

Contents

Introduction	2
History	3
Glasgow School of Art	6
Hill House	10
Tea Rooms:.....	11
Decline	14
My Opinion	15
More Pictures of Mackintosh Works	16
Conclusion.....	18
References	19
Appendix	20

Introduction

In this assignment I have been tasked with carrying out a study on the works of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Throughout the assignment I aim to give a clear and concise outline of his work history and provide sketches and pictures where necessary. Upon completion of the report, I hope to have gained a better understanding and knowledge of his work and will hopefully have formed my own opinion on his work also.

History

Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928) was an architect who designed schools, offices, churches, tearooms and homes, an interior designer and decorator, an exhibition designer, a designer of furniture, metalwork, textiles and stained glass and, in his latter years, a watercolourist. He was born at no. 70 Parson Street, Glasgow, on the 7th June 1868 and was the second son in a family of eleven children. His Father William was a superintendant of the police in Glasgow, a man of high repute and a Highlander. His mother Margaret was a Lowlander and was a mild mannered, home loving woman who was adored by her children. In 1878 the family moved from their modest tenement flat to a more attractive house, No. 2 Firpark Terrace, Dennistoun. The more attractive surroundings of this new address allowed William to indulge in his favourite hobby, gardening. He was lucky enough to obtain part of the garden of the nearby Golf Hill House and kept such good care of it that his children christened it the 'Garden of Eden'. William encouraged his children to participate in the upkeep of the garden and this early exposure to horticulture led Charles to a deep appreciation of nature, from which his organic approach to design evolved. The extent to which nature influenced Mackintosh's work is demonstrated in his subsequent architectural projects, which bear a dynamism comparable to that of living organisms. (Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Charlotte and Peter Fiell, 1997, p.8)

From an early age Charles expressed a desire to become an architect. In 1884 at the age of 16 and in spite of his father's attempts to dissuade him, he became apprenticed to the architectural firm of John Hutchison of Glasgow. In the same year he enrolled for evening classes at the Glasgow School of Art. Upon completion of his apprenticeship in 1889 Mackintosh joined the newly established and prosperous firm of John Honeyman and John Keppie to work at first, as a draughtsman. During these formative years there were many influences that had a direct bearing upon Mackintosh's professional development. These ranged from the secular, (such as marine engineering and the Scottish Baronial Style) to the spiritual (Japanese design and architecture and the Pantheism of Celtic belief) (Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Charlotte and Peter Fiell, 1997, p. 8). He was fortunate in that commissions undertaken by the firm such as the extension to the Glasgow Herald Building and

Queen Margaret's Medical College, that were considered minor projects, not warranting the attention of a senior member of the firm, were placed in the hands of juniors such as himself. As a result of this, Mackintosh's reputation as an original architect soon spread. (Mackintosh Architecture, Academy Editions, 1980, p.8)



Details of Glasgow Herald Towers from Architects Blueprints.

<http://www.scotcities.com/mackintosh/>



Tower of Glasgow Herald Building.

<http://www.scotcities.com/mackintosh/>

Mackintosh was a highly successful student while at the Glasgow School of Art and was awarded several prizes for his draughtsmanship, painting and architecture during his time there. The most important of these prizes was the highly coveted Alexander Thomson Travelling Scholarship, which he received for 'the best design of a public hall to accommodate 1000 persons' in 1890. The prize money he received from this enabled him to take an extensive and extremely valuable tour of Italy in 1891. He recorded his visits to several famous Italian buildings with sketches and diary entries. These diary entries reveal that his interests were leaning towards the early styles of Romanesque, Gothic and Byzantine, rather than to the classicizing architecture of the renaissance. (Charlotte and Peter Fiell, 1997, p. 10) On his return to Glasgow he presented his drawings and gave a talk to the Glasgow School of Art, bringing him to the attention of its principal Francis Newbery, who became an important patron and influential friend.

