

# M178 Design for a Country Mansion

## Introduction

This design for a grand house is known only from a large drawing of the front and rear elevations and a small sheet of rough sketches. It was probably an ideal or visionary scheme, not intended to be built. It shows the influence of C. F. A. Voysey. It also has features in common with Mackintosh's designs for an Artist's House and Studio in the Country and an Artist's Town House and Studio, and it probably dates from the same period.

**Authorship:** The style of draughtsmanship is Mackintosh's, and the drawings were in his possession at his death.

**Status:** Unbuilt

## Chronology

## Description

This very ambitious unbuilt scheme is known from a large drawing in pencil and watercolour showing the front and rear elevations, and a small sheet of rough sketches which includes a front elevation and plan. <sup>1</sup> The large drawing, though no longer in pristine condition, is a refined piece of draughtsmanship which looks as if it was intended for exhibition, although the lettering seems unfinished. The generic title 'A Country Mansion', inscribed along with Mackintosh's name in the top left corner, suggests that it was an 'ideal' design, not made for a particular client or location. This puts it in the same category as the designs for an Artist's House and Studio in the Country and an Artist's Town House and Studio, and indeed on the verso of the sheet of rough sketches there are sketches relating to the artist's country house. This suggests a similar date – late 1899 or early 1900 – for both projects. In scale and elaboration, the Country Mansion is comparable to Mackintosh's entry in the design competition for a House for an Art Lover, announced in December 1900, and it has been suggested that it may even be an early idea for the competition. <sup>2</sup>

The finished elevations are difficult to interpret in the absence of a matching plan. The sketch plan suggests the house encloses three sides of a courtyard, with a wall on the fourth containing a gate. This is an arrangement more typical of urban houses, where it serves to isolate domestic life from the bustle of the street. It is derived from the Parisian *hôtel*, and was used in 17th-century Scotland for certain high status town residences such as Argyll's Lodging, Stirling. A large, double-height hall occupies the centre of the main block, and the entrance is presumably here. From the hall, passages extend right and left, overlooking the courtyard and giving access to a series of outward-facing rooms, of which only the dining room and morning room are named. At the back there is a terrace, no doubt overlooking a garden. The location of the main stairs is unclear, but they may be opposite the entrance, on the garden side of the hall.

All Mackintosh's other mature domestic designs have exteriors that reflect the informality of their interior plans, but the Country Mansion is remarkable for its symmetry. The rough sketch of the front elevation includes a few asymmetrical features: a single conical roofed tower, perhaps in a corner of the courtyard, and a projecting bay at one end of the hall, as in the great hall of a large medieval English house (or, to take a Scottish example, Stirling Castle). In the finished design, however, these have disappeared, and right and left are virtually mirror images of each other. The hall is framed by a pair of flat-roofed polygonal towers with glazing in long, thin strips, and there are two further towers, possibly in the angles of the courtyard or attached to the forward-projecting wings. The building this most recalls is Scotland Street Public School, where symmetry is the natural result of providing matching accommodation for boys and girls. The towers of the Country Mansion with their extremely elongated windows clearly look forward to those of Scotland Street.



The colouring of the large drawing suggests white roughcast was intended for the walls and green slate for the roofs. These materials recall the houses of C. F. A. Voysey, as do the low, horizontal proportions, the tall, battered chimneys, and the smooth simplicity of the garden front. Other features, however, belong to Mackintosh's own distinctive architectural language. The Japanese-style timber arches framing the doors to the terrace look forward to the garden gate at Windyhill; the tapering stone columns at each end of the terrace are found in the same position at the House for an Art Lover and at the Dalhousie Street entrance to the Glasgow School of Art; and the combination of roughcast with panels of carved stone above the windows occurs both at the Artist's Town House and at the House for an Art Lover.

## People

**Clients:**

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**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 M178 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 M178 has been extracted from the job books:

Job book: Page: NaN
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**Client:**

**Tenders:**

Contractor	Type	Address	Date	Value	Accepted

**Payments (trades):**

Name	Type	Payment out sum

**Payments (suppliers):**

Name	Service

**Total cost:**

## Documents

## Images



Front elevation, detail,  
1899-1900



Rear elevation, detail,  
1899-1900

## Bibliography

### Published

- Alan Crawford, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1995, p. 211

### Unpublished

- Hiroaki Kimura, 'Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Architectural Drawings', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1982, p. 39

#### Notes:

1: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 52589 (M178-002); GLAHA 41843 (M178-001).

2: Hiroaki Kimura, 'Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Architectural Drawings', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1982, p. 39.

## Mackintosh Architecture: Context, Making and Meaning

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