

# Welcome to the New Year 2020 Newsletter of Richard Murphy Architects



RICHARD  
MURPHY  
ARCHITECTS

## FIVE NEW PROJECTS

We have five significant new projects but unfortunately each one is confidential until we submit their respective planning applications. They are a cultural building in Edinburgh, a commercial and residential building also in Edinburgh, a commercial building in Inverness, a major hotel extension in St Ives in Cornwall and finally a new house in Gullane, East Lothian; so although this is very exciting and the office is working very hard we can't share any more news until a little later in the year.

In the meantime it has been a remarkable few months for publicity about the office:

## ACUTE MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY, CITY HOSPITAL, BELFAST



The Acute Mental Health Unit in Belfast (designed in conjunction with RPP and Devereux Architects) finished in mid-2019 and featured in the October 2019 edition of the RIBA Journal. The editor Hugh Pearman wrote:

The Company

Press

Awards

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The Breakfast  
Mission

2019 and featured in the October 2019 edition of the RIBA Journal. The editor, Hugh Edmunds, wrote:

*'Humane approach sets Belfast's acute mental unit apart'. "The plan is the thing.....Murphy's idea, as the lead design architect, was to insist on it being single-storey, to therefore occupy the site completely and to make a new set of outside spaces within the overall layout..... This is very complex architecture on plan, a small cityscape of different*

*functions ranging from the public to the intensely private, the general to the clinical. It is a tribute to the design team that here the brief is translated into a succession of intriguing, humane spaces that suggest a better way forward for such buildings. For Murphy and his colleagues and clients, the hope is that this different approach to specialist healthcare design can become the new normal."*

The RIBA Journal article can be seen [here](#).

## **'THE CRESCENT', EDINBURGH HOUSING FOR CALA AT THE FORMER DONALDSON'S SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF**



In the Edinburgh Evening News on 10th December, Conor Marlborough writes under the heading *'Is this Scotland's*



*most expensive one-bedroom flat?*

Scottish Construction Now reported on 9th October '**CALA surpasses £20m sales mark at flagship Edinburgh development**'. Philip Hogg, Sales and Marketing Director with CALA Homes (East) said:

*"Residents moving in adds a whole new element to The Crescent and is rewarding for the teams to see. This has always been a hugely ambitious project quite unlike anything built in the city in recent times, so I'm really pleased to see buyers responding so positively... There is an amazing diversity to the home types here too. For instance, the vast duplexes could easily become a family home, whereas the garden apartments are a downsizer's dream. They all have a unique feel. In the short time since launch, The Crescent has been awarded a number of prestigious industry accolades, most recently taking the prize for Best Show Home at The Herald Property Award."*

## **'THE PLAYFAIR' DEVELOPMENT**



Edinburgh Live asked '*Is this the cosiest flat in Edinburgh? Check out this beautiful garden apartment at Donaldson's*' when it looked at one of the apartments in the City and Country conversion of the historic building now called 'The Playfair'.

## **THE ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL**

## THE ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL



In his 'Predictions for 2020' former Evening News editor John McLellan predicts that the long awaited 2018 (sic) public enquiry report into the proposed hotel conversion of the Royal High School will be with Scottish ministers this month. He gives the meagre odds of 2:10 that planning minister Kevin Stewart will accept the report if it recommends approval and 9:10 odds that he will go along with it if it recommends rejection. Assuming the latter - what next?

If the hotel developer abandons the site Edinburgh City Council might negotiate with our client, put the building up for sale or investigate further options for the re-use of the building. Hopefully whatever strategy they might adopt it will not lead to further delays. The Trust has already been waiting four years to implement our plans for a conversion to a music school for St Mary's, a proposal with full planning and listed building consent, that is fully funded.

The Edinburgh Evening News article can be seen [here](#).

## HOUSE AT STRATHAVEN AIRFIELD



The award winning house at Strathaven airfield was featured in the Architects Journal (7th August 2019), The Observer Sunday newspaper colour supplement (30th September 2019) and the online news site HITC (17th October 2019).

In a long article the Observer's Rowan Moore wrote:

*"A sequence of spaces is orchestrated against the staves and bar lines of the frame – a sheltered nook at the entrance, a just-big-enough lobby, an ascent to a living room, which rises up to the underside of that part of the roof that is not occupied by the studies. Sometimes the building encloses, sometimes it opens up to the view. Skinny pieces of structure are selectively revealed, inside and out. A game is played of mass and levitation. Windows on either side of the house allow you, from some positions, to see through it. Long glazed strips on the top of the bedrooms' outer walls seem to detach them from the deck above; corresponding strips of mirror on their inner walls, visible from outside, further dematerialise the building's substance. The outward stepping continues upward towards the deep-eaved, unifying roof. Murphy (who arrives for our discussion and leaves in the microlight he likes to fly) points out the details that might escape the casual observer. The roof has no gutters, which give it a sharp edge that he admires in the works of Frank Lloyd Wright. He acknowledges the influence of Glenn Murcutt, an Australian winner of the Pritzker prize who has made architecture out of workaday materials. Like Murcutt, Murphy*