While studying at the Glasgow School of Art Mackintosh became good friends with Herbert McNair, a fellow employee at Honeyman and Keppie. The pair were introduced by Francis Newbery to two English sisters of Scottish descent, Frances and Margaret McDonald, who were enrolled at the school as day painting students. Newbery, in identifying similarities between their work and that of Mackintosh and McNair, suggested they form a close working collaboration. (Charlotte and Peter Fiell, 1997, p. 16) Mackintosh, McNair and the Macdonald sisters came to be known as The Four. Together they designed and exhibited work including posters and furniture. Through them, Mackintosh was introduced to the broader field of art and in particular to the feminine, symbolic graphic style of the Macdonald sisters. In 1894 they were described by the press as "the Spook School", a reference to their elongated, sinuous and feminine graphic forms based on fabled and mythic themes. Mackintosh married Margaret Macdonald in 1900 and she was to remain his principal collaborator throughout his life. (<http://designmuseum.org/design/charles-rennie-mackintosh>)

Glasgow School of Art

In 1896 Francis Newbery invited twelve local architects to enter a competition to design a new building for Glasgow School of Art. One of these firms was Honeyman & Keppie, which was almost certainly selected because of Mackintosh's friendship with Newbery. Honeyman & Keppie won the competition with Mackintosh as designer. This, his first and most important commission, was to seal his future reputation. Due to the financial restrictions the design was completed in two phases. The north end opened in 1899, but the construction of the west end did not start until 1907 and was only completed in 1909. This time lapse coincided with the most productive period of Mackintosh's career and accounted for the changes in style between the first and second phases. The later west end is not only much more radical and progressive than the north end, but Mackintosh also added an attic storey to create more studio space. The School forms a simple E-shaped building with an austere and asymmetrical north facade with massive studio windows. A single central entrance leads to a staircase with two floors of studios to the right and left. At the centre of the school is an exhibition space called the Museum. There was little additional decoration to the building because of the limited budget. In the second phase of construction, the west elevation was radically altered with the addition of the library's dramatic three-storey windows. The interior of the library is no less surprising, with the central fall of light from the windows contrasting with the dark stained wooden gallery supported by split beams. Mackintosh designed the fittings and furnishings in dark stained wood decorated with splashes of red, green and white – a mix of academic sobriety and modern geometric intensity. This library was probably one of Mackintosh's most exciting interiors in a building that both kick started his architectural career and later revealed his mature style. (<http://designmuseum.org/design/charles-rennie-mackintosh>)



Glasgow School of Art.

<http://www.design1900online.com/page2/page2.html>



Glasgow School of Art West Elevation.

