

M175 Design for an Artist's Town House and Studio

Introduction

This is one of a pair of complementary schemes – the other is for a house and studio in the country – that Mackintosh drew in the months before his marriage in August 1900. They appear to have been 'ideal' designs, not intended to be built.

Authorship: The drawings were published as Mackintosh's in 1902.

Status: Unbuilt

Chronology

Description

This is one of a pair of schemes by Mackintosh for a combined house and studio for an artist. Both were published in 1902 by Hermann Muthesius, with captions identifying this as a town house and its companion as a house in the country.¹ The design for a House in the Country was almost certainly exhibited in Spring 1900, and was probably made earlier that year or late in 1899. The town house drawings are so close to it in style and format that they must be of the same date. Both schemes probably reflect Mackintosh's anticipation, in the months leading up to his marriage in August 1900, of a shared domestic and creative life with Margaret Macdonald: Muthesius wrote that the designs 'refer to the home desired by the artist couple, and thus have a singular interest'.²

Like the country house, the town house seems to have been an 'ideal' scheme, not intended to be built. The drawings give no hint of a specific setting or context, except that the site slopes upwards fairly steeply from N. to S. The plan is narrow and deep with the stairs at one side, like a typical terraced house. However, there are windows on three sides, and the overall proportions are those of an isolated tower house. Mackintosh presumably imagined a sufficiently spacious setting for the balconies to have an open outlook, and for the carved decoration on the N. and S. elevations to be seen to advantage. Living accommodation is on the ground and first floors, while the studio occupies the whole of the top floor. Though a single room, it is inscribed 'studio' at one end and 'workshop' at the other, reflecting the Mackintoshes' range of skills and the vital connection between designing and making that was central to the Arts and Crafts movement.

As with the country house, the exterior walls are mostly roughcast, but sneaked rubble gives the ground floor a more urban character. The front doorway replicates the one Mackintosh had designed at Ruchill Free Church Halls early in 1899.



The projecting studio windows on the N. and the staircase windows on the S. are framed by stonework incorporating decorative carving, a foretaste of Mackintosh's designs for the House for an Art Lover.

Most striking is the treatment of the window openings. In an untitled paper on architecture of c. 1892, Mackintosh had criticised the Georgian practice of hiding diverse rooms behind identical windows. Following the Gothic Revival architect and writer A. W. N. Pugin (1812–1852), he argued instead for the picturesque variety that arises naturally from allowing the internal plan to determine the size and position of the windows.³ Some windows in the artist's town house, such as the elongated ones that light the stairs, clearly do reflect the interior. In general, however, their varied shapes and irregular distribution are no more determined by the internal plan than those of a typical Georgian facade, and the overall impression is artful rather than natural. The angled window that lights the main bedroom is a feature Mackintosh would use again two years later for Mr Blackie's dressing room at The Hill House. In both cases it is a contrivance to provide the room with a S. view, but in the artist's town house this could have been achieved instead by simply inserting a window in the S. elevation.

A probable influence on Mackintosh's design was C. F. A. Voysey's 1891 studio-house at 14 South Parade, Bedford Park, London, for the artist J. W. Forster. It was illustrated in the *British Architect* (coincidentally in the same issue as Dunloe, a house by John Honeyman & Keppie),⁴ and it has many features in common with Mackintosh's design: the narrow facade and tower-like proportions; the combination of white roughcast and stone; the tall un moulded chimney; and the relatively small, widely-spaced windows.



People

Other:

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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 M175 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 M175 has been extracted from the job books:

Job book: Page: NaN

Client:

Tenders:

Contractor	Type	Date	Value	Accepted
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Payments (trades):

Name	Type	Payment out sum
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Payments (suppliers):

Name	Service
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Measurer fee payment: ()

Total cost:

Documents

Images

Bibliography

Published

- Alan Crawford, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1995, pp. 94–5
- Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2nd edn, 1977, pp. 111–13
- James Macaulay, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, New York: W. W. Norton, 2010, p. 229
- Robert Macleod, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Architect and Artist*, London: Collins, 1983, pp. 86–7
- Hermann Muthesius, 'Die Glasgower Kunstbewegung: Charles R. Mackintosh und Margaret Macdonald-Mackintosh', *Dekorative Kunst*, 5, March 1902

Unpublished

- Hiroaki Kimura, 'Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Architectural Drawings', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1982, p. 37

Notes:

- 1: Hermann Muthesius, 'Die Glasgower Kunstbewegung: Charles R. Mackintosh und Margaret Macdonald-Mackintosh', *Dekorative Kunst*, 5, March 1902.
- 2: Hermann Muthesius, 'Die Glasgower Kunstbewegung: Charles R. Mackintosh und Margaret Macdonald-Mackintosh', *Dekorative Kunst*, 5, March 1902 (translation by Nicky Imrie).
- 3: Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 'Untitled Paper on Architecture', in Pamela Robertson, ed., *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Architectural Papers*, Wendlebury, Oxon: White Cockade in association with the Hunterian Art Gallery, 1990, pp. 185–6.
- 4: *British Architect*, 36, 18 September 1891, p. 209.

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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