

M147 Gravestone of James Reid

Introduction

This was the second of four gravestones made to Mackintosh's design. It was probably commissioned through Reid's son-in-law, William Davidson, who became Mackintosh's most loyal patron.

Authorship: A photograph of the stone was published under Mackintosh's name in 1902, and a signed drawing for it survives, confirming his authorship.

Status: Standing structure

Listing category: B

RCAHMS Site Number: NS37SE 73

Grid reference: NS 35432 70753

Chronology

1897

4 October: Death of James Reid. ¹

1898

A photograph of the Reid gravestone taken after the death of Mrs Reid in 1907 clearly shows the date 1898 and Mackintosh's initials carved on the right side of the base. ²

1902

March: Photograph published in *Dekorative Kunst*. ³

1907

13 July: Death of Margaret Reid. ⁴

1912

11 October: Drawing published in *British Architect*. ⁵

1992

Cleaned by Stokes Monumental Sculptors of Dunoon. ⁶

2000

Cleaned and treated with biocide by Graciela Ainsworth, sculpture conservator. ⁷

2012

2–4 August: Ivy cut back, and gravestone cleaned and treated with biocide by Graciela Ainsworth. ⁸

Description

James Reid (1837–1897) was telegraph superintendent of the Glasgow & South Western Railway from c. 1876, and lived at Fernie Bank, Kilmacolm, from c. 1882. ¹ According to the inscription on his gravestone, it was erected by his widow, Margaret Henry Reid. ² However, the choice of Mackintosh as designer was probably due to William Davidson, who had married the Reids' daughter, Jane Steel Reid, in 1889. ³ On Mackintosh's drawing for the gravestone, the name of Reid's widow is wrongly given as 'Jane'. ⁴

The top right-hand corner of the base was inscribed with the initials 'CRM' and the date '1898', now obscured by undergrowth, but clearly visible in an early photograph. ⁵ Margaret Henry Reid did not die until 1907, after which her name and dates were added seamlessly to the main inscription, presumably under Mackintosh's direction. Davidson's own grave is next to that of the Reids.



Mackintosh greatly admired 17th- and 18th-century headstones, and he drew many examples on sketching holidays in England. ⁶ According to W. S. Moyes, his design for the Reid gravestone may have been influenced by one such drawing of a headstone at Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, dated 1740. ⁷ The drawing referred to by Moyes appears to be one of those reproduced in the *British Architect*, two years before the Reid commission, accompanied by a letter in which Mackintosh praised the Chipping Campden headstones: 'They all seem to be the outcome of the village mason's own ideas: ideas which are free yet reserved; ideas which are exceptionally interesting because of their dangerous closeness to debased or bad art; ideas which would put to shame the designs of architects and others which make the modern graveyard hideous.' ⁸ A page in one of Mackintosh's sketchbooks shows what appears to be a different stone from Chipping Campden, which has the same distinctive 'ears' as the Reid stone. ⁹



The decoration of the Reid stone has compositional similarities with contemporary decorative and graphic works by Mackintosh, the Macdonald sisters and James Herbert McNair, such as Frances Macdonald's *Mirror: Honesty* of c. 1896 (Glasgow Museums), and Mackintosh's bookplate for John Keppie (Glasgow School of Art Library). The *British Architect* described the pair of figures flanking the inscription as 'two angels in low relief guarding the grave', explaining that 'they take the form of the poppy – the emblem of sleep'. ¹⁰



Mackintosh's only known drawing for the stone was presumably intended for presentation to the client, or for exhibition. ¹¹ It does not give enough information for a carver to realise the design in three dimensions, so can hardly have been a working drawing. Mackintosh is said to have made a full-size clay model for the carver to work from, as he did for his later Talwin Morris monument in Dunbarton and Orrock Johnstone monument in East Wemyss. ¹² The making of a full size model follows the practice of contemporary sculptors, as does Mackintosh's initialling and dating of the finished work that was carved from his design by other hands.



Fourteen years after the Reid stone was made, Mackintosh's drawing for it was published along with illustrations of the Morris and Johnstone monuments in the *British Architect*. ¹³ The illustrations were accompanied by a letter from Mackintosh, in which he decried the shortcomings of contemporary gravestones and pleaded for simplicity and the avoidance of sentimentality:

The present-day graveyard is surely the most ugly and depressing place in any modern town or village, because of the assemblage of tombstones of an inartistic and thoughtless character. ... This is not the place to discuss the bad taste of people, rich and poor, who vie with each other as to who shall have the most arrogantly ugly heap of granite, marble or freestone erected in the name of a tombstone. But it is certainly possible that in your admirable weekly you can suggest from time to time that simplicity and sincerity may be fine, and may be art, but that thoughtless extravagance never can be either.