<http://www.design1900online.com/page2/page2.html>



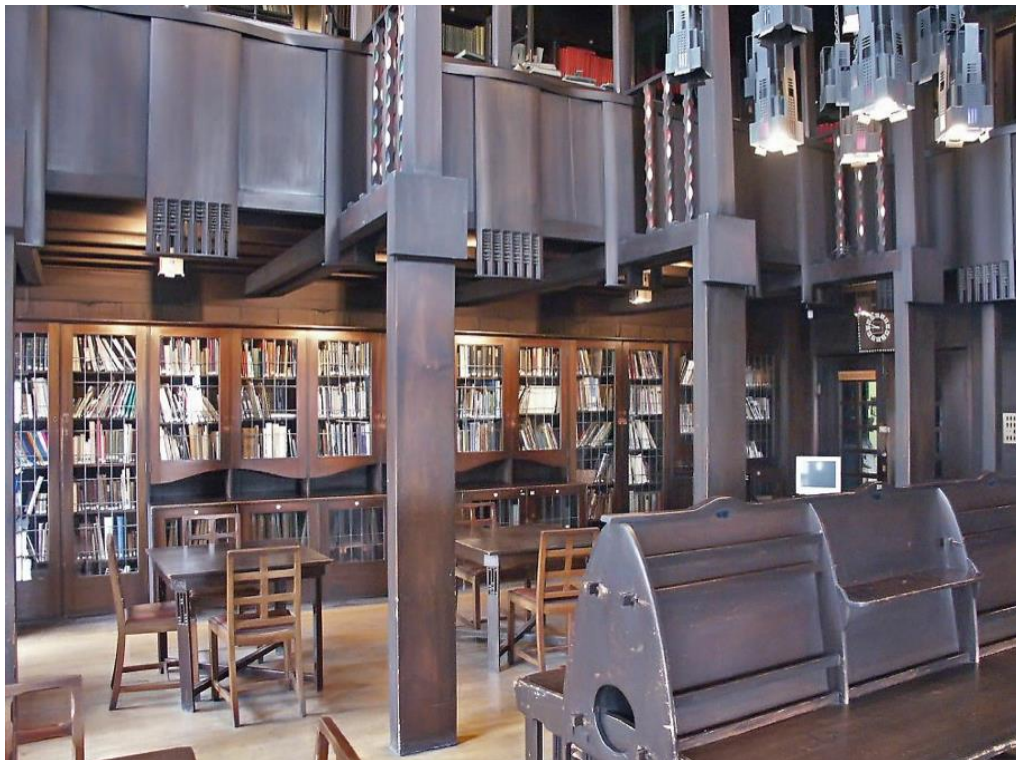
GSA West Entrance

<http://www.design1900online.com/page2/page2.html>



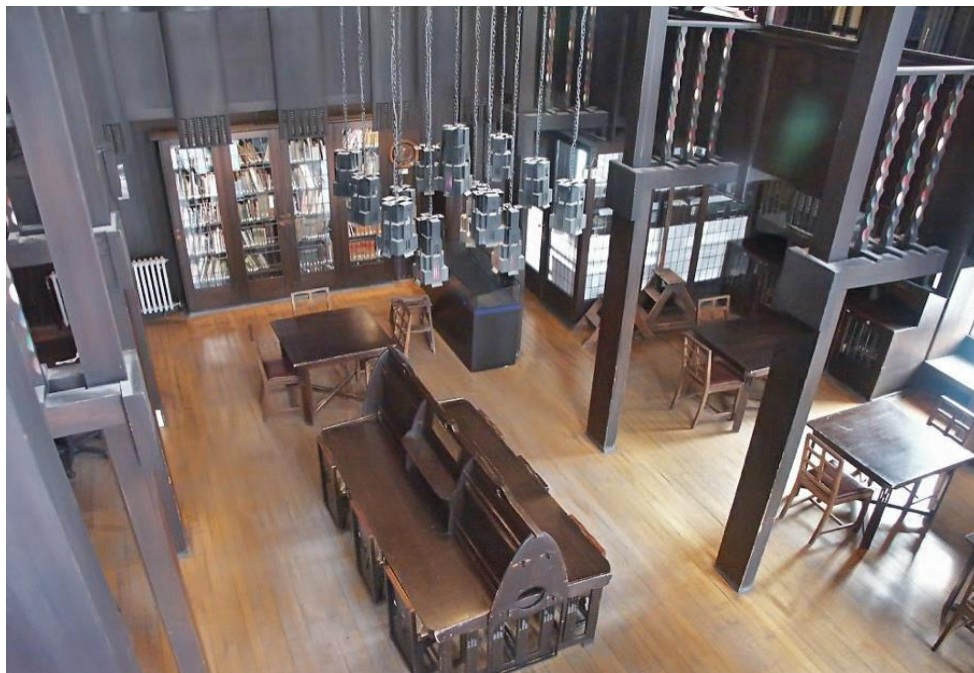
GSA North Elevation

<http://www.design1900online.com/page2/page2.html>



The Library at the Glasgow School of Art

<http://www.design1900online.com/page2/page2.html>



The View from the Balcony

<http://www.design1900online.com/page2/page2.html>

Hill House

In 1902 Mackintosh received another significant commission when he was asked to design The Hill House in Helensburgh for Glasgow publisher Walter Blackie. "Hill House, the largest and finest of Mackintosh's domestic buildings was designed in 1902. It occupies a hillside side that looks out over the Clyde estuary, and is surrounded by grounds meticulously landscaped by Mackintosh, who went to the extent of instructing that the trees be clipped according to his manner of drawing them. Built from local sandstone and rough-cast rendered, the house bears the image of Scottish baronial traditions. For the interior, Mackintosh designed fireplaces, furnishings and fittings. His attentions extended from the design of built-in wardrobes for the white bedroom to the detailing in a superb set of pewter fire tongs and poker. Walls in the house were generally white, some with delicate stencil designs in pale greens, pinks, and silver. His desire to create a total environment was in keeping with the artistic taste of the time and Mackintosh was extremely fortunate to work throughout his career with clients such as Walter Blackie, who allowed him to have complete control over a project." (Mackintosh Architecture, Academy Editions, 1980, p.40)



