

M206 Alterations to Fairlie Cottage

Introduction

Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh made alterations to this early 19th-century seaside house for the Glasgow-born scientist James J. Dobbie. Apart from minor works to the boundary wall and the stables, the office job book does not record exactly what was done. No physical evidence survives in situ.

Authorship: Despite the lack of evidence of what work was done, there is good documentation to suggest Mackintosh was responsible for this project: the job-book entry is written entirely in his hand; Mackintosh included 'Fairlee [sic]' on his submission for Fellowship of the RIBA in 1906; and Ronald Harrison, an early student of Mackintosh's architecture in the 1930s, included a 'Detail of house at Fairlie for Dobbie' on a list he compiled of Mackintosh works and 'Detail 1/2"' for 'House for Dobbie Fai[r]lee [sic]' on a list of drawings produced in the office during Mackintosh's time.

Alternative names: Fairlee Cottage.

Cost from job book: £565 13s 2d

Status: Standing building

Current use: Residential (2014)

Grid reference: NS 2090 5522

Chronology

1902

2 April: Principal tender accepted. ¹

5 June: First payment to contractor. ²

6 October: Tender for raising and pointing boundary wall accepted. ³

1903

30 January: Final payments to contractor and measurer. ⁴

Description

Fairlie Cottage is one of a cluster of early 19th-century seaside houses – 'marine villas' – in the Ayrshire village of Fairlie, overlooking the Firth of Clyde. ¹ It was used as a 'summer retreat' by the Glasgow-born scientist James J. Dobbie (1852–1924) and his family, eventually becoming Dobbie's permanent home on his retirement in 1920. ²

In 1903, after 19 years as Professor of Chemistry and Geology at the University College of North Wales in Bangor, Dobbie was appointed Director of the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh. ³ It may have been in anticipation of returning to Scotland and spending more time at Fairlie that he employed Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh to carry out improvements to the house in 1902–3.

The job-book entry gives little information about what was done. Relatively small sums seem to have been spent on raising and pointing the boundary wall, and on a damp-proof course at the stables. (The stables no longer survive.) The rest of the overall cost of £565 13s 2d would have been sufficient for an extension, but comparing the O.S. maps of 1897 and 1911, the footprint of the house seems unchanged, which suggests the work may have been limited to internal alterations.

People

Clients:

- James J. Dobbie

Contractors:

- R. Aitkenhead & Son
- Barr & Fyfe

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 M206 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 M206 has been extracted from the job books:



Client: James J. Dobbie

Measurer: Barr & Fyfe

Tenders:

Contractor	Type	Address	Date	Value	Accepted
Daniel McCallum	several works	Glasgow	1902	£424 14s 9d	no data in job book
George Barclay	several works	Largs	1902	no data in job book ¹	no
James Grant	several works	Glasgow	1902	£492 12s 0d	no
R. Aitkenhead & Son	several works	Greenock	1902	£405 3s 8d	yes (2 April 1902)
James McCallum	several works	Fairlee	1902	no data in job book ²	no
R. Aitkenhead & Son	builder	Greenock	1902	£3 10s 0d ³	yes (16 April 1902)
R. Aitkenhead & Son	builder	Greenock	1902	£35 0s 0d ⁴	yes (6 October 1902)
Austin & McAslin	garden work	no data in job book	1902	no data in job book	no data in job book

Payments (trades):

Name	Type	Payment out sum
R. Aitkenhead & Son	several works	First installment: 5 June 1902 Final installment: 30th January 1903 £477 10s 6d
R. Aitkenhead & Son	builder	First installment: 11th December 1902 Final installment: 7th January 1903 Payment date: £68 2s 8d

Measurer fee payment: £20 0s 0d (30 January 1903)

Documents

Images



View from S.W.

Bibliography

Published

Notes:

- 1: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh job book, GLAHA 53061, p. 255.
- 2: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh job book, GLAHA 53061, p. 256.
- 3: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh job book, GLAHA 53061, p. 255.
- 4: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh job book, GLAHA 53061, p. 256.
- 5: Rob Close and Anne Riches, *Buildings of Scotland: Ayrshire and Arran*, New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2012, pp. 318, 320.
- 6: Obituary of James Johnston Dobbie, *Journal of the Chemical Society, Transactions*, 1924, pp. 2681–90.
- 7: Obituary of James Johnston Dobbie, *Journal of the Chemical Society, Transactions*, 1924, pp. 2681–90.
- 8: 'returned'.
- 9: 'returned'.
- 10: For 'Damp course at stable'.
- 11: For 'Raising & pointing Boundary Walls'.

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