

ACCORD collaboration with the Friends of the Glasgow Necropolis: Summary Statement of Social Value

Co-Authored by the Friends of the Glasgow Necropolis and the ACCORD project.
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Introduction

The ACCORD team worked with The Friends of the Glasgow Necropolis on the 5th and 6th of July 2014. Together we recorded and modelled two headstone inscriptions, and the portico and interior of the Monteath Mausoleum. We used the technologies of photogrammetry and Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI). This document provides information about the context of this work. There is a brief discussion of the historical value of the monuments, with reference to wider sources. The main focus of this document is to describe the social value of the monuments for the Friends of the Glasgow Necropolis. Social value refers to a collective attachment to place that embodies meanings and values that are important to a community or communities (Jones and Leech 2015: paras 1.5 and 1.6; see also Johnston 1994 and Byrne et al. 2003). The role of 3D recording and modelling in expressing the value of the monuments, and in creating value, is also summarised. Quotes and opinions in this document were expressed during focus groups held at the beginning and end of the co-production process.

The Friends of the Glasgow Necropolis

The Friends are an extremely pro-active group currently in their 9th year. Established in 2005, the group has a constitution and is run entirely by a volunteer committee; membership is open to anyone over 18 and to families for a small fee. Members include people from a range of professional backgrounds and from all across the globe. They are registered as a Scottish Charity (SC037918). As stated in their constitution “the objectives of the association are advancing public understanding and enjoyment of the Glasgow Necropolis, and working with Glasgow City Council to conserve and develop the Glasgow Necropolis, for the benefit and amenity of the public.” The group aims to conserve the Glasgow Necropolis and to build its profile as a tourist attraction. They give regular tours of the site and create promotional material (including maintaining a popular website <http://www.glasgowneecropolis.org>) and publications. They also conduct archival research, monitor conservation issues, employ professional specialists to carry out maintenance and restoration work and have powers to raise funds and accept gifts for this aim. They currently have an active appeal to raise funding for work on the Monteath Mausoleum (<http://www.glasgowneecropolis.org/monteathappeal/>). In association with Page\Park Architects, the Friends also facilitate placements for Architecture and Conservation students through Erasmus or Leonardo Lifelong Learning programmes. At the time of our project, there was one Conservation Studies student from Nicolas Copernicus University in Torun, Poland, helping to survey and record the burial memorials. The Friends have links to the Merchants’ House, the Trades House, the Civic Trust, the Glasgow Natural History Society, Glasgow and West of Scotland Family History Society, Glasgow University, Strathclyde University, The Metropolitan College, various local schools, and the local community more generally. They have the full support of Glasgow City Council who own the Necropolis.

The ACCORD engagement with the Friends grew out of an ongoing Adopt a Monument project run by Archaeology Scotland. Over the weekend of 5th and 6th July the ACCORD team worked with five

members of the Friends, the Erasmus exchange student and one non-member who had previously collaborated with the Friends. A range of ages and interests were represented, including conservation and survey, planning, architecture, landscaping, archiving, IT and digital media, gardening, sculpture, history, genealogy and publishing. The Deputy chair and one of the long-term members of the Friends, Ruth Johnston, has written a book entitled *Afterlives* on the monuments in the Glasgow Necropolis.

Landscape Setting of the Glasgow Necropolis (NS 60369 65405)

The site was developed as a pleasure ground known as Fir Park in the early 19th century, whereas the Necropolis itself was largely created from 1828 to 1900 and is one of Scotland's first planned garden cemeteries. The Necropolis was constructed around the focal point of the John Knox monument which was erected earlier in 1825. Tombs predominantly Neo-classical in style are set on terraces and blasted into the rock around the hill. The extent of the Necropolis occupies a very prominent natural hill by the Molendinar Burn adjacent to the Glasgow Cathedral precinct, within the urban centre of the city. The Bridge of Sighs, entrance gates and Cemetery Lodge were designed by D. & J. Hamilton in 1833, 1838 and 1829-40 respectively. The Bridge of Sighs leads you across the culverted burn, past the cemetery lodge and the Superintendent's House (built in 1848), to the gates into the Necropolis. Several eminent designers of the Victorian period, including Alexander 'Greek' Thomson, and into the later Art Nouveau movement, Charles Rennie Macintosh, have monuments here. Individuals of national and local significance, "the prominent and wealthy entrepreneurs of the Second City of the Empire" (Ruth Johnston 2007) are buried here.

The Necropolis is nationally recognised to be of outstanding value for its architectural, historical, artistic, and scenic attributes (the Historic Scotland Gardens and Designed Landscapes Inventory). The Necropolis has a site record in Canmore – the national monument's record – which includes over 150 digitised photographs (Canmore ID 45014).

