

M133 Biggar Manse

Introduction

John Honeyman & Keppie received the commission to design a new manse for Biggar Parish Church during a bitter and long-standing dispute between its minister, the Rev. William Grant Duncan, and the local heritors' committee. The minister claimed the existing manse was in a state of uninhabitable disrepair and campaigned for a new building; the heritors favoured carrying out repairs. Probably because of his reputation as a church architect and his connections to Scottish Ecclesiological societies, John Honeyman was consulted on the matter in May 1895, and concluded a new manse would be less costly to the heritors in the long term.¹

John Honeyman & Keppie designed a large and solid, symmetrical, two-storey house with lower two-storey service quarters at its rear and a separate single-storey outbuilding accommodating a coachhouse, stable, washhouse and stores. The manse is built in snecked red rubble sandstone with smooth dressings and quoins. Roofs are hipped and slated; the service quarters have gable-head dormers and overhanging eaves. The principal S. elevation has a central entrance, open-pediment doorcase, and canted bays on the ground floor to either side. Inside, the accommodation was suited to the requirements of a large family and three servants.² Originally, the ground floor included drawing room and study to the front, dining room, parlour, kitchens and stores to the rear; on the first floor there were four large bedrooms (two with dressing rooms), nursery, servants' bedroom, bathroom, and ancillary rooms.

Authorship: Two surviving drawings for the house are held at Biggar Museums Trust. Previously, these have been attributed to Mackintosh on stylistic grounds.³ On closer examination, however, it is clear that neither these drawings nor those in the possession of the current (2013) manse owner, nor a detail drawing held at the National Archives of Scotland are Mackintosh autograph work. They are characteristic examples of drawings produced by John Honeyman & Keppie in the late 1890s, which included Mackintosh-style lettering. The more conventional historical details on the exterior, and those which survive inside the house, suggest the work of John Keppie.

Alternative names: Kirkhouse; Established Church Manse; Parish Church Manse.

Cost from job book: £2386 1s 8d

Status: Standing building

Current use: Residential (2014)

Listing category: B: Listed as 'Kirkhouse, Carwood Road'

Historic Scotland/HB Number: 22269

RCAHMS Site Number: NT03NW 235

Grid reference: NT 0402 3818

Chronology

1884

Rev. William Grant Duncan inducted as minister at Biggar. He reports the uninhabitable state of the manse (built 1876) to the heritors and moves into lodgings. A Glasgow architect named Thomson carries out a survey of the manse.¹

1885

Architect Thomson carries out repairs and alterations to the manse and Rev. Duncan takes up residence.²

1894

Rev. Duncan submits a renewed complaint of 'disrepair and inadequate accommodation' at the manse following consultation with an architect and a medical officer of health.³

1894–6

Numerous meetings of the heritors and Rev. Duncan are held. Rev. Duncan's claim that a new manse is required and his proposal for its funding are disputed by the heritors. The heritors appoint Glasgow architects Henry Steele & Balfour to carry out a survey on the existing manse, who recommend making repairs and alterations. In May 1895, John Honeyman's name appears in news reports of the meetings for the first time. He recommends the construction of a new manse, remarking that it would reduce the heritors' costs in the long term.⁴

1896

3 April: At Lanark, Sheriff T. A. Fyfe rules in favour of replacing the existing manse at the same location. The Sherriff Court is to be involved in the selection of the architect. Additional meetings of the heritors and Rev. Duncan are held during the year to debate the ruling. ⁵

September: Date of earliest drawings prepared by John Honeyman & Keppie.

18 December: Contractors sign the drawings in connection with their tenders. ⁶

1897

January: Contractor tenders submitted. ⁷

1 March: Client Rev. William Grant Duncan applies for 'a supply of Gravitation Water for building purposes for the New Manse and authority to make the necessary connection to the Town Main pipe'. The application is approved by the Commissioners of the Burgh of Biggar. ⁸

12 July: John Honeyman & Keppie receive a payment of £60 for work at Biggar Manse. ⁹

1898

25 June: Contractors paid. ¹⁰

3 August: Rev. W. Grant Duncan pays Honeyman & Keppie £79 9s 0d. ¹¹

10 October: The Burgh Commissioners agree to charge Rev. Duncan £2 10s 0d per annum for the water supply to the new manse. ¹²

2012

December: Programme of restoration and redecoration by latest owners nearing completion. ¹³

Description

People

Clients:

- Rev. W. Grant Duncan

Contractors:

- William Aitken & Son
- Andrew M. Hope
- Proctor & Weir
- Hugh Ross
- Isaac Whitfield

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 M133 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 M133 has been extracted from the job books:



