

M235 Chancel furnishings, Bridge of Allan Parish Church

Introduction

Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh designed a pulpit and other furnishings for the chancel of this mid 19th-century Gothic Revival church.

Authorship: Mackintosh is named as designer in the minutes of the church's Trustees and Elders.

Alternative names: Bridge of Allan Quoad Sacra Church; Bridge of Allan Chapel-of-ease; Holy Trinity Church.

Alternative addresses: Fountain Road

Cost from job book: £179 12s 2d.

Status: Extant

Current name: Bridge of Allan Parish Church

Current use: Church (2014)

Listing category: B

Historic Scotland/HB Number: 22656

RCAHMS Site Number: NS79NE 122.00 and NS79NE 122.01

Grid reference: NS 79145 97345

Chronology

1903

November: Announcement of a gift of £800 from Mrs Whitelaw and Mrs Fitzgerald 'towards improving and modernising the church organ'. ¹

December: John Honeyman is consulted about 'the alterations in the church which would be necessary in consequence of the organ extension'. ²

1904

January: 'sketches of the organ case, &c., ... being prepared.' ³

February: Plans for 'the organ and case, proposed structural alterations in church, new Pulpit &c.' approved by the Elders and Trustees, who decide oak rather than cypress should be used for 'both pulpit and organ case'. ⁴

14 March: John Craig's tender accepted. ⁵

27 May: Intended date of opening recital on extended organ. ⁶

23 June: Organ screen installed by this date; some church members think it too high. ⁷

13 July: Mackintosh attends Elders' and Trustees' meeting to answer criticism of the organ screen. It is agreed that the screen should not be altered, but that 'a moulding be placed round the pulpit and that shelves be placed in the pulpit and in the Quoir seats'. ⁸

26 September: Final instalment of John Craig's bill passed for payment. ⁹

1905

28 April: Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh agree to reduce their fee from £25 to £20. ¹⁰

Description

In 1893 John Honeyman & Keppie had designed a hall for what was then Bridge of Allan Quoad Sacra Church. In 1903, a gift of £800 from two ladies of the congregation, Mrs Whitelaw and Mrs Fitzgerald, made it possible to enlarge the organ. ¹ The cost of improving the instrument was more than enough to use up this sum. Nevertheless, the Elders and Trustees decided to commission new furnishings for the chancel at the same time. Once again, they sought Honeyman's advice, but this time Mackintosh, who was now a partner in the firm of Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh, undertook the work, designing a pulpit, choir stalls, platform, communion table, organ screen and chair. The drawings were approved in February 1904, and some – possibly all – of the furniture had been installed by the end of June.

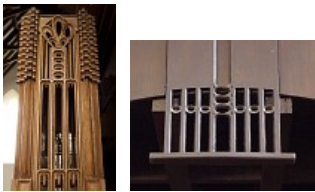
This job hardly counts as architecture – only minor, unspecified structural alterations to the church's fabric were entailed – but it is included here because it went through Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh's job book. The furnishings are outstanding examples of Mackintosh's reworking of medieval prototypes, and can be seen as a further development from his Gothic architectural designs for Queen's Cross Church in Glasgow (1897–1900) and Liverpool Cathedral (1901–2).

The organ screen is the most elaborate part of the ensemble. It stands behind the communion table and just in front of the organ console, concealing the organist from the congregation. Divided vertically into three equal sections, each with a traceried canopy, it recalls the choir stalls and sedilia of medieval churches. A possible source is King's College chapel, Aberdeen, where the early 16th-century stalls make up the best surviving collection of medieval woodcarving in Scotland. ² Detailed drawings of the Aberdeen stalls were published in the *Builder* in 1885, and Mackintosh could have seen the chapel for himself, for instance on his sketching trip to the N.E. of Scotland in 1889. ³ At Bridge of Allan the flattened ogee arches and pierced tracery echo the Aberdeen stalls, as do the dividing pinnacles with their close-set, thistle-shaped crockets. However, tracery and pinnacles are kept within the overall squared-off outline of the screen, producing a radically simplified alternative to the spikey, gabled tops of most medieval Gothic choir stalls.

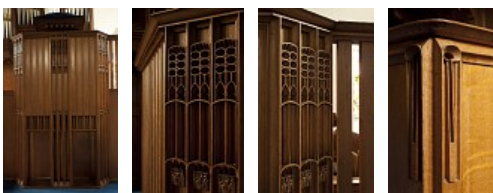


It is possible that this flat upper edge is the result of later alteration, and does not represent Mackintosh's original intention. When it was first put in place, some members of the church thought the screen was too high. ⁴ Mackintosh, evidently not inclined to make changes, attended a meeting of Trustees and Elders at which he reminded them that 'all the drawings in connection with the matter had been before the Committee and approved of.' ⁵ It was decided 'to do nothing further in the meantime in regard to the suggested reduction in height', but alterations may have been made at a later date, and in the absence of drawings or early photographs of the church interior, it is impossible to know if the screen is now (2014) as Mackintosh originally designed it.

The looping pattern of the tracery has parallels at Aberdeen, but its distinctive and most often repeated feature – an oval laid on its side – was perhaps devised by Mackintosh himself. It can be found in the choir door added to Belhaven Church, Glasgow, by John Honeyman & Keppie in 1898, and at Queen's Cross Church in the porch windows and in the pendant carvings below the gallery fronts. Similar pendant ornaments are also a feature of the Bridge of Allan organ screen.



Panels of similar tracery decorate the pulpit – box-shaped, with canted corners – while the communion table, choir enclosure and platform have the horizontal oval motif again, but extended downward into a narrow slot to make a tapering key-hole shape.