Hill House

<http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/helensburgh/hillhouse>



Interior of bedroom · Hill House · Helensburgh, Scotland

Photo by [Howard Davis](#). © Howard Davis

Tea Rooms: Mackintosh's most supportive client was Miss Catherine Cranston, a woman who owned a chain of Glasgow tea rooms. He was first employed by Miss Cranston in 1896 to decorate the walls of her tea rooms at Buchanan Street. His decoration depicted elongated female figures in pairs, facing each other, surrounded by roses. This successful commission led to others from Miss Cranston and in 1898 he was given sole responsibility for the Argyle Street tea rooms. It was for this project that he first designed his now infamous high back chair. In 1900 he designed the ladies luncheon room and related rooms at the Ingram Street tea rooms, and in 1903 he designed from top to bottom, the Willow tea rooms at Sauchiehall Street. Mackintosh along with his wife Margaret designed everything from the furniture and menus, to the waitresses' uniforms at the Willow tea rooms. "The most extravagant of the rooms was the Room de Luxe on the first floor. Overlooking the street, it had white walls with a frieze of coloured glass, mirrored glass and decorative leading, a gesso panel by Margaret Macdonald, splendid double doors with further leaded

glass decoration and silver painted high-backed chairs and sofas upholstered in rich purple.”(<http://designmuseum.org/design/charles-rennie-mackintosh>)



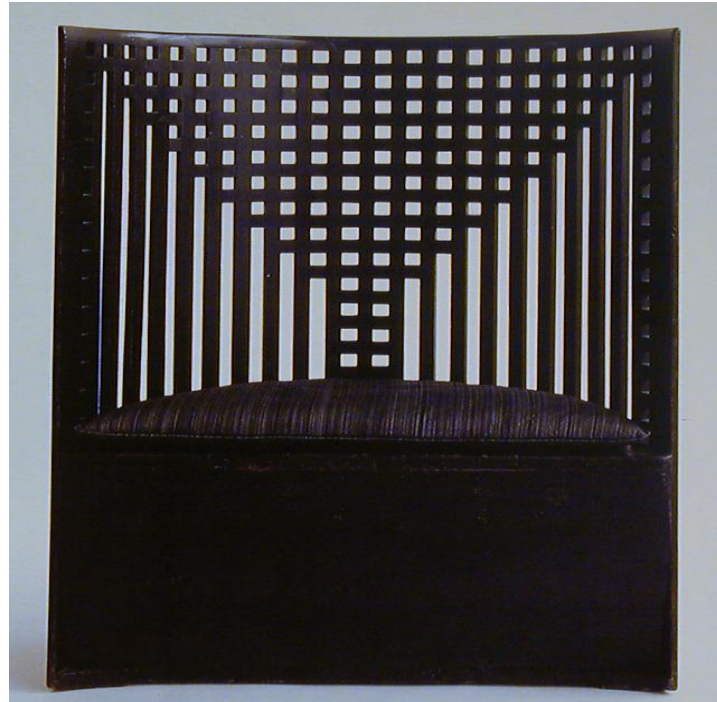
The Ingram Street Tea Room

<http://www.design1900online.com/page25/page26/page26.html>



The Willow Tea Rooms

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willow_Tearooms



Chair for the Order Desk at the Willow tea room.

