

M040 Auchencraig, Largs

Introduction

John Honeyman & Keppie designed a large, red sandstone house and roadside lodge on the S. edge of Largs, Ayrshire, for retired physician Dr Robert Kirkwood. The house has an interesting wooden porch with bell-shaped roof and Glasgow-Style stained glass which was added following completion of the house. The stained glass was probably installed at an even later date. By 1895, the house was named Auchencraig. ¹

Authorship: This is one of over 270 jobs carried out in the office of John Honeyman & Keppie (Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh from 1901) during Mackintosh's time there. Mackintosh undoubtedly worked on many of these, but there is no specific evidence for his involvement in this case.

Cost from job book: £4552 5s 9d

Status: Standing building; divided in four flats

Current name: Auchencraig

Current use: Residential (2014)

Grid reference: NS 2088 5811

Chronology

1891

21 January: Sketch plan of house sent by John Honeyman & Keppie to Dr Robert Kirkwood. ¹

2 February: Amended plan of house sent to Kirkwood. ²

6 February: Sketch elevations sent to Kirkwood. ³

1893

1 April: The house 'is nearing completion'. ⁴

26 December: Final payments made to contractors and to measurer. ⁵

1894

15 October: Contractors paid for completion of the porch. ⁶

1896

28 February: Contractors paid for the lodge. ⁷

c. 1960s

House divided into four flats; addition of second floor at N. section of main house. ⁸

Since c. 1970

Two houses built in the grounds of the house. ⁹

Since c. 1985

First-floor bay window enlarged and a new door inserted on W. elevation; roof garden constructed; internal alterations carried out including installation of en-suite bathrooms in ground- and first-floor flats. ¹⁰

Description

From early 1891 John Honeyman & Keppie were working on a design for a new house, Auchencraig, at Largs for retired general practitioner Dr Robert Kirkwood. His young second family was growing rapidly and two of his older daughters still lived at home. ¹

The selected site was on a steep hillside on the S. edge of Largs with extensive grounds and views W. over the Firth of Clyde. The family had previously lived in the centre of Largs in another sizable house: it was sold to a photographer named Storey for £18,000 in early 1893. ² It is not yet clear how Kirkwood came to commission Honeyman & Keppie to design his new home, but it may have been the result of the architects' personal connections with Ayrshire.

There is nothing in the appearance of the red sandstone exterior to suggest the involvement of Mackintosh. It is conceivable however that he contributed to the design of the wooden porch, which was constructed around a year after the house was completed and has a bell-shaped, lead-covered roof, and curious cigar-shaped columns. The form of the porch, though not its details, suggest his later porch designs at Arddarroch and the Infants' entrance at Scotland Street School. Curiously, the total cost of the porch is recorded twice, in two separate locations, in the job books. ³

Internally, fireplaces, chimneypieces and woodwork details are classically inspired and comparable with near-contemporary work at both Craigie Hall and Glasgow Art Club; the billiard room has the same barrel-vault ceiling with glazed section as Craigie Hall.

There is no record in the job books of the stained glass in the porch and this was probably installed later. It is not known if Mackintosh was involved in the design. The forms and colouring of the peacocks' tail feathers do recall Mackintosh's 1896 design for a stencil for Miss Cranston's Buchanan Street tea rooms. ⁴

The house was mentioned in Dr Kirkwood's obituary in the *Largs and Millport Weekly News*, which reported that its 'appearance was unhesitatingly sacrificed to comfort and health protection', while there were 'many evidences' of Kirkwood's 'strongly aesthetic bent'. ⁵

People

Clients:

- Dr Robert Kirkwood

Contractors:

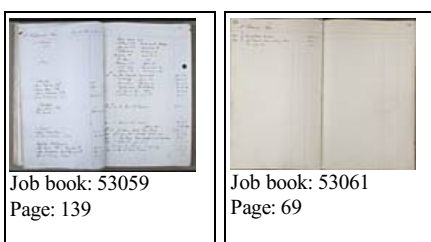
- George Adam
- C. T. Bowie, Fisher & Co.
- John Bryden & Sons
- John Caldwell
- Danskin & Purdie
- Thomas Duff & Son
- Thomas Main
- McGeoch & Co.
- Thomas McKirdy
- George Rome & Co.
- Shaw & Walker
- S. Stewart & Son

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 M040 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 M040 has been extracted from the job books:



Client: Dr Robert Kirkwood

Measurer: Danskin & Purdie

Tenders:

