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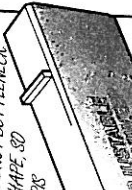


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## My Favourite Building

By Allan Wilson MSP, Deputy Minister for Sport, the Arts and Culture

**Selecting one favourite** building from Scotland's architectural past or present is no easy task. Historically, Scotland has produced outstanding talent in the field of architecture and there is much to admire in our built heritage and the work of architects such as Robert Adam, Alexander Thomson and Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

Recently, we have seen a renewed spirit of confidence emerging in Scottish architecture, in landmark cultural buildings such as the Museum of Scotland, Dundee Contemporary Arts and The Lighthouse. These buildings have raised the profile of new Scottish architecture and captured public imagination.

Rather than choose one individual building, I have selected a recently completed group of buildings which combine a sense of history and place, with a confident architectural statement that looks to the future.

My selection, a project by Molendinar Park Housing Association, located in the East End of Glasgow at Graham Square, demonstrates the qualities we should be seeking in our new buildings and the environments in which they are set.

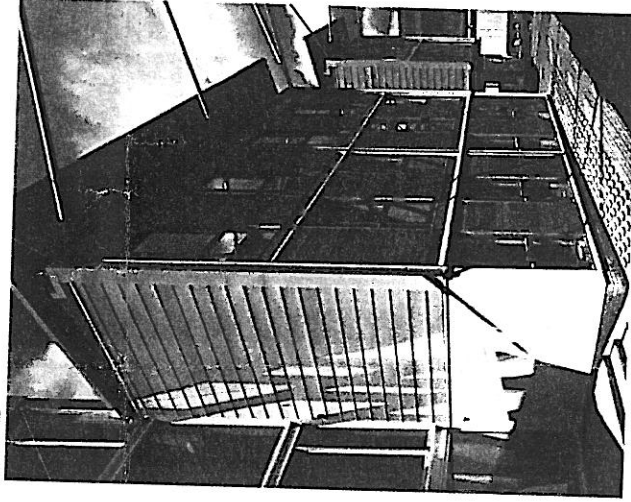
Good design and a commitment to better architecture are as important in our everyday buildings as they are to civic and prestigious projects, and Graham Square shows the benefits of good design in the context of new housing.

An important aspect of the project is the way in which it continues and reinforces the successful regeneration strategy which the housing associations have been employing.

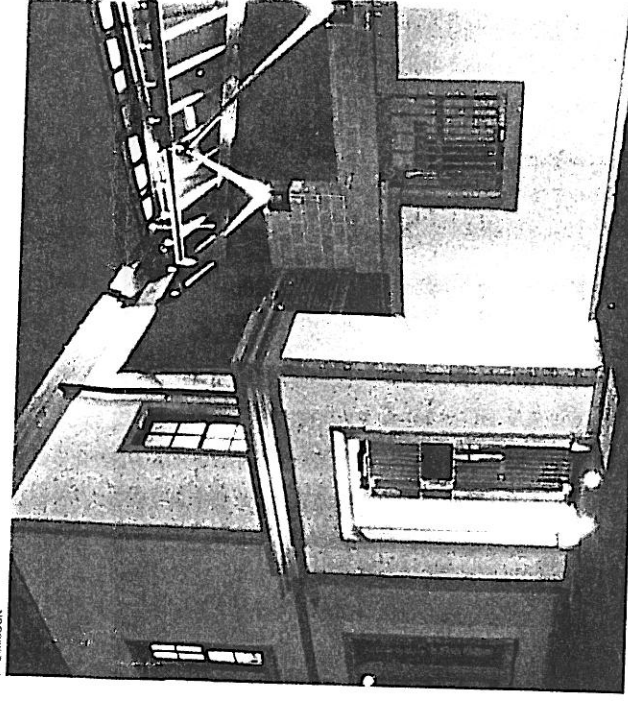
# All but Square

Eastenders in Glasgow enjoy greater architectural innovation than their televisual London cousins, reckons Allan Wilson MSP.

ANDREW LEE



A. DIMMOCK



Clockwise from above left: McKeown Alexander, Richard Murphy Architects and Page and Park's contributions to Graham Square.

Existing tenements have been refurbished and new housing knitted into gap sites and previously derelict areas. The East End is being transformed and reconnected to the city centre. Communities are being rebuilt and given a new sense of optimism, together with the provision of decent, well-designed housing.

Graham Square represents another step forward in this process as it reclaims another brownfield site for housing and other uses such as office accommodation. It demonstrates how imaginative design can contribute significantly towards the improvement of the physical fabric and the environmental quality of urban areas which are in the process of regeneration.

The positive role that good design can play in regeneration, both urban and rural, is one of the key messages I intend to promote within the Executive's policy on architecture. At Graham Square, it is not just the design of the buildings which takes the eye. Consideration has been given to the quality of the public realm in which the new housing is located.

I am impressed by the attention given to the quality of the space around the

buildings and the attempt to create a pleasant courtyard from which everybody living and working in Graham Square can benefit.

This has been helped by retaining and using elements from the site's original use as a meat market, within the public space. The incorporation of existing sandstone walls and arches together with new features such as the sculpture by artist, Kenny Hunter, gives the courtyard a sense of place and makes an interesting connection back to the history of the site.

The courtyard setting also seems to provide a unifying backdrop to the individual approach that each architect has brought to the site. I believe the uplifting approach to urban space in this project provides a good example of why it is necessary to think about the context that buildings are located in, as much as the designs of individual buildings.

This point was made strongly to us during the consultation on the policy on architecture, and Graham Square offers lessons about the importance of carefully considered public space within new or regenerated neighbourhoods.

The houses use the Glasgow tenement as a reference point, but the architects involved, McKeown Alexander, Page and Park, and Richard Murphy, have taken the opportunity in their designs to rethink some aspects of this traditional way of living. This has provided an interesting mix of accommodation.

Of course, the production of imaginative, well-designed buildings cannot be achieved without the backing of a client or client organisation committed to the delivery of good architecture.

Molendinar Park Housing Association is to be congratulated on the way in which it has initiated this project, secured funding and redeveloped the site. Credit must also go to Scottish Homes for investing in the innovative architecture this project has produced. There is a real sense of achievement at Graham Square, underpinned by the vision of the client and the creativity demonstrated by the individual design teams.

The immediate beneficiaries are those tenants who have notaken up residency, but we can all benefit from what has been achieved at Graham Square.