

Children's 'tsar' avoids merger of watchdogs

PROPOSALS to slim down the number of watchdog "tsars" have been unveiled by MSPs.

Ten bodies under the wing of the Scottish Parliament or the Scottish Government should be merged into seven, the MSPs said.

But they said the post of the children's commissioner - which it had been proposed to merge with the Scottish Human Rights Commission - should remain a stand-alone body.

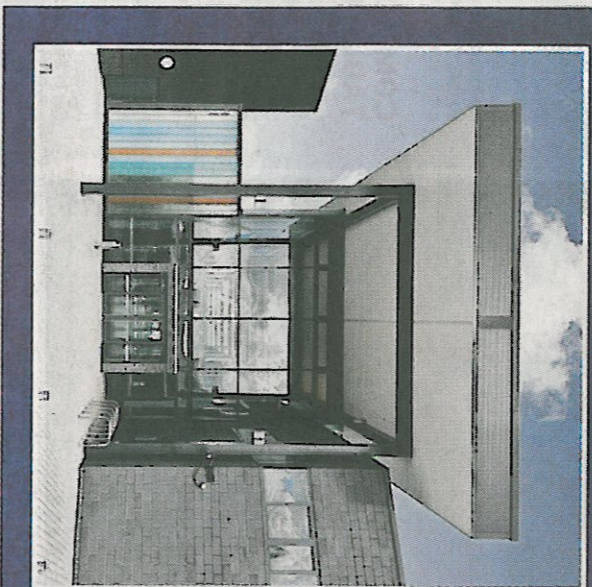
The changes would also see the watchdog responsible for policing MSPs' behaviour, the Scottish Parliamentary Standards Commissioner, merged into a new and bigger body.

The previous commissioner, Dr Jim Dyer, had argued against such a move, telling MSPs in January that removing his stand-alone post could be seen as politicians trying to lessen the scrutiny they face.

Labour MSP Trish Godman, who led the review, said: "While we have recommended reducing the number of public bodies overall, we have also safeguarded the public's valuable regulatory, advocacy and investigatory services."

Glasgow awarded unprecedented number of

City scoops five architect gongs



BY VIVIENNE NICOLL

GLASGOW has scooped five out of seven Scottish architecture Oscars - one for a building described as "lickable".

It is the first time the city has picked up so many awards from the Royal Institute of British Architects. The award-winning buildings will now go forward to the National finals later this year.

Glasgow's winners were the Beatson Institute's new cancer research facility, Moore Street housing, North Glasgow College, Pollok Civic Realm and the Printworks.

Neil Baxter, secretary of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, said: "It is totally unprecedented for Glasgow to get five awards.

"It really is extraordinary that one city should clean up so comprehensively."

David Dunbar, president of the Royal Incorporation, added: "We are delighted Scotland has come up with such a strong list of winners.

"These buildings are undoubtedly among the best in the UK and a great credit to Scotland's architects."

The citation for the new Beatson, which was designed by Reich and Hall, says Glasgow Institute of Architects "oozing cool" and demanding to be touched.

It continued: "The RIBA award judges took this one step further, suggesting it was one of the most 'lickable' of all this year's submissions."

Of North Glasgow College, designed by RMDM Scotland, the judges said: "Set within Springburn, once the focus

of Glasgow's innovative manufacturing

industry, the building's scale, prominence, bold, contemporary form and elegantly conceived landscape setting all signify major, positive change."

Architects' Pollok Civic Realm is a multi-functional space containing a library, employment services, local museum, cafe, IT training, childcare and Citizens' Advice as well as providing access to the existing health and leisure centres. But while it won an award for its design, the judges were less complimentary about its name.

GA The RIBA award judges suggested it was the most 'lickable' building

The citation reads: "One minor criticism was the unimaginative naming of this new development

"The Hub, The Pivot, The Portal, Nexus, even Pollok Plaza would have been a more appropriate celebration of this significant achievement for the Pollok community."

The Printworks, designed by Cameron Webster Architects, is described as a hidden gem at the end of an unsurfaced lane behind a West End tenement.

Moore Street Housing, designed by Richard Murphy Architects, also won the praise of the judges, who said:

"This development amply demonstrated that the social housing sector in Scotland remains a vital focus for innovation."

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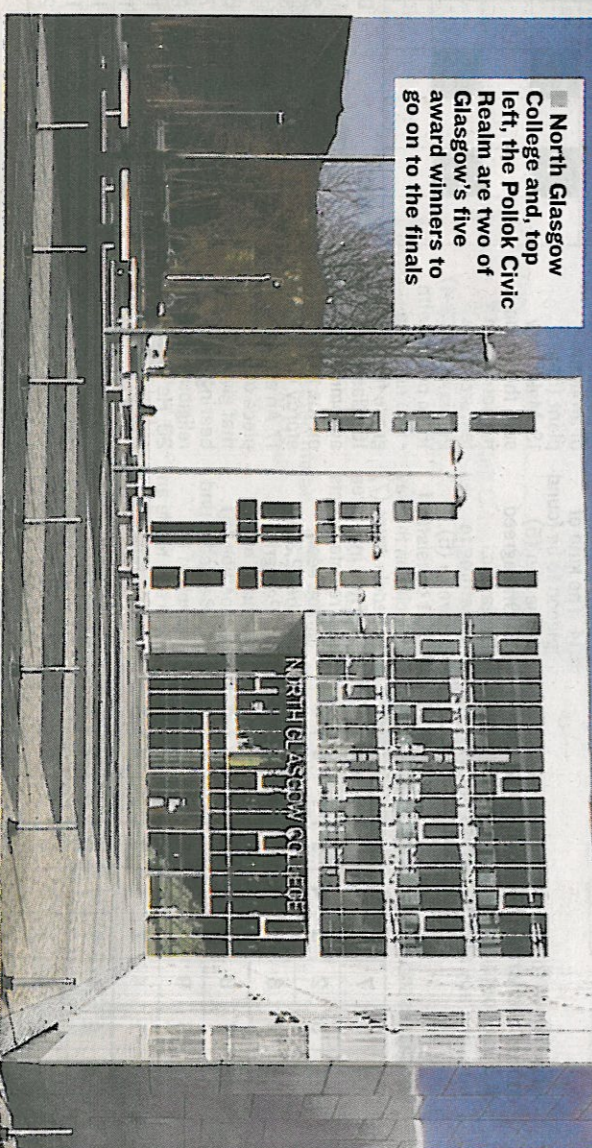
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North Glasgow College and, top left, the Pollok Civic Realm are two of Glasgow's five award winners to go on to the finals