People

Other:

- William Davidson

Job Book

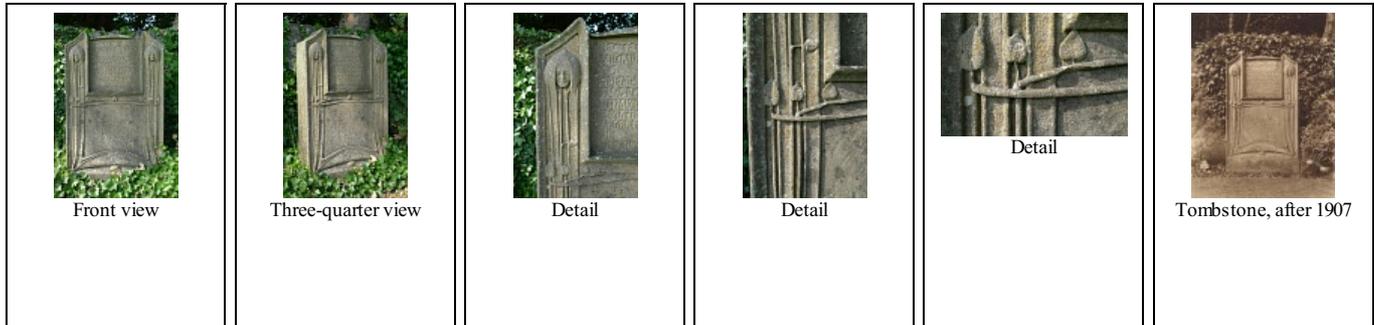
The job books of Honeyman & Keppie (later Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh) are now held by The Hunterian, University of Glasgow and include four volumes related to the Mackintosh period. The books were used by the firm to keep a project-by-project, day-by-day record of contractors, suppliers and expenditure. 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 M147 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 M147 has been extracted from the job books:

Documents

Images



Bibliography

Published

- Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2nd edn, 1977, pp. 183–4
- *British Architect*, 78, 11 October 1912, p. 241, p. 242
- *Dekorative Kunst*, 5, March 1902, p. 215

Unpublished

- University of Toronto, Robarts Library: letter from W. S. Moyes to Thomas Howarth, 29 April 1947, B96-0028/017 (13)

Notes:

- 1: Date recorded on gravestone.
- 2: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 52619.
- 3: *Dekorative Kunst*, 5, March 1902, p. 215.
- 4: Date recorded on gravestone.
- 5: *British Architect*, 78, 11 October 1912, pp. 241–2.
- 6: *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 60, Winter 1992, p. 3.
- 7: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: conservation report by Graciela Ainsworth Sculpture Conservation and Restoration, 19 July 2000.
- 8: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: conservation report by Graciela Ainsworth Sculpture Conservation and Restoration, 21 August 2012.
- 9: Information from Glasgow Post Office directories.
- 10: The full inscription reads: 'ERECTED BY / MARGARET HENRY / REID IN / REMEMBRANCE OF HER / HUSBAND JAMES REID / BORN 29 AUG 1837 DIED 4 OCT 1897 / TELEGRAPHIC SUPDT G & SWRY / MARGARET HENRY / REID DIED 13 JULY 1907 AGED 71'.
- 11: *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 61, Spring 1993, p. 3; The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: letters from descendants, 15 October 1999 and 9 November 1999.
- 12: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 41928 (M147-001).
- 13: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 52619. The date and initials are less clearly visible on a photograph published in *Dekorative Kunst*, 5, March 1902, p. 215.

14: For example, The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 53012/28, GLAHA 53014/27, GLAHA 53014/32.

15: University of Toronto, Robarts Library: letter from W. S. Moyes to Thomas Howarth, 29 April 1947, B96-0028/017 (13).

16: *British Architect*, 44, 22 November 1895, pp. 359–61.

17: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 53011/30.

18: *British Architect*, 78, 11 October 1912, p. 241.

19: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 41928 (M147-001).

20: *British Architect*, 78, 11 October 1912, p. 241.

21: *British Architect*, 78, 11 October 1912, p. 241.

Mackintosh Architecture: Context, Making and Meaning

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