

M344 Extension and conversion of Leigh Farm Cottages

Introduction

This was a small project, involving the conversion of a pair of semi-detached cottages into a single house.

Authorship: Mackintosh's authorship is confirmed by his sketchbook and diary for 1920, and by a number of architectural drawings inscribed with his name.

Alternative names: Little Ease Cottage ¹ .

Status: Demolished

Grid reference: TQ 28825 21723

Chronology

1920

17 August: Mackintosh visits Burgess Hill and sketches cottages. ¹

31 August: Mackintosh sends 'plans of Cottages at Burgess Hill to Miss Brooks'. ²

8 September: Florence Brooks approves sketch plans and instructs Mackintosh to proceed with working drawings and estimates. ³

1921

3 January: Mackintosh shows amended plans to Florence Brooks, who instructs him to proceed with working drawings and estimates. ⁴

5 January: Possible site visit. ⁵

10 January: 'Miss Elder' starts working for Mackintosh 'on Miss Brooks cottages', evidently as a draughtswoman. ⁶

April–May: Interior alterations are carried out by local building contractor Norman & Burt Ltd. ⁷

1944

18 August: House completely destroyed by a flying bomb, and subsequently rebuilt to a different design. ⁸

Description

This was a very modest project involving the conversion of a pair of semi-detached cottages into a single house. Its main interest is as an indicator of how low Mackintosh's architectural career had been brought subsequent to moving to the unfamiliar world of London, and by restrictions on new building as a result of the First World War.

Very little is known of the client, Florence Brooks, or of how she came to commission Mackintosh. On 17 August 1920 he made a site visit to the cottages, situated between Burgess Hill and Ansty, where he drew rough plans and took measurements. ¹ On 8 September Brooks approved his proposals and asked him to proceed with the working drawings and estimates. ² After this there seems to have been a delay until January 1921, when the client approved amended plans and Mackintosh engaged an assistant, Hope Elder, to draw them up. ³ She was a sister of Eleanor Elder, who was one of the Honorary Organising Secretaries of the Arts League of Service, Mackintosh's most important client at the time. ⁴

The pair of cottages appear to have been built around the turn of the 20th century; they do not appear on the O.S. map of 1897, but are shown in 1911. ⁵ They may have been bought by Brooks in 1919: a 'pair of capital brick and tiled cottages' appeared in lot 33, 'Lower Little Ease or Leigh Farm', of the July 1919 sale of 'outlying portions' of the Sergison Estate. ⁶

The cottages formed a simple two-storey-plus-attic block, square in plan and symmetrical, with drip moulds over the windows, deep eaves, and a single chimney stack in the middle of the roof. Mackintosh designed a small, two-storey lean-to addition at the N.E. corner, completely utilitarian in appearance, incorporating a new entrance, staircase, small kitchen and bathroom. His drawings also show some new windows, and minor changes to the internal layout. Only the cage-like treatment of the staircase balustrade in the addition gives any hint of the individuality of the earlier Mackintosh. The work was carried out by local builder contractors Norman & Burt Ltd and was underway during April and May 1921. A few notes and records survive in the Norman & Burt records

at the Royal Institute of British Architects. These include a typed 'Specifications of work' issued by Mackintosh and which includes guidance on issues such as materials and workmanship, maintenance, acts and bye-laws, insurance and materials. This is the only known survival of such a document for projects by Mackintosh or John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh. ⁷

The house was completely destroyed by a flying bomb on 18 August 1944. ⁸

People

Clients:

- Florence Brooks

Contractors:

- Norman & Burt Ltd

Other:

- Hope Elder

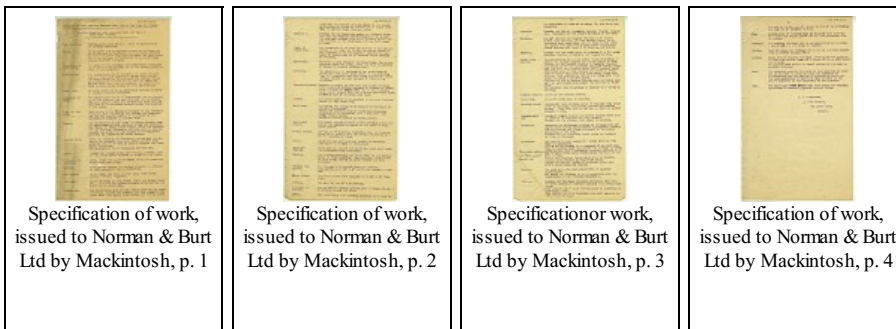
Job Book

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 M344 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 M344 has been extracted from the job books:

Documents



Images

Bibliography

Unpublished

- The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Mackintosh's diary for 1920, GLAHA 52408
- London, Royal Institute of British Architects: Additions and alterations to Leigh Farm Cottages, Burgess Hill, for Miss Florence Brooks, Norman & Burt Ltd manuscript notes and rough sketches, PA 304/2 (24–34)

Notes:

1: Florence Brooks was registered as an 'occupation voter' at Little Ease Cottage in the Parish of Hurstpierpoint in 1921. Lewes, East Sussex Records Office: East Grinstead Constituency electoral register, autumn 1921, C/C 70/122. Information supplied by P. Bye, 15 May 2013, and A. Lusted, 20 May

2013.

2: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Mackintosh's diary for 1920, GLAHA 52408; Sketcher's Notebook, GLAHA 53015/40 (M344-004); GLAHA 53015/41 (M344-001); GLAHA 53015/42 (M344-003); GLAHA 53015/43 (M344-002).

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: Mackintosh's diary for 1920, GLAHA 52408.

6: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Sketcher's Notebook, GLAHA 53015/40.

7: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Mackintosh's diary for 1920, GLAHA 52408; Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2nd edn, 1977, p. 214.

8: London, Royal Institute of British Architects: Additions and alterations to Leigh Farm Cottages, Burgess Hill, for Miss Florence Brooks, Norman & Burt Ltd manuscript notes and rough sketches, PA 304/2 (24–34)

9: London, Royal Institute of British Architects: letter from O. R. D. Wallace to Thomas Howarth, 6 December 1954, [check reference: no longer the same as the drawings, NI 10 June 2013].

10: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Mackintosh's diary, GLAHA 52408; Sketcher's Notebook, GLAHA 53015/40 (M344-004), GLAHA 53015/41 (M344-001), GLAHA 53015/42 (M344-003), GLAHA 53015/43 (M344-002).

11: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Mackintosh's diary, GLAHA 52408.

12: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Mackintosh's diary, GLAHA 52408.

13: Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2nd edn, 1977, p. 214.

14: O.S., Sussex, TQ 22 (County Series 1:2500, 1st revision, 1897); O.S., Sussex XXVI/13, (25 inch, 2nd edn, 1911).

15: Chichester, West Sussex Records Office: Sergison Estate, Illustrated sale particular of outlying portions of the Sergison Estate proposed to be sold by auction at Goldings Hotel, Haywards Heath, by direction of Lieutenant-Colonel Bertram Norman Sergison-Brooke, 22 July 1919, Sergison 3/3/16. Information supplied by F. Lansley, 24 May 2013

16: London, Royal Institute of British Architects: Norman & Burt Ltd, RIBA Norman & Burt Box 3.

17: London, Royal Institute of British Architects: letter from O. R. D. Wallace/Wallis, Director, Norman & Burt, to Thomas Howarth, 6 December 1954, Norman & Burt Box 3.

Mackintosh Architecture: Context, Making and Meaning

Led by The Hunterian, University of Glasgow, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council; with additional support from The Monument Trust, The Pilgrim Trust, and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art; and collaborative input from Historic Scotland and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.



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