Contractor	Type	Address	Date	Value	Accepted
no data in job book	mason	no data in job book	no data in job book	no data in job book	no data in job book
no data in job book	joiner	no data in job book	no data in job book	no data in job book	no data in job book
James Ingleton & Co.	plumber	no data in job book	no data in job book	£416 0s 0d	no
Moses Speirs & Son	plumber	no data in job book	no data in job book	£355 0s 0d	no
James Johnstone & Son	plumber	no data in job book	no data in job book	£394 0s 0d	no
Thomas McKirdy	plumber	Largs	no data in job book	£414 3s 6d	yes (no data in job book)
James Caird & Co.	plasterer	no data in job book	no data in job book	£220 0s 0d	no
George Nicol	plasterer	no data in job book	no data in job book	£239 9s 10d	no
A. & D. MacKay	slater	no data in job book	no data in job book	£122 10s 6d	no
S. Stewart & Son	slater	Largs	no data in job book	£101 14s 11d	yes (no data in job book)
John Bryden & Sons	gasfitter & bellhanger	Renfield Street	no data in job book	£50 2s 0d	yes (no data in job book)
Alex. Hutcheson	gasfitter & bellhanger	West Regent Street	no data in job book	£50 7s 3d	no
Thomas McKirdy	gasfitter & bellhanger	Largs	no data in job book	£52 7s 11d	yes (no data in job book)
C. T. Bowie, Fisher & Co.	painter	Bothwell Street	no data in job book	no data in job book	yes (no data in job book)
John Orr & Co.	painter	Wellington Street	no data in job book	no data in job book	no
H. L. Anderson	painter	St Vincent Street	no data in job book	no data in job book	no
J. & W. Guthrie	painter	West George Street	no data in job book	no data in job book	no
George Sellars	painter	West George Street	no data in job book	no data in job book	no
J. B. Bennett & Co.	painter	Gordon Street	no data in job book	no data in job book	no
A. M. Scott	painter	Sauchiehall Street	no data in job book	no data in job book	no
Carlton & Co.	painter	St Vincent Street	no data in job book	no data in job book	no

Payments (trades):

Name	Type	Payment out sum
John Caldwell	mason	Payment date: 26 December 1893 £1781 8s 8d
W. & T. Duff	joiner	Payment date: 26 December 1893 £1538 16s 8d

Thomas McKirdy	plumber	Payment date: 26 December 1893 £371 7s 10d
Thomas McKirdy	gasfitter	Payment date: 26 December 1893 £21 13s 11½d
John Bryden & Sons	bells	Payment date: 26 December 1893 £28 19s 3d
George Rome & Co.	plasterer	Payment date: 23 May 1893 £208 3s 1d
S. Stewart & Son	slater	Payment date: 21 June 1893 £102 14s 14½d ¹
C. T. Bowie, Fisher & Co.	painter	Payment date: 1 December 1893 £179 3s 11d

Payments (suppliers):

Name	Service	Payment date	Payment sum
McGeoch & Co.	no data in job book	26 December 1893	£42 19s 9d
George Adam	Gates and hinges	20 January 1893	£44 0s 0d
Thomas Main	Grates ²	7 June 1893	£113 10s 0d
Shaw & Walker	Kitchen range	27 April 1893	£19 12s 9d

Measurer fee payment: £111 1s 0d (26 December 1893)

Phase 2: Porch, 1894



Job book: 53059
Page: 139

Tenders:

Contractor	Type	Date	Value	Accepted
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Total cost: £143 15s 6d ³

Phase 3: Porch and lodge, 1894–6



Job book: 53061
Page: 69

Client: Dr Robert Kirkwood

Tenders:

Contractor	Type	Date	Value	Accepted
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Payments (suppliers):

Name	Service	Payment date	Payment sum
no data in job book	'Cost of porch complete'	15 October 1894	£143 15s 4d

John Caldwell	'Mason work of lodge'	28 February 1896	£223 5s 0d
Thomas Duff & Son	no data in job book	28 February 1896	£108 11s 6d

Documents

Images



Bibliography

Notes:

- 1: O. S., Ayrshire III.12 (Largs) (25 inch, 2nd edition, 1895–7).
- 2: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie visit book, 1891–4, GLAHA 53060, p. 3.
- 3: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie visit book, 1891–4, GLAHA 53060, p. 3.
- 4: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie visit book, 1891–4, GLAHA 53060, p. 3.
- 5: 'Notes and Comments', *Largs and Millport Weekly News*, 1 April 1893, p. 3.
- 6: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie job book, GLAHA 53059, p. 139.
- 7: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie job book, GLAHA 53059, p. 139; John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh job book, GLAHA 53061, p. 69.
- 8: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh job book, GLAHA 53061, p. 69.
- 9: Information from current residents, 7 and 14 September 2011.
- 10: Information from current residents, 7 and 14 September 2011.
- 11: Information from current residents, 7 and 14 September 2011.
- 12: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie visit book, 1891–4, GLAHA 53060, p. 3. The house is named on O. S., Ayrshire III.12 (Largs) (25 inch, 2nd edition, 1895–7). Children were born in 1889, 1890 and May 1891.
- 13: 'Notes and Comments', *Largs and Millport Weekly News*, 1 April 1893, p. 3.
- 14: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie job book, GLAHA 53059, p. 139; The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: John Honeyman & Keppie / Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh job book, GLAHA 53061, p. 69.
- 15: See The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 41803, GLAHA 52869 and GLAHA 52873.
- 16: 'Our Losses: Dr Kirkwood', *Largs and Millport Weekly News*, 28 May 1898, p. 2.
- 17: Includes £ 19s 4½d for 'jobbing a/c'.
- 18: 'as per offer + 3.0.0 for Hall fireplace'.
- 19: 'Cost of porch complete'; 'new a/c'. Paid 15 October 1894.

Mackintosh Architecture: Context, Making and Meaning

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