

Rosie – fashion designer behind the St James Quarter tartan

Fashion designer Rosie Baird is responsible for the new tartan which she devised for St James Quarter. At present the tartan is used for the customer service team uniforms, but there are plans to roll it out in other ways.

Rosie is originally from Outlander country, specifically Falkland in Fife, and now lives and works in London for a Soho based skateboarding brand called Thames.

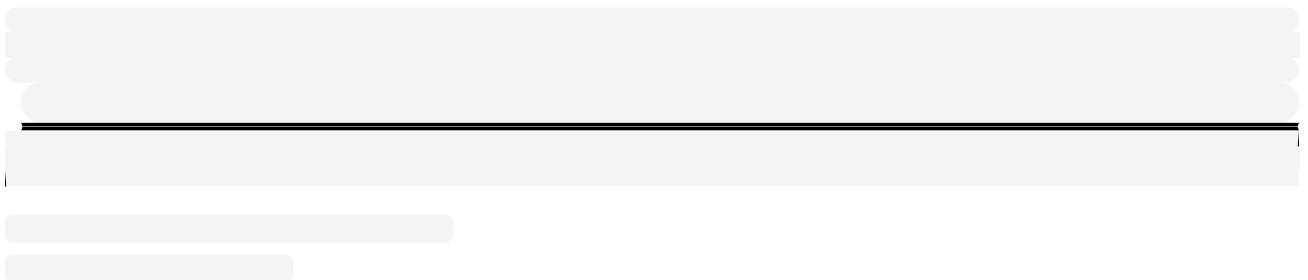
She said that although Thames is perhaps moving away from the skateboarding look they have some “really interesting tailoring projects coming up”, and she hopes to use tartan influences there too, proving her allegiance to her Scottish roots in modern fashion.

One of the highlights of her career was to design the new tartan for St James Quarter (SJQ). Her tartan is a nod to James Craig’s design of the New Town with the gold running

through it to represent the W Hotel, while the navy and brown in the tartan represent the landscape.



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A post shared by Rosie Baird (@rkb.fashion)

She graduated from Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) in 2019 and many of the garments she designed for her graduate show then

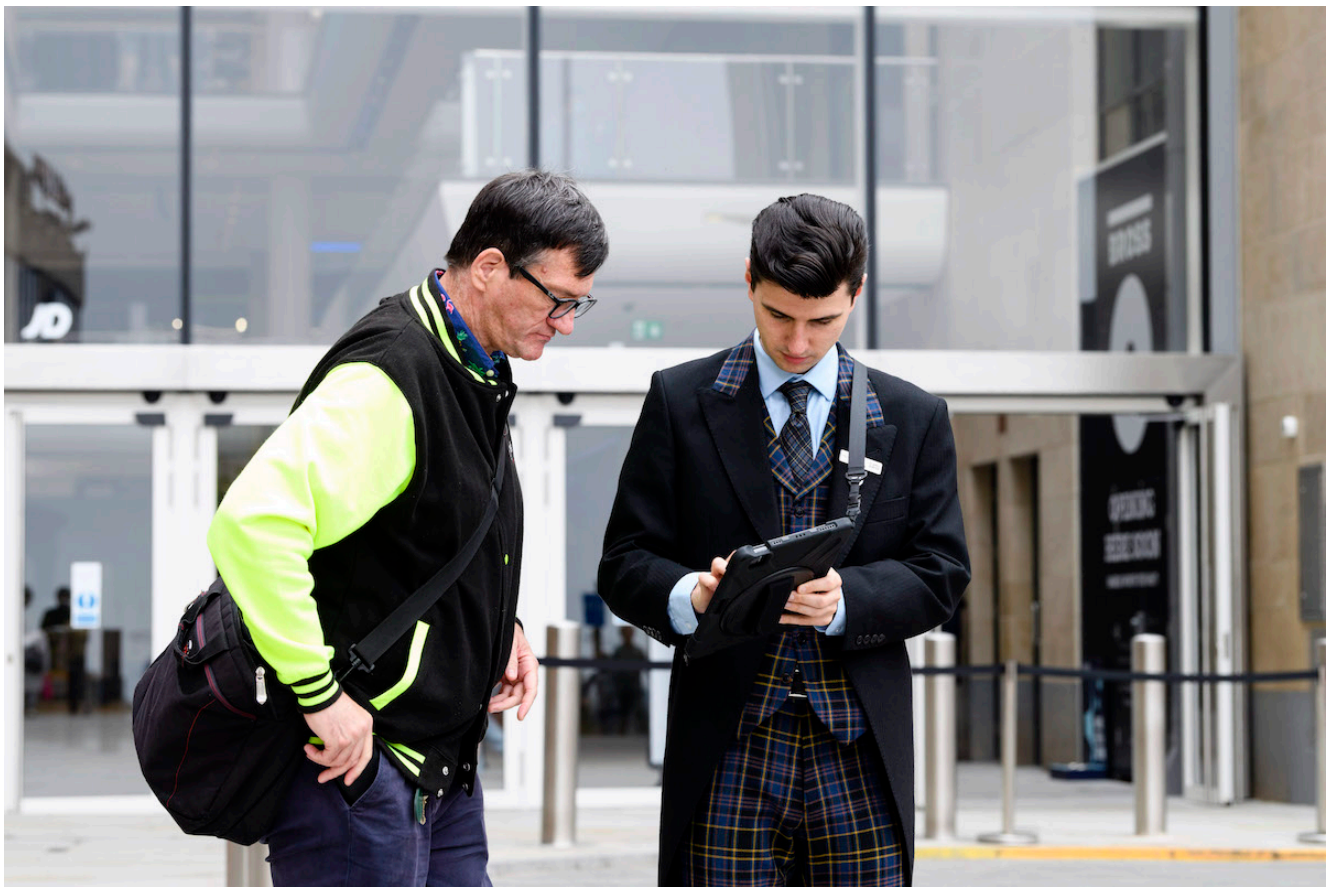
featured saltires and tartan. And it was good that she did as Rosie was commissioned to produce the tartan by a member of SJQ staff who had seen her graduate collection at the ECA fashion show in the museum.