<http://www.design1900online.com/page25/page26/page26.html>

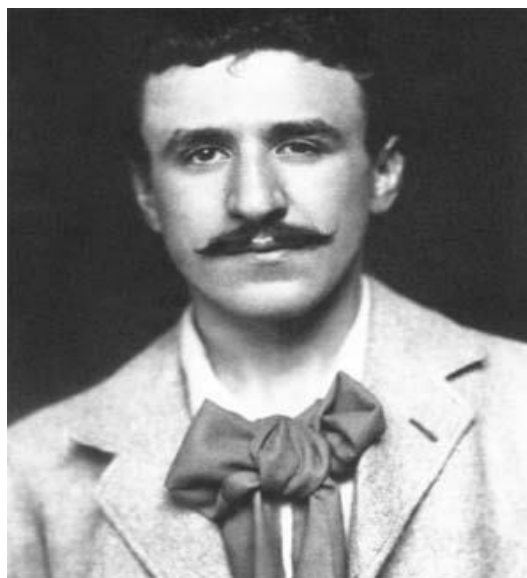


Willow tea rooms today.

<http://www.design1900online.com/page25/page26/page26.html>

Decline

Mackintosh had designed a music room at Carl-Ludwigstrasse in Vienna for Fritz Warndorfer and through this work had gained massive respect in Europe. However, the reputation he had gained in Europe had not made the slightest difference to his reputation in Glasgow, where he felt under-appreciated. Following the completion of the Glasgow School of Art in 1909, his career began to steadily decline and there were few commissions between 1909 and 1911. (Charlotte and Peter Fiell, 1997) In 1913 Mackintosh resigned his position at Honeyman and Keppie with his capacity for work having been diminished through heavy drinking and damaged confidence. He and his wife moved to Suffolk in England in 1914 where he produced a series of botanical watercolours. In 1915 they moved again, this time to Chelsea. Here he began again, to undertake various architectural projects, one of which was a commission to refurbish and redecorate a house in Northampton which he executed in a very modern style. In 1923 the couple moved to Port Vendres in the south of France. Mackintosh devoted himself to watercolour painting while there and produced a portfolio of landscape paintings. In the Autumn of 1927 he complained of a sore throat and was persuaded to return to London on doctor's recommendation. Soon afterwards he was diagnosed with throat and tongue cancer and he died on December 10, 1928 at the age of sixty. His wife Margaret passed away five years later on January 10, 1933. (Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Thomas Howard, 1977)



Charles Rennie Mackintosh

My Opinion

Overall I would have to say that I am a massive admirer of Charles Rennie Mackintosh's work. While I cannot state that his work has influenced me personally to date, I certainly anticipate his work influencing me in the future. Having researched thoroughly his architecture, interior design and furniture design, there is nothing that I don't particularly like.

The Glasgow School of Art for example, I like for its sheer scale. The massive three story windows look amazing and provide fantastic light for the students inside. These windows are also north facing so direct sunlight never beams through them, which is important and shows attention to detail on his part. The decorative iron work which is also functional, also looks beautiful. The library in this building is very eye catching. There is a strong Japanese influence in this room which I like and the contrast of the natural light hitting the dark stained timber throughout the room is appealing to me.

At Hill House where Mackintosh was given free rein to design all aspects of the house, grounds and interior, it's his attention to detail that I most admire. The fact that he insisted on the trees in the garden being trimmed to match his drawings is actually amusing to me, but shows an absolute determination to achieve perfection, which is admirable. The bedroom in particular at Hill House looks modern even today. I like the light and airy colour scheme of the room and it just looks clean and uncluttered.

In the tea rooms I find his stenciled wall decorations to be very simple and elegant. This is of course where he first introduced his high back chair, which is a very striking piece of furniture that I admire. The subtle shape of the willow tree that he incorporated into the design of the chair at the order desk at the Willow tea rooms is beautifully executed and understated. This piece of furniture in particular is one of my favourite pieces of his work.

His furniture on the whole I find very appealing in its design. It is generally clean, crisp and not fussy in any way, which is to my taste. He used a lot of sharp edges and straight lines in some of his designs and this gives his furniture a modern feel to it even by today's standards. The high back chair which forms a sharp and rigid shape also manages to have an elegant look about it and it is certainly an eye

catching piece of furniture. His cabinet designs in contrast to some of his chair design hardly contained a straight line in them. They are full of curves and tapers, but this more organically influenced design still looks clean and crisp and works wonderfully well in my opinion.

