BUSINESS ARCHIVES COUNCIL of SCOTLAND

Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture and Gaelic
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

5 August 2026

Dear Màiri McAllan, MSP

Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA) and Third Eye Centre Archive Sale

The Business Archives Council of Scotland (BACS) is concerned by news of the proposed sale of Glasgow's Centre for Contemporary Arts and Third Eye Centre archive collections.

The Business Archives Council of Scotland was established in 1960 as an independent archive body focused on the active preservation of the records of Scottish business and industry. Today, we continue to advocate for the management and preservation of Scotland's historically significant business records.

The records of the CCA and Third Eye Centre represent 50 years of contemporary art practice and evidence the essential work of both organisations in providing creative spaces and the administrative framework and support that facilitates artistic practice. It is a collection of national importance and we believe strongly that it should be deposited with a public archive repository in Glasgow. A private sale risks the dispersal of this collection and its loss as an important research resource for the study of Scotland's cultural and creative achievements.

We recognise that Insolvency Practitioners have a duty to realise company assets during the liquidation process. One of the Council's early achievements was the preservation of the records of the constituent companies of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders in 1973 after prolonged efforts by the liquidator Robert C Smith who was also at that time BACS Chairman. The rescue of the UCS records provides an early and exemplary case of partnership working between archivists and the liquidator. It demonstrated that, even in the context of corporate failure, an organisation's heritage and its significance to the wider community can be preserved for future generations.

We're aware that the Business Archives Surveying Officer and the Ballast Trust have been working with the valuer appointed by the liquidator to secure the collection. In recent years, the Surveying Officer has worked with liquidators to transfer and deposit several collections to public archive services in Scotland such as the records of Charles Henshaw & Sons, architectural metalworkers (est. 1904), Ballantine Castings Ltd, iron founders (est.1822) and Scotland's last linen manufacturer Peter Greig & Co. (est. 1825). Further afield, we have seen extensive archive collections for household names such as Thomas Cook (est.1841) and Debenhams (est.1778) also be saved for the nation through partnership working.

These cases demonstrate practice in line with the guidance[1] issued by the Insolvency Practitioners Association in 2021 highlighting that administrators and liquidators are bound by a code of ethics to understand the wider context of an insolvency case. This includes consideration of the disposal of assets such as archives, whose significance may extend far beyond their monetary value. The sale or dispersal of the CCA and Third Eye Centre archive could set a damaging precedent, treating culturally significant archival collections primarily as financial assets and risking the irreversible loss of their historical context, research value, and wider public benefit.

As Scotland's Cabinet Secretary for Culture, we understand that assurances have been made that the archive will be retained in whole and available to the public. This will require government support to secure the funding if the sale goes ahead. However, we would urge you to request that the liquidator reconsider the proposed sale of the collection entirely and explore alternative solutions that would prioritise its cultural significance over any financial value thus preserving its integrity as a collection in a public archive repository.

Yours sincerely,

Executive committee
Business Archives Council of Scotland

[1] https://insolvency-practitioners.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/How-Insolvency-Practitioners-Can-Rescue-Records-v2-03-02-21.pdf