

## M330 Design for a memorial fountain

### Introduction

This is one of a group of speculative designs made by Mackintosh for the town planner Patrick Geddes. It may be connected with Geddes's work in India.

**Authorship:** The drawing is inscribed with Mackintosh's name and is unmistakably in his hand.

**Status:** Unbuilt

### Chronology

#### 1915

12–31 July: Summer Meeting held at King's College, London, co-organised by Patrick Geddes. <sup>1</sup> Mackintosh is given temporary work by Geddes, which involves drawing unspecified plans and elevations. <sup>2</sup>

5 August: Mackintosh writes to William Davidson that he has been attending Geddes's lectures and expects to stay with him until the end of the month. <sup>3</sup>

### Description

This design for a fountain is one of a group of drawings by Mackintosh in the archive of the Scottish sociologist, philosopher and town planner Patrick Geddes; the others are for a war memorial and a range of street lighting standards. <sup>1</sup> A pair of related drawings in The Hunterian, University of Glasgow, shows two buildings in an arcaded street. <sup>2</sup> The Hunterian drawings may have been made to illustrate Geddes's town planning proposals for Lucknow, and it is possible that the fountain design was also made for the city. <sup>3</sup> All the drawings appear to have been made for exhibition or demonstration purposes rather than as working drawings.

Geddes wrote that 'in every urban community what makes an aggregation of buildings something more than a mere aggregation is the presence of an appeal to the sense of beauty, the feeling of a common life, and the prompting of noble aspirations.' <sup>4</sup> As Volker M. Welter has pointed out, the war memorial and fountain are sites of public assembly, reflection and ritual, and therefore suitable illustrations of this lofty concept of urban design.

The fountain is basically a large cube of masonry, with a deep wedge-shaped niche of stepped profile in each face. On top of the cube sits a shallow drum, and on top of that a trumpet-shaped bowl. Water shoots up from the bowl, cascades over the drum, and re-emerges lower down where it falls into four broad basins within the niches. Each basin is smoothly serpentine on plan, but in elevation the curved front is broken into a series of shallow steps, stretched and twisted in the centre to form a curious opening, like a pair of eyelids. The drawing is unclear, but from here the water seems to flow out along four narrow, straight channels, following the main axes of the plan. Four square columns rising from the corners of the cube, and 12 more forming an enclosure round it, support a wooden pergola for climbing plants. A concave bench is positioned under each corner of the pergola, with its back to the fountain. Fountain and pergola combined make a structure about 12 metres square and almost 6 metres high – in effect a large outdoor room with the fountain at its centre.

In June 1908 Mackintosh had sketched a small well at Cintra, Portugal, in which water flows along a narrow channel flanked by curved seats. <sup>5</sup> The present design perhaps contains an echo of this.



The combination of hard, rectilinear shapes with organic curves also recalls the 1911 Cloister Room in Miss Cranston's Ingram Street tea rooms, the last work Mackintosh completed before he left Glasgow. <sup>6</sup> The curved benches with their simple lattice backs are similar to the semicircular one he designed for the garden at Windyhill in 1902 or 1903. <sup>7</sup>



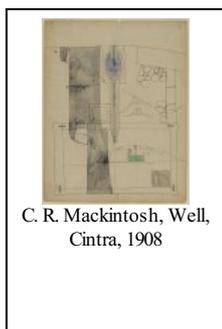
## People

### Clients:

- Patrick Geddes

## Documents

## Images



C. R. Mackintosh, Well,  
Cintra, 1908

## Bibliography

### Published

- James S. McGrath, 'Mackintosh Drawings in the University of Strathclyde', *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 50, Winter 1988–9, pp. 9–11
- James S. McGrath, 'Geddes and Mackintosh', *Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society Newsletter*, 53, Spring 1990, p. 5
- Volker M. Welter, 'Arcades for Lucknow: Patrick Geddes, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Reconstruction of the City', *Architectural History*, 42, 1999, pp. 316–32

### Notes:

- 1: Glasgow, Strathclyde University Archives: T-GED 3/12/18.
- 2: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: letter from Philip Mairet to Murray Grigor, 2 March 1967, GLAHA 52373.
- 3: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: letter from Mackintosh to William Davidson, 5 August 1915, GLAHA 52538, GLAHA 52536.
- 4: Glasgow, Strathclyde University Archives: T-GED 22/1/1413.2, T-GED 22/1/1413.3.
- 5: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 41282 (M329-001), GLAHA 41283 (M329-002).
- 6: Volker M. Welter, 'Arcades for Lucknow: Patrick Geddes, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Reconstruction of the City', *Architectural History*, 42, 1999, pp. 316–32.
- 7: Patrick Geddes, Gilbert Slater, *Ideas at War*, London: Williams & Norgate, 1917, p. 194, quoted in Volker M. Welter, 'Arcades for Lucknow: Patrick Geddes, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Reconstruction of the City', *Architectural History*, 42, 1999, pp. 316–32.
- 8: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 41438.
- 9: Roger Billcliffe, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Complete Furniture, Furniture Drawings and Interior Designs*, Moffat, Dumfriesshire: Cameron & Hollis, 4th edn, 2009, pp. 265–6.
- 10: Roger Billcliffe, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Complete Furniture, Furniture Drawings and Interior Designs*, Moffat, Dumfriesshire: Cameron & Hollis, 4th edn, 2009, p. 165.

# 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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