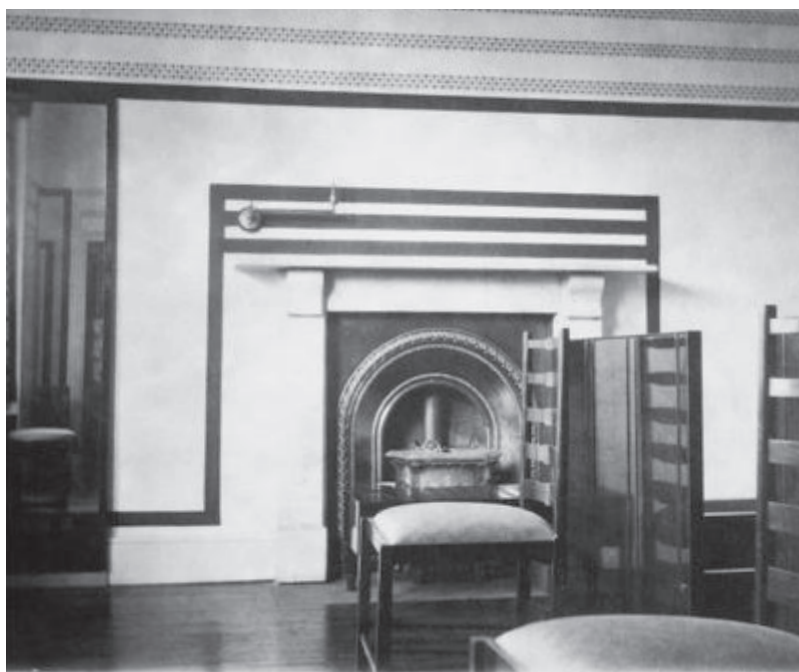
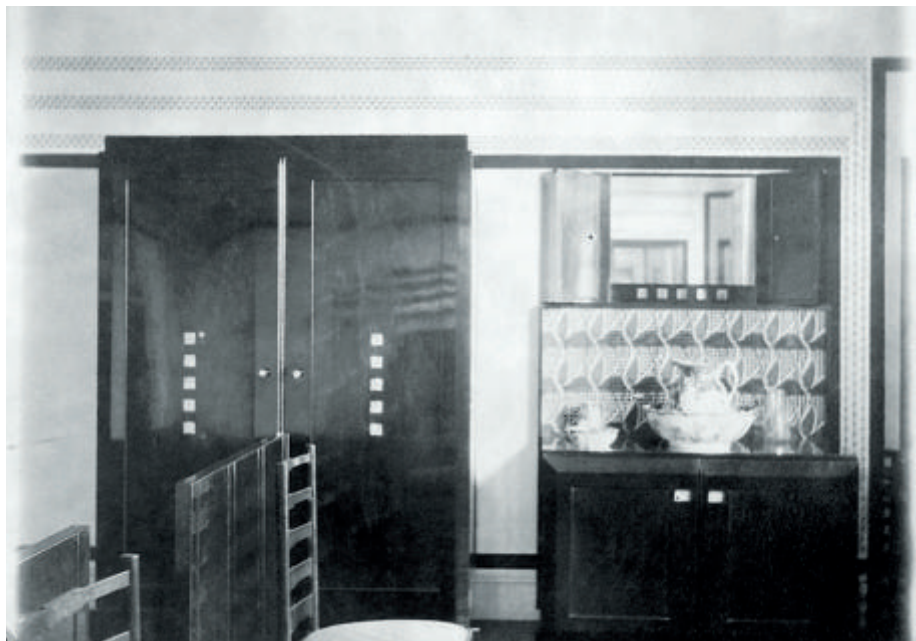


Charles Rennie Mackintosh's **A BEDROOM AT BATH**





Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 1920.
© Glasgow School of Art



Bedroom, Onega Lodge, c1920.
Courtesy of Roger Billcliffe, collection of V&A.

Front Cover: Bedroom, Onega Lodge, c1920. Courtesy of Roger Billcliffe, collection of V&A.

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A BEDROOM AT BATH

A story of Charles Rennie Mackintosh,
Sidney Horstmann and Wenman Bassett-Lowke

Dr Trevor Turpin

Bath Industrial Heritage Trust Ltd

Charles Rennie Mackintosh's **A Bedroom at Bath**



Bedroom suite on display in 1966 at Bethnal Green Museum.
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Introduction

In 1917, Sidney Horstmann, an engineer and inventor, had a bedroom at his house in Bath designed by the acclaimed Scottish architect, designer and artist, Charles Rennie Mackintosh. It was furnished with furniture to Mackintosh's design. Wenman Bassett-Lowke, the model engineer (and for whom Mackintosh was executing some work at his home in Northampton), and a friend of Horstmann, facilitated the arrangement.

This is the beginning of the jigsaw.

The furniture is today in the care of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and the scale drawing by Mackintosh for the room's decoration is held by The Hunterian, University of Glasgow. Photographs of the room as decorated and furnished also still exist.

Those are the last pieces of the jigsaw.