Vandalism has in the past been rife in the Glasgow Necropolis, and is still an occasional problem. Only a few days before our project one of the angel monuments had been targeted and had its head deliberately broken off. It is felt by the long-term members of the Friends that often there is a lack of respect in peoples' behaviour who visit the site, for example quad-biking and anti-social behaviour. It is believed by some in the group that this may be partly due to how the Glasgow Necropolis is currently run under city Park Rules and not as a burial ground. The Glasgow Necropolis is on the national Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland (Reference number 3152) echoing the concerns of the Friends. Currently it is listed as Category A, and thus officially recognised of national or international importance, with fine little-altered examples of architecture and design. It is regarded by Historic Scotland and RCAHMS (who compile this list) to be at low risk, though it is noted the site has unsafe stonework, and has suffered from years of neglect and acts of vandalism. The monuments of the Necropolis are collectively listed category B; i.e. is of regional or more than local importance, including major examples distinctive of 19th Century styles and monument types, some of which have been altered. Restoration work is in progress and the City Council in partnership with the Friends have an ongoing programme of repairs, while so far in Phase One, five mausolea have been restored (Buchanan Sisters, King family, Black Mausoleum and Angus Turner plus the Egyptian Vaults) and Phase Two the Hutchison and Delta Mausolea. In addition restoration work has been completed on the monuments to Adam of Larchgrove, William Miller and the main Phoenix Foundry cast iron Gates designed by David Hamilton.

Significance and Social Value

The relationship between the Necropolis and the commercial and industrial history of the city was raised as a prominent issue in the focus group. Whilst this intersects with its historic value, it is the contemporary significance of this history that stands out as producing a sense of pride and, as one of the founding members put it, “awe at what the Victorians achieved”. The way the Necropolis represents many of the key figures in the history of the city is significant here in reinforcing a sense of civic identity; “they’re all in there, industrialists, slave owners, anti-slavery campaigners, temperance campaigners”.

The Necropolis as a place was valued due to its views, its aesthetic qualities and its atmosphere. The changeable nature of the place was voiced; “the mood changes with the weather and the seasons”. It was also emphasised that it’s a wonderful peaceful and beautiful place. However, there was no romantic vision of unruly nature and sublime decay, rather the Friends value the pristine quality of the refurbished memorials and make many efforts to maintain the garden landscape. Most of the people present at the focus group felt that a lot of the vegetation growing on the tombs and memorials should be removed. It was “not part of the architect’s vision”. As one person put it “there’s plenty of official vegetation up there without the rest”. In keeping with the professional backgrounds of many of the group in architecture, they expressed a strong desire to return the Necropolis to its original Victorian design (as described in 1831 by John Strang, the Glasgow City Chamberlain who had the original vision) and its former purpose as a public arboretum and park (from the 17th Century and up until the 1830s) was not seen as a significant focus for the group.

The history of the group was recounted by three of the founding members. There is clearly a strong sense that the Friends act as caretakers of the site, taking on a stewardship role of the heritage and gardens, despite not actually having any legal rights or economic ownership of the site. Long-term members highlighted a desire to raise the profile of the Necropolis and take responsible ownership of it in the face of what they saw as a lack of local interest and care; as one member of the group expressed there was “no conception of the importance of this place”. The Necropolis is owned by Glasgow City Council and managed by Land and Environmental Services under ‘Parks’. Since the Friends have formed they feel much progress has been made to encourage respectful behaviour and now the site in one person’s words, it can be considered “high profile”, although much still has to be done to engage local communities and Glasgow citizens with this site; “people who live here (in Glasgow) don’t see it”. Tourists now come specifically to Glasgow to visit the site and the website gets visits from all over the world. For the Glasgow-based members, around half the group, this strong sense and desire to communicate the city’s identity was connected to their varying personal ties to the place.

In the ACCORD focus group a number of people started by explaining their personal role in, or their affiliation with, the Friends. Overtly intellectual and professional reasons for getting involved were expressed. Many told of how they joined the Friends in response to the need for specific skills and a pre-existing interest in periods of history or the architecture which can be found here. Indeed, approximately half of the Friends who participated in the ACCORD project worked in or currently work in the fields of architecture, survey and conservation. The striking architecture of some of the mausolea was noted, and a phrase frequently used was that the Necropolis was regarded as an “architectural encyclopaedia”. The Necropolis was also said to be valuable as an ideal training ground for professional skills.

