

M174 Design for an Artist's House and Studio in the Country

Introduction

This is one of a pair of complementary schemes – the other is for a town house and studio – that Mackintosh drew in the months before his marriage in August 1900. They appear to have been 'ideal' designs, not intended to be built.

Authorship: The drawings were published as Mackintosh's in 1902.

Status: Unbuilt

Chronology

1900

Spring: Mackintosh exhibits an 'Artist's Cottage and Studio' at the Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts (536). ¹

Description

The drawings for this project are almost certainly those for an 'Artist's Cottage and Studio' that Mackintosh exhibited at the Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts in the spring of 1900 (536). This suggests they were made in late 1899 or early 1900. Mackintosh made a complementary set of drawings for an Artist's Town House and Studio, presumably around the same time. The drawings give almost no idea of setting, and both designs were probably 'ideal' schemes, not intended to be built. They seem to reflect Mackintosh's anticipation, in the months leading up to his marriage in August 1900, of a shared domestic and creative life with Margaret Macdonald: Hermann Muthesius, who published them in 1902, wrote that they 'refer to the home desired by the artist couple, and thus have a singular interest'. ¹

It was Muthesius who identified this as a country house and its companion as a town house. Apart from the presence of a dovecot, however, it is not immediately clear that this building *is* in the country, with its constricted plan and narrow, walled back yard. The white roughcast walls and green shutters with heart-shaped piercings recall C. F. A. Voysey. Unlike such Arts and Craft architects, however, Mackintosh does not emphasise the sheltering roof of the house, which is virtually hidden behind horizontal parapets. Instead, he focuses attention on its basically cubic shape, from which three tall, buttress-like chimneys emerge. The battered walls have very few projections and the seamless envelope of roughcast wraps over the tops of parapets and chimneys, as if the whole building might have been turned out of a mould. The projecting window with one canted corner, nestling into the angle of the chimney on the E. front, reappears in the design for a town house, and is a feature Mackintosh would later reuse on the entrance front at The Hill House. The other windows are mostly small, and positioned more for external effect than internal convenience.

A sheet of sketches on tracing paper in The Hunterian, University of Glasgow, includes a rough plan and elevation of an earlier version of the design. ² The sketch plan is essentially the same as the finished version, but the sketch of the W. elevation has a different arrangement of windows and a symmetrical pair of chimneys flanking the front door. The sketch elevation shows chimneys on the N. and S. elevations too, and a pyramid roof visible above the flat parapet, crowned with a large and elaborate finial.

The unadorned walls and almost monolithic character of Mackintosh's design led Muthesius to compare this small house – improbably – with the pyramids of Egypt. ³ The critic of the *Glasgow Herald* was less complimentary: 'Mr. C. R. Mackintosh's "Artist's Cottage and Studio," No. 536, certainly does not lack simplicity in mass and outline; if original and interesting it is somewhat enigmatical; we have, indeed, heard it described as "a set of drawings for an armoured train"! ⁴ This was a topical reference: armoured trains were being used in the South African war at exactly this time, and illustrations in the British press showed them to be crudely utilitarian, with small rectangular openings (for guns) in their otherwise windowless sides. ⁵



A house based on Mackintosh's design was eventually built c. 1990 at Farr, near Inverness, by Robert Hamilton Macintyre. ⁶

People

Clients:

-

Contractors:

-

Other:

-

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 M174 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 M174 has been extracted from the job books:

<input type="checkbox"/> Job book: Page: NaN

Client:**Tenders:**

Contractor	Type	Address	Date	Value	Accepted

Payments (trades):

Name	Type	Payment out sum
		Payment date:

Payments (suppliers):

Name	Service	Payment date	Payment sum

Measurer fee payment: ()

Total cost:

Documents

Images

Bibliography

Published

- Alan Crawford, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1995, pp. 94–5
- Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2nd edn, 1977, pp. 111–13
- James Macaulay, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, New York: W. W. Norton, 2010, p. 229
- Robert Macleod, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Architect and Artist*, London: Collins, 1983, pp. 86–7
- Giles Walkley, *Artists' Houses in London 1764–1914*, Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994, pp. 176–7
- Hermann Muthesius, 'Die Glasgower Kunstbewegung: Charles R. Mackintosh und Margaret Macdonald-Mackintosh', *Dekorative Kunst*, 5, March 1902
- *Glasgow Herald*, 26 April 1900, p. 8

Unpublished

- Hiroaki Kimura, 'Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Architectural Drawings', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1982, p. 37

Notes:

- 1: *Glasgow Herald*, 26 April 1900, p. 8.
- 2: Hermann Muthesius, 'Die Glasgower Kunstbewegung: Charles R. Mackintosh und Margaret Macdonald-Mackintosh', *Dekorative Kunst*, 5, March 1902.
- 3: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 41843 (M174-005). The sheet has been laid down and the sketches are on the verso, but they are visible from the recto.
- 4: Hermann Muthesius, 'Die Glasgower Kunstbewegung: Charles R. Mackintosh und Margaret Macdonald-Mackintosh', *Dekorative Kunst*, 5, March 1902. A more apt comparison might be with the adobe buildings of N.W. Africa and the S. of North America, but there is no evidence that Mackintosh knew these.
- 5: *Glasgow Herald*, 26 April 1900, p. 8.
- 6: E.g. *Graphic*, no. 1564, 18 November 1899, p. 696; no. 1569, 23 December 1899, p. 853; no. 1607, 15 September 1900 p. 382.
- 7: *Glasgow Herald*, 14 September 1994, Scotland's Homes supplement, p. 1.

Mackintosh Architecture: Context, Making and Meaning

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