

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OF

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY SOCIETY

held on Saturday 15 June 2019 at 11.30 am
at Holy Apostles Church Hall, 47 Cumberland St, Pimlico, London SW1V 4LY

1. **Apologies for absence:** list available from the Society's office.

2. **Approval of Minutes** of the Annual General Meeting held on 9 June 2018

The Minutes were approved, and signed by the Chairman.

3. **Matters Arising:** none

4. **President's Address**

President Gillian Darley presented some of her current reflections, centring on the use of commercial buildings, commenting in particular on: the Tagliero service station at the Unesco World Heritage site in Asmara, Eritrea; the 1954 Bank of England's Debden Printing Works; the Bata East Tilbury industrial estate; and York's Rowntree factory.

5. **Chairman's Address**

- 5.1. Peter Ruback thanked the members present for coming to the AGM. The main purpose of the AGM is to transact formal business, but it also provides an opportunity for the Chairman to air more generally issues of strategic concern to the Society and what it is trying to do. Trustees have been doing a lot of thinking about the future and what and how our work should be. Looking back over the past year, while there have been some successes and some surprise listings it is difficult not to conclude that the system is not working as it should be. Part of this is due to the staffing of local authorities and not always being equal to the resources developers bring to the party, but more to a lack of appreciation of the heritage of our period indeed whether "our" period is heritage.
- 5.2. As introduced last year, the Society had addressed handling post 1999 cases. Alec Forshaw, an extremely experienced former planning officer, helped the Society with this and we consider that there will not be an avalanche of such cases and have agreed these should be unequivocally taken on: we have the skills; there are no obvious stylistic boundaries to suggest otherwise; and there is no one else who should do this. The question of the name of the Society does not have to be addressed now and there is no need to change our objects as they refer only to post 1914. The Society is of course determined not to let up on efforts in relation to the whole of the post 1914 period and in all styles, whether Neo Georgian, Art Deco, mid century, brutalism, high tech or PoMo.
- 5.3. Trustees and staff have also addressed how, ideally, the Society should be working. The problems of the political environment and the lack of appreciation by land owners,

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developers and decision makers at all levels of Government whether Local or National has led us to the ambition of deepening casework. This means, when resources allow, spending more time on communicating the lessons of cases, about the threat, what should be done or educating people about successful cases of constructive reuse and conservation. Outside the building conservation community, it is not widely understood exactly what the Society does and why.

- 5.4. Some of our reserves have been invested in refreshing the website alongside a very generous donation from a Society member and benefactor that kick started the project and resources reallocated to increase the staff time dedicated to communication. However we will need a consistent level of additional income to deliver our aspirations. Trustees are in clear agreement about the priorities for spending additional income and intend this to make fund raising more focussed. Efforts will increase in the next few months, both in getting out messages about what members' subscriptions pay for and encouraging more donations and increasing membership.
- 5.5. In keeping our heads down on the casework and campaigning side the Society has not always thanked members or event participants for supporting casework so much. The Society will do this more, and members attending were thanked for their support.
- 5.6. Some of the direct benefits of membership – beyond the satisfaction in supporting a good cause and activity that is not done elsewhere – can be lower if members live too far from London to be able to attend lectures or half day events there. Regional groups have been encouraged to organise local events – primarily for regionally based members – and to give opportunities for the social side that London members can easily enjoy. PR thanked Bob Hardcastle and particularly Aidan Turner-Bishop who were both instrumental in starting and chairing their regional groups over a number of years.
- 5.7. PR also thanked the staff who have joined us in the last year: Grace Etherington as caseworker and Oliver Bennett our communications officer. They joined Catherine, Clare and Kate, as well as Susannah who is leading on the website refresh.
- 5.8. The Society wanted to mark its thanks to Gavin Stamp, former chairman and writer and campaigner whose activity over the last forty years can be seen in all of the Society's activities. As part of the Society's 40th birthday celebration, which will start in August, a one day conference and celebration of Gavin's life and work with the Society would be held on 15 September at the University of Westminster.
- 5.9. PR drew members' attention to a loss due to fraud which appears in the accounts. The Society suffered an email scam and had so far recovered about half of our loss. While the remainder is still not entirely resolved, we have provided for the maximum possible loss in this year's accounts. Trustees had reviewed what had happened and a number of actions had been taken to prevent a reoccurrence.
- 5.10. PR expressed the Trustees' gratitude to Simon Van Heyningen who was retiring as a Trustee. Taking on the role of events secretary was not an easy task, but he had done it uncomplainingly. PR also thanked Barnabas Calder who was standing down due to family commitments: he had been an insightful and engaging Trustee making a strong contribution to our discussions. Trustees were proposing Andrew Jackson, Neil Shasore and Otto Saumarez Smith for election as Trustees. We continue to seek opportunities to work with younger people as we know they are supportive of our cause and the source of future members and supporters of the Society.

