

# Community Construction Wins International Architectural Accolade

Waldorf school building receives Architecture MasterPrize ‘Honorary Mention’ during centenary of Waldorf worldwide education & Doors Open ‘Global Connections’ theme.

September marks the 100th year of Waldorf education globally. Thousands of campuses in some 80 countries follow a remarkable and consistent ethos, drawing inspiration from founder Rudolf Steiner’s teachings and his Goetheanum in Switzerland. Now a C-listed Steiner-inspired building in Edinburgh wins an Honorary Mention in Design Architecture / Educational Buildings by Architecture MasterPrize (AMP).

The AMP celebrates the very best in design excellence and innovation from the worlds of architecture, interior and landscape design. The prized project sits on a campus where a holistic



education highly respecting architecture is offered, emphasising pupils throughout their educational careers are profoundly influenced by their built environment.

three have been listed amongst the most significant works of modern architecture. These include both the first and second Goetheanums in Switzerland - the latter now the world centre for the spiritual science – anthroposophy - behind the education.

Still the largest and fastest growing independent education system in the world, the first school opened in Stuttgart on 19th September 1919 to educate the children of the Waldorf cigarette factory. Now there are over 1,100 Steiner schools and 2,000 kindergartens on every habitable continent.

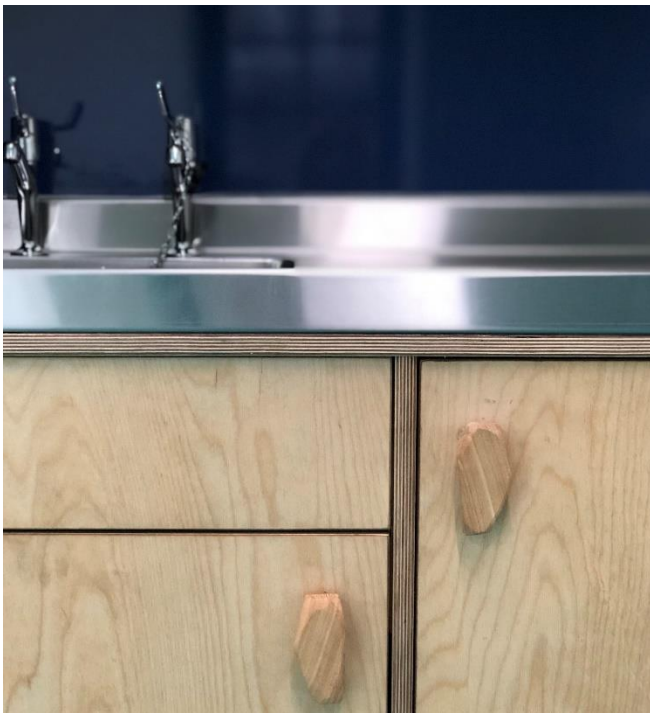
In 1988 Benjamin Tindall Architects collaborated with a Steiner teacher to design an unhurried Kindergarten in the city. Thirty years on, the design principles have matured for the restoration of a 19th Century coach house to 21st Century classrooms.



Uniquely, it is a living example of community construction - involving pupil, parent and pastoral teacher involvement in the design and build; working together with the architects and contractors sympathetic to welcoming children onto a building site.

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) was an Austrian social reformer, educational philosopher and architect. Designing 17 buildings in his lifetime,





Benjamin Tindall Architects has over three decades of experience in the industry, with a focus on environmental, economic and social sustainability. Projects include Jupiter Artland at Bonnington House, the east gate at the Edinburgh Botanic Gardens, and the Queen's Gallery.

Identified as being of significant importance to Scotland's architectural heritage, the dilapidated, damp and disused stable block, coach house and lay loft was in dire need of being repaired at the start of the year.



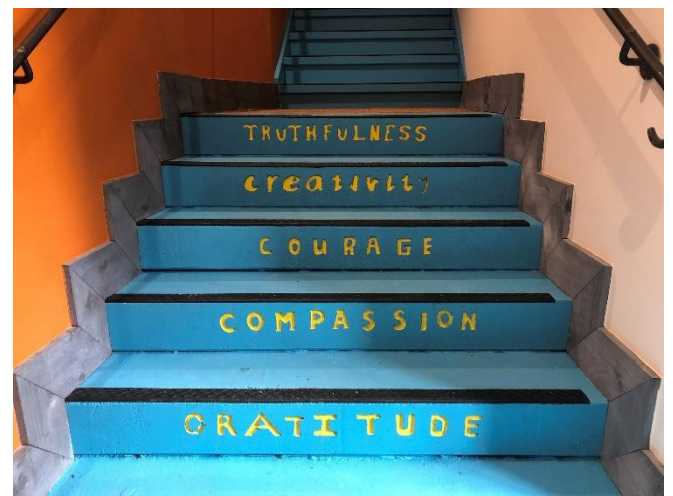
Sitting on a three-acre campus within a conservation area of Merchiston, Historic Scotland's Statement of Special Interest notes: "The survival of the stable block [circa 1875] contributes to a large extent to the listed building status".

Edinburgh Steiner School celebrated the centenary of Steiner education and its own landmark 80<sup>th</sup> year breaking ground with its Growing Spaces

project. The £0.5m conversion, project managed by teacher Rachel Craig, came in on time and on budget, ready for the new academic year; and has now received an accolade from the prestigious Architectural MasterPrize for the design - the building itself used as a learning tool.