It is hoped that this catalogue will, by telling the story as far as it is known of the gaps in between, and by including an element of conjecture, enable the reader to at least have an impression of the complete picture of **A Bedroom at Bath.**



The Horstmann brothers

Context

Once the reality of the First World War began to bite, restrictions to conserve materials for the war effort meant that new house building became difficult. This challenge was replicated to an extent by the production of new furniture and furnishings. It was exacerbated by the diversion of skilled craftsmen and women to war duties – either volunteering, conscription or for protected employment such as engineering. Both Horstmann and Bassett-Lowke responded by turning their engineering skills, abilities and resources to production of precision instruments for military purposes; this also protected their labour forces.

In 1916 Bassett-Lowke was engaged to be married: a new house was out of the question and so he focussed his attention on a Georgian terraced house in the centre of Northampton, at 78 Derngate, that his father had bought for him. Its conversion overcame the challenge of finding a home suitable for his new adventure. Fitting it would be addressed by the expedient of arranging his factory craftsmen to execute the designs of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. The furniture itself was made by skilled German cabinet makers who were interned at Knockaloe camp on the Isle of Man.

This enabled him to support these craftsmen while facilitating his own requirements.

At this time (1916), Horstmann and Bassett-Lowke, both engineers, were 35 and 38 respectively and busy fulfilling government orders for the war effort. Mackintosh was 48 and while he had been one of the most successful architects in Scotland, he was no longer a partner with Honeyman, Keppie & Mackintosh, and was now based in London and work in his profession was difficult to obtain.

Sidney Adolph Horstmann

The youngest child of Gustav Horstmann, a watchmaker from Westphalia who had settled in Bath in 1854, Sidney Adolph Horstmann was brought up in the traditions of craftsmanship and engineering. He was born on the 7th July 1881 and was apprenticed to the early motoring enthusiast and research engineer Commander Bayntun Hippisley at Ston Easton near Bath. He was an indefatigable inventor – sometimes and eventually, successful.

His first patent when he was just 25 was for a two-speed gear and free engine for motorcycles. He had a workshop at this time in Monmouth Street in Bath before he purchased the old roller skating rink in James St. West where he established Horstmann Cars Ltd. His first car was awarded the prize for 'The Car with the Most Novel Features' at the 1913 Motor Show.

He had married Frances Osborne in 1909 and initially they lived in Norfolk Crescent near to the workshop. In 1911 they took a lease for three years on Onega Lodge, an 1880s Victorian villa just along from Norfolk Crescent on the Upper Bristol Road. They were to live here until 1935.

On the outbreak of war in 1914 and at the age of 33 he had to turn his production such as it was to wartime purposes. Charles Lister of Dursley suggested manufacturing gauges. Sidney said that he had none of the necessary equipment to which Lister replied, 'You have lathes; adapt them.' He clearly did and manufactured screw thread gauges and was awarded the MBE for his company's war efforts in 1919.



Sidney Horstmann, his wife Frances & daughters Katherine and Alison (front) c1923. Courtesy of Tim Dunmore

After the war, he continued to manufacture motor cars but struggled with competition and finance and his last car was made in 1928. However, in that year he had patented (to himself 'of Onega Lodge, Bath' and to his Company) his Slow Motion Suspension. Eventually this was taken up for use in tracked vehicles and is still manufactured in Bath to this day and exported worldwide by the company which still uses the name Horstman. (The second 'n' was dropped after 1918 in deference to anti-German feeling).



The Horstmann Car Company, James Street West Works, Bath c1915.



Horstmann 1913-14 Car,
Museum of Bath at Work



1923 Horstman Tourer owned by Sidney Horstmann.
Photo courtesy Tony Baker



Terrier® fitted with Horstman suspension and running gear c2010.



Horstmann timers, 2017



Horstmann Lighters 1950s.

Sidney had also founded the Horstmann Gear Company with his brothers, which operated from Newbridge Road in Bath. During the Second World War, this Company again made gauges, clocks and compasses. During the 1950s it specialised in gas street lighting, time switches and with increased use of central heating systems, domestic programmers. It relocated to Bristol in 2000 and today Horstmann Controls is a leading designer and manufacturer of domestic thermostats, central heating programmers and switch controls.

Sidney remained an inventor throughout his life, designing such items as hair clippers, mousetraps and gas lighters. He was awarded the OBE in 1955 and died in 1962 at Fairlawn, Weston in Bath, the house he had lived in since his move from Onega Lodge.

Wenman Bassett-Lowke

Wenman Joseph Bassett-Lowke was born on 27th December 1877. His father, Joseph Lowke ran the engineering and boiler-making business started by his stepfather, Absalom Bassett, in Kingswell Street, Northampton. He left school at 13 and undertook practical training including some 18 months in an architect's office; he then took an apprenticeship with the family firm. By 1897 this was J. T. Lowke & Sons run by his father who encouraged him to take an electrical engineering apprenticeship in 1898.

He was making model steam engines in his spare time and turned this into a mail-order business selling castings and model fittings in 1899 as W. J. Bassett-Lowke & Co. In 1900 he visited the Paris Exposition Universelle where he established contacts with the Nuremberg toy manufacturers, Bing Brothers and Georges Carette. He was impressed by the high quality of their models and resolved to have model locomotives made to his specifications in Germany. 'It was here that his lasting admiration for things German began.'¹ On this basis, the business thrived and in 1908 he opened his first shop in High Holborn, London. He joined the Institution of Locomotive Engineers in 1911. In 1914 he bought a cottage in Roade outside Northampton, which he named Candida Cottage after the George Bernard Shaw play: he was a great admirer of Shaw.

