



## Case information

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<b>Case ID</b>	300009373
<b>File Reference</b>	HGH/B/SL/255
<b>Name of Site</b>	Hillhead Library, 348 Byres Road, Glasgow

<b>Local Authority</b>	Glasgow City Council		
<b>National Grid Reference</b>	NS 56737 67220		
<b>Designation No. (if any)</b>	N/A		
<b>Designation Type</b>	Listed Building	<b>Current Category of Listing</b>	N/A
<b>Case Type</b>	Designation		

<b>Received/Start Date</b>	13/06/2014
<b>Decision Date</b>	12/12/2016

## 1. Decision

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In our current state of knowledge, Hillhead Library, 348 Byres Road, Glasgow is considered to meet the criteria for listing at category B. The building has been designated (listed).

<b>Previous Statutory Address</b>	N/A
<b>New Statutory Address</b>	Hillhead Library, 348 Byres Road, Glasgow

## 2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

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### 2.1 Designation Background

There is no known previous assessment of this building for listing. Hillhead Library is situated in the Glasgow West Conservation Area.

### 2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

### 3. Assessment

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#### 3.1 Assessment information

The site was visited on 11/09/2014 and the interior and exterior were seen.

#### 3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

The building was found to meet the criteria for listing.

An assessment against the listing criteria was carried out. See **Annex A**.

*The designation criteria are published in the Historic Environment Scotland policy statement June 2016, Annex 2, pp. 51-53.*

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/legislation-and-guidance/historic-environment-scotland-policy-statement/>

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## **ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Listing Criteria\***

### **Hillhead Library, 348 Byres Road, Glasgow**

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#### **1. Description**

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Robert Rogerson and Philip Spence (in conjunction with the Glasgow Corporation Planning Department), 1972. A large, purpose-built public library of 2-storeys and 10-bays, rectangular in plan (with an angled section to the rear) and prominently located on Byres Road.

The building has a reinforced concrete frame. The principal elevation has tall narrow vertical windows divided by pre-cast concrete pilasters. Above the main entrance there is a large decorative concrete cantilevered canopy of abstract cubist motifs. The roof is reinforced concrete slabs made with grey Creetown granite. Windows are finished in bronze.

The library interior (seen in 2014) consists of a spacious open double height circulation space with adjoining open library spaces to the front of the plan and offices to the rear. There is a first floor mezzanine designed as a reading space. There are exposed supporting circular columns with a fluted concrete shuttering. The bespoke bookshelves are of Belford rosewood veneer with macore wood facings. On each side of the reception area are two open circular staircases leading to the first floor. To the front of the plan at the first floor there is a panelled project/exhibition room and a public hall/lecture theatre. The building also has a large entrance area with lift access, basement stores, workrooms, offices and a plant room. Services are located in the angled section to the rear.

#### **2. Assessment Against the Listing Criteria** (HES Policy Statement, 2016) Annex 2, pp. 51-52

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Criteria for determining whether a building is of ‘special architectural or historic interest’ for listing under the terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 [[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/9/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/9/contents)]

*To be listed, a building need not meet all the listing criteria. The criteria provide a framework within which judgement is exercised in reaching individual decisions.*

##### **2.1 Age and Rarity**

Built at a total cost of £450,000, Hillhead Library by Rogerson and Spence is the most substantial public branch library in the Glasgow area and is understood to be the largest branch library built after the Second World War in Scotland. When it

opened in 1975, the library became the most popular branch library in the city in terms of the number of items issued, which is a position it maintains (2016).

The foundation of the public library system as we know it today began by the passing of the Public Libraries Act of 1850, which was extended to Scotland in 1853. Although subscription, collegiate, and private libraries existed from as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Act established the new concept of the public library, free for everyone, to be funded by from local taxation. In practice, however, it was unsatisfactory and as late as 1878, only six burghs had adopted it and four had rejected it. The introduction of the Act met strong opposition as rate payers felt that local taxes were already burdensome and there was no lack of books available from circulating libraries, Mechanics institutes or churches.

