



M126 Achamore House

Introduction

This large, rambling, Scottish Baronial house was originally built to the designs of John Honeyman between 1882 and 1886 for the laird of Gigha, Captain W. J. Scarlett. It was damaged by fire in 1896 and reconstructed by John Honeyman & Keppie in 1896–7. The extent of the reconstruction is unclear, but it included re-roofing, as well as much interior woodwork and plasterwork.

Authorship: As designer of the original Achamore House, John Honeyman is likely to have overseen its post-fire reconstruction. Stylistic evidence suggests Mackintosh may have worked on the interior detailing: the drawing-room ceiling has sinuous, Art Nouveau plasterwork comparable to that in the editor's room of the Glasgow Herald building. Corroboratory evidence is provided by Ronald Harrison, an early student of Mackintosh's architecture in the 1930s who had access to the office records. He included Achamore House on lists he compiled of works he believed were by Mackintosh and of drawings produced in the office during Mackintosh's time. A ground-floor plan of the house, apparently drawn in Mackintosh's hand, dated 1903, remained in his possession at his death.

Alternative names: Auchamore House.

Cost from job book: £5895 14s 6½d

Status: standing building

Current use: Residential / bed & breakfast (2014)

Listing category: B

Historic Scotland/HB Number: 11449

RCAHMS Site Number: NR64NW 30.00

Grid reference: NR 64273 47866

Chronology

1882

October: Tendering for original house. ¹

1886

20 December: Final payments for original house. ²

1896

28 March: Original house damaged by fire. ³

May: Tenders for repair and reconstruction accepted. ⁴

1897

July–August: Final payments to principal contractors for repair and reconstruction. ⁵

1903

26 June: Plan of ground floor drawn, probably by Mackintosh. ⁶

Description

Original house, 1882–6

John Honeyman designed Achamore (or Auchamore) House in 1882 for Captain W. J. Scarlett (c. 1840–1888). The date 1884 is inscribed over the entrance, but final payments to the measurer and some of the contractors were not made until December 1886. ¹ The total cost was just over £5700.

Honeyman exhibited his design at the Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts in 1885 (957). He also showed a watercolour of the house at the 1888 Glasgow International Exhibition (1702), on the basis of which the *British Architect* described it as 'nicely grouped, but wanting in cohesion and interest'.² No drawings or photographs from this period appear to survive.

Repairs and alterations, 1896–7

On 28 March 1896, the house was badly damaged by fire.³ The owner was now W. J. Yorke Scarlett, son of the original client, and he immediately engaged John Honeyman & Keppie to rebuild it. Although contemporary newspaper reports speak of the house being 'nearly all destroyed' with the exception of the billiard room, it seems that the walls must have survived the fire. The job-book entry for the reconstruction makes no mention of mason work, and the main task was evidently the replacement of the roof: the largest payment recorded is for carpentry and joinery, with further substantial sums for slater and plumber work.⁴ With an eye to avoiding future disasters, payments to the plumber included £50 for fire-fighting equipment such as hydrants, and 200 feet (61 m) of hose pipe with copper couplings. Extensive work was also done to the interior: the job books include sums of £135 for oak flooring, £45 for an oak stair and £769 for 'oak finishings' (presumably the panelling that lines many of the rooms), as well as £655 for plasterwork and £368 for painting.⁵

In 1897, Honeyman exhibited a watercolour at the Royal Scottish Academy (518) showing the house with three floors, rather than the two it has today (2012).⁶ It has been suggested that this represents Achamore before the fire, as designed by Honeyman in 1882.⁷ This may be so, though it is puzzling that he should have exhibited the drawing just as he was rebuilding the house along significantly different lines. Another possibility is that the watercolour shows an alternative proposal for the post-fire reconstruction, more ambitious than the scheme that was carried out.