With the outbreak of war, his company's precision engineering and model ship making was diverted to government work and Bassett-Lowke began to engage in other activities: in 1916 he joined the Fabians and then the Design & Industries Association (DIA), formed



Wenman Bassett-Lowke, c1915.

© The Hunterian, University of Glasgow

to promote good design in industry and society.

He married Florence Jones (a daughter of Charles Jones, co-founder of Crockett & Jones, shoemakers of Northampton) on 21st March 1917. They moved into 78 Derngate, a house dating from 1815 and bought for Bassett-Lowke by his father in 1916, and which Bassett-Lowke had remodelled to designs of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. (Mackintosh also produced designs

¹ Janet Bassett-Lowke, 2005. p.28



Bassett-Lowke engine & adverts; Trix wagon c1938. showing acknowledgment from Bing.

for furniture and decoration for Candida Cottage in 1917-18). They lived here until 1926 when they moved to New Ways, Wellingborough Road, Northampton, designed for them by the German architect Peter Behrens.²

After the war, as well as his core business of model trains, he diversified into making scale model ships, architectural and planning models. In the depression of 1929, business struggled and shops he had opened in Edinburgh and Manchester closed and his German supplier, Stefan Bing lost his business. (Bassett-Lowke helped him establish Trix Twin trains with a London HQ in 1935).



Original Bassett-Lowke shop in High Holborn, London.

© 78 Derngate Northampton Trust

With the advent of the Second World War, he again adapted his business to special work including models to plan the D-Day landings.

² 78 Derngate is now conserved as the Charles Rennie Mackintosh House and is open to the public. www.78derngate.org.uk

He founded the Northampton Rotary club in 1921, was on the board of the Northampton Royal Theatre and became a Labour Councillor in 1930. In the role of chairman of the Building Committee, he promoted the civic centre including the new public baths and a fire station – with a modernist design. He was a keen traveller and photographer. He died in 1953.



Wenman Bassett-Lowke: the photographer.
© 78 Derngate Northampton Trust



Bassett-Lowke & Florence at 78 Derngate c1918.
© 78 Derngate Northampton Trust

Charles Rennie Mackintosh

Charles Rennie Mackintosh is today recognised as one of Scotland's greatest architects and his masterpiece, the Glasgow School of Art, attracts visitors from all over the world. He was the son of a policeman with the City of Glasgow force and was born on 7th June 1868. He left school at 14 and took a pupillage in architecture, joining the Glasgow architectural firm of John Honeyman & Keppie as a draughtsman in 1889. He attended evening classes at the Glasgow School of Art and it was here that his drawing talent was spotted by Francis Newbery, the head of the School. He was also designing furniture, showing several pieces at an Arts and Crafts exhibition in Glasgow in 1895. In this year, he undertook a sketching tour of Somerset, Oxford and Gloucestershire. He had met the artist Margaret Macdonald at the School of Art and they married in 1900.

He soon made his mark at John Honeyman & Keppie and in 1897, the firm won the competition for the new School of Art; the drawings for the School were by Mackintosh. The first stage of the School was completed in 1899 and he became a partner of the firm in 1901. He completed many commissions designing schools, offices, houses and churches. Margaret and Mackintosh exhibited at the Vienna Secession in 1900, an exhibition promoted by the architect Josef Hoffman; they were to spend six weeks in Vienna, forming a lasting friendship with many architects and designers. Mackintosh was reported as saying that the trip to Vienna was the high point of his life.³

