

SIR BASIL SPENCE re-viewed: the architect and his office

A one-day symposium in Coventry on 29 August 2008

Organised by

The University of Warwick

with

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland

ECA Scottish Centre for Conservation Studies

and supported by the

Arts and Humanities Research Council

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

Venue: Holy Trinity Church Centre, Coventry and the Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry



Basil Spence, perspective drawing of Coventry Cathedral, c.1952

Sir Basil Spence re-viewed: the architect and his office

A one-day symposium in Coventry on 29 August 2008

This one-day event, funded by the AHRC research project *The life and work of Sir Basil Spence 1907-76: architecture, tradition and modernity*, will focus on Basil Spence's work during his most prolific and creative decades, between his work at the 1951 Festival of Britain and the high profile projects of the 1960s and 70s. Short presentations by members of the AHRC research team will discuss Spence's transition from Scotland to the English architectural world of the 1950s, his work at Coventry and at the University of Sussex. Elain Harwood of English Heritage will also speak about her experience of listing Spence's buildings.

Our aim is to chart Spence's evolution as designer, to examine his working methods and to discuss – with the help of contributions from former members of his staff – the ways in which his various offices functioned. We are interested in exploring such topics as personal style, individuality, collaboration, authorship, approaches to materials, and relationships between drawing and architecture.

We will conclude the day with a reception at the Herbert Art Gallery and an opportunity to view the RCAHMS/National Galleries of Scotland's exhibition *Back to the Future: Sir Basil Spence 1907-76*, the full version of which is on show in Coventry.

Venue:

Holy Trinity Church Centre

5a Priory Row (junction of Priory Row and Trinity Lane), Coventry CV1 5EX

It is in the centre of Coventry, next to Broadgate, two minutes walk from the Cathedral. The Church Centre is a Victorian school (the old Blue Coats School), across the lane from Holy Trinity Church and adjacent to the new Priory Visitor Centre.

Programme

10.30 Registration and coffee

11am **Welcome** by Dr. Louise Campbell (AHRC project director)

11.10 Dr Clive Fenton (AHRC project fellow, Edinburgh): **The early postwar period 1945-55**

12 noon Dr David Walker (AHRC project fellow, Warwick) **The Sea and Ships Pavilion**

12.30 Lunch

1.25 Sarah Walford (AHRC project doctoral candidate, Warwick University): **Coventry: City, civic centre and Cathedral**

1.55 Dr. Louise Campbell (Warwick University): **Spence and Sussex : a practice in transition**

2.25 Elain Harwood (English Heritage): **Listing Spence**

3 pm Tea

3.30-4.30 **Recollections of life in the office**

3.30 David Rock

3.55 Peter Winchester

4.10 James Thomas

4.30 **Discussion**

5.30 pm close

5.45pm **Herbert Art Gallery reception**

If you wish to visit the Cathedral, it is holding evening prayers at 5.15 (Gethsemane Chapel).