The design is a physical realisation of the principals of Steiner education, with improved environmental credentials, and a respect for its 150-year-old history.

Children often leave their mark on schools, from scribbles on desks to testing the resilience of furniture. This project actively invited their contributions.



Materials were chosen for their reaction to human contact. Pupils participated in the design and

build: adding a distinctive façade through boldly integrating Steiner's Curriculum of Colours, whittling coat hooks by hand from native wood, to making tactile elm handles for the kitchens in each of the four rooms.

Parents and teachers, with expertise in design and art, collaborated with pupils in workshops. Others – both alive and through legacies – financed the project, which had no public or grant funding.





With the new academic year in session, it is a modern example of child-friendly architecture within a Waldorf Steiner campus, used as classrooms and creative arts studios for many of the pupils who worked on the project. The building today takes part in this year's Doors Open on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September. The architectural initiative – now in its 30<sup>th</sup> year - encourages people to discover some of the Capital's most unique and interesting buildings normally closed to the public. This year's theme: Global Connections.

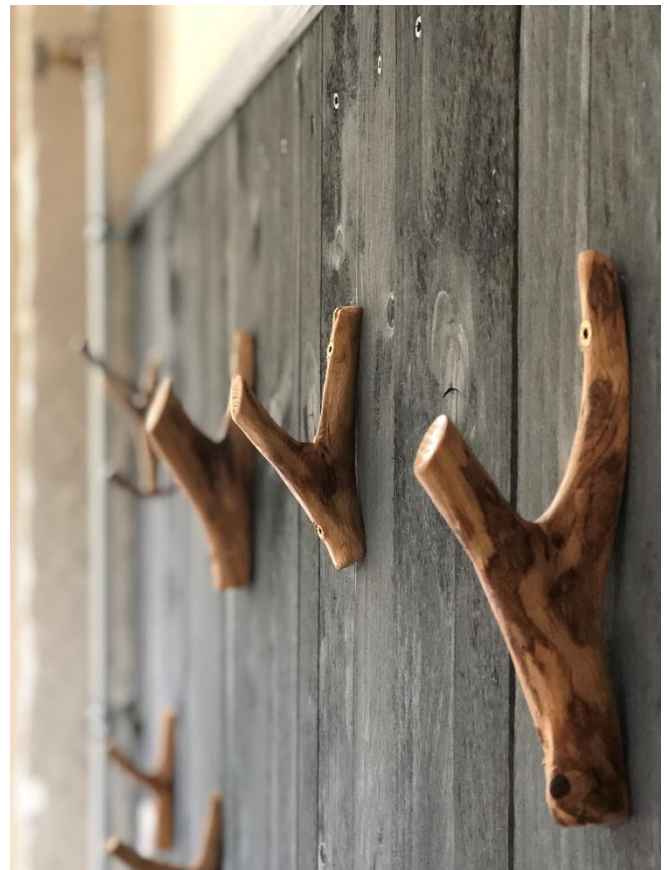
Based on a deep understanding of the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs of the developing human being, the guiding principles of the pedagogy transcend geographical borders. This makes a Waldorf classroom distinctive, whether it is situated in Jordon or Germany, America or Africa, Ukraine or the UK.



Delivering a curriculum spanning 15 years of a pupil's school career, it is juxtaposing two distinct Waldorf buildings that are at each end of the spectrum of child-friendly architecture: the purpose-built Kindergarten for the Early Years and the newly converted 19th Century coach house into 21st Century classrooms for the penultimate and final years of school.

The conservation of the latter involved the painstaking restoration of an entire tiled wall, thought to be built at the same time as the building itself. Its preservation in the new craft room is a throwback to its former use, where once the horses would have been washed down, the porcelain bricks providing a suitable waterproof area.

Each 150-year-old Scotch slate tile on the roof was delicately removed, cut down using hand tools and reused.



Whilst the exterior original walls maintain the traditional character of the building, inside was entirely gutted out, removing floors, ceilings and walls to create two large flexible spaces above and below; the ground floor opening out into a courtyard for outside learning.

The conservation works are part of an £8 million campus development project facilitating the 300-pupil school to grow as a beacon of Steiner education in Scotland, with fundraising efforts underway to raise a further £500,000 to repair and convert the conjoined west coach house and build a new extension to the science wing.



The first school based upon Steiner's ideas was



and ultimately closed most Waldorf schools in Europe in the late 1930s. The affected schools, including the original school, were reopened after the Second World War.

The priority of the Steiner ethos is to provide an unhurried and creative learning environment where children can find the joy in learning and experience the richness of childhood rather than early specialisation or academic hot-housing.

Edinburgh Steiner School was one of the first schools to be established in the UK, opening its gates to 8 pupils in 1939. It now has an all-through school, Kindergarten, Parent & Toddler groups and a soon-to-be-registered playgroup. It is also a Teacher Training Centre, a centre for the delivery of Integrated Education and a centre for Cambridge English Assessment for international students.



opened in 1919 to serve the children of employees of the Waldorf-Astoria Cigarette Company in Stuttgart, Germany. The co-educational school was the first comprehensive school in Germany, serving children from all social classes, genders, abilities, and interests.

Political interference from the Nazi regime limited

**BENJAMIN TINDALL ARCHITECTS**

**Growing Spaces**

**East Coach House**

**ARCHITECTURE MASTERPRIZE**

**ARCHITECTURE MASTERPRIZE**

**EDINBURGH STEINER SCHOOL**