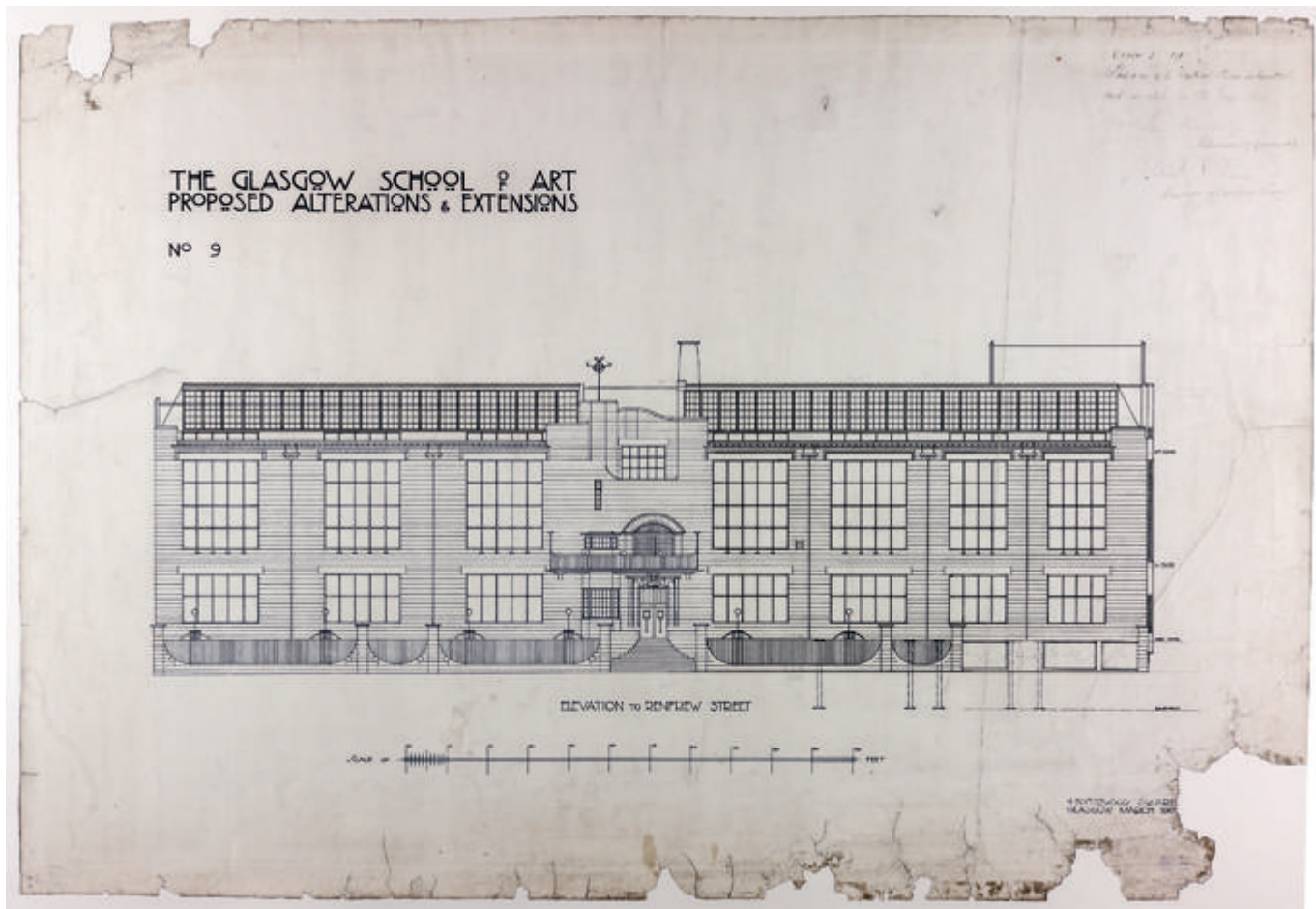
³ Crawford, 1995, p.79



The Immortals: CRM front, Margaret Macdonald second left, 1893. © Glasgow School of Art

An important client at this time was Miss Catherine Cranston, owner of tea-rooms in Glasgow, and for whom he was to design a number of interiors through to 1917.

Between 1896 and 1907 Mackintosh designed around fifty buildings and interiors; from then until 1914 he completed only nine – his star was waning in his home city. He resigned from the partnership in 1913 and in July 1914 he and Margaret left Glasgow for recuperation at a house in Walberswick on the Suffolk coast, adjoining one owned by Francis Newbery. Soon after, war was declared, Margaret let their home in Glasgow and Mackintosh never returned to the city of his birth and his outstanding architectural work.



Glasgow School of Art, Elevation to Renfrew Street, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, c1907.

© Glasgow School of Art.



Porlock Weir, Somerset, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 1895. © The Hunterian, University of Glasgow

At Walberswick he rediscovered his skill and love of drawing and embarked on a series of flower paintings. He would go for walks along the coast with his sketch book, deerstalker and cape. The local people were intrigued by his perambulations and strange accent. Allegedly, one evening, trying to fix a lantern, he raised local suspicions that he was signalling to the enemy. In May 1915 the military authorities raided his house

and found, unsurprisingly, letters from fellow artists in Austria and Germany. These were confiscated, Mackintosh was detained and, the following week, orders were served to leave the area. He went to London in an attempt to clear his name.

In August Margaret joined him and they found two adjacent studios in Glebe Place, Chelsea. They were to stay here for eight years. They formed friendships with



Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh, c1900.
© Glasgow School of Art