Job book: 53061
Page: 95

Client: Rev. W. Grant Duncan

Tenders:

Contractor	Type	Address	Date	Value	Accepted
George Kerr	mason	Biggar	January 1897	£1182 12s 2d ¹	no
James Masterton	mason	Biggar	January 1897	£1084 0s 0d ²	no
Andrew M. Hope	mason	Biggar	January 1897	£1035 0s 0d ³	yes (no data in job book)
Thomas Brown	joiner	Biggar	January 1897	£800 0s 0d	no
William Pillans	joiner	Biggar	January 1897	£776 0s 0d	no
Hugh Ross	joiner	Biggar	January 1897	£665 13s 0d	yes (no data in job book)
John Hislop	plumber	Carlake	January 1897	£279 15s 0d	no
Proctor & Weir	plumber	Biggar	January 1897	£259 0s 0d	yes (no data in job book)
Thomas Lithgow	slater	Lanark	January 1897	£126 10s 0d	no
William Aitken & Son	slater	Biggar	January 1897	£119 8s 0d	yes (no data in job book)
Alex. Bonnar	plasterer	Biggar	January 1897	£125 0s 0d	no
Isaac Whitfield	plasterer	Biggar	January 1897	£112 0s 0d	yes (no data in job book)
Thomas Lithgow	plasterer	Lanark	January 1897	£110 16s 0d	no

Payments (trades):

Name	Type	Payment out sum
Andrew M. Hope	mason	Payment date: 25 June £1177 14s 9d ⁴
Hugh Ross	joiner	Payment date: 25 June £709 13s 9d
Proctor & Weir	plumber	Payment date: 25 June £270 0s 0d ⁵
William Aitken & Son	slater	Payment date: 25 June £119 8s 0d
Isaac Whitfield	plasterer	Payment date: 25 June £109 5s 2d

Documents

Images



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Bibliography

Published

- Brian Lambie, 'Plans for a Country Manse', *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 21, Winter/Spring 1979, pp. 4–5
- *Glasgow Herald*, 1 December 1894, p. 9; 5 February 1895, p. 9; 27 April 1895, p. 3; 11 May 1895, p. 4; 3 September 1895, p. 3; 3 April 1896, p. 10; 26 May 1896, p. 11; 11 June 1896, p. 6; 10 July 1896, p. 6

Notes:

1: Brian Lambie, 'Plans for a Country Manse', *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 21, Winter/Spring 1979, pp. 4–5; *Glasgow Herald*, 1 December 1894, p. 9; 5 February 1895, p. 9; 27 April 1895, p. 3; 11 May 1895, p. 4; 3 September 1895, p. 3; 3 April 1896, p. 10; 26 May 1896, p. 11; 11 June 1896, p. 6; 10 July 1896, p. 6. Drawings describing additions and alterations to the existing manse were prepared by Glasgow architects Steele & Balfour in February–March 1896. Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland, RHP45739/1–6.

2: Census 1901, www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk [accessed 12 March 2013].

3: Brian Lambie, 'Plans for a Country Manse', *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 21, Winter/Spring 1979, pp. 4–5. It has been claimed that John Honeyman & Keppie's manse design was based on floor plans drawn up in July 1895 by local man, John Lamb Murray, a practising architect in Edinburgh. For reasons of conservation, it has not been possible to view these drawings and thus confirm or disprove this claim for the Mackintosh Architecture project. Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland, RHP45738/1–2.

4: *Glasgow Herald*, 3 April 1896, p. 10.

5: *Glasgow Herald*, 3 April 1896, p. 10.

6: *Glasgow Herald*, 3 April 1896, p. 10.

7: *Glasgow Herald*, 11 May 1895, p. 4; 3 April 1896, p. 10.

8: *Glasgow Herald*, 3 April 1896, p. 10; 10 July 1896, p. 6.

9: See M133-002 and M133-003.

10: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh job book, GLAHA 53061, p. 95.

11: Lanark Library: Burgh of Biggar, Town Council minutes, 1 March 1897.

12: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh / Keppie Henderson cash book, 1889–1917, GLAHA 53079, p. 42.

13: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh job book, GLAHA 53061, p. 95.

14: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh / Keppie Henderson cash book, 1889–1917, GLAHA 53079, p. 47.

15: Lanark Library: Burgh of Biggar, Town Council minutes, 10 October 1898.

16: Information supplied by current owner, via email, on 20 October and 21 November 2012.

17: 'wall 13/6 per yd'.

18: 'wall 15/9 per yd'.

19: 'wall 16/- per yd'.

20: 'including boundary walls'.

21: 'including extra water and gas pipes'.

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