
Annual Dinner 2020

Annual Report

MARCH 2020

The Aberdeen Society of Architects
Andrea Stewart & Richard Slater



ASA Annual Dinner 2020 Report

Venue

This year's dinner and awards ceremony took place at the Sandman Signature Aberdeen Hotel on the 6th March 2020. A former Robert Gordon University Building, the hotel since its renovation has become an attractive venue. The function room caters for up to 320 guests with catering supplied by the Chop Grill and Bar. Also available is a private bar exclusive to the function room.

The hotel's events management team were very helpful and patient when it came to final numbers for the night. They also provided a master's of ceremony for the night who on the day was the point of contact and made sure all tables were set up as requested.

The catering provided us with a choice of 3 different menus plus they would provide for special dietary requirements.

Menu chosen:

Starter

Chicken liver & Brandy Parfait, Oatcakes.

Main

Braised Rump, Grain Mustard Mash, Greens, Confit Shallots, Whisky Sauce.

Dessert

Cranachan, Golden Raspberries, Sandman Whisky, Fresh Cream, Oats.

Attendance

It was anticipated that approximately 100 guests were to attend the event, and the venue was initially booked and price as such. The final numbers came to 97 including 13 guests for the top table.

Dinner Format and Presentations

The order of the evening was similar to last year's dinner, with drinks reception starting at around 6.30pm, followed by welcome and introduction presentation by President of ASA and current RIAS President. Grace was performed by Aberdeen Lord Provost.

Dinner was preceded by the presentation of the Guest Speakers, Collective Architecture. Last in the evening was the formal presentations of the ASA Design Awards presented by President ASA and Guest Judge.

The venue had available two separate screens and so it was decided that two separate presentations would be shown throughout the evening. The main stage was used for the main presentations for the night, including Guest Speakers and Awards Presentation, while the second screen was reserved for a presentation of the shortlist, this year's chosen charity and social occasions involving the ASA. This presentation was set up on a loop.

The evening also included displays of various art works submitted to the ASA from architects for events such as ASAPOP and portrait of a place. Exhibition areas proved valuable this year as a gathering place for guests to congregate while the evening wore on.

Feedback

Following the event, a survey monkey was prepared and shared via e-mail to obtain feedback from those who attended the dinner. On sharing the survey we also invited email feedback if that was preferable.

The survey went to the 36 email addresses of those who made the bookings for the dinner. We received 17 responses, which we feel is relatively high. There were a variety of responses (constructive, positive and negative) on various aspects of the evening. We really appreciate the time taken by those who responded.

We will review all of the points received, by email and through the survey, and look to address them. It is worth noting that some parts of the evening received opposing views, so we will, as a committee, take our own view on whether action should be taken to address them.

There were also some points made regarding food, service, and the venue generally. These again were mixed in nature and we will pass these on to the venue. The current intention is to host the annual dinner at the same venue for at least 2 years for a couple of reasons. Firstly to allow some differentiation between the presidential postings, but also to allow some continuity for the president hosting. The thought being that any bugs in the first dinner should be ironed out in the second dinner. (bound to have jinxed that now).

Conclusion

We feel that the evening was a success overall, with some elements that can be improved upon.

The inclusion of the awards as part of the evening was felt to be a success.

The inclusion of an architectural speaker is one that has been a recent change to the dinner and we feel that, although it doesn't please everyone, it has so far been relatively successful over the past 3 years. We have certainly had less complaints about the tone or nature of the after-dinner speakers. We will continue to review this. It should be said that it is difficult to control what your speakers are actually going to speak about!

We felt that the exhibitions provided a welcome talking and focal point for the arrival, networking and breaks during the evening.

As noted above we will feedback to the venue any comments received as the intention is to host the dinner at The Sandman again next year.

The awards and dinner booklet seemed to continue to be a success, although no comments were received on it. This has now been a fixture for the past 5 years, with small adjustments in style every year.

Thanks

This year the annual dinner and design awards were held in the looming shadow of a pandemic and we would like to thank everyone who managed to attend, including all of our guest, speakers, awards judging team and of course our members.

Sincerely

Annual Dinner Committee

Andrea Stewart, Gordon G. Smith & Richard Slater

