

MX.04 Interiors for 120 Mains Street

Introduction

Mackintosh decorated, and designed furniture and fittings for at least four interiors in this city-centre flat. From 1900 to 1906 it was the home of Mackintosh and his wife, artist Margaret Macdonald.

Authorship: It is generally accepted that Margaret Macdonald played an important role in the development of Mackintosh's decorative schemes in the early 1900s – notably the House for an Art Lover competition, the Rose Boudoir at Turin, and the Willow Tea Rooms – though the precise nature and extent of that input is not clear. Photographs of the flat were published in the *Studio* under both Mackintosh's and Macdonald's names, acknowledging her contribution to the creation of the interiors, which at the very least comprised the design and making of decorative panels. ¹

Alternative addresses: 120 Blythswood Street

Status: Standing building; Mackintosh fittings removed

Current name: Mackintosh House

Current use: Offices (2014)

RCAHMS Site Number: NS56NE 2108

Grid reference: NS 5854 6577

Chronology

1900

22 August: Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald marry at Dumbarton and the couple move into the Mains Street flat. Mackintosh probably lived in the flat before marrying. ¹

Interiors photographed by T. & R. Anman & Sons and published in a special edition of the *Studio* in 1901. ²

1902

Interiors photographed again. ³

1904

Interiors published in Hermann Muthesius, *Das englische Haus*, Berlin: Ernst Wasmuth Verlag, 1, 1904, plates 172 and 174.

1906

Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald purchase a house at 6 Florentine Terrace, Hillhead, Glasgow.

After 1910

The building containing number 120 Mains Street is extended S. to Bath Lane, adding two bays and a new doorway to the Mains Street elevation. This new door is later renumbered 120 Mains (later Blythswood) Street: the original entrance to 120 no longer has a street number. ⁴

2013

Now known as 'Mackintosh House', 120 is occupied by the Glasgow branch of The Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland (MDDUS).

Description

Design

This high-ceilinged, first-floor flat in the 1830s building was Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald's first home together following their marriage in August 1900. Mackintosh probably moved from the dark 'bachelor's den' in the basement of his father's house in Strathbungo, on the south side of Glasgow, to live here alone prior to his marriage while he worked on its redecoration in his own time. ¹ The job does not appear in John Honeyman & Keppie's job books.

120 Mains Street was a rented flat which would explain why no structural alterations were made. Existing decorative features, such as the cornice and architraves in the drawing room, also remained untouched.² Mackintosh designed decorative schemes and furniture for the N.-facing drawing room and studio looking out to Bath Street, and the bedroom and dining room looking W. out to Mains Street. The flat also included a kitchen, small second bedroom and a maid's room. No record of these three rooms survives.³

The flat provided Mackintosh with the opportunity to develop his design ideas further. Aspects of his holistic aesthetic, such as the articulation of space using a horizontal picture rail and vertical wall-strapping, the careful groupings of unconventionally spare furniture, the contrasting light and dark palettes and the importance given to the fireplace, informed many later domestic and tearoom projects,⁴ including the contemporaneous interiors for Miss Cranston's tea rooms in Ingram Street and Dunglass Castle, Bowling for Margaret Macdonald's brother, Charles Macdonald.⁵

In spring 1906 Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald moved to a three-storey house, 6 Florentine Terrace, in the West End of the city, near the University of Glasgow. The interiors there largely replicated those at Mains Street, recreating the decorative schemes, and reusing the fittings, fire surrounds and furniture from the flat.

Reception

Photographs of the flat appeared in three publications in the years immediately following its completion. A special number of the *Studio* in 1901 carried the photographs by T. & R. Annan, accompanied by brief, descriptive captions.⁶ Hermann Muthesius' 1904 publication *Das Englische Haus* briefly mentioned Mackintosh's interiors, praising their restrained colours and included two views of the drawing room.⁷ In 1905, a French publication, *De la Tamise à la Sprée, l'essor des industries d'art* included an essay describing the flat which apparently had been visited by the review's author, E. B. Kalas.⁸ Kalas has often, incorrectly, been thought to be a man, but in fact was *Madame* Blanche-Ernest Kalas (née Blanche Honorine Trouchon), a painter, and wife of Rheims architect Ernest Kalas.⁹

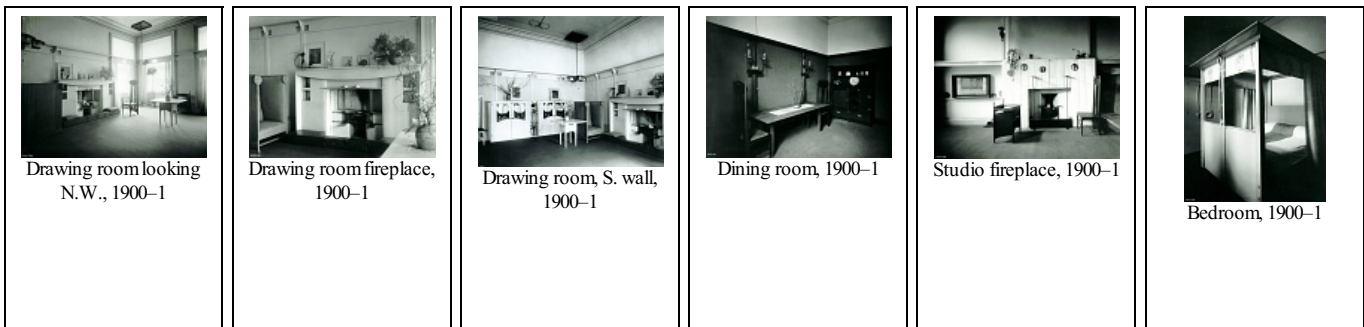
Later history

At some point between 1910 and 1934, the building containing 120 Mains (later Blythswood) Street was extended S. incorporating the garden or yard between it and Bath Lane. This added two bays and a new doorway to the Mains Street elevation, and must have led to the blocking up of the S.-facing kitchen and second bedroom windows in the Mackintosh's former flat. This new doorway was later renumbered 120; the original number 120, nearer the street corner, no longer has a number.¹⁰

