of Scotland, Architectural Heritage Fund, Celia Sinclair Thornqvist and her husband, Rolf Thornqvist and Glasgow City Council.

Mackintosh at the Willow re-opened to the public on 7 September 2018 after an extensive restoration by the Willow Tea Rooms Trust.

The original Willow Tea Rooms Building was initially opened by Miss Cranston and designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh with significant design input from his wife, Margaret Macdonald in 1903.

Mackintosh first worked for Miss Catherine 'Kate' Cranston in 1896, designing murals of her new Buchanan Street tearooms. In 1898, he then worked on her existing Argyle Street tearooms designing the furniture and interiors and by 1900 Miss Cranston commissioned him to redesign an entire room in her Ingram Street tearooms (the restored Oak Room from which is now on show at V&A Dundee).

This ultimately led to a commission for the complete design of the proposed new tearooms in Sauchiehall Street in 1903. Mackintosh for the first time was given responsibility for not only the interior design and furniture, but also for the full detail of the internal layout and exterior architectural treatment. The resultant building came to be known as the Willow Tearooms, now known as Mackintosh at the Willow, and is the best known and most important work that Mackintosh undertook for Miss Cranston.

**3. The National Trust for Scotland** is the conservation charity that over 90 years has saved, cared for and shared many of the country's most loved places, rich with history, heritage, nature and culture. The charity celebrates Scotland's heritage and with more than 100 places in its care, there's a place for everyone to love. The National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage that people from Scotland and across the world all love, ensuring its future for everyone to enjoy. Support the National Trust for Scotland and help them protect the places we all love. Become a member at [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk).

#### **4. About The National Lottery Heritage Fund**

\*Grant applications over £250,000 are assessed in two rounds. ***Mackintosh Illuminated*** has initially been granted round one development funding of **£1,159,091** from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, allowing it to progress with its plans. Detailed proposals are then considered by the Heritage Fund at second round, where a final decision is made on the full funding award of £7,340,909. Our vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future. That's why as the largest funder for the UK's heritage we are dedicated to supporting projects that connect people and communities to heritage, as set out in our strategic plan, [Heritage 2033](#). Heritage can be anything from the past that people value and want to pass on to future generations. We believe in the power of heritage to ignite the imagination, offer joy and inspiration, and to build pride in place and connection to the past. Over the next 10 years, we aim to invest £3.6billion raised for good causes by National Lottery players to make a decisive difference for people, places and communities. [heritagefund.org.uk](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk)

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