In addition, as became evident, for the Glasgow-based members of the Friends personal attachments to the Necropolis were also important motivations for caring for this site, expressed via memories of visiting and playing in the grounds from their adolescence or childhood. One of the founding members of the Friends has lived near the Necropolis and visited it for over 40 years. One

member recounted his mother having taken him there as a boy to visit the family memorial. Memories from other members of the group include visiting the Necropolis on the way to the nearby hospital, for another “skipping off school to do homework” here. Family histories of visitors were also cited; “people tell you their grandmother worked for that company” [owned or founded by someone buried in the Necropolis]. Indeed, as one of these individuals stressed it is “the wee personal connections and stories” that draw people here in the first place, encouraging a sense of responsibility. Others, those who were not from Glasgow, explained that they did not have a long-term attachment to this place. Thus, taking part in activities at the Necropolis organised by the Friends was overtly expressed by them as an intellectual activity, but in reality it can also be understood as a place-making activity since strong individual emotive attachments, whether longstanding or newly formed, to this place was evident for all in the group who took part in ACCORD. For example, many of the members had their favourite monuments and had carried out extra research into the monuments and characters, perhaps seeking their own personal connections to the place and people memorialised here. For example, one member discovered that they have relatives interned here.

The ACCORD project monuments

The following section describes the individual monuments which were recorded during the ACCORD project and outlines the values the Friends attach to them and their social and historical significance. Choice was influenced by an ongoing research project being undertaken into researching and documenting the worst of the eroding headstones, and secondly the ongoing fundraising effort for the Monteath Mausoleum. Additionally, Ruth Johnston, one of the longstanding members of the Friends, has written a book ‘Afterlives’ which describes selected monuments in the Necropolis and the individuals associated with them (Johnston 2007), which also directed our choices for recording certain headstones. The stories and characters behind each monument were always of particular interest and intrigue.

The Monteath Mausoleum, 1842-50. The models created of this monument, as part of ACCORD, it was hoped, would benefit the wider community. This monument was an appropriate choice in particular because of the “really good story” that it tells and how it is regarded as an icon of the Necropolis, widely recognised by the Glasgow community due to its highly prominent visibility in the urban skyline. The Friends also expressed a strong desire to focus on this monument because of its poor state of preservation, in accordance with their caretaking role, and voiced a desire to use the resulting model to help raise funds for its restoration. In addition, the Friends wanted to model the interior of the mausoleum three-dimensionally, as it is normally locked off from public access.

This elaborate mausoleum is situated on the south-east corner of the uppermost brow of the Necropolis and thus is a very prominent landmark. The Mausoleum has an individual record in Canmore – the national monument’s record (Canmore ID 217643). It was built in memory to two brothers; Major Archibald Douglas Monteath who died in 1842, and James Monteath Douglas who died in 1850. Designed by the Edinburgh based architect David Cousins, it is influenced by Neo-Norman styles and built of yellow sandstone (Johnston 2007). Inside the stonework is undecorated and there are eight internal pillars. “Intriguingly it has no writing, lettering or numerals inscribed anywhere on it – it is completely silent about its occupants” (Henderson 2013: 10). The only personal association appears to rest with the beasts heads which adorn it influenced by deities carved on Hindu and Indian temples, forts and palaces; Major Archibald Douglas Monteath served in the East India Company during his lifetime. He reputedly made his fortune when “an elephant carrying precious gems belonging to a Maharajah was captured and ‘relieved’ of its load by him” (quoted and referenced in Henderson 2013: 9).

Further information can be found in an accompanying biography of Major John Archibald Monteath produced by the Friends of the Glasgow Necropolis archived alongside the 3D model on the Archaeology Data Service. Additionally, Lynda Henderson, who participated in the ACCORD project, has produced an architectural and conservation report on the mausoleum as part of her MSc thesis (2013), archived alongside the 3D model on ADS. Her report notes the following conservation problems suffered by the monument: black crust and contour scaling damage caused by pollution; granular erosion; salt leaching; rising damp; delamination; damage caused by vegetation and mechanical fittings; modern bad repairs and pigeons roosting.

Francoise Foucart Headstone, 1781-1863. Not much information is currently known by the group on this individual. This particular monument is suffering from bad erosion, vegetation growth and delamination, and thus the text is mainly unreadable. François Foucart (1781-1850) was an Officer of the Imperial Guard of France, Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur and Professor of Fencing at the Royal Academy in Paris. Foucart spent 40 years in Glasgow as a fencing teacher and his students raised the memorial to honour him in 1863.