*runs the corrugations of his metal sheets horizontally, the better to reflect the landscape around”.*

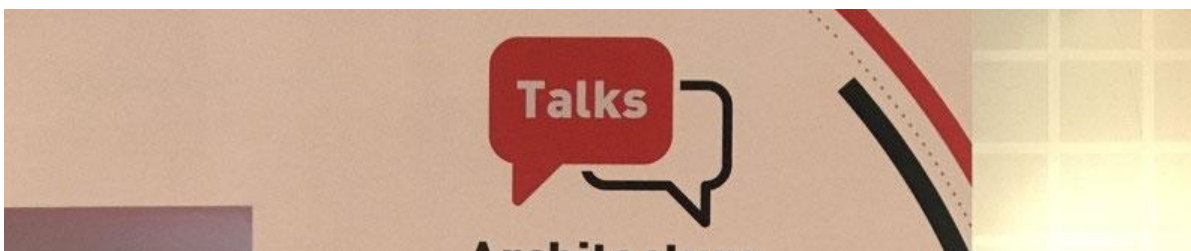
The Observer article can be seen [here](#).

## ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY



Richard Murphy Architects featured prominently at the Royal Scottish Academy 2019 Annual Exhibition with a whole wall showing the completed house in Dalkey (photo above credit Julie Howden), our proposals in Greenock, the completed extension to Galeri Creative Enterprise Centre, Caernarfon, North Wales and the completed Science Centre at Anglia Ruskin University Cambridge. Richard will also be chairing the 2020 RSA Metzstein Architecture Discourse on 29th January where Kjetil Trædal Thorsen, the founder of Snøhetta Architects of Oslo will give the Annual Discourse in the George Square Lecture theatre at 6.45pm. Tickets are now on sale via the [RSA website](#).

## DUBAI BIG 5 AND LECTURES IN SOUTH CHINA UNIVERSITY GUANGZHOU







Richard went on a trip to Dubai and Guangzhou in November speaking firstly at the RIBA Conference providing the "inspiration hour" at the Dubai Big 5 Building trade fair going on to give two lectures on the practice's work and the

work of Scarpa in Guangzhou. Pictured above from left to right are Sumaya Dabbagh (RIBA Gulf Chapter Chair), Jane Duncan (former President of the RIBA), Richard Murphy and Alan Vallance (RIBA Chief Executive).

## BOOK NEWS

2020 sees Richard's blockbuster book 'Carlo Scarpa and Castelvechio Revisited' going into a second edition (currently there are less than 400 remaining from a print run of 3000 printed two years ago!) and Italian and Chinese language editions are now in preparation for publication at the end of the year. The book is still currently available through this website: [www.breakfastmissionpublishing.com](http://www.breakfastmissionpublishing.com)

## 28TH BIRTHDAY AND CHANGES AT RICHARD MURPHY ARCHITECTS

The office celebrated its 28th birthday in our new Edinburgh Maggie's Centre extension by kind permission of Andrew Anderson and his team there. There have been some recent changes in personnel. Our administrator Kathy Jowett, familiar to everyone who phones as "the voice of Richard Murphy Architects", has now retired to Yorkshire after 18 years in the practice. She has been replaced by Pauline Costigane who was already familiar to us from her time working at the Royal Scottish Academy. Matthew Bremner, former director has gone on to other pastures. Tom Hetherington has been appointed an associate. Tom is currently very busy running four projects: the Theosophy Centre, a major house extension in Morningside, a mews conversion in the Edinburgh west end and a new house in Gullane. Richard has been elected to be a member of the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland (the RIAI). Over the years we have built four projects in the Republic and three in Northern Ireland so this is an exciting and appropriate step to take.

## FORTHCOMING TALKS

Richard has been invited to give lectures in February to the Clemson University in Genoa, talking to American architecture students about Scarpa and our own work.

## AND FINALLY.....





As well as our new associate's considerable architectural skills, Tom Hetherington is probably far more familiar to the public for his Great British Bake Off appearances in their 2017 series. Although he didn't win then we were delighted to watch him on Christmas Day in the Channel 4 Bake Off Christmas special. Tom's competition show stopper was a baked version of the Dome bar, (formerly the Commercial Bank on George St by David Rhind 1844), a popular Edinburgh watering hole. We were thrilled that Tom was chosen from the many other competitors for this special show and believe he had over 7 million viewers. If only architecture could bring in the same numbers...!

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