

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

2 February 2018

High note launches the Hill House 'box' appeal

- *CYBG donate Charles Rennie Mackintosh £100 printing plate to campaign to save masterpiece of early modern architecture*
- *National Trust for Scotland's biggest-ever single appeal aims to raise £1.5 million to stop building dissolving*
- *Construction of 'colossal yet sublime' box is set to begin in June 2018*

The National Trust for Scotland today (2 February, 2018) kicks-off its urgent multi-million pound appeal to save the Charles Rennie Mackintosh-designed the Hill House in Helensburgh, one of the most ambitious and important fundraising drives in the conservation charity's history.

During the 150th anniversary of Mackintosh's birth this year, the National Trust for Scotland is planning to build a "box" around the iconic property whose sandstone structure is dissolving under its cement render. The box will shield the Hill House from the rain, allowing the building to dry out and for crucial conservation work to take place.

Supporting the launch of the "Box: The Hill House Appeal", CYBG, owner of Clydesdale Bank, has donated the original printing plate used to produce its £100 note, which features Charles Rennie Mackintosh. The plate was used to print 200,000 notes, which entered circulation in 2009. The plate and a £100 specimen bank note have been mounted in a presentation frame and will be auctioned off later this year with all proceeds going towards the campaign.

This weekend, every National Trust for Scotland member will receive a letter asking them to support the appeal, the first time the conservation charity has rallied its entire membership for a single project. Anyone can back the appeal and donations can be made to save the Hill House at the Trust's campaign page at www.nts.org.uk/Campaign/Help-us-save-the-Hill-House

Ahead of the launch of the appeal, the Trust has already secured £3 million towards the construction of the box, however, another £1.5 million is still required by the end of Spring 2018 to reach the overall target. Assembly of the box is expected to begin in June this year, protecting the property from another winter of snow, rain, wind, and bitterly cold temperatures.

Richard Williams, General Manager for Glasgow and West at the National Trust for Scotland, said: "This is one of the most urgent and important appeals in our history. We have very limited time to get the box in place around the Hill House and start the process of drying the building out.

"It's imperative that we secure the funds as soon as possible, to begin construction and protect the building from further degradation – if all of our members donated just £5, we'd exceed our target. The box shelter will also allow visitors to see the building from a completely new perspective, with walkways and an opportunity to get to rooftop level.

“We’re very grateful to CYBG for its generous support of the campaign with this unique and fitting donation, and hope that everyone with a love of Mackintosh’s work and Scotland’s architectural heritage will join the bank in making a contribution.”

Debbie Crosbie, Group Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director at CYBG, added: “We are proud to have Charles Rennie Mackintosh on our £100 Clydesdale bank note and when we learned about the National Trust for Scotland’s appeal we knew we wanted to help. Every year, the Hill House welcomes visitors from all over the world to view and learn more about his work – it would be incredibly sad to lose this property as his legacy should continue to be celebrated for years to come.

“The Box honours Charles Rennie Mackintosh’s work with its innovative and unique design, and will ensure that the Hill House remains an important part of our cultural landscape. We’re delighted to support this incredible initiative to preserve one of Scotland’s most well-known and celebrated architectural gems.”

Donations to the appeal can be made online at: <https://www.nts.org.uk/Campaign/Help-us-save-the-Hill-House>

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Images: Hi-res images can be downloaded from <https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/59YCLm>

Background

- Charles Rennie Mackintosh, the son of a police superintendent, was born in Glasgow on 7 June 1868. The 150th anniversary of his birth will be marked in 2018.
- He enrolled at Glasgow School of Art in 1884. After completing his apprenticeship in 1890, he met his future wife Margaret MacDonald, her sister Frances and, together with his friend, Herbert McNair, they became known as ‘The Four’ who created the ‘Glasgow Style’ of architecture and interior design.
- In 1902, the publisher Walter Blackie purchased a plot of land at the top of a hill in Helensburgh for which he planned a new home with views over the Gareloch and the Firth of Clyde.
- Blackie already had an interest in the Glasgow Style and Mackintosh was recommended to him.
- Mackintosh was heavily influenced by the traditional plain style of historic Scottish towns and villages and disliked the then current vogue in architecture which copied Tudor, Gothic and Classical detailing. It was a meeting of minds with Blackie.
- At a cost of £5,000, Mackintosh, along with his wife Margaret MacDonald, oversaw the design and construction of every detail of the Hill House, which was completed in 1904.
- Mackintosh made use of an experimental material – Portland cement – to form a smooth layer of render. Unfortunately, the finish allowed water to seep in to the sandstone from the day it was first applied. Decades of driving west coast wind and rain have saturated the wall of the Hill House – and threaten the long-term survival of the building and its priceless, Mackintosh-designed interior.
- The Hill House proved to be incredibly influential in Europe, becoming especially inspiring to the German Bauhaus school and architectural/design movement, which in turn inspired much mid-late 20th century architecture.

- In 1953, the property was sold to Mr T Campbell Lawson. In 1972 it was sold to the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) and by 1978 the Landmark Trust took over a specially converted top flat for holiday-letting.
- The National Trust for Scotland acquired the Hill House in May 1982, with financial assistance of £425,000 from the National Heritage Memorial Fund.
- In 2015, the Getty Foundation awarded a grant of £95,000 through its Keeping It Modern initiative to support the development of a conservation management plan for the Hill House.