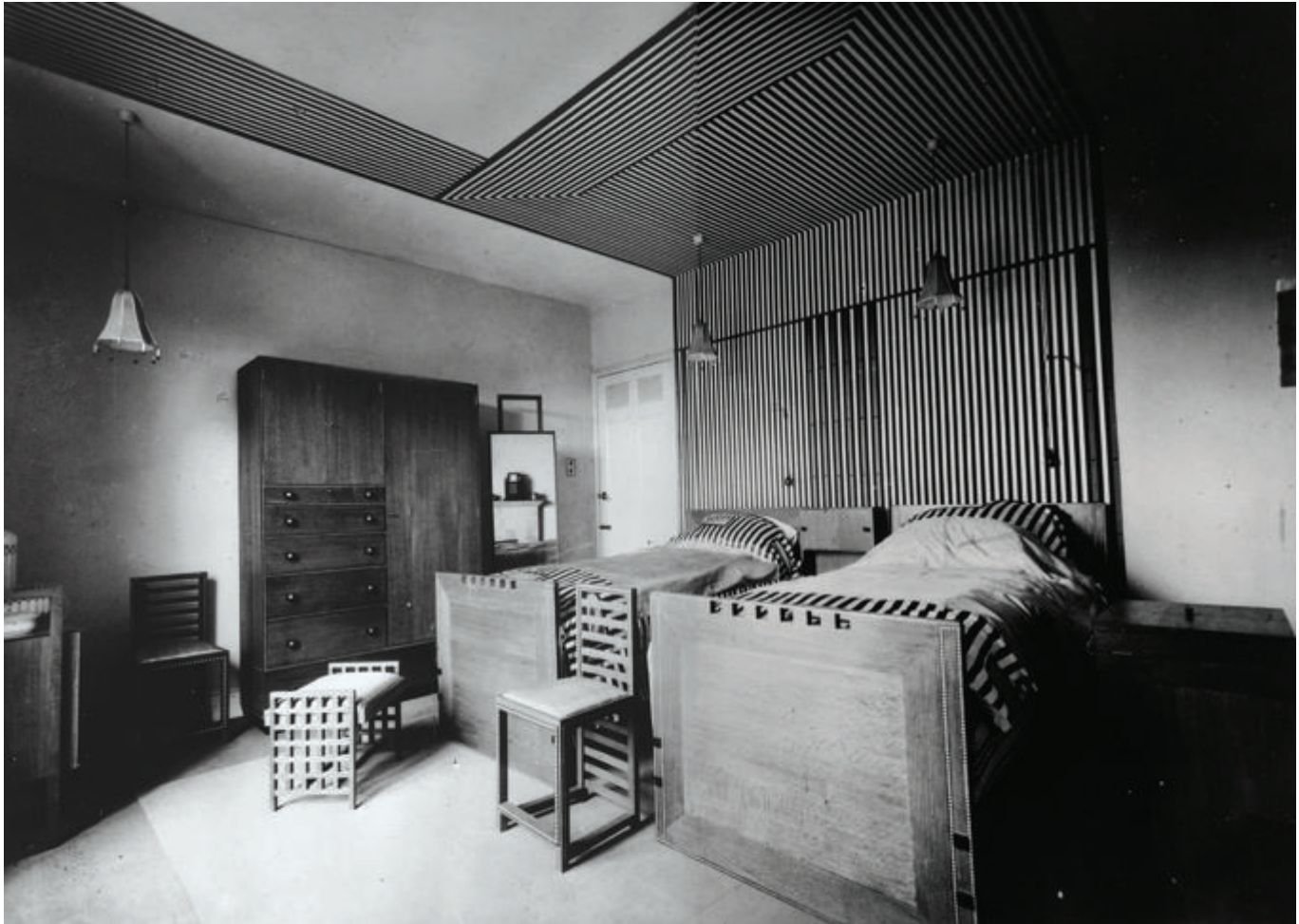
painters, photographers, actors and musicians – from being relatively well off and part of the bourgeoisie in Glasgow, they were now poorer bohemians in London.⁴ Mackintosh had some work with Patrick Geddes, the town planner who was working on plans for cities in India, but seems to have focussed on his painting: work was hard to find for architects, and Mackintosh and Margaret also turned to textile designs. Many of these were bought by William Foxtan – an enthusiast for progressive design and vivid colour. Foxtan was also a member of the DIA.

⁴ Crawford, 1995, p.166



Gaillardia, Walberswick, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 1914.
© Glasgow School of Art

Charles Rennie Mackintosh's **A Bedroom at Bath**



Guest bedroom, 78 Derngate, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 1917.
© 78 Derngate Northampton Trust



Textile design, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 1915.
© Glasgow School of Art

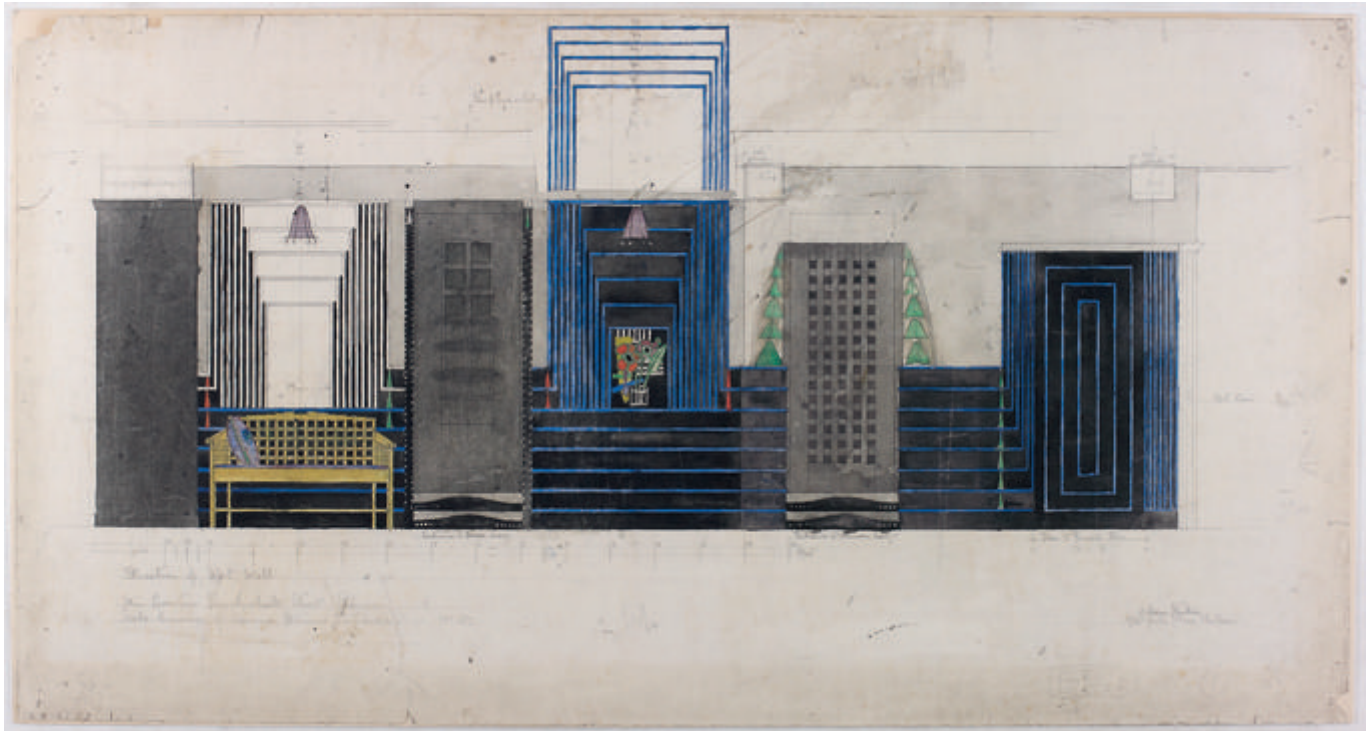
In early 1916, he was contacted by Bassett-Lowke to help him on 78 Derngate. The plans for the modest three-storey Georgian terraced house had been submitted to the local authority by A.E. Anderson in June 1916 – a Scottish architect practising in

