

A stack of several rectangular concrete blocks is shown against a light blue background. The blocks are arranged in a slightly offset manner, creating a sense of depth. Overlaid on the blocks is the word "SURROUNDS" in a very large, bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters are positioned such that they appear to be resting on or attached to the concrete blocks. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a focus on texture and typography.

# SURROUNDS

# Intro

Dress for the Weather is an architecture studio. Our work with buildings and art responds to its context.

We use a study of our surroundings to build layers of understanding about a particular place and formulate ideas around a challenge to that environment, rather than an acceptance of it.

# Locality



“We don’t want to make assumptions about what a project should be, it’s actually much more discursive. We talk about the architecture and where that comes from, but people also tell us things about their locality that feed into what we’re doing.”



The practice name comes from our belief that a strong response to locality provokes a more appropriate design response. The process of contextualising invites openness and freedom in our work. It attracts new ideas and lateral thinking, helping us to find routes through each project’s constraints and to achieve outcomes that add new layers to the existing context. We believe that the more attention you pay to something, the truer the response will be.

The practice is guided by self-initiated and project-specific research. This research explores physicality, sociology, history, culture, economy and community to develop an understanding of place and how people interact with their surroundings. We are interested in all of the elements that contribute towards a deeper understanding of context.

Involvement in teaching and community arts enables us to reach out to an even wider context and to a greater range of influences. We believe in being open and inclusive. We talk about architecture, art and place, and encourage others to become engaged through walks, talks, workshops and education.

Through an engagement with our home city, Glasgow, we have nurtured an ethos that translates to other localities. We are representatives of Guiding Architects; an international network of architects offering tours of their home cities. Not only does this opportunity for discussion with visitors broaden our own understanding of the city, it also gives us an international forum for exchanging ideas.

# Studio

“I think that freedom we have in terms of researching and exploring ideas is something that keeps the design practice relevant and interesting, and hopefully it’s a reason why people want to work with us.”

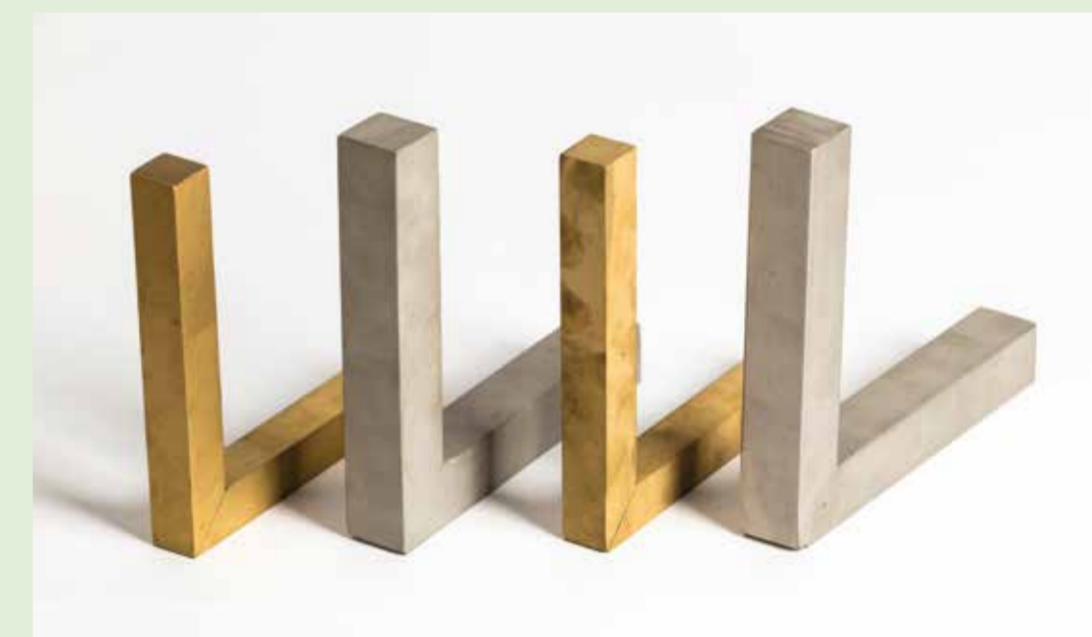


Our design response starts with the layering of ideas. We then filter these ideas to establish the essence of each project, allowing a diverse range of influences to shape our work.

This ethos adds value and meaning to our designs and has enabled us to successfully answer a wide range of projects.

