

M033 Monument to Alexander McCall

Introduction

A Celtic cross with attached portrait plaque by James Pittendrigh Macgillivray commemorates Alexander McCall, Glasgow's Chief Constable from 1870 to 1888.

Authorship: The base is inscribed 'Chas. R. McIntosh Arch'. Mackintosh's father worked closely with McCall as Chief Clerk in the City of Glasgow Police Force, and this association is likely to have led to the commission.

Status: Standing structure

Listing category: A: listing category for entire Necropolis

Historic Scotland/HB Number: 33890 (for entire Necropolis)

RCAHMS Site Number: NS66NW 27.00 (for entire Necropolis)

Grid reference: NS 6041 6537 (approximate)

Chronology

1888

29 March: Death of Alexander McCall. ¹

1991

Memorial toppled from its base; head of cross broken. ²

1996

22 May: Re-erected, following repairs carried out in the Aberdeen yard of Messrs J. & G. Mossman. ³

1997

Bronze relief panel taken into care of Glasgow Museums and replaced with fibreglass cast. ⁴

2005

Cross reassembled from fragments, repaired and re-erected. ⁵

Description

Alexander McCall (1836–1888) served as Glasgow's Chief Constable for 18 years, until his death on 29 March 1888. ¹ Throughout this period, the Chief Clerk in the City of Glasgow Police Force – effectively McCall's personal assistant – was William McIntosh, Charles Rennie Mackintosh's father. ² According to the inscription, the monument that marks McCall's grave in the Glasgow Necropolis was erected by 'THE POLICE COMMISSIONERS; A FEW FRIENDS; AND THE FORCE OF WHICH HE WAS SO LONG THE HONOURED CHIEF'. It seems highly likely that the commission to design it came to Mackintosh as a result of his father's close links with the deceased.



This early work gives no hint of the architect's future individuality. It takes the form of a Celtic cross in grey granite, indistinguishable from numerous others to be found in Victorian cemeteries. At the bottom, on the front of the shaft, a bronze tablet by James Pittendrigh Macgillivray incorporates a circular relief portrait of McCall and the dedicatory inscription. Entries in Macgillivray's account book suggest that the work on the monument is later than previously thought i.e. 1890–1 rather than around 1888. ³



The sides of the shaft and the head of the cross are carved with interlace ornament, while the space immediately above the bronze panel is filled with sinuous lines looped around circular bosses. Bulbous pink granite bosses are set in the corners of this space, and there is another at the intersection of the arms of the cross. The back is plain.



The base is inscribed with the names of designer and sculptor, 'Chas. R. McIntosh Arch' and 'Peter Smith S'. Peter Smith was active both as an independent sculptor and as manager of the Glasgow branch of J. & G. Mossman, monumental sculptors. ⁴ He took over Mossman's business in 1890.

The cross has been damaged and repaired on at least two occasions. A photograph said to have been taken c. 1980 appears to show it intact, but in 1991 it was toppled and the head was broken. ⁵ It was put back together and re-erected in 1996 by J. & G. Mossman, the bronze tablet being replaced with a fibreglass cast. ⁶ After further serious damage it was once again reassembled and repaired in 2005 by Kenneth Pollok-Smith of Mossmans. ⁷ The two quarter circles below the arms are now missing (2011).

People

Clients:

- Commissioners of the City of Glasgow Police, and others

Contractors:

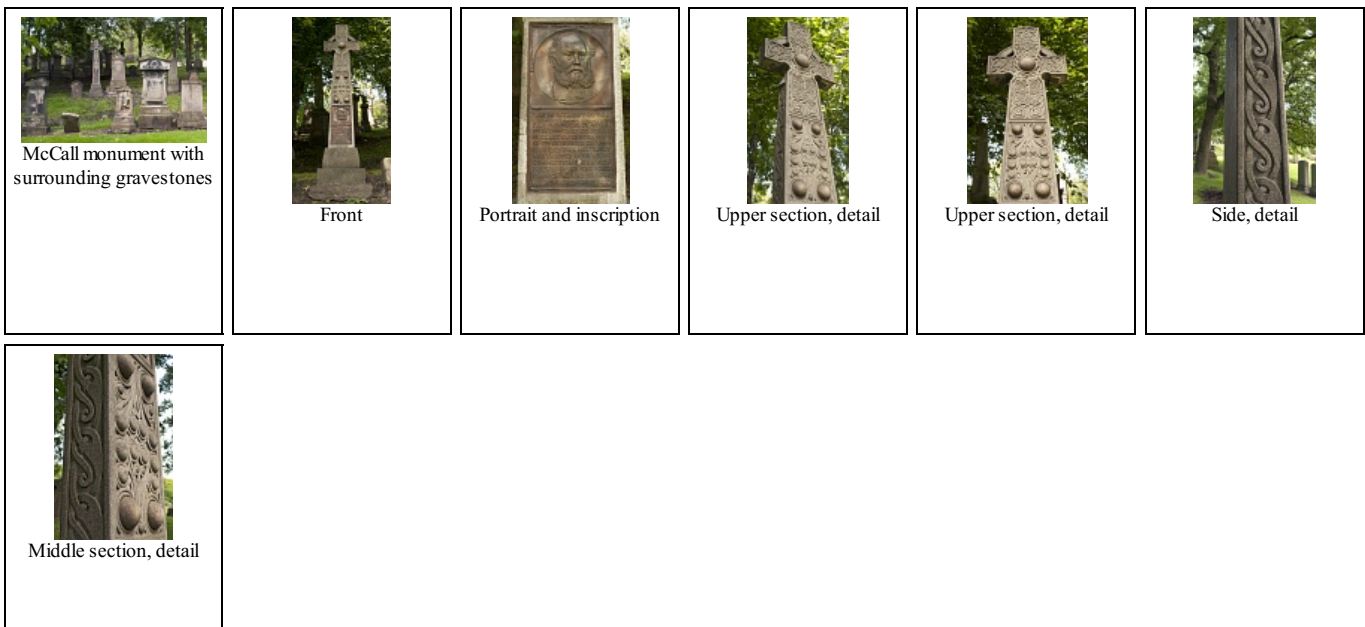
- James Pittendrigh Macgillivray
- J. & G. Mossman
- Peter Smith

Other:

- Alexander McCall

Documents

Images



Bibliography

Published

- Alan Crawford, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1995, p. 210
- Ray McKenzie, *Public Sculpture of Glasgow*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002, p. 460
- Iain Paterson, 'William McIntosh', *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 67, Summer 1995, pp. 5–8
- Iain Paterson, 'Alexander McCall Memorial, Necropolis', *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 69, Spring 1996, p. 8
- Iain Paterson, 'Alexander McCall Memorial', *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 70, Autumn 1996, p. 12
- Iain Paterson, 'Alexander McCall Memorial', *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 71, Spring 1997, p. 15

Notes:

1: *Glasgow Herald*, 30 March 1888, p. 9.

2: Iain Paterson, 'Alexander McCall Memorial, Necropolis', *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 69, Spring 1996, p. 8.

3: Iain Paterson, 'Alexander McCall Memorial', *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 70, Autumn 1996, p. 12.

4: Iain Paterson, 'Alexander McCall Memorial', *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 71, Spring 1997, p. 15.

5: *Scotsman*, 10 October 2005, p. 13.

6: *Glasgow Herald*, 30 March 1888, p. 9.

7: Iain Paterson, 'William McIntosh', *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 67, Summer 1995, pp. 5–8.

8: Pittendrigh McGillivray account book, Aberdeen University Library, Special Collections, MS 3095: 6 March 1891 payment of £10 received 'For Medall. of McCall' and 25 March 1891 payment of £14 for 'McCall / Medallion'.

9: 'J. & G. Mossman', Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland 1851–1951, University of Glasgow History of Art and HATII, online database 2011: sculpture.gla.ac.uk/ [accessed 5 February 2013].

10: Iain Paterson, 'Alexander McCall Memorial, Necropolis', *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 69, Spring 1996, p. 8.

11: Iain Paterson, 'Alexander McCall Memorial', *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 70, Autumn 1996, p. 12; Iain Paterson, 'Alexander McCall Memorial', *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 71, Spring 1997, p. 15.

12: *Scotsman*, 10 October 2005, p. 13.

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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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