So as I said before, I admire greatly pretty much all of Mackintosh's work and feel that it may well influence any future designs or work I produce myself in the years to come.

More Pictures of Mackintosh Works



Queen Margaret Medical College (Opened 1895)

<http://www.scotcities.com/mackintosh/>



House for an Art Lover (Designed 1901)

<http://www.scotcities.com/mackintosh/>



Hallway in Hill House © [T & R Annan & Sons Ltd](#)



High Back Chair



Mackintosh Cabinet

These images are © The Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery, University of Glasgow 2014.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I really enjoyed working on this assignment and learning about Charles Rennie Mackintosh. I did not have a great knowledge of the works of Mackintosh at the outset and am now undoubtedly better informed. Whereas before I would not have been able to pick a Mackintosh piece of furniture out of a line-up, I would now not have any problem at all in identifying his unique style. I now greatly appreciate his work and am actually a fan of it. I plan to take what I have found out on this assignment forward with my future learning and may incorporate some Mackintosh influenced elements in my future designs.

References

Mackintosh Architecture, Academy Editions London, Second Edition, 1980.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Charlotte and Peter Fiell, Taschen, 1997.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh and The Modern Movement, Thomas Howarth, 1977.

<http://designmuseum.org/design/charles-rennie-mackintosh>

<http://www.design1900online.com/page25/page25.html>

<http://www.gsa.ac.uk/visit-gsa/mackintosh-building-tours/charles-rennie-mackintosh/>

<http://www.charlesrenniemac.co.uk>

<http://www.crmsociety.com>

<http://designmuseum.org/design/charles-rennie-mackintosh>

<http://www.huntsearch.gla.ac.uk/Mackintosh/biography.html>

Appendix

Charles Rennie Mackintosh Timeline:

- 1868** Born 7 June, Glasgow
- 1883** Enrolled at Glasgow School of Art
- 1884** Apprenticed to John Hutchison, architect, Glasgow
- 1889** Joined Honeyman and Keppie, architects, Glasgow as a draughtsman
- 1891** Tour of Italy
- 1893** 'Glasgow Herald' newspaper premises
- 1894** Queen Margaret Medical College, University of Glasgow
- 1895** Martyrs' Public School, Glasgow
- 1896** Decorative schemes for Miss Cranston's Tea Rooms, Buchanan Street, Glasgow
- Exhibits at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, London
- 1897** Wins competition for the Glasgow School of Art; first phase completed 1899
- Queen's Cross Church, Glasgow
- 1898** Glasgow International Exhibition buildings, competition entry
- Furniture and decorative schemes for Miss Cranston's tea rooms, Argyle Street, Glasgow
- 1900** 'Daily Record' newspaper premises
- Windyhill, Kilmacolm
- Interiors for Miss Cranston's Tea Rooms, Ingram Street, Glasgow
- Marries Margaret Macdonald and moves to 120 Mains Street, Glasgow
- Exhibits at the Vienna Secession
- 1901** 'A House for an Art Lover' competition entry
- Made partner in Honeyman and Keppie
- Liverpool Cathedral competition entry
- 1902** The Hill House, Helensburgh
- Exhibits at the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative Art, Turin
- 1903** The Willow Tea Rooms, Glasgow
- Scotland Street School, Glasgow
- 1904** Interiors for Hous'hill, Glasgow

1906 Moved to 6 Florentine Terrace, Glasgow (later renamed 78 Southpark Avenue)

1907 Second phase of Glasgow School of Art

1914 Partnership of Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh dissolved

The Mackintoshes have an extended holiday in Walberswick, Suffolk

1915-23 In London, working on watercolour painting and textile designs

1916 Interiors for 78 Derngate, Northampton

1920 Unrealised designs for studios in Chelsea

1923-27 In the South of France, focusing on watercolour painting

1927 Returns to London, terminally ill with cancer

1928 Dies in London, 10 December

<http://www.huntsearch.gla.ac.uk/Mackintosh/biography.html>

Works to be found at:

Glasgow School of Art

Hunterian Art Gallery, [The Hunterian Art Gallery online catalogue](#)