5 Kinchin. 2005. p.11



Bouquet, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 1918.
© Glasgow School of Art

Northampton. These plans show the staircase moved through 90° and a 2-storey extension at the rear. Bassett-Lowke was to say (to Thomas Howarth in 1944-46⁵) that Mackintosh had nothing to do with the structural alterations as this was carried out before he met him. However, it is thought that Mackintosh was instrumental in the creation of a full height white extension at the rear, with views over the River Nene – very much in the Modern style. Entering the house however, there is a marked contrast, with the entrance



Design for The Dug-Out, Willow Tea Rooms, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 1917. © Glasgow School of Art

hall painted black: the furniture was black and the floor was black. The rest of the house was quieter in greys and sycamore or mahogany. Much of the work was managed by Bassett-Lowke.

All was completed in time for Bassett-Lowke's wedding in March 1917 – Charles and Margaret sent a wedding gift of a book of plays by George Bernard Shaw as a 'token of our best wishes for your united happiness'⁶: a clear demonstration of the friendship between the

two couples. The guest bedroom at Derngate was one of Mackintosh's more remarkable designs, with vertical black and white stripes on the wall and across the ceiling of the room; the curtains and bedspreads were of similar design. George Bernard Shaw was an occasional visitor to the house and when it was hoped that the décor would not disturb his sleep, replied 'No, I always sleep with my eyes closed'.⁷

Mackintosh later received a final commission from

⁶ Janet Bassett-Lowke. p.105

⁷ Howarth, in Crawford. 1995. p.179

Miss Cranston who required a war-time theme for an underground extension to the Willow Tea Rooms in Glasgow, to be called 'The Dug-Out'. The design was similar to the hall at Derngate.

Charles and Margaret continued with their textile designs and he with his still-life flower paintings – now more in the bold and colourful Fauve style than the more precise, delicate Walberswick days. After this Derngate commission, Mackintosh worked on alterations at Candida Cottage and then a number of schemes in Chelsea. Only one, at Glebe Place, was built. Finally, in 1921, Bassett-Lowke asked him to redecorate the hall at Derngate.

In 1923, Margaret and Charles left Chelsea for a long holiday in the south of France where they stayed for four years. They moved around Roussillon, spending the summers in the foothills of the Pyrenees and the winters on the coast – in 1925 they were in Port Vendres at the Hotel du Commerce where they were frequent visitors. In 1927, she went to London for medical treatment and Mackintosh wrote to her almost every day. He was brought wine for dinner "they have the happy idea to give me still a full bottle of wine and I have the good and happy idea to drink only about half of it"⁸ – evidence that while he had been rumoured to have a reliance on alcohol during the difficult times, this had been overcome. The life in France had brought him solace and contentment.

Mackintosh died in London in December 1928 having suffered with cancer of the tongue for some time; Margaret travelled in France and Britain in search of health cures until her death, also in London, in 1933.



Slate Roofs, Roussillon, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 1924.

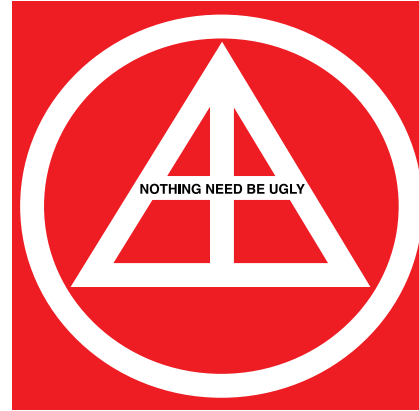
© Glasgow School of Art

8 The Chronycle, Thursday 12th May p.49

Design and Industries Association

Wenman Bassett-Lowke was an early member of this Association. Sir Gordon Russell, the furniture maker and designer, recorded in his obituary of Bassett-Lowke that he came to know him as a founder, although he doesn't appear on the original founders list.