We use a number of tools to explore these ideas: model making, prototyping and testing materials. We’re interested in how materials are used and how people engage with architecture as a craft. Our hands on style and the open interaction we have with our clients when presenting ideas leads to further, more detailed development as each project progresses. This approach has also led to us publishing research on a number of different subjects.

We feel that our work in a variety of fields is mutually beneficial and that there is an advantage to working at a number of different scales. We regularly engage with a range of communities, public bodies, private clients and creative organisations to open up new opportunities.



# Work in Context

“It becomes more about being a facilitator to something that’s being fed into by a lot of different people.”





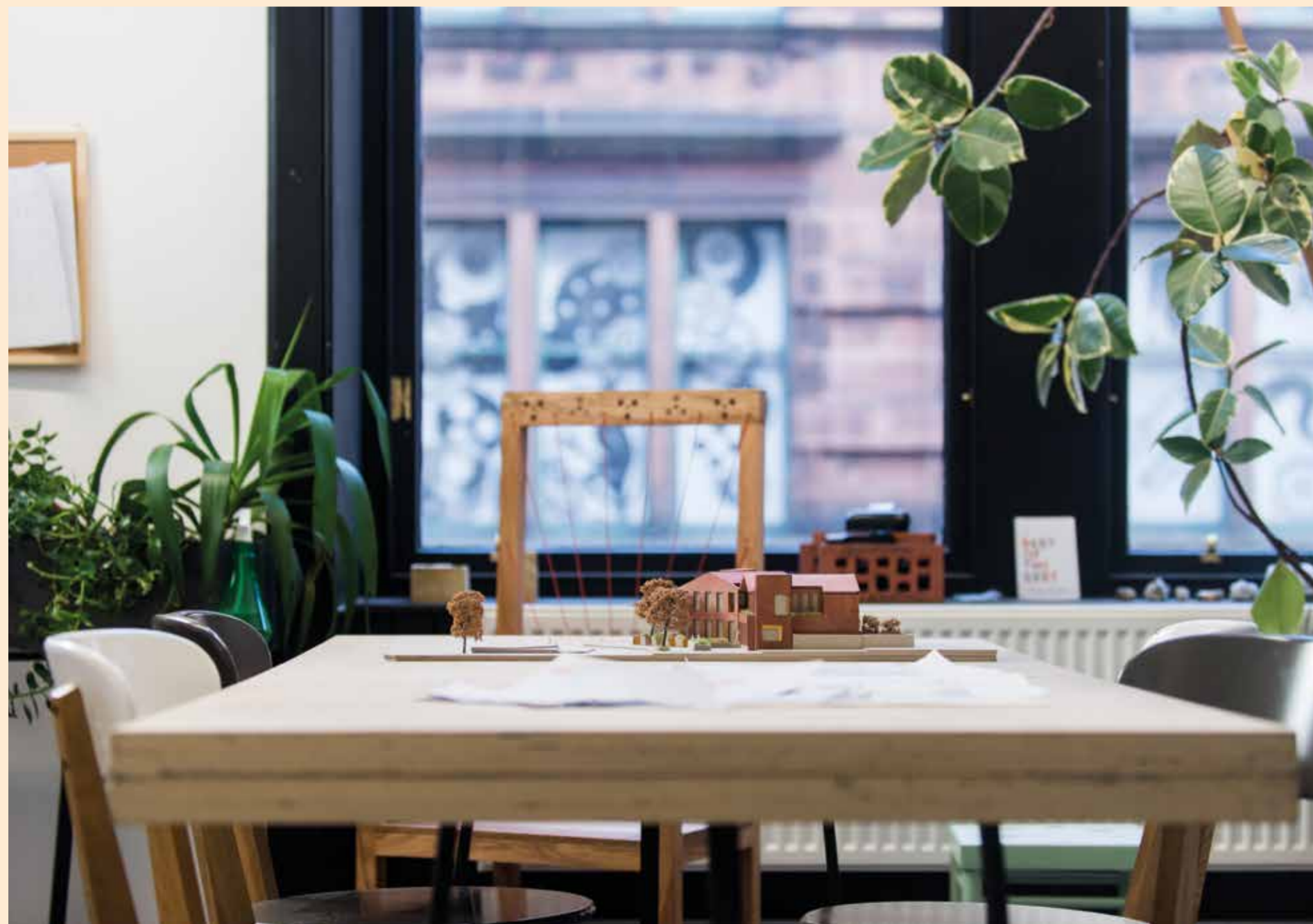


“It’s about using a range of techniques to achieve the best outcomes. It’s about creating content - or creating art - that can then be integrated into the process. It’s using that established route but integrating bespoke content and meaning along the way.”



