

M030 Reordering of the choir, Glasgow Cathedral

Introduction

This scheme for reordering the E. end of Glasgow's medieval cathedral involved removing the old central pulpit, laying a new marble floor, installing an oak communion table and constructing a stone reredos.

Authorship: It appears from contemporary published sources that John Honeyman was personally responsible for the work.

Cost from job book: £535 1s 5d

Status: The reredos has been removed; other elements of the scheme survive

Current use: Cathedral (2014)

Listing category: A

Historic Scotland/HB Number: 32654

RCAHMS Site Number: NS66NW 17.00

Grid reference: NS 60248 65577

Chronology

1890

June: Approximate date of commencement of works. ¹

1893

March: Reredos erected and reordering complete. ²

Description

Between 1890 and 1893 a general reordering of the choir of Glasgow Cathedral was carried out. The aim seems to have been to create a setting for Presbyterian worship that was more in keeping with the building's medieval character, as favoured by the ecclesiological movement. From contemporary press reports it seems clear that John Honeyman was personally responsible. ¹ He was a scholarly architect with a keen interest in archaeology, and as early as 1854 he had published on the cathedral's architectural history. ² While the work was in progress, he delivered a paper about the reordering to the Glasgow Archaeological Society. ³ Mackintosh may have been involved with the project as an assistant, but there is no documentary evidence for this.

Some of Honeyman's work has been removed, but photographs record its original appearance. The reordering involved relocating the old central pulpit, laying a new floor of coloured marbles, enclosing the sides of the choir with 'carved oak work' and installing on the site of the medieval high altar an oak communion table carved with a representation of the Last Supper. ⁴ The final and most prominent element of the scheme was the free-standing reredos of Caen stone and alabaster, which provided a backdrop for the communion table and gave it an altar-like dignity. Made by the sculptor James Young, it consisted of three traceried arches under crocketed gables, with statues at each end representing St Ninian and St Kentigern. ⁵ Its whiteness and delicacy contrasted starkly with the dark and massive 13th-century piers of the choir.

Some elements of the scheme were funded by private donors: the floor was paid for by William Gilfillan of Galbraith & Winton, the firm which laid the marble; the reredos was the gift of Lady Maxwell of Calderwood in memory of her husband Sir William Maxwell; and the communion table was given by James Garroway. ⁶ This may explain why not all the work is recorded in John Honeyman & Keppie's job book. However, their cash book records that they received £25 0s 0d on 23 April 1891 from Garroway, presumably in connection with the communion table, and £46 0s 0d for the reredos on 6 June 1893. ⁷ A payment of £40 0s 0d from the Cathedral Committee was received on 29 September 1890, and another on 14 March 1891. ⁸

People

Clients:

- Glasgow Cathedral Committee
- James Garroway
- William Gilfillan
- Lady Maxwell

Contractors:

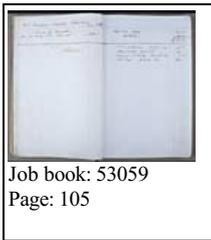
- P. & W. Anderson
- Buchans & MacIntyre
- John Craig
- Galbraith & Winton
- Jones & Willis
- James Young

Job Book

The job books of Honeyman & Keppie (later Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh) are now held by The Hunterian, University of Glasgow and include four volumes related to the Mackintosh period. The books were used by the firm to keep a project-by-project, day-by-day record of contractors, suppliers and expenditure. The name of a project and/or client is usually at the top of the left-hand page, followed by information about tradesmen who tendered. The name of the measurer (quantity surveyor) is usually at the top of the right-hand page, followed by information about payments to contractors and suppliers. All of the data for M030 is entered in the tables below.

Page numbering is not consistent in the job books. Sometimes a single number refers to a double-page spread and sometimes each page is individually numbered. Here, each image of a double-page spread is identified by the number given at the top of the left-hand page. (Images of all of the pages from the four job books can be found at [Browse Job Books, Visit Book and Cash Book.](#))

The following information about M030 has been extracted from the job books:



Client: no data in job book

Tenders:

Contractor	Type	Date	Value	Accepted
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Payments (trades):

Name	Type	Payment out sum
P. & W. Anderson	no data in job book	Payment date: 9 October 1890 £69 18s 0d ¹
Jones & Willis	no data in job book	Payment date: 10 December 1890 £40 0s 0d ²
Buchans & MacIntyre	no data in job book	Payment date: 24 February 1891 £5 3s 5d ³
John Craig	no data in job book	Payment date: 9 March 1891 £420 0s 0d ⁴

Documents

Images



View of reordered choir,
1893

Bibliography

Published

- *British Architect*, 34, 26 December 1890, 34, p. 493
- *Glasgow Herald*, 25 March 1893, p. 6

Notes:

- 1: *British Architect*, 34, 26 December 1890, p. 493.
- 2: *Glasgow Herald*, 25 March 1893, p. 6.
- 3: *British Architect*, 34, 26 December 1890, p. 493; *Glasgow Herald*, 25 March 1893, p. 6.
- 4: John Honeyman, *The Age of Glasgow Cathedral, and of the Effigy in the Crypt*, Glasgow: David Bryce, 1854.
- 5: *British Architect*, 34, 26 December 1890, p. 493.
- 6: *British Architect*, 34, 26 December 1890, p. 493; *Glasgow Herald*, 25 March 1893, p. 6.
- 7: *Glasgow Herald*, 25 March 1893, p. 6; *British Architect*, 39, 31 March 1893, p. 230..
- 8: *British Architect*, 34, 26 December 1890, p. 493; *Glasgow Herald*, 25 March 1893, p. 6.
- 9: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh / Keppie Henderson cash book, 1889–1917, GLAHA 53079, pp. 11, 22.
- 10: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh / Keppie Henderson cash book, 1889–1917, GLAHA 53079, pp. 8, 10.
- 11: No tender recorded
- 12: No tender recorded
- 13: No tender recorded
- 14: No tender recorded

Mackintosh Architecture: Context, Making and Meaning

Led by The Hunterian, University of Glasgow, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council; with additional support from The Monument Trust, The Pilgrim Trust, and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art; and collaborative input from Historic Scotland and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.



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