

# News story: David Mundell Statement on Glasgow School of Art

As the House will be aware, on the night of 15 June a fire broke out at Glasgow School of Art's renowned . The Building is one of Glasgow's iconic landmarks and regarded as Mackintosh's greatest work. It is, rightly, respected as of great architectural significance and a unique and irreplaceable building in the eyes of many worldwide.

Indeed the art school was itself a work of art. It is a jewel in a city that sparkles with architectural splendour.

And it is also worth noting that the building next door, the O2 ABC music venue has also been affected. It was an even older building and had a colourful and varied history.

The art school was never a museum piece but a living, breathing, working art school – a powerhouse of creativity, a much loved part of the fabric of Glasgow.

We can, however, be grateful that this tragedy was not worsened by a loss of life. My heartfelt thanks go out to the emergency services, particularly the fire service, who attended the scene under such adverse conditions, in the heart of the vibrant city's nightlife.

Many people, like myself, are still in disbelief that this could happen again after the devastating fire of 2014, particularly so given the painstaking and careful efforts that have taken place over the past years to restore the building.

I visited the building on 1st June for the Degree Show 2018 opening. I saw the restored library and famous Hen Run and was struck by the love and passion of those involved in restoring the building. I am personally devastated by this fire, a fact I communicated directly when speaking to the School's Director, Professor Tom Inns, over the weekend. My heart goes out to the School, its students and supporters who have done so much to raise funds for the restoration after 2014.

At this point we do not know the cause of the fire, but I note that the fire service has assured us that a "comprehensive and professional" probe will be carried out in due course.

The UK Government previously gave £10 million to rebuild the School after the last fire and we stand ready to help again.

There was never any question about the need to rebuild and restore it when tragedy struck just four years ago. The situation is far worse after the weekend's fire, but I hope we can start with that aim in mind.

Obviously there are real questions about what will happen next. But we stand

ready to work with the School, the City Council and the Scottish Government. I am visiting the site and meeting the Head of the School on Friday. I will update Members when I am in a position to do so.