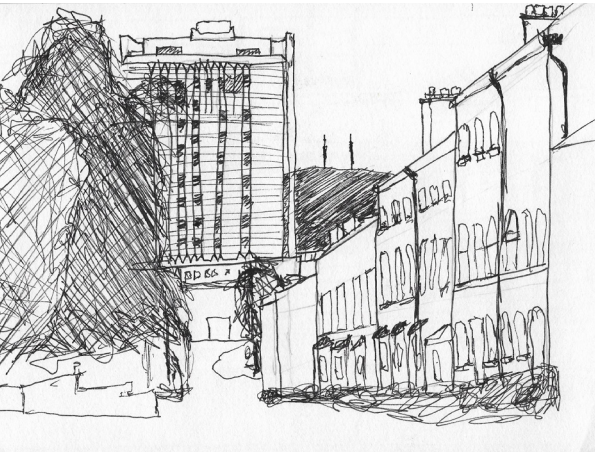


Drawing Support

Sketching Workshop with Peter Hutchinson - 07.10.23, Mount Charles, Belfast



Andrew Molloy - City Hospital



Michael Doherty - University Street



Adrian Donelley - 34 Mountcharles front elevation

It was an unseasonably balmy morning in early October. The soft burble of the percolator and the rich smell of fresh coffee filled the boardroom of Mount Charles as the visitors slowly arrived one by one. While it wouldn't be quite correct to describe them as disparate – they were all connected to the profession of architecture and the art world – they were nonetheless an expression of the full diversity of that sphere. Practising architects and university lecturers; retired architects and students; accomplished artists and those who had regretfully drifted away from that aspect of the profession over the years. And so the foundation was laid for an engaging workshop on the art of sketching, ably led by accomplished sketch-diarist Peter Hutchinson.

Peter had painstakingly prepared a four-page handout featuring a series of sequential thumbnail sketches dissecting the process of the sketch; from choosing your subject and positioning yourself in the street, through holding your 'drawing unit' (that's a pen or pencil to you and me) as an extension of one's arm, positioning your image on the page, and on through the rudiments of perspective, framing, proportion and adding layers and life to the drawing. After a crash course through the fundamentals, we grabbed our books and 'drawing units' and left the comfort of the boardroom, out into the autumnal late morning sunlight to observe and sketch.

Peter's boardroom prep talk had seemingly freed us from the fear of the blank page as we all headed in different directions. Mount Charles, from University Street down to Botanic, was peppered with figures disconnected from the Saturday morning hustle but

connected to their surroundings via a different medium; urban observers rather than citizens. I selected my subject, the City Hospital as framed by Victorian suburbia looking down Claremont Street. Allowing my eye to work with the pen, I was able to appreciate the alien form of the tower block as it sat amongst the red-brick two-up-two-downs and was able to appreciate it much more as a collection of forms, particularly coming to an understanding of the articulation of that famous yellow façade.

My personal takeaway was the value of the understanding achieved through sketching-as-observation, even if the finished product is not quite worthy of framing, or even sticking on the fridge door. That, and the importance of resisting the fear and tyranny of the blank page. ○

Dr Andrew Molloy

