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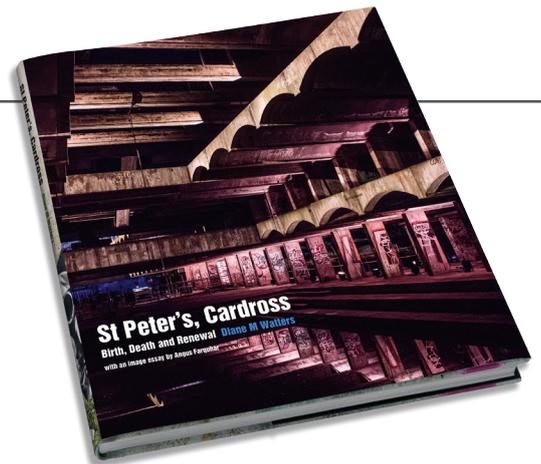
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# St Peter's, Cardross

## Birth, Death and Renewal

**Diane M Watters**  
with an image essay by **Angus Farquhar**

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The ruin of St Peter's College has sat on a hilltop above the village of Cardross for more than three decades. Over that time, with altars crumbling, graffiti snaking across its walls and nature reclaiming its concrete, it has gained a mythical, cult-like status among architects, preservationists and artists.

St Peter's only fulfilled its original role as a seminary for 14 years, from 1966 to 1979. As its uncompromising design gave way to prolonged construction and problematic upkeep, the Catholic Church reassessed the role of seminaries, resolving to embed trainee priests not in seclusion, but in communities. Although briefly repurposed as a drug rehabilitation centre, the building was soon abandoned to decay and vandalism.

Ever since, people have argued and puzzled over the future and importance of St Peter's. It has been called both Scotland's best and worst twentieth century building, and was category A listed in 1992. One of its architects suggested the idea of 'everything being stripped away except the concrete itself – a purely romantic conception of the building as a beautiful ruin'. And now in 2016, St Peter's is renewed as a cultural space through the work of the arts organisation NVA.

In this landmark book, Diane Watters looks at the history of a structure that emerged out of an innovative phase of postwar Catholic church building. She traces the story of an architectural failure which morphed into a tragic modernist myth. This is a historian's account of the real story of St Peter's College: an exploration of how one of Scotland's most singular buildings became one its most troubled – and most celebrated.

### Image Essay by Angus Farquhar, NVA

Across 54 pages of imagery of St Peter's and the globally publicised *Hinterland* event, Angus Farquhar recounts how his independent arts organisation came to play the key role in the renewal of St Peter's.

### Authors

Diane M Watters is an architectural historian at HES and teaches at the University of Edinburgh. A specialist in 19th and 20th century architecture and conservation in Scotland, she has undertaken a succession of research based publications and is currently researching the history of Edinburgh's school architecture.

Angus Farquhar has been Creative Director of Glasgow based NVA – one of the UK's most noted independent public arts organisations – since its inception in 1992.

### Key Selling Points

- There has been global publicity for St Peter's Seminary in 2016 as a result of its redevelopment as a cultural centre by innovative arts charity NVA
- The definitive – and only – history of the building, released on the 50th anniversary of its original opening, produced in partnership between HES, NVA, Glasgow School of Art and the Scottish Centre for Conservation Studies, University of Edinburgh
- Showcases the birth, death and renewal of the building through unique previously unpublished imagery, including original plans and photographs, and views of the recent artistic revival *Hinterland* (winner of the Cultural Event of the Year Award at the Scottish Event Awards 2016)

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