

# M005 Wylie Hill's store

## Introduction

This large department store in Glasgow's premier shopping street was built in 1889 for Wylie, Hill Robert. It was damaged by fire in 1903 and reconstructed the following year, when an extra storey was added.

**Authorship:** The architect in 1888–9 and 1903–4 was John Hutchison, though the design is said to have been largely the work of his chief assistant, Andrew Black. <sup>1</sup> Mackintosh was in the final year of his apprenticeship with Hutchison in 1888–9, and according to the later recollections of a near contemporary in the office, he designed plaster capitals for the interior. <sup>2</sup>

**Alternative addresses:** 39 Argyll Arcade

**Status:** Standing building

**Current name:** Nike

**Current use:** Retail and offices (2014)

**Listing category:** B

**Historic Scotland/HB Number:** 32632

**RCAHMS Site Number:** NS56NE 288

**Grid reference:** NS 58992 65135

## Chronology

### 1888

14 October: R. Wylie Hill & Co.'s previous building on the site destroyed by fire. <sup>1</sup>

November–December: John Hutchison draws plans for new building. <sup>2</sup>

### 1889

10 January: Hutchison's plans approved by Glasgow Dean of Guild Court. <sup>3</sup>

14 January: Work begins on site. <sup>4</sup>

16 May: Fourth storey under construction. <sup>5</sup>

25 November: Intended date of opening. <sup>6</sup>

November–December: Completed. <sup>7</sup>

### 1903

6 November: Damaged by fire. <sup>8</sup>

### 1904

31 March: Hutchison's plans for reconstruction approved by Glasgow Dean of Guild Court. <sup>9</sup>

14 April: Work of clearing debris from fire-damaged building in progress. <sup>10</sup>

2 June: New top storey in progress. <sup>11</sup>

16 December: Store reopened by this date. <sup>12</sup>

1905

7 February: Reconstruction complete. <sup>13</sup>

## Description

The 1889 rebuilding of Wylie Hill's department store was one of the major works undertaken by John Hutchison during Mackintosh's apprenticeship in his office. Wylie Hill's previous building on the site burned down on 14 October 1888. <sup>1</sup> Hutchison's impressive replacement – five storeys plus attic, crowned with a square-domed tower – joined a growing cluster of showpiece retail premises at the S. end of Buchanan Street. The facade of bright orange-red Corsehill stone from Dumfriesshire has Italian Renaissance-style details and rows of large windows with glazing set directly into the masonry. Inside, a central glass-roofed light well originally rose from top to bottom through the open-plan floors. The drawings approved by the Glasgow Dean of Guild Court show a system of iron columns, beams and joists supporting timber floors, with a note saying that plaster is to be used to protect the ironwork from fire. <sup>2</sup> A description of the newly opened building says that the 'iron beams and columns are covered with Titancrete, a new fireproof material'. <sup>3</sup> The builders were Bell, Hornsby & Co. <sup>4</sup>



W. J. Blain (1870–1958), who succeeded Mackintosh in Hutchison's office in April 1889, informed Thomas Howarth in February 1946 that Mackintosh had made drawings of Ionic capitals to be executed in plaster for the store's interior, and that these 'appeared to be different from the copy-book types customary at the time'. <sup>5</sup> When Howarth published this information he referred to only one drawing, which, according to Blain, was 'brilliantly executed and showed surprising individuality'. <sup>6</sup> Wylie Hill's 1889 building caught fire on 6 November 1903, and Howarth was under the impression that it had been completely destroyed, and with it Mackintosh's capitals. <sup>7</sup> In fact, the building was only damaged, and the following year Hutchison reconstructed it, adding an extra floor. <sup>8</sup> The lower floors must still have been sound, because according to the Dean of Guild Court inspector's reports the clearing of debris did not begin until April 1904 and by 2 June work was underway on the new top floor – an unlikely timetable if the whole internal structure had to be rebuilt from scratch. <sup>9</sup> The unusual Ionic capitals which can still (2012) be seen on the ground and first floors may be the ones for which Mackintosh made his drawings, survivors from the 1889 building. Those on the ground floor have inverted volutes, perhaps derived from the work of 16th- and 17th-century Mannerist and Baroque architects. Mackintosh had not yet visited Italy at this date, but he would have been familiar with published illustrations of such work.



## People

### Clients:

- Robert Wylie Hill

### Contractors:

- Bell, Hornsby & Co.

