

# Mackintosh House

## Room by Room

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# Welcome

The Hunterian Art Gallery houses one of the most important collections of the work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh.

## Charles Rennie Mackintosh

The Scottish architect, designer and artist Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868–1928) was one of the most individual and creative designers of the turn of the last century. His tea room interiors are central to Glasgow's identity and his architectural masterpieces, including The Hill House and Queen's Cross Church, are internationally celebrated. His rooms feature furniture of his own design arranged with meticulous care and precision. The overall effect shows his extraordinary sensitivity to colour, light, space and atmosphere.

## Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh

Margaret Macdonald (1864–1933) was one of the most gifted artist-designers working in Glasgow at the turn of the last century. Her range is impressive: metalwork, textiles, graphics, watercolours and gesso. Her achievements with the latter were unmatched in Britain. Macdonald often worked in collaboration, with her talented sister Frances in the 1890s and later with Mackintosh in the early 1900s.

# The Mackintosh House

The Mackintosh House contains the reassembled interiors from 78 Southpark Avenue, Glasgow. Originally 6 Florentine Terrace, this mid-19th century house was remodelled by the Mackintoshes who lived there from 1906 to 1914.

The original house was demolished in the early 1960s but the fixtures were preserved and reassembled at the Hunterian Art Gallery, complete with the Mackintoshes' contents.

The Gallery architects, Whitfield Partners, took pains to ensure that the rooms exactly reflected the original. 78 Southpark Avenue stood only some 100 metres away so virtually the same views and effects of natural light are enjoyed.

The interiors, completed in 1981, have been furnished with the Mackintoshes' own furniture – all to Mackintosh's design – and decorated as closely as possible to the original. The selection of bric à brac, fitted carpets, curtains and other soft furnishings was based on contemporary descriptions of the house and photographs of Mackintosh interiors of the period.

The Introduction Gallery tells the story of the Mackintoshes, their house and the collection.

## Hall

In the Hall Mackintosh introduced a new front door, south-facing window, panelling and wall-strapping. The most striking object is the beaten lead mirror, entitled 'Vanity', designed and made by Margaret and Frances Macdonald and Frances' husband James Herbert McNair in 1896.

## Dining Room

The most significant alteration was the introduction of a new fireplace on the north wall. The decorative scheme boldly subdivides the space between the white ceiling, frieze and sombre stencilled decoration. The dark-stained furniture dates from the late 1890s to 1900. Most striking are the chairs, Mackintosh's first 'high-back', based on a design for Miss Cranston's Tea Rooms, Argyle Street, Glasgow (1898). The armchair probably had a plaque by Margaret Macdonald in the oval back-rail. The armchair, dining table and wooden-seated chair have been lent by the Glasgow School of Art. The two chairs on the long sides of the table belonged to the Mackintoshes, while the two against the wall are modern reproductions.

## Studio-Drawing Room

Two rooms were knocked through to create this breathtaking L-shaped interior, decorated throughout in white and flooded with light from a new horizontal window on the south wall. Much of the Victorian

detailing was removed or replaced – fireplaces, doors, light-fittings, cornices, while a screening wall was introduced above picture-rail level to mask the vertical proportions of the two east windows.

The furniture was a skilful mix of dark stained items, mainly of the late 1890s and white-painted pieces of the early 1900s. Certain items were exhibited in Mackintosh's lifetime to great acclaim on the Continent. For example the stencilled chairs and oval table in the drawing room formed part of the Mackintoshes' celebrated room setting 'The Rose Boudoir' exhibited in Turin in 1902.

Mackintosh collaborated with Margaret Macdonald on several major projects in the early 1900s. In this interior, decorative silvered metal panels by her are incorporated in the white desk.

The other desk, the mahogany writing cabinet in the studio, was purchased for a world-record price in 1979 after an international appeal. A sophisticated design, it combines rectilinear and curvilinear forms and a variety of decorative materials. Its accompanying chair is a replica.

As none of the Mackintoshes' library survives, the studio bookshelves have been filled with titles which reflect their known interests and reading. Works with appropriate decorative bindings of the period have also been included.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Landing**

Few alterations were made to the stairwell as a whole except for the introduction of a new south-facing window at the first floor landing. At this upper level, the west wall was panelled and a plaster panel, based on a design for the Willow Tea Rooms, incorporated above. The striped stairway led to an attic studio/bedroom, not reconstructed.

## **Bedroom**

As in the studio-drawing room, two rooms were knocked through to create an L-shaped apartment, decorated in white, with new door, light-fittings and fireplace. The furniture, with its sculptural detailing inspired by plant and bird forms, was designed in 1900.

# **The Mackintosh House Gallery**

The Mackintosh House Gallery is entered from the second-floor landing. It houses other works from the University's Mackintosh Collection, the most extensive holding of

Mackintosh's drawings and designs in the world. A

permanent feature of the Gallery is the reconstruction of one of Mackintosh's last interior schemes, the dramatic guest bedroom from 78 Derngate, Northampton of 1916.

## **The Mackintosh Estate and Collection**

The Mackintoshes' Estate was gifted to the University of Glasgow by their nephew in 1947. This donation provided the University with an unrivalled holding of Mackintosh's drawings, designs and watercolours, covering all aspects of his output: architectural sketches and designs, flower drawings, interior designs, graphic and textile designs and watercolours. In addition a small but important archive includes correspondence, contemporary periodicals and photographs. The Estate also contains over 40 works by Margaret Macdonald, the largest single representation of her output.

Since 1947 significant additions have been made to the Collection. With over 1,000 items, it is now the world centre for the study of Mackintosh. The Collection also includes important examples of work by Frances Macdonald, James Herbert McNair and other artists and designers working in Glasgow from the 1890s.

# Further Information

Find out more about the Mackintosh Collection on our website: [glasgow.ac.uk/hunterian/collections](https://glasgow.ac.uk/hunterian/collections)

To find out more about Mackintosh in Glasgow visit: <https://www.crmsociety.com/>

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