The funding and building of public libraries relied heavily on the donations of philanthropists, most notably the industrialist Andrew Carnegie, who was responsible for the endowment of over 2,500 public libraries throughout the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The first Carnegie funded library or Carnegie library, was opened in his hometown of Dunfermline, Fife in 1883 (listed at category B, LB25979) and this began the most significant period of public library construction in Scotland, with over 70 libraries built between 1883-1914. Carnegie donated £100,000 to build branch libraries in Glasgow and plans to provide a branch library in the Hillhead area had existed since 1907 (Glasgow Corporation Libraries Committee, 1907, p.137).

Between 1900 and 1960, the city of Glasgow erected more than 20 branch libraries. The 1960s saw the construction of various university libraries including Glasgow University (1965-1968) and the University of Strathclyde (1963-1967) but public libraries are relatively less common with less than ten public libraries constructed across the country during that decade. Only three were built during the 1970s including Hillhead in 1972. The others were Girvan Library (South Ayrshire, 1973-1976) and Dalkeith Library (Midlothian, circa 1975).

Libraries are an important part of Scotland's educational and social history and they are among our finest public buildings. There are around 560 library buildings in Scotland and around 360 of these were purpose built. The majority of those which are listed were constructed between 1883 and 1914. In 2016 there is one central library and one public branch library from the post-war period that are listed: The National Library of Scotland at George IV Bridge, Edinburgh (1956, LB27684) and Inverkeithing Library, Fife (1969-1971, LB49939) respectively.

Buildings erected after 1945 may merit inclusion on the lists if their special architectural or historic interest is of definite architectural quality. Hillhead Library is one of a small number of well-planned, high quality, bespoke public library buildings of the post-war building period in Scotland, designed in the Modernist architectural style. It is also an early example of a public building where accessibility was planned into its design. (See Architectural or Historic Interest below).

## **2.2 Architectural or Historic Interest**

## ***Interior***

The interior scheme, which survives largely intact, features a double height space with good quality bespoke fixtures and fittings throughout that largely date to the period of construction. The use of timber and veneers throughout give the interior a modern Scandinavian emphasis. The carefully considered interiors include curving staircases made of veneered plywood panels which stand out as important elements within the design, supported by a concrete post-and-beam structure. Historical photographs indicates that there has been some alterations to the reception desk area.

## ***Plan form***

The building makes notable use of space within its largely intact plan form. The introduction of open access libraries commenced in the last decade of the 19th century. It changed the design of library interiors because the divisions between the different sections of a library became less clear. From the 1920s and 1930s, most libraries had become a single space with areas defined (if at all) by the arrangement of bookshelves and furniture.

The open plan and open-access main library space of Hillhead Library is representative of post-war library design in Scotland. The main library space is on the ground with raised mezzanine balcony, hall and projects rooms to the first floor, and with services largely confined to the rear.

Hillhead library is an early example of a public building where accessibility was planned. The ground floor is fully accessible with changes level or raised areas and follows the newly introduced principles of planning for maximum use and easy access.

## ***Technological excellence or innovation, material or design quality***

The building is built in a simple Modernist style with a strong sense of horizontal and vertical articulation to the main exterior elevations. It has pre-cast concrete pilasters dividing full height glazed units, referencing the forms of monumental classical architecture. The building is constructed of a reinforced concrete frame with circular columns cast in one single length with narrow shuttering to give a fluted effect, evocative of the pillars of ancient Greek architecture. The Scandinavian-influenced mezzanine balcony reached by curving staircases, the use of bronze window frames, extensive use of vertical timber veneered slats to screens, doors and balustrades and other surviving fixtures and fittings add to the material design quality and integrity of the building as a whole.

Hillhead was the first library in Glasgow to be fully air-conditioned; to have a hall for exhibitions and community activities; to have a young people's project room; to operate an automated loan recording system; to provide listening points for records and tapes and to have a system for relaying background music (Glasgow District Libraries, 1975, p.2).

