

M335 Alterations to house at Little Hedgecourt, Felbridge

Introduction

These alterations and additions to a pre-existing cottage were designed by Mackintosh for his friend, the photographer E. O. Hoppé. Mackintosh proposed adding two wings (one containing a studio), linked by a pergola enclosing a small courtyard. The additions were to be vernacular in style, built of brick with hipped, tiled roofs. The scheme was not carried out, but there is evidence that some unspecified work was done for Hoppé to Mackintosh's designs.

Authorship: Drawings and diary entries by Mackintosh confirm that he designed the unexecuted wings-and-pergola scheme. Hoppé later told Thomas Howarth that some undistinguished work was actually carried out for him to Mackintosh's designs, but it has not been possible to identify the work in question.

Alternative names: Little Hedgecourt; Hedgecourt House.

Status: Unbuilt

Grid reference: TQ 35607 40170

Chronology

1919

15 March: Mackintosh draws plans of Hoppé's existing cottage in his sketchbook, almost certainly in the course of a site visit to Little Hedgecourt. On the opposite page is a sketch showing how the cottage can be enlarged with two wings projecting forwards, linked by a pergola and enclosing a courtyard. ¹

15 August: In a letter to William Davidson, Mackintosh mentions having drawn 'a dovecot for a friend of young Holmes of The Studio'. There are several surviving designs by Mackintosh for dovecots for Little Hedgecourt, and the letter to Davidson may refer to these. 'Young Holmes' is presumably Geoffrey Holme (1887–1954), who in 1919 took over the editorship of *The Studio*, the art journal founded by his father Charles Holme in 1893. ²

1920

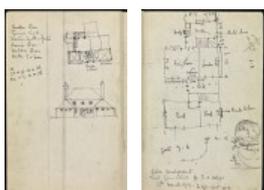
17 February: Mackintosh records in his diary: 'Left plans of house at East Grinstead with E. O. Hoppe'. ³

19 February: Mackintosh receives £6 from Hoppé, 'being final payment to account for work proposed at E. Grinstead'. ⁴

Description

Extension to cottage

This was one of a small number of architectural commissions that came to Mackintosh during his years in London, mostly through his artistic circle in Chelsea. On 15 March 1919, he made a survey of a small L-shaped cottage at Little Hedgecourt near East Grinstead, owned by his friend, the photographer E. O. Hoppé. He drew rough floor plans and took measurements in his notebook, and on the opposite page he made a sketch showing how the cottage could be enlarged with two wings projecting forwards, linked by a pergola enclosing a small courtyard. ¹ Several further pencil drawings, not in the sketchbook, show these proposals in greater detail. ² In due course, they were drawn out in ink and wash for Mackintosh by another draughtsman. ³ However, the scheme seems to have been abandoned by 19 February 1920, when Mackintosh received £6 from Hoppé as a 'final payment ... for work proposed at E. Grinstead'. ⁴



The unexecuted scheme had service accommodation in the N.W. wing, while the N.E. wing contained a double-height studio with a large N.-facing window and an angle. A new staircase was shown in the S.E. angle of the original house. Above the angle and the stairs, Mackintosh proposed extending the principal bedroom by breaking through the external wall on either side of the fireplace, leaving the chimney free-standing in front of a large new window recess.

With its hipped roofs covered in red tiles, the design follows local vernacular tradition. It also recalls the early work of Edwin Lutyens (1869–1944), who regularly used such brick-columned pergolas in his gardens. Sixteen years earlier, when planning a visit to Hermann Muthesius in London, Mackintosh had

expressed a keen interest in exactly this kind of architecture: 'nothing', he wrote, 'would give me greater pleasure than to make the tour you suggest to Surrey to see some houses by Lutyens'.⁵ Compared with his other schemes of 1919–20, however, such as the Studio Block for the Arts League of Service, the more traditional character of the Little Hedgecourt proposals is striking.

Previous writers have identified Hoppé's cottage as the original part of a large house now (2013) known as Hedgecourt House.⁶ They have claimed that although Mackintosh's ambitious scheme of projecting wings was not built, he had earlier designed a more modest addition which was actually carried out. This has since been obscured by further extensions, but an old photograph records its original appearance.⁷ It was thoroughly unremarkable, with a brick ground floor and roughcast first floor, and it abutted the original house very awkwardly.

