

Stewart Brown: *The Restoration and Furnishing of the Willow Tea Rooms, 215–217 Sauchiehall Street*

Stewart Brown, architect and founding partner of the Edinburgh architectural and archaeological firm of Simpson & Brown, and a trustee of the Willow Tea Rooms Trust, spoke about the work of the Trust in restoring and furnishing Miss Cranston's original tea rooms. Established in 2014, the aims of the Trust were an accurate repair and restoration of the building, and the procurement of reproduction furniture, with new interventions only as necessary. In the adjacent building a new visitor centre will include a shop, a conference room and temporary exhibitions space, an education suite, and an exhibition about Miss Cranston, fully accessible with an all-floors lift.

Using a range of archival and published sources, specifications for furniture were researched and developed, and manufacturers and suppliers identified. Analysis of the metallic finish on the high-back chairs from the Salon de Luxe showed it to be polished aluminium flake, and a supplier, Metaflake of Anstruther, was identified.

Advertising through the Scottish Furniture Makers Association, eight firms were initially identified and indicative prices requested. All the workshops were visited by members of the Trust's Advisory Panel. Six sample ladder-back chairs were produced and compared anonymously with originals. The lowest price for each

type won the commission. The three firms which were awarded commissions were Angus Ross of Aberfeldy (black stained ladder-back chairs for the front and back saloon areas), Bruce Hamilton of Anniesland (black stained low-back armchairs in the front and back saloon and the gallery) and Character Joinery of Kilmarnock (Salon de Luxe tables and chairs).

Liz Hancock