The Design & Industries Association (DIA) is an organisation that was formed in 1915 by designers, businessmen, industrialists, and with the slogan "Nothing Need be Ugly", and the aim to change the way products were designed and perceived by the public. Inspired by the Deutscher Werkbund (DWB), which had been established in Germany in 1907 to improve standards of design in manufacturing industry and everyday life, the DIA was established in London with similar aims. The DIA sought to promote better understanding between manufacturers, designers, and retailers. However, it attracted neither the membership numbers nor the influence of its German counterpart and was unclear whether it supported the principles of the Arts and Crafts Movement or 20th century modernism. The founder members of the DIA included the metalwork designer Harold Stabler, Ambrose Heal and Frank Pick, all of whom had been impressed by the range of products and buildings on display at the DWB exhibition in Cologne in 1914.



Nothing Need be Ugly, Design and Industries Association.

William Foxtan, the textile designer and maker, was also an early member⁹ who commissioned fabric designs from independent designers.

Early DIA exhibitions were devoted to printing, textiles, and household goods and the Association also organized seminars and lectures on design matters. From 1922 DIA developed its profile through publications, to embrace ideas of 'Good Design'. The DIA also sought to involve itself with wider issues of town and environmental planning, in line with many of the activities of the Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England. It was organised into regional groups and Bassett-Lowke formed a group in Northampton in 1928. He was a frequent contributor to its journal and organiser of the summer tours, visiting European cities.