6. Director's Report

- 6.1. The Director Catherine Croft (CC) thanked those present for their continuous support. She confirmed that casework remained her top priority. The caseworkers worked hard but their

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combined hours total 1.6 persons per week, and we need more than that. CC expressed her gratitude to the Casework Committee and to its Chairman David Heath.

- 6.2. CC reported on the fundraising consultancy project which was expected to reach a conclusion and be implemented by the end of July. It has been acknowledged that we need to be more upfront about asking people for money.
- 6.3. Volunteer support is essential and we need to recruit more of them. Nick Savage had taken up the role of Volunteer Co-ordinator.
- 6.4. The major refresh of the website had been designed make communications much clearer and efficient, on all devices, more suitable for journalists and for students. There will be more photos and better integration between photos and text. Events bookings will be simplified.
- 6.5. CC showed her recent presentation to Trustees on casework. This included explaining what sort of cases we comment on; what casework actually consists of; how very many tipoffs come from our members; the current issues on getting buildings listed and planning and listed building applications; the problem of wealthy developers being able to afford costs in the debates about substantial harm and public benefit. Richmond House has been an example of our strategy of matching tactics to particular cases: CC wrote to the Times about the case; and there is a monograph in preparation on the architect, William Whitfield who had recently died. We had a second case of taking a church case as far as the Consistory Court which had been determined in our favour because of our representations.
- 6.6. CC commented also on the successes of: Trevor Dannat 's Quaker Meeting House, Blackheath; the James Stirling History Library; and his Queens College scheme having been put on hold. We had expressed our concerns about how Goldfinger's Balfour Tower was being converted but this had not been reflected in planning decisions and the Society considered it was no longer an authentic refurbishment.

7. Hon Treasurer's Report and presentation of 2018 Accounts

- 7.1. The Hon Treasurer presented the 2018 accounts which showed a small overall surplus of around £6,000, which would have been £21,000 but for the fraud.
- 7.2. The Society received £13,500 in gifts, donations and legacies. Membership and gift aid income, our most important stream of income, had been broadly in line with 2018. Events did very well with a profit of around £29,000. We continued to receive a Historic England grant towards casework of £40,000 (reduced by 5% since 2016).
- 7.3. We anticipated that staff costs will continue to increase since we are now legally obliged to pay pensions, and rates have increased, but we are not proposing any increase to subscriptions this year.
- 7.4. In summary, the accounts showed a good position, but we need to continue to grow our income and fundraising. Legacies will continue to be an important source of income.
- 7.5. The Accounts were approved.

8. Ordinary Resolution to re-appoint Argents Accountants Ltd as auditors

The Resolution was passed.

9. Ordinary Resolution to Elect Six Directors (Trustees)

In accordance with the rotation requirements of Article 24 of the Articles of Association: one third (5 of the existing 15) of the existing Directors retired. Of these five, Simon van Heyningen and

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Barnabas Calder did not stand for re-election. Carolyn Parmeter, Sarah Jackson and Barry Arden being willing to stand for re-election were elected, and three new nominees recommended by the Directors under Article 27, Andrew Jackson, Neal Shasore and Otto Saumurez Smith, being willing to stand and having been nominated for election were elected by Ordinary Resolution (The permitted maximum number of Directors (Trustees) is 16.)

10. Annual Reports

The Reports from the Publications Committee, the Hon Events Secretary, and the Hon Membership Secretary, had been placed on the Society's website, together with AGM Minutes and Annual Reports from Regional Groups. Paper copies of all these are available on request from the office.

11. Any other business

Next year's AGM is planned to place in Coventry with a weekend programme of walks and visits.

..... Date: 2020

Peter Ruback

Chairman