

The Sir John Maxwell School

A New Life for the 21st Century



Our Aim

Our aim is the renovation of this old School and its grounds in Pollokshaws, Glasgow to create a financially self sustaining **Glasgow Centre for Environmental Education and Innovation** which will include space for enterprises

Because of its location, its history and the fact that environmental issues are at the forefront of thinking about our collective future this is an opportunity to create a unique resource for Glasgow and Scotland.

Building on the Heritage

The original Industrial School established on the site in 1854 by Sir John Maxwell was for the disadvantaged children of Pollokshaws to learn craft skills such as carpentry and cooking and they were also taught practical gardening on adjacent plots.

This school was replaced in 1909 by the present building as a primary school. It closed in 2011. So We want to **revive this education and training heritage** but adapted to the needs of the 21st Century

Building on the Location

The school site was gifted by the Maxwell family of Pollok and so is Common Good land, (that is it belongs to the people of Glasgow). We understand that the terms of the gift were that it **remains for educational purposes**.

It is across the road from the main entrance to **Pollok Country Park**, train station and bus route. So the new Centre is **easily accessible**

Pollok at 150 hectares is one of the largest urban parks in Scotland with Pollok House and gardens (National Trust) and the Burrell Collection museum. The Park has around 1 million regular visits per year and it is expected that the renovated Burrell when reopened in 2021 will attract an additional 350,000 people per year. **The centre** will use the resources of the Park for educational purposes (large wooded areas, wildlife garden, livestock, ponds, meadows, deer, otters and many bird species). As an attraction it will benefit from and add to the combined visitor experiences of the Southside.



Pollok Woodland Nursery (Glasgow Times)

Next door is a hectare of unused space which used to be an orchard, the Cart River Walkway and cycle route..

Building Sustainability

The school is one of the few remaining local examples of the magnificent red sandstone architecture of Glasgow's late Victorian and Edwardian heyday. Unfortunately the demolition of these buildings as part of Glasgow's "modernisation" continues. But this strategy is increasingly being questioned, not just from a heritage viewpoint but also as environmentally wasteful. Demolishing and rebuilding uses more resources and energy and thus can create more CO2. **Retaining and retrofitting is a better solution.**

Glasgow Council's 2018-23 Strategic Business Plan commits it to "positively contribute to the city's economic growth through sustainable Property Development". If this means anything it must mean reusing old buildings. A commitment to keep this one and use it as an Environmental Education Centre **could** be the best advertisement Glasgow can create when its hosts the **Climate Change World Conference in 2021**

What can be created?

Previous studies have shown that the building can be adapted to accommodate around 2500 sq m (27,000 sq ft) of space on 3 floors with mezzanines. A redesign could possibly increase this. An extension into the yard could add another 500-800 sq m. (another 20% or so)

Outside

- Demonstration of solar panels and windmill energy
 - Gardens and growing plots (in yard plus roof garden)
 - Car charge points/bike station/cycle repair
 - A model "ecohouse" (energy saving, bulding materials,recycling)
- Link through to Pollok Park, train station, walkways and cycle route
 - Larger garden, growing plots, permaculture demonstration, orchard and natural play area on the adjacent land (if it can be added to the site)



Ideas Sketch by our Partners at New Practice
<https://new-practice.co.uk/>

Inside



- Exhibition and information spaces
- Seminar and meeting rooms, small cinema / classrooms
- A cafe, shop and gallery, playspace
- Demonstration kitchen and water saving bathroom
- A model “ecoflat” (what you can do to save energy, reduce waste)
- Studios, workspaces and offices (for environmentally related enterprises)

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Why the Centre is Unique

Iberdola (with Scottish Power) has a Renewal Energy Information Centre at Whitelee in Lanarkshire and several in Spain (www.iberdrola.com). There are several outdoor environmental centres such as Aigas near Inverness (www.aigas.co.uk) but our project idea is **unique in UK** in combining an indoor learning centre with adjacent outdoor resources in an easily accessible **urban setting** along with supporting innovation enterprises.

School children at an
Iberdrola Education Centre
Spain



Who is it for?

1. General visitors interested in the ideas, visitors to Pollok and the Burrell (therefore a good number of tourists)
2. Schoolchildren/students on educational trips from across Scotland
3. Attendees at seminars, discussions, film shows, special exhibitions and courses and classes (such as environmentally sustainable cooking)
4. Occupants - this could include research and environmental bodies
5. The local community- we want the place to be part of and welcoming to the people of Pollokshaws/Glasgow to drop in, have a cup of something, play, use the spaces, maintain the plots and act as guides

Partnership

The Sir John Maxwell School Trust cannot do this on its own and so a consortium of like minded and enthusiastic partners is needed. Key are the **City Council and Scottish Government**. Such a Centre will **contribute to their commitments** to sustainable policies and actions. Other partners could include universities and research bodies, energy companies, environmentally committed businesses and third sector bodies. Given the unique opportunity this Centre will provide the net should be cast internationally

Issues Raised at the International Sustainability Camp

2011

Financial Plan

In addition to assessing the costs of renovating the old school a **Business Plan** to work out running costs, income and viability is needed including grants, business sponsorships and investment (eg energy companies or others diversifying into a green future, Triodos Bank etc). The enterprise units could be around 50% of the usable space in order to have a regular income (along with hiring of spaces)

Next Steps

The school has deteriorated badly but the building is able to be saved. A commitment is needed now by its owner, the **City Council, to invest in temporary but essential repairs** to safeguard it until the Partnership and Business Plan are developed and funding is secured

Who we are

The Sir John Maxwell School Trust a Charity set up by local people to bring this building back into a viable use for the community and wider public benefit. There is a small steering group and around 200 supporters. For more information and to support go to <https://www.sirjohnmaxwellschool.com/> and <https://www.facebook.com/SaveSirJohnMaxwellSchool/>