# Discussion

“The name derives from a strong response to context. Putting research and a lot of consideration into places we’re working with...”



## Why did you start Dress for the Weather?

**Matt:** Looking at the way architecture is delivered as a service, we feel that there's potential for more depth and greater attention to context; cultural and social context that can be explored and then presented in places, buildings and spaces.

## What does the name mean?

**Andy:** The name derives from a strong response to context. Putting research and a lot of consideration into places we're working with - the contexts and constraints - and responding to that, not just accepting it. Dress for the Weather, as a name, suggests a response or a challenge to an environment.

## How has the practice evolved?

**Andy:** We get a lot of our work through connections. That typically comes from research or a workshop we're running or through our involvement in education. Also, the exploration of ideas tends to involve people, which then leads to more architectural work in the long run.

**Matt:** We've never had to chase another big job to keep things going. That allows us a certain amount of freedom to tackle a range of projects, both large and small.

## Does that freedom teach you new things or bring new inspiration?

**Andy:** Yeah, definitely. I think that freedom we have in terms of researching and exploring ideas is something that keeps the design practice relevant and interesting, and hopefully it's a reason why people want to work with us.

**Matt:** It opens up new avenues. For example, the work we're doing at Holmwood House or at St Andrew's Drive; we've done some work in architectural masterplanning but now, because we're combining with the arts, we've been asked by people to do arts masterplans and arts programming for buildings and spaces in the city.

## In your approach, is it important to understand the client, the client's project or both?

**Matt:** Both, I think. When it's a straightforward dynamic, like in the case of an extension to a residential property, we work with the client to understand how the home is used. Do they have 20 friends over for dinner once a month? Things like that can have a big impact on a design. If it's a public building, it's about what the client wants but also what the users of the building think too.

**Andy:** With the public building projects, it's also important to spend time in the area, so we do that quite a bit; whether it's a walking tour or whether it's turning up at community events and being part of that. We want to further our understanding of the social and cultural side of things too; being there is pretty fundamental to that.





**How else do you immerse yourselves in order to understand each project's context?**

**Andy:** There are different ways. We've done mapping projects in the past where we've drawn maps of the area. We've got a self-initiated project called Typology, which researches different building typologies in Glasgow to understand the fabric of the city better.

**Matt:** This included research into the evolution of pub design, which we charted through six case studies, from Glasgow's oldest surviving pub times to contemporary times. It allows us to research, learn and comment on why architecture has changed in response to other social, cultural, and political urban changes; like the advent of cinema, women's rights, the smoking ban, city laws to do with prohibition or licensing. That all affects the architecture or the design. By getting under the skin of things that way, you've got a much better understanding of why things are the way they are and a much better starting point in order to design.

That's the heavier research stuff but there are other ways like the walking tours we take. In our approach to architecture, we don't want to make assumptions about what a project should be, it's actually much more discursive. We talk about the architecture and where that comes from, but people also tell us things about their locality that feed into what we're doing. That tends to happen in more public projects, but it's a nice way of starting a discussion and making a proposition.

**You're ambassadors for Guiding Architects...**

**Andy:** Yeah, that's right. It's an international network of architectural guided tours. Though we're showing people Glasgow, I see that as research as well; a non-agenda specific type of research, where we're talking to a wider group of people about our city, meeting people from other cities, building connections and learning about their cities. We try to ask them as much about their experiences of the places they come from in relation to the issues we're discussing. So, by that extension, it's a constant learning process.

**Matt:** Through Guiding Architects, we're starting to make European wide connections, which we're hoping to push and explore.

**Looking at your portfolio, there's a range of projects and plenty of collaboration with creative and community practices. Why is that?**

**Andy:** They tend to offer the most scope to be communicative with your approach, especially with the community projects we work on. There's generally more freedom to take the focus off one particular element of the design process. So it becomes more about being a facilitator to something that's being fed into by a lot of different people.

**Matt:** Glasgow Collective Studios was a really good example of that. The client basically said: "I don't know what this space is going to be yet. I don't have tenants signed up for all these studios, so how do we develop a space that's appealing or attractive but also flexible for us? If someone comes to me in a month's time and says I need desk space for 12 people, I want to be able to do that." The end result may seem like a simple plan, but you can actually subdivide that space in hundreds of different ways, depending on what needs to be done.

**Do you find inspiration from interests you have outside the practice?**

**Andy:** Teaching is pretty massive for me. I run a Stage 3 unit at Newcastle University that has the same ethos as Dress for the Weather. It's about building on the physical and cultural fabric, looking at cultural architecture in the city and how that deals with commercial concerns as well. So there are quite a lot of different layers and things overlapping, which I learn from and bring into the practice.