Possible involvement by Mackintosh

Stylistic evidence suggests Mackintosh may have had some involvement in the design of the interior. Photographs dating from July 1911 show plaster ceilings and woodwork combining 17th-century motifs with decoration of a more sinuous Art Nouveau character.⁸ These ceilings evidently date from after the fire: they are quite different from the only surviving pre-fire interior, the billiard room, which has an open timber roof with Renaissance and vaguely Romanesque details. The drawing room ceiling has strapwork similar to the editor's room of Mackintosh's contemporary Glasgow Herald building, with bosses in the form of stylised thistles, shamrocks and roses along the cornice, and the dining-room panelling and chimney-piece have more of this type of decoration. It may have been for these features that Achamore was included on a list of Mackintosh's works compiled in the 1930s by Ronald Harrison, an early student of his architecture who had access to the records of John Honeyman & Keppie.



For reasons that are not clear, Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh prepared a ground plan of the house in June 1903, although no work relating to Achamore is recorded in the firm's job book or cash book at this date. The drawing appears to be in Mackintosh's hand, and was in his possession at his death.⁹

People

Clients:

- W. J. Yorke Scarlett

Contractors:

- T. & R. Annan & Sons
- John Bryden & Sons
- W. H. Dinsmore
- P. & R. Fleming
- George W. Forbes
- Galbraith & Winton
- J. & W. Guthrie
- Hutcheson & Grant
- James Ingleton & Co.
- Kean & Wardrop
- A. & D. MacKay
- C. Ritchie & Co.
- George Rome & Co.
- William Vickers
- J. C. Wilson & Co.

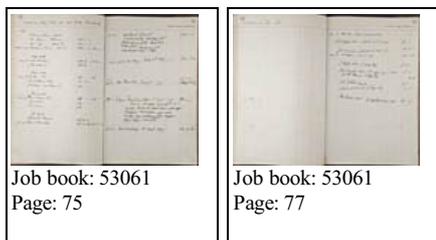
Job Book

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 M126 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 M126 has been extracted from the job books:



Client: W. J. Yorke Scarlett

Measurer: W. H. Dinsmore

Tenders:

Contractor	Type	Address	Date	Value	Accepted
Thomas Brown	carpenter and joiner	Rottenrow	1896	£3722 7s 10d	no
A. & G. Grey	carpenter and joiner	Bath Street	1896	£3766 2s 11d	no
Hutcheson & Grant	carpenter and joiner	Pitt Street	1896	£2917 11s 5d	yes (14 May 1896)
A. & D. MacKay	slater	no data in job book	1896	£522 4s 0d	yes (27 May 1896)
John Anderson	slater	no data in job book	1896	£578 9s 0d	no
George Rome & Co.	plasterer	no data in job book	1896	£618 0s 0d	yes (29 May 1896)
R. A. McGilvray & Ferris	plasterer	no data in job book	1896	£668 9s 4d	no
William Forbes	plasterer	West Graham Street	1896	£600 0s 0d	no
James Ingleton & Co.	plumber	no data in job book	1896	£482 0s 0d	yes (27 May 1896)
Fyfe & Allan	plumber	no data in job book	1896	£510 0s 0d	no
William Anderson	plumber	no data in job book	1896	£573 0s 0d	no
Galbraith & Winton	tiler	no data in job book	1896	£257 13s 11d	no
Kean & Wardrop	tiler	no data in job book	1896	£257 10s 11½d	yes (27 May 1896)

Payments (trades):

Name	Type	Payment out sum
Hutcheson & Grant	carpenter and joiner	Payment date: no data in job book £3317 5s 8d ¹
A. & D. MacKay	slater	Payment date: 15 July 1897 £542 5s 4½d
George Rome & Co.	plasterer	Payment date: 20 July 1897 £655 1s 4½d
James Ingleton & Co.	plumber	Payment date: 8 August 1897 £584 4s 6d ²
Kean & Wardrop	tiler	Payment date: 12 August 1897 £102 9s 6½d