She said: "It is such a fun thing to play with particularly with my own heritage. But to do it in a modern way – in a way that is having a laugh at yourself it is great fun. There is a lot of humour in Scottish culture.

"I feel very lucky and it was very kind of them to put that faith in me. I have been warping the tartan in my designs, not using a traditional design, so it was the first time that I had designed an actual tartan. It is now registered legally and should be on the tartan register soon if not already.

"It is a very open process designing a tartan but also quite specific. You can only do so much with a certain pattern. You have to be so careful with making it just like any other tartan which would mean it couldn't be registered. There are a lot of specifications – it needs to be a unique tartan in itself. It is interesting to come through that process to create something that has not already been done.

"You know there are a lot of tartans out there."





The process for determining that the tartan is different from all others is still a bit of a mystery, but SJQ has exclusive use of the tartan.

Rosie explained the design process. She said: "It was really important that the tartan that I designed for SJQ really represented the development. There were different elements they wanted to include, and I had the opportunity to design something from scratch and that was so exciting.

"It really felt like an opportunity when we could make everything from the colour, the actual construction, and everything could be made to really mean something.

"There is a breakdown of what the colours mean in the tartan. I have done a lot of research on tartans and there are many reasons why I find it very interesting, but one of the reasons is that a tartan represents a group of people or a community. That is what they stand for, so that is what I was trying to get with the SJQ tartan. It was going to represent this community, the people who are going to be working in there who are going to build up this space and community.

"The Colour inspiration is this:

Gold~ Inspired by the iconic 'W' hotels golden cladding, a central part of the new St James Quarter development.

Navy~ A reference to the Scottish Saltire; as well as a nod to the Firth of Forth, seen from the Quarter when looking down Leith Walk.

Black~ An homage to the brutalist Architecture of the old St James Centre.

Brown~ To represent Edinburgh's closeness to nature.

"I had a discussion with SJQ about the tartan and then created a range of different designs inspired by shapes and different colours, and then we looked at them together. I got to understand what they actually wanted from it. When people see different options in front of them they can then more easily decide what they want. So they decided on the colour schemes...

"So it was very much a collaborative at that point and we had discussions about the tartan. We discussed if we would put a

bit of black in it remembering that it had to work from day to night, and it is used in so many different circumstances. They are there all day but then do evening events too.

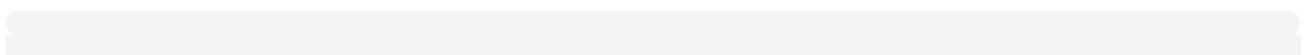
“It also had to have a luxury feeling to it.”

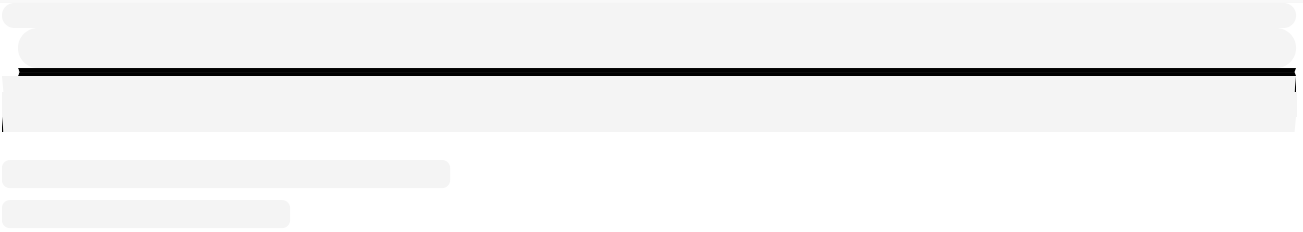
The tartan is exclusively used by SJQ and it will also be used in other products which can be sold there in future.

There is a billboard in SJQ which narrates the story of the tartan – and of course the customer services staff wear uniforms made from it. The Guest Ambassadors are able to help shoppers with any queries big or small from their service desks in the centre.



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