The 1871 *Monuments and Monumental Inscriptions of Scotland* (Vol. 1 pp 488-9) has a description of the monument and the following transcription of the words inscribed on his tombstone, composed by J. Sheridan Knowles:

Talk you of scars? "that Frenchman bears a crown! Body and limb his vouchers palpable; For many a thicket he has struggled through Of briery danger, wondering that he Came off with even life, when right and left His mates dropp'd thick beside him. A true man, His rations with his master gone " for he Was honor's soldier, that ne'er changes sides. He left his country for a foreign one To teach his gallant art, and earn a home. I knew him to be honest, generous, High soul'd, and modest, every way a grace To the fine martial nation whence he sprang.

Due to its sorry state, it was agreed that this headstone was a good target for RTI. There is a photograph and description of this monument on in 'Afterlives', (Johnston 2007: 117).

Mrs John Macdonald Headstone, 1841-1852. There is a description of this monument on p.13 in 'Afterlives', Ruth Johnston's book which describes selected monuments in the Necropolis and the individuals associated with them. One of the inscriptions has been in part transcribed by the Glasgow and West of Scotland Family History Society, but there are many blanks:

*Here are the remains of JOHN MCDONALD, ? Also the remains of his three sisters MARY, ANNA , and WILLIAM, who died in infancy. There is more text with names of children who died young , but it is very weathered. Testimonial - To commemorate the virtues. An excellent-
Mrs. JOHN MCDONALD, died on the 11 March 1841 aged 50 years, JOHN MCDONALD, died on the 24 April 1852 aged 59 years.*

Not much information is currently known by the group on these individuals. This particular monument is suffering from bad erosion and therefore the text is mainly unreadable, and was therefore thought to be another good choice for RTI recording.

The Impact of 3D modelling and recording

The Friends had not engaged practically with the digital techniques used as part of ACCORD previously, but in general were familiar and interested in the potentials it offered for fulfilling their

aims of “fundraising”, “publicity”, “interpretation” and “communication”. Some were familiar with the Scottish Ten laser scanning project by the Digital Design Studio, Glasgow School of Art with Historic Scotland, and CyArk. One person voiced that she had only visited these sites recorded by the Scottish Ten project at <http://www.scottishten.org/>, and thus the opportunity offered by 3D recording technologies for virtual tourism is attractive to the Friends. The potential of photogrammetry and RTI to aid recording and to inform restoration work was also recognised, though concerns were voiced over their accuracy. Finally, the opportunity to make the inaccessible virtually accessible (i.e. areas of the Necropolis closed off to the public) was also attractive, as in the case of recording the Monteath Mausoleum interior.

Professional and pragmatic benefits were highlighted by the Friends for fulfilling their aims, in accordance with their background and their stewardship role. The photogrammetry results are regarded as a useful and “efficient” tool for survey work and conservation management to the members who have professional experience in these fields, whereas RTI for informing archival and genealogical research work was raised as a particular benefit. In particular, RTI was regarded as a good interpretation tool adding to information and was not highly valued as a visualisation technique, whereas photogrammetry was highly valued in capturing and modelling what was already there in an engaging “exciting” way, more so “than just measuring tape”. It was also expressed how “the virtual thing [especially photogrammetric models] is a good propaganda tool”, and that 3D models will attract new audiences to their cause.

At the same time, it was clear that personal relationships with the monuments recorded as part of ACCORD were transformed through using the technologies; “the process itself forces you to examine the monument in detail”, while the results “focuses attention”, “enhances what is already there” and “made things visible, [that I had] not seen before” on a one-to-one intimate basis. The results were met with general exclamation; “A-mazing”, “incredible”, “we’re all astounded”.

A founding member of the Friends even expressed “it’s better than the real thing”. Despite this, others who are familiar with conservation survey methods and digital technology, felt that although the results were “realistic” and “looked like the real thing”, that they did not replace the original. This was summed up succinctly by one member who expressed: “these are *representations* of what is authentic, [but] give a different feeling to the original”. People “do not tend to touch the monuments”, and so capturing the monument digitally was not considered to be detrimental in terms of an authentic experience. It was felt by the group that the texture of the surfaces were captured effectively by the digital technologies. However, the group in general did have reservations about the lack of a sense of context; a sense of scale was not easily understandable in the virtual visualisations, and the surrounding landscape was not included in the visualisations.

It was clear that the process of recording and modelling the monuments had an impact on how people perceived and engaged with them and ultimately by co-producing the results value was added. One member even wondered “whether [this experience] will change our attitude to survey work”? The techniques were considered to be easy to learn and members are already planning future work; “it’s not rocket-science!” as the webmaster of the Friends exclaimed. Furthermore, a sense of ownership of the results was felt strongly, especially by the official members of the Friends; whilst everyone acknowledged the significance of the technologies for making the monuments accessible, there was also a feeling that “it would be quite nice if the results were ours alone”.

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