In recent years, I've held a number of residencies; first in Hospitalfield and then at Cove Park. Cove Park, for example, that gave me an opportunity to explore surfaces, especially concrete. That material testing is starting to feed back into the practice. It just allows an opportunity to step back and be a bit freer with reflection.

**Matt:** I'm the chair of an arts charity on the Southside called Streetland, I took over a few years ago. The aim is to bring arts and performance to the streets in order to engage with a diverse community.

**Looking around the practice, it's obvious that testing materials and model making are integral to your approach...**

**Andy:** We do make a lot of test models and we're increasingly interested in testing materials as well. We're also talking more about surfaces too.

**Matt:** Andy has been working with concrete and I've recently been given funding to develop my metalwork practice into a range of architectural ironmongery products. If we want to integrate artworks into buildings, which is potentially part of the aim or artistic thinking of the buildings, then we're keen to be able to come with a grounding in that. We feel it opens up the potential for integrating more craft into buildings.

**Andy:** I think people like coming into the office because there are lots of models, material samples and tests that fill the place. It may look quite cluttered, but there are a lot of interesting ideas there.

**Why is that approach important?**

**Andy:** It comes from a process based on ideas and layers. We both like to have the ideas that we've worked on through past projects; there are a lot of links between some of our research and the design practice. There's a linkage between a continuation of ideas and responsiveness that I think is good to present to people.

**Matt:** We're not reinventing the wheel, model making is a traditional architectural technique, but that's how we evolve our ideas. For us, it's about using a range of techniques to achieve the best outcomes. It's about creating content - or creating art - that can then be integrated into the process. It's using that established route but integrating bespoke content and meaning along the way.

# Team

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## Accreditations:

Royal Incorporation of Architects  
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Member of the Scottish Ecological  
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Member of Guiding Architects



## Andy Campbell

Andy is a co-founder and director of Dress for the Weather. He is passionate about social and public architecture; working with projects across community, arts and public sectors. This has included acting as lead consultant on an arts and heritage refurbishment for a B-listed mill building as well as an art gallery, studio and entertainment venue in Glasgow.

He is a Teaching Fellow at Newcastle University, Architecture Department, where he delivers a studio in Stage 3. The themes of this studio are aligned with the practice and ethos of Dress for the Weather.

Andy's research focuses on the accessibility of design and architecture, something that is achieved by processing ideas into formats suitable for the widest possible audience. This has included a typology study on pub design and an architectural map of Glasgow that has developed into a tour of the city.

## Matt McKenna

A co-founder and director of Dress for the Weather, Matt is involved in a range of projects, predominately focused on work to existing buildings. This includes residential conversions within listed buildings, converting industrial spaces to arts venues, repurposing community spaces, and developing arts and interior strategies for healthcare buildings.

He has significant experience with tenement buildings. This includes architectural alterations and research into the characteristics and design that define a building's typology.

Matt's sculptural work in metal frames, which includes projects like the Architecture Bar and Kilsyth Patterns, has led to funding for the design and fabrication of a range of architectural ironmongery specific to Glasgow.

Matt is also the chair of Streetland, a community arts organisation working in Glasgow's Southside.

## Hazel Wallace

Hazel joined Dress for the Weather in 2015 after completing a Masters project on gender perception of the city at Glasgow School of Art and has also spent time studying at Oslo School of Architecture and Design.

Since joining Dress for the Weather, she has enjoyed applying her research in urban centres and culture to a number of community and arts projects within the practice. Hazel has experience in workshops and events-based architecture, including work for Holmwood House, where the practice has been developing an arts strategy for the A-listed building.

Hazel also has a strong interest in the construction of architecture, which she developed through gaining the City and Guilds Award in Construction from The Boat Building Academy, and by helping construct the Welsh Sustainable Retreat.

## Romain Charlet

Romain joined Dress for the Weather in 2016. His experience in France and Italy reflect an interest in working within existing contexts, such as listed buildings, and with heritage landscapes. Romain has a keen interest in the exploration of each project's context to ensure the programme will not only fit, but also highlight the potential of the locality in which it resides.

He is gaining experience in a wide range of projects of varying size and budget, and across disciplines. Alongside this, his commitment to education led him to volunteer for the Institute of Architecture of North France where he acted as a cultural mediator.

Romain is involved with Des Pieds à La Tête, an association that aims to open the field of architecture to the wider public. He has organised conferences and guided tours around historic and contemporary districts of cities.