People

Clients:

- Trustees and Elders of Bridge of Allan Church

Contractors:

- John Craig

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 M235 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 M235 has been extracted from the job books:



Job book: 53062
Page: 14

Client: Trustees and Elders of Bridge of Allan Church

Measurer: no data in job book

Tenders:

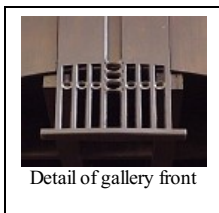
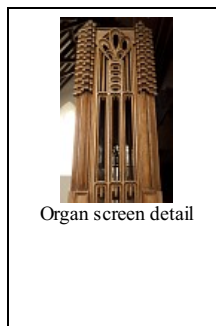
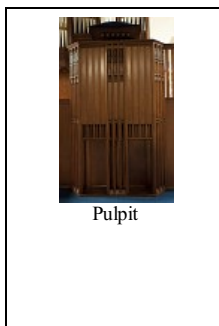
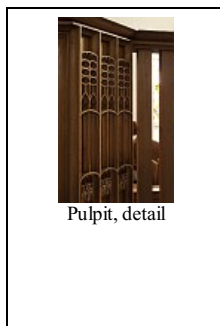
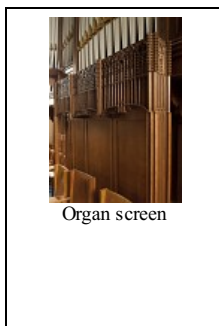
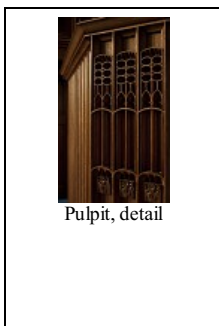
| Contractor | Type | Address | Date | Value | Accepted |
|-------------------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| James Grant | furniture | no data in job book | 23 February 1904 | £125 0s 0d ¹ | no |
| James Grant | furniture | no data in job book | 8 March 1904 | £175 0s 0d ² | no |
| John Craig | furniture | no data in job book | 8 March 1904 | £123 0s 0d ³ | no |
| John Craig | furniture | no data in job book | no data in job book | £170 0s 0d ⁴ | yes |
| William McPherson | furniture | Stirling | 10 March 1904 | £173 0s 0d | no |
| Mr. Cadien | furniture | Bridge of Allan | 10 March 1904 | £194 0s 0d ⁵ | no |

Payments (trades):

| Name | Type | Payment out sum |
|------------|-----------|---|
| John Craig | furniture | First installment: 11 July 1904 Final installment: no data in job book £179 5s 6d |

Documents

Images



Bibliography

Published

- Roger Billcliffe, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Complete Furniture, Furniture Drawings and Interior Designs*, Moffat, Dumfriesshire: Cameron & Hollis, 4th edn, 2009, pp. 217–8
- Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2nd edn, 1977, pp. 181–2

Unpublished

- Stirling Council Archives Service: Bridge of Allan parish church, Elders and Trustees minutes, CH2/730/18

Notes:

- 1: Stirling Council Archives Service: Bridge of Allan parish church, Elders and Trustees minutes, CH2/730/18, 17 November 1903.
- 2: Stirling Council Archives Service: Bridge of Allan parish church, Elders and Trustees minutes, CH2/730/18, 22 December 1903.
- 3: Stirling Council Archives Service: Bridge of Allan parish church, Elders and Trustees minutes, CH2/730/18, 22 January 1904.
- 4: Stirling Council Archives Service: Bridge of Allan parish church, Elders and Trustees minutes, CH2/730/18, 24 February 1904.
- 5: Stirling Council Archives Service: Bridge of Allan parish church, Elders and Trustees minutes, CH2/730/18, 14 March 1904.
- 6: Stirling Council Archives Service: Bridge of Allan parish church, Elders and Trustees minutes, CH2/730/18, 4 May 1904.
- 7: Stirling Council Archives Service: Bridge of Allan parish church, Elders and Trustees minutes, CH2/730/18, 23 June 1903.
- 8: Stirling Council Archives Service: Bridge of Allan parish church, Elders and Trustees minutes, CH2/730/18, 13 July 1904.
- 9: Stirling Council Archives Service: Bridge of Allan parish church, Elders and Trustees minutes, CH2/730/18, 26 September 1904.
- 10: Stirling Council Archives Service: Bridge of Allan parish church, Elders and Trustees minutes, CH2/730/18, 28 April 1905.
- 11: Stirling Council Archives Service: Bridge of Allan parish church, Elders and Trustees minutes, CH2/730/18, 17 November 1903.
- 12: Sallyanne Simpson, 'The choir stalls and rood screen', in Jane Geddes, ed., *King's College Chapel, Aberdeen, 1500–2000*, Leeds: Northern Universities Press, 2000, pp. 74–97.
- 13: James C. Watt, 'Chapel and tower, King's College, Aberdeen University', *Builder*, 48, 6 June 1885, p. 794.
- 14: Stirling Council Archives Service: Minutes of Joint Meetings of Elders and Trustees of Bridge of Allan parish church, CH2/730/18, 23 June 1904.
- 15: Stirling Council Archives Service: Minutes of Joint Meetings of Elders and Trustees of Bridge of Allan parish church, CH2/730/18, 13 July 1904.
- 16: For 'new pulpit &c.' in cypress.
- 17: For 'new pulpit &c.' in oak.
- 18: For 'new pulpit &c.' in cypress.
- 19: For 'new pulpit &c.' in oak.
- 20: For 'new pulpit &c.' in oak.

Mackintosh Architecture: Context, Making and Meaning

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