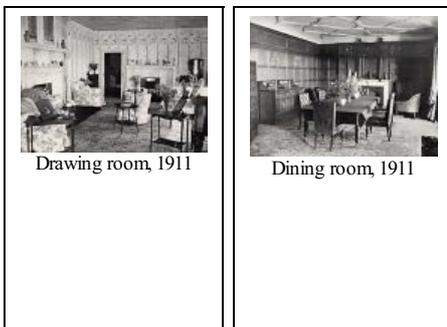
Payments (suppliers):

Name	Service	Payment date	Payment sum

T. & R. Annan & Sons	'Photos of Gigha paid by JH & K'	16 June	£1 18s 0d
J. C. Wilson & Co.	bell	14 December 1896	£30 5s 0d
George W. Forbes	asphalt	29 March 1897	£40 10s 1d
William Vickers	stone carving	9 April 1897	£36 4s 9d
C. Ritchie & Co.	no data in job book	3 May 1897	£25 11s 0d
John Bryden & Sons	bells	8 April 1897	£51 6s 0d
P. & R. Fleming	no data in job book	8 July 1897	£0 11s 3d
J. & W. Guthrie	painting	no data in job book	£368 0s 0d
Galbraith & Winton	no data in job book	20 September 1897	£2 15s 0d
John Bryden & Sons	blinds and picture rods	20 September [1897]	£137 7s 0d

Documents

Images



Bibliography

Published

- David Stark, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Co.*, Catrine, Ayrshire: Stenlake Publishing, 2004, pp. 68, 73
- Frank Arneil Walker and Fiona Sinclair, *Buildings of Scotland: Argyll and Bute*, London: Penguin, 2000, p. 259
- *Academy Architecture*, 11, January 1897, pp. 70, 77

Unpublished

- Edinburgh, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland: Estates Exchange, Argyll item 1482, MS 265/15

Notes:

- 1: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman/John Honeyman & Keppie job book, GLAHA 53059, pp. 28–9.
- 2: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman / John Honeyman & Keppie job book, GLAHA 53059, p. 49.
- 3: *Glasgow Herald*, 30 March 1896, p. 7.
- 4: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh job book, GLAHA 53061, p. 75.
- 5: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh job book, GLAHA 53061, p. 76.
- 6: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 41875.
- 7: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman/John Honeyman & Keppie job book, GLAHA 53059, pp. 28–9, 48–9.
- 8: *British Architect*, 29, 25 May 1888, p. 371.
- 9: *Glasgow Herald*, 30 March 1896, p. 7.

10: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie job book, GLAHA 53061, pp. 75–8.

11: A small amount of income in connection with Gigha school is also recorded in January 1898 (The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh / Keppie Henderson cash book, 1889–1917, GLAHA 53079, p. 45).

12: *Academy Architecture*, 11, January 1897, p. 70.

13: David Stark, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Co.*, Catrine, Ayrshire: Stenlake Publishing, 2004, pp. 68, 73; Frank Arneil Walker and Fiona Sinclair, *Buildings of Scotland: Argyll and Bute*, London: Penguin, 2000, p. 259.

14: Edinburgh, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland: Estates Exchange, Argyll item 1482, MS 265/15.

15: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 41875 (M126-001). A similar drawing with the same provenance, GLAHA 41874 (M228-001), shows the ground-floor plan of Skipness Castle, Argyllshire. Both drawings may have been made for an unidentified publication.

16: 'oak flooring £135'; 'oak stair £45'; 'oak finishings £769'; 'Porch £49'; 'Belfry £34'; 'Ironmongery £10'; and 'Marble steps &c £22 = £264'.

17: 'Deduct old copper tank &c £5.14. 0. Includes Hydrants, 200 feet hose with copper couplings Stand pipe, fire cocks &c. £50. Also outhouses £22, & copper roof of belfry & vane £35.'

Mackintosh Architecture: Context, Making and Meaning

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