People

Documents

Images



Bibliography

Published

- Roger Billcliffe, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Complete Furniture, Furniture Drawings and Interior Designs*, Moffat, Dumfriesshire: Cameron & Hollis, 4th edn, 2009, pp. 10–12, 78–91
- Alan Crawford, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1995, pp. 66–72
- Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2nd edn, 1977, pp. 43–8
- Hermann Muthesius *Das Englische Haus*, Berlin, Ernst Wasmuth, 1904–5, pls 172 and 174; first English translation: *The English House* London: Crosy Lockwood Staples, 1979, pp. 51–4, figs 111 and 112
- Pamela Robertson, *The Mackintosh House*, Glasgow: Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, 1998, pp. 8–13
- Charles Holme, ed., *Special Summer Number of the Studio: Modern British Domestic Architecture and Decoration*, 1901, pp. 110–15
- B. E. Kalas, trans. John Dunlop, 'The Art of Glasgow', *De la Tamise à la Sprée, l'essor des industries d'art*, Rheims: Michaud, 1905, reprinted in *Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh, Memorial Exhibition Catalogue*, Glasgow: McLellan Galleries, 1933, pp. 3–5.

Notes:

- 1: Charles Holme, ed., *Special Summer Number of the Studio: Modern British Domestic Architecture and Decoration*, 1901, pp. 110–15.
- 2: Pamela Robertson, *The Mackintosh House*, Glasgow: Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, 2011, pp. 9–10.
- 3: Charles Holme, ed., *Special Summer Number of the Studio: Modern British Domestic Architecture and Decoration*, 1901, pp. 110–15; Pamela Robertson, *The Mackintosh House*, Glasgow: Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, 1998, p. 13; Roger Billcliffe, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Complete Furniture, Furniture Drawings and Interior Designs*, Moffat, Dumfriesshire: Cameron & Hollis, 4th edn, 2009, p. 80.
- 4: Roger Billcliffe, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Complete Furniture, Furniture Drawings and Interior Designs*, Moffat, Dumfriesshire: Cameron & Hollis, 4th edn, 2009, p. 80.
- 5: See extension to the building in O.S., Lanarkshire VI.10 (County Series 1:2500, 2nd revision, surveyed 1910, published 1914) and O.S., Lanarkshire NS56 (County Series 1:2500, 3rd revision, 1934).
- 6: Pamela Robertson, *The Mackintosh House*, Glasgow: Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, 2011, pp. 9–10. Alan Crawford, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1995, p. 69–70.
- 7: Alan Crawford, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1995, p. 66.
- 8: Alan Crawford, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1995, pp. 66–7; for an in-depth account of the interiors and furniture, see Roger Billcliffe, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Complete Furniture, Furniture Drawings and Interior Designs*, Moffat, Dumfriesshire: Cameron & Hollis, 4th edn, 2009, pp. 10–12; 78–90.
- 9: Roger Billcliffe, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Complete Furniture, Furniture Drawings and Interior Designs*, Moffat, Dumfriesshire: Cameron & Hollis, 4th edn, 2009, p.12; Alan Crawford, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1995, p. 66–7.
- 10: Roger Billcliffe, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Complete Furniture, Furniture Drawings and Interior Designs*, Moffat, Dumfriesshire: Cameron & Hollis, 4th edn, 2009, p.78; Alan Crawford, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1995, p. 67.
- 11: Charles Holme (ed.), *Studio: Modern British Domestic Architecture and Decoration*, 1901, pp. 110–5. Roger Billcliffe points out that some of Annan's photographs of the flat must have been taken no earlier than 1902 due to the appearance in them of an oval table which does not appear elsewhere until the International Exhibition in Turin. Roger Billcliffe, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh: The Complete Furniture, Furniture Drawings and Interior Designs*, Moffat, Dumfriesshire: Cameron & Hollis, 4th edn, 2009, p. 80.
- 12: Hermann Muthesius *Das Englische Haus*, Berlin: Ernst Wasmuth Verlag, 1, 1904, plates 172 and 174; first English translation: *The English House* London: Crosby Lockwood Staples, 1979, pp. 51–4, figs. 111 and 112.
- 13: Thomas Howarth, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Modern Movement*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2nd edn, 1977, p. 46. An English translation of the essay was used as the introduction to the 1933 Memorial Exhibition catalogue. B. E. [sic] Kalas (trans. John Dunlop), 'The Art of Glasgow', *De la Tamise à la Sprée, l'essor des industries d'art*, Rheims: Michaud, 1905, reprinted in *Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh, Memorial Exhibition Catalogue*, Glasgow: McLellan Galleries, 1933, pp. 3–5.
- 14: Neil Jackson identifies Madame Kalas as the author of the essay in his article, 'Found in Translation: Muthesius, Mackintosh and Japan', *Journal of Architecture*, 18, no. 2, 2013, p. 210, notes 113–14.
- 15: See extension to the building in O.S., Lanarkshire VI.10 (County Series 1:2500, 2nd revision, surveyed 1910, published 1914) and O.S. Lanarkshire NS56 (County Series 1:2500, 3rd revision, 1934).

Mackintosh Architecture: Context, Making and Meaning

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