It is one of three public libraries built in Glasgow by the architectural practice of Rogerson and Spence, the others being Cardonald Library (1968-1970) and Ibrox Library (c.1980). Robert Rogerson and Philip Spence formed a partnership in the mid-1950s specialising in churches and housing working predominantly in Glasgow and the West of Scotland. Robert Rogerson was specifically involved in designing for

special needs and instigated a wide-ranging study which culminated in 1969 in a book entitled 'Place at Work: the Working Environment of the Disabled'.

### **Setting**

The library is prominently located on Byres Road in a commercial and built up area. The area was laid out in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century and has a small number of 1960s and 1970s buildings.

### **Regional variations**

There are no known regional variations.

## **2.3 Close Historical Associations**

There are no known associations with a person or event of national importance at present (2016).

## **3. Working with the Principles of Listing** (HES Policy Statement, 2016) Annex 2, pp. 53

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In choosing buildings within the above broad headings particular attention is paid to:

- a. special value within building types*
- b. contribution to an architecturally or historically interesting group*
- c. the impact of a grouping of buildings*
- d. authenticity*

When working with the principles of listing Hillhead Library has particular interest under a. and d.

a. Hillhead Library is a rare and notable example of 1970s public library design with a double height circulation space and high quality bespoke interior scheme. It is one of the largest post-war branch libraries in Scotland.

d. The library layout and interior decorative scheme dating to 1972 largely survives throughout, adding to the authenticity of the building as an example of its building type.

## **4. Summary of Assessment Against the Listing Criteria\*\***

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The Hillhead library is a notable example of a modernist, post-war branch library, built to high quality bespoke design specifications. The library has been little altered to both the interior and exterior and is among the best of a relatively small number of public library commissions carried out in Scotland between 1960 and 1980. It is an early example of a public building where accessibility was planned into the design from the outset.

In our current state of knowledge it is considered to meet the criteria for listing.

## 5. Category of Listing

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Categories of listing are non-statutory and buildings are assigned a category (A, B or C) according to their relative importance following the assessment against the criteria for listing.

Category definitions are found at: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/what-is-listing/>

Category B is for buildings of regional or more than local importance; or major examples of some particular period, style or building type, which may have been altered. The interest of Hillhead library is as a good example of post-war public library that has been little altered, with a good period interior scheme which is also largely intact. Category B is considered to be the most appropriate category of listing.

## 6. Other Information

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N/A

## 7. References

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### Printed Sources

Glasgow Corporation Libraries Committee (1907) *Descriptive handbook of the Glasgow Corporation public libraries; with plans and illustrations*, Glasgow: Libraries Committee of the Corporation [of Glasgow].

Glasgow District Libraries (1975) *Hillhead Library*. Glasgow: District Libraries.

Glendinning M. (ed) (1997) *Rebuilding Scotland: The Postwar Vision 1945-1975*. Edinburgh: University Press, p.592.

Historic Environment Scotland (2015). *Scotland's Purpose Built Libraries: Preliminary Report*. Unpublished.

Historic Scotland (2011) *Post-War Listed Buildings*. Edinburgh: Historic Scotland.

Libraries Committee of the Corporation [of Glasgow] (1955) *Public libraries periodical summary, Glasgow*.

Williamson E, Higgs M. and Riches A. (1990) *Buildings of Scotland: Glasgow*. London: Penguin Books Ltd. p.346.

Whatley, A. (1975) 'A Touch of Class: Impressions of Hillhead Library, Glasgow' in *Library Review*, Vol. 25. Issue3. pp.111-113.

### Online Resources

Dictionary of Scottish Architects. *Hillhead Library* at [http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/building\\_full.php?id=402083](http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/building_full.php?id=402083) [accessed 13/08/2015].

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\* This assessment is based on our current state of knowledge and has been prepared for the purpose of consultation or to provide a view on the special interest of a building. This assessment is a consultation document and will form the basis of any new or updated listed building record should the structure be listed. The content of this assessment may change to take into account further information received as a result of the consultation process.

\*\* A building may be found to meet the listing criteria but in some circumstances may not be added to the list. See 'When might Historic Environment Scotland list a building' at <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/what-is-listing/>