There seems to be no firm evidence for attributing the brick and roughcast addition to Mackintosh. Moreover, it is difficult to see how the original core of Hedgecourt House matches the building shown in Mackintosh's drawings, and it is therefore uncertain that this really is the cottage he planned to enlarge. About 50 metres N. of it is a second house, known as Lake Cottage in Hoppé's day, now called Lake House.⁸ This has also been altered since 1919, but its basic plan is closer to the one drawn by Mackintosh, and it may have been the subject of his proposals. Thomas Howarth briefly described Mackintosh's work for Hoppé as the conversion and extension of a former 'gamekeeper's cottage on an estate at Little Hedgecourt', a description that might refer to Lake Cottage. Hoppé himself told Howarth that some work was 'carried out according to Mackintosh's design, but it is quite undistinguished and lacks the character of the architect's earlier work.'⁹

Gates and pigeon house

As well as the proposed extension to Hoppé's house, Mackintosh made scale drawings for a new front gate in oak, with a dwarf railing on each side.¹⁰ He also made several alternative designs for pigeon houses.¹¹ Annotations on one of these show that he was working on the gate and pigeon house designs in June, presumably in 1919 (in August that year, in a letter to his former client William Davidson, he mentioned having drawn 'a dovecot for a friend of young Holmes of The Studio' – possibly a reference to Hoppé).¹²

Two of the most detailed of the pigeon house drawings show a structure with a thatched roof carried on A-frames made of old scaffolding poles. Another design is closer to the pyramidal dovecot of 1904 for Windyhill.¹³ One pitched-roofed design has triangular gables with tiers of triangular openings for the pigeons, recalling the triangle-based interior decoration at 78 Derngate, Northampton, of a few years earlier.

Mackintosh had shown an interest in pigeon houses as early as 1897, when he added a rough sketch of one to a drawing for the E. elevation of the Glasgow School of Art, and he later included a free-standing dovecot in the walled garden of his design for an Artist's House in the Country.¹⁴

People

Clients:

- E. O. Hoppé

Documents

Bibliography

Published

- Roderick Gradidge, 'The Last of Mackintosh', *The Field*, 265, 8 December 1984, pp. 11–13
- Gavin Stamp, 'The London Years', in Wendy Kaplan, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, New York and London: Abbeville Press, 1996, pp. 201–24

Unpublished

- Hiroaki Kimura, 'Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Architectural Drawings', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1982, p. 62
- The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Mackintosh's diary for 1920, GLAHA 52408

Notes:

- 1: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Sketcher's Notebook, GLAHA 53015/19 (M335-002); GLAHA 53015/20 (M335-001).
- 2: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: letter from Mackintosh to William Davidson, 15 August 1919, GLAHA 52542.
- 3: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Mackintosh's diary for 1920, GLAHA 52408.
- 4: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Mackintosh's diary for 1920, GLAHA 52408.
- 5: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Sketcher's Notebook, GLAHA 53015/19 (M335-002), GLAHA 53015/20 (M335-001).

- 6:** The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 41565 (M335-010); GLAHA 41566 (M335-005); GLAHA 41567 (M335-004); GLAHA 41568 (M335-003); GLAHA 41569 (M335-009); GLAHA 41570 (M335-008); GLAHA 41571 (M335-006); GLAHA 41572 (M335-007).
- 7:** The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 41573 (M335-011); GLAHA 41574 (M335-014); GLAHA 41575 (M335-015); GLAHA 41576 (M335-013); GLAHA 41577 (M335-012).
- 8:** The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Mackintosh's diary for 1920, GLAHA 52408.
- 9:** Berlin, Werkbundarchiv, Museum der Dinge: Hermann Muthesius Estate, letter from Mackintosh to Hermann Muthesius, 13 March 1903.
- 10:** Roderick Gradidge, 'The Last of Mackintosh', *The Field*, 265, 8 December 1984, pp. 11–13; Gavin Stamp, 'The London Years', in Wendy Kaplan, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, New York and London: Abbeville Press, 1996, pp. 201–24.
- 11:** Roderick Gradidge, 'The Last of Mackintosh', *The Field*, 265, 8 December 1984, pp. 11–13.
- 12:** Information from Jeremy Clarke, Felbridge History Group.
- 13:** Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2nd edn, 1977, p. 207.
- 14:** The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 41561 (M335-016).
- 15:** The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 41562 (M335-018); GLAHA 41563 (M335-019); GLAHA 41564 (M335-017).
- 16:** The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: letter from Mackintosh to William Davidson, 15 August 1919, GLAHA 52542. 'Young Holmes' is presumably Geoffrey Holme (1887–1954), who in 1919 took over the editorship of the *Studio*, the art journal founded by his father Charles Holme in 1893.
- 17:** The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh job book, GLAHA 53062, p.14.
- 18:** Glasgow School of Art Archives and Collections: MC.G.60; The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 41142 (M335-001); GLAHA 41145 (M335-003).

Mackintosh Architecture: Context, Making and Meaning

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