### Other:

- Andrew Black
- John Hutchison

## Job Book

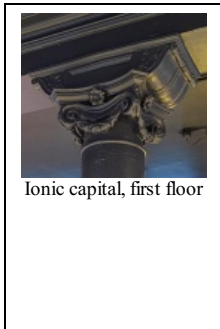
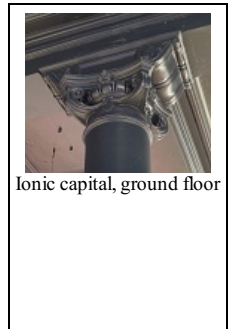
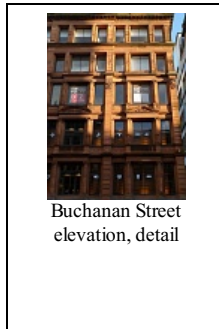
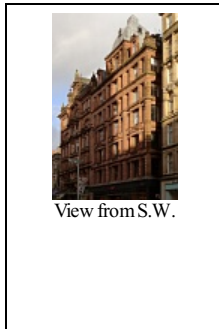
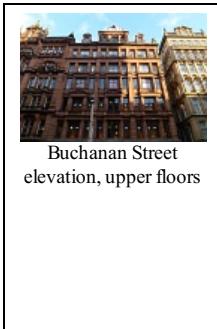
The job books of Honeyman & Keppie (later Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh) are now held by The Hunterian, University of Glasgow and include four volumes related to the Mackintosh period. The books were used by the firm to keep a project-by-project, day-by-day record of contractors, suppliers and expenditure. 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 M005 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 M005 has been extracted from the job books:

## Documents

## Images



## Bibliography

### Published

- Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2nd edn, 1977, pp. 3–4
- Elizabeth Williamson, Anne Riches and Malcolm Higgs, *Buildings of Scotland: Glasgow*, London: Penguin, 1990, p. 221
- James Macaulay, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, New York: W. W. Norton, 2010, p. 72
- *Glasgow Herald*, 21 November 1889, p. 6
- *British Architect*, 32, 22 November 1889, p. 362 and illustration.

### Unpublished

- Hiroaki Kimura, 'Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Architectural Drawings', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1982, p. 18
- Glasgow City Archives Collection: Glasgow Dean of Guild Court, Register of Inspections, D-OPW 25/1, p. 9
- Glasgow City Archives Collection: Glasgow Dean of Guild Court, Register of Inspections, D-OPW 25/2, p. 95

### Notes:

- 1: *Dictionary of Scottish Architects, 1840–1980*, [www.scottisharchitects.org.uk](http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk) [accessed 16 January 2012].
- 2: University of Toronto, Robarts Library: notes by Thomas Howarth of an interview with W. J. Blain, 25 February 1946, B2000-0002/041(08).
- 3: *Glasgow Herald*, 15 October 1888, p. 6.
- 4: Glasgow City Archives Collection: Glasgow Dean of Guild plans, 1B4/12//747.
- 5: Glasgow City Archives Collection: Glasgow Dean of Guild Court, Register of Inspections, D-OPW 25/1, p. 9.
- 6: Glasgow City Archives Collection: Glasgow Dean of Guild Court, Register of Inspections, D-OPW 25/1, p. 9.
- 7: Glasgow City Archives Collection: Glasgow Dean of Guild Court, Register of Inspections, D-OPW 25/1, p. 9.
- 8: *Glasgow Herald*, 21 November 1889, p. 6.
- 9: Glasgow City Archives Collection: Glasgow Dean of Guild Court, Register of Inspections, D-OPW 25/1, p. 9.

- 10: *Scotsman*, 7 November 1903, p. 9.
- 11: Glasgow City Archives Collection: Glasgow Dean of Guild Court, Register of Inspections, D-OPW 25/2, p. 95.
- 12: Glasgow City Archives Collection: Glasgow Dean of Guild Court, Register of Inspections, D-OPW 25/2, p. 95.
- 13: Glasgow City Archives Collection: Glasgow Dean of Guild Court, Register of Inspections, D-OPW 25/2, p. 95.
- 14: Glasgow City Archives Collection: Glasgow Dean of Guild Court, Register of Inspections, D-OPW 25/2, p. 95.
- 15: Glasgow City Archives Collection: Glasgow Dean of Guild Court, Register of Inspections, D-OPW 25/2, p. 95.
- 16: *Glasgow Herald*, 15 October 1888, p. 6.
- 17: Glasgow City Archives Collection: Dean of Guild plans, 1B4/12//747.
- 18: *Glasgow Herald*, 21 November 1889, p. 6.
- 19: Glasgow City Archives Collection: Glasgow Dean of Guild Court, Register of Inspections, D-OPW 25/1, p. 9.
- 20: University of Toronto, Robarts Library: notes by Thomas Howarth of an interview with W. J. Blain, 25 February 1946, B2000-0002/041(08).
- 21: Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2nd edn, 1977, pp. 3–4.
- 22: *Scotsman*, 7 November 1903, p. 9; Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2nd edn, 1977, p. 4.
- 23: Glasgow City Archives Collection: Glasgow Dean of Guild Court, Register of Inspections, D-OPW 25/2, p. 95.
- 24: Glasgow City Archives Collection: Glasgow Dean of Guild Court, Register of Inspections, D-OPW 25/2, p. 95.

## Mackintosh Architecture: Context, Making and Meaning

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