

M337 Scheme for a studio-house for Arthur Cadogan Blunt

Introduction

This is one of three schemes for studio-houses on neighbouring sites in Glebe Place, Chelsea, all designed by Mackintosh in 1920.

Authorship: There are signed and unsigned drawings by Mackintosh, and his diary for 1920 provides a detailed record of his involvement.

Status: Unbuilt

Grid reference: TQ 27170 77837

Chronology

1920

13 February: Mackintosh receives instructions from Arthur Cadogan Blunt to 'prepare plans and get estimates for Studio & House in Glebe Place'. ¹

18 February: Mackintosh sends plans to Blunt. ²

19 March: Revised estimates provided by Holloway Brothers. ³

18 May: Blunt instructs Mackintosh to prepare plans incorporating 'timber of old barn'. ⁴

31 May: Mackintosh and Blunt attend County Hall 'regarding license for erecting timber structure', after which Blunt instructs Mackintosh to prepare drawings and submit them to the London County Council. ⁵

Description

Site

This proposed studio for Arthur Cadogan Blunt is closely associated with several other schemes – a block of studios and studio-flats for the Arts League of Service, a second studio block for the League in Glebe Place, a studio for Harold Squire and a studio for Derwent Wood – all intended for a site in Chelsea bounded by Glebe Place, Oakley Street and Upper Cheyne Row.

The site had been owned until his death in 1912 by the architect and collector Dr John Samuel Phené. ¹ It had been the garden of Old Cheyne House, a dilapidated 18th-century dwelling that still stood at its W. end. At the opposite end, on the corner of Oakley Street and Upper Cheyne Row, was the eccentric Mystery House. Along the N. edge, facing Glebe Place, were some cottages. The site was offered for sale in July 1914, divided into 17 lots, but some or all of it was on the market again in October 1919. ² It was soon after this that Mackintosh became involved.

Commission and design

Mackintosh was already designing a studio-house for the artist Harold Squire at 49 Glebe Place when, on 13 February 1920, he received a similar commission from Blunt. ³ Blunt's site was next-door to Squire's, at 48 Glebe Place. By 18 February Mackintosh had plans ready to send to his client, and the following month the builders were providing estimates. ⁴

The surviving drawings show a three-storey building with sash windows, similar in style to the many modest Georgian houses in neighbouring Chelsea streets. It has a facade of three bays to Glebe Place, four to the garden. ⁵ The first-floor studio overlooks the garden and is lit by large, S.-facing sash windows. A flat roof serves as a terrace.

On 18 May, Blunt asked Mackintosh to incorporate some timbers from an 'old barn' – possibly one of the dilapidated buildings on the site. ⁶ This resulted in a completely different design, Tudor instead of Georgian, with a gabled elevation to Glebe Place composed of Portland stone below and half-timbering above. ⁷ A timber building evidently required a special license from the London County Council, and client and architect attended a meeting about this at County Hall on 31 May. ⁸ Later the same day, Blunt instructed Mackintosh to prepare drawings and submit them to the Council, but the project seems to have been abandoned, and there is no further mention of it in Mackintosh's diary. He later made designs for a block of studios for the Arts League of Service on the same site.

Among Mackintosh's Chelsea-period drawings are two unidentified plans which may be alternative proposals for Blunt's building, using the whole site, including the garden.⁹ They show a dwelling at the front on Glebe Place, linked to a separate studio at the rear, with a square courtyard between. The front block seems to have a pitched roof with the ridge parallel to Glebe Place, and an attic bedroom lit by dormers. An unidentified drawing of a timber-framed elevation may be related to this scheme.¹⁰

People

Clients:

- Arthur Cadogan Blunt
- Holloway Brothers

Documents

Images

Bibliography

Published

- Alan Crawford, 'Lost and found: architectural projects after Glasgow', in Pamela Robertson, ed., *C. R. Mackintosh: The Chelsea Years, 1915–1923*, exhibition catalogue, Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, 1994, pp. 8–10

Unpublished

- Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Mackintosh's diary for 1920, GLAHA 52408

Notes:

1: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Mackintosh's diary for 1920, GLAHA 52408.

2: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Mackintosh's diary for 1920, GLAHA 52408.

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: Alan Crawford, 'Lost and found: architectural projects after Glasgow', in Pamela Robertson, ed., *C. R. Mackintosh: The Chelsea Years, 1915–1923*, exhibition catalogue, Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, 1994, pp. 8–9.

7: Alan Crawford, 'Lost and found: architectural projects after Glasgow', in Pamela Robertson, ed., *C. R. Mackintosh: The Chelsea Years, 1915–1923*, exhibition catalogue, Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, 1994, pp. 8–9.

8: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Mackintosh's diary for 1920, GLAHA 52408.

9: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Mackintosh's diary for 1920, GLAHA 52408.

10: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 41580 (M337-001) and 41581 (M337-002).

11: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Mackintosh's diary for 1920, GLAHA 52408.

12: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 41582 (M337-003) and GLAHA 53025 (M337-004).

13: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: Mackintosh's diary for 1920, GLAHA 52408. A letter to Mackintosh from the London County Council Architect's Department dated 26 May 1920, arranging the appointment, is also in The Hunterian, GLAHA 41543.

14: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 41626 (M337-006) and GLAHA 41627 (M337-007).

15: The Hunterian, University of Glasgow: GLAHA 41628 (M337-005).

Mackintosh Architecture: Context, Making and Meaning

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