⁹ Jackson, Lesley. *Twentieth Century Pattern Design* 2002. p.58

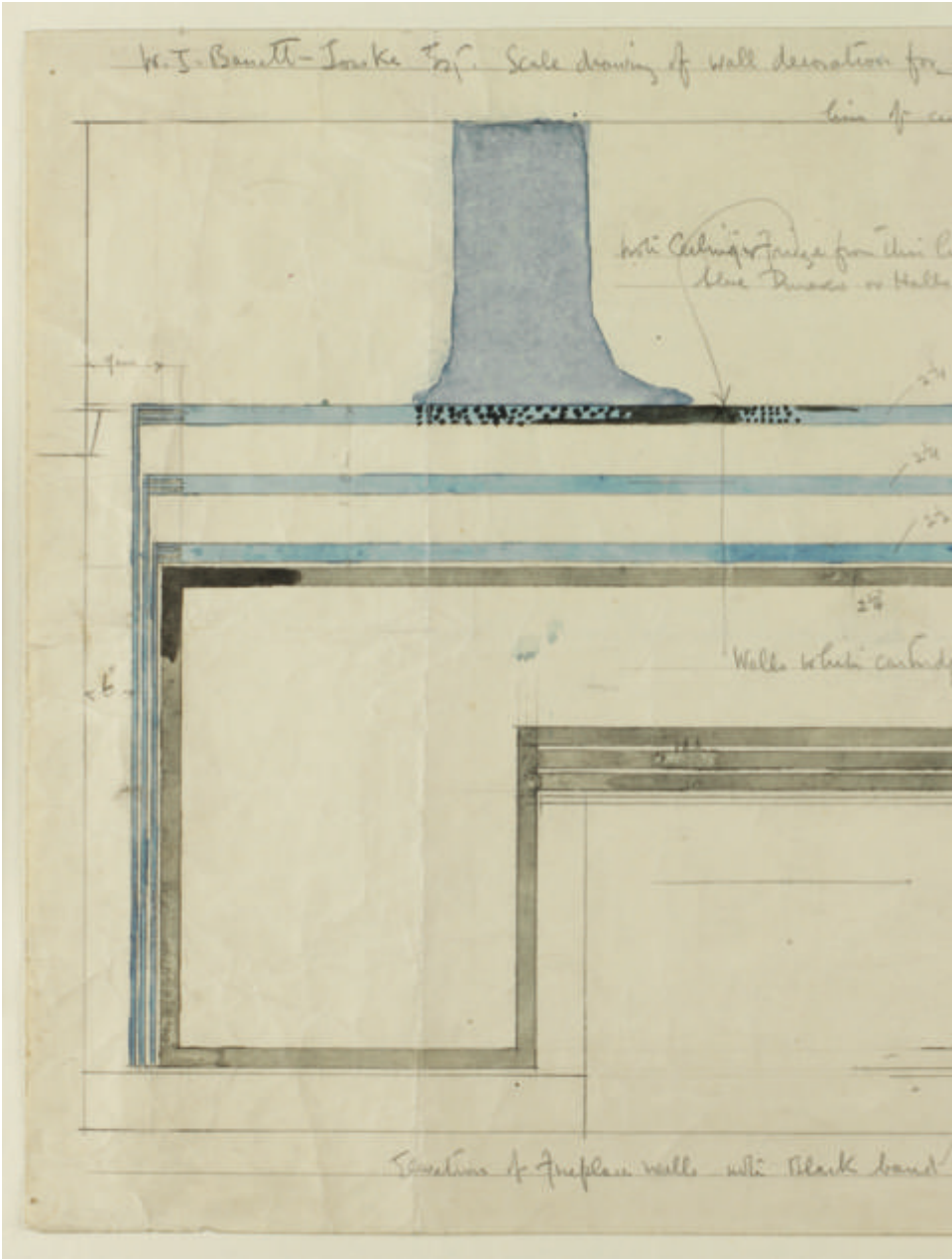


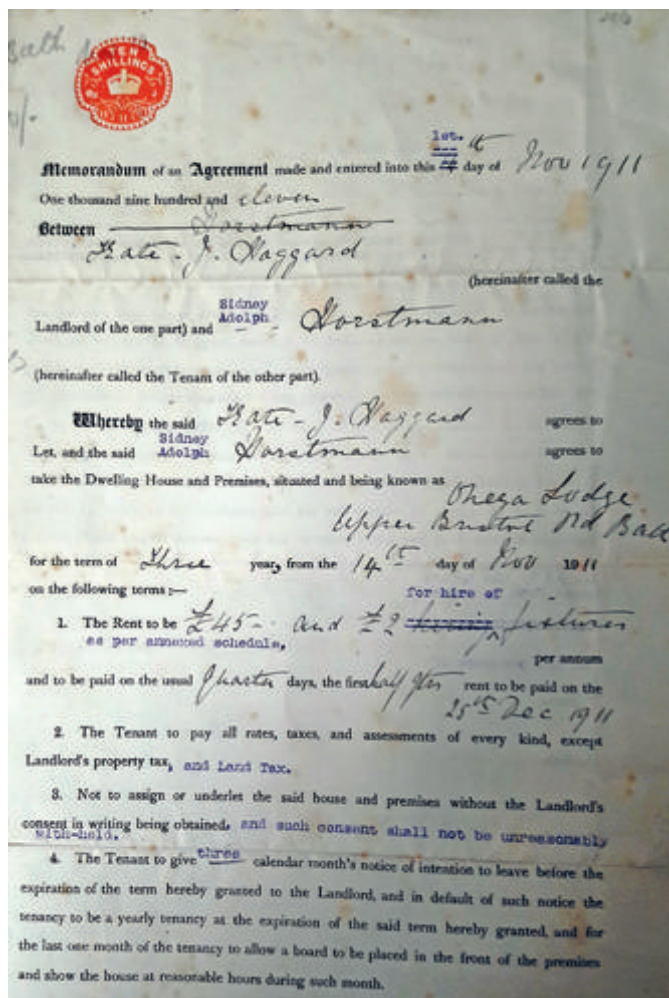
Onega Garage with curved top to windows on first floor, 1975. © Bath in Time.

ONEGA LODGE

Onega Lodge, a detached (c1880) Victorian villa on the Upper Bristol Road in Bath, was some five minutes' walk from Horstmann's workshops in James Street West. It backed on to the River Avon towpath and faced Royal Victoria Park. It would have been some thirty years old at the time, so a relatively modern house, compared to the Georgian Norfolk Crescent. It was therefore a

very favourable position for the Horstmanns to move to and they rented it from Kate Haggard of Bath on the 1st November 1911- for an initial period of three years. The rent was £45 per year with £2 'for the hire of the fixtures'. They didn't leave until 1935 when they were then the owners and we can suspect that when the initial term was reached (in the early months of the First





Omega Lodge lease 1911 to Sidney Horstmann.

World War) that it was purchased from Haggard in or around November 1914.¹⁰

The original 'Schedule of Fixtures' for the house, included:

Front Bedroom-large – Gas stove, gas bracket, 3 blind rollers, hanging pegs. (2 windows are cracked)

In 1917, Mackintosh produced a design, 'W.J. Bassett-Lowke Esq, Scale Drawing of Wall Decoration for Bedroom at Bath' for this room.¹¹ It can be identified from the bay window and fireplace with gas stove on the outer east wall. Sidney Horstmann's younger daughter, Alison Dunmore also remembered the windows having curved tops.

¹⁰ Intriguingly, Omega Lodge does not appear in the Electoral Roll until 1914, when Sidney Horstmann is registered (with Frances from 1918).

¹¹ The Hunterian, University of Glasgow

THE DESIGN

For the decoration of the bedroom, Mackintosh 'created a pattern out of stencilled strips, each approximately 5cms wide; some are solid colour, and others are composed of small triangles of different hues. They seem to have been run around the room at frieze level with deviations around the doors. A solid strip ran above the skirting board, which was diverted around fixtures such as the fireplace, door and beds. Behind the beds was a panel of fabric, designed by Mackintosh, which matched that used for the splash-back of the wash-stand.'¹² This inclusion of fabric in furniture was a development of Mackintosh's (and Margaret's) increasing interest and skill in textile design at this time. It was one of only a few pieces that he designed with textiles (other than chair seat covering) and it is regrettable that it was removed and lost.

Mackintosh's drawing shows that the solid stripes were black and that the walls below the frieze rail were white cartridge paper. Above the frieze, the walls and ceiling were to be painted blue; the curtains and valance (pelmet) were in the same fabric as the splash-back. 'We had to have white walls with a black band framing the walls and a stencil was provided to stencil above the band. It also came with material for the curtains and a panel behind the twin beds'.¹³ Contemporary photographs show that this was carried out – although the colours cannot be confirmed. Alison Dunmore remembered in 2006 that the colours used for the curtains were blues, purples and greens, like the eyes in

a peacock's tail, with white paintwork in the room, and a black line above the window.¹⁴

It was not an easy i.e. soft or homely, design to live with and apparently, Mrs Bassett-Lowke shared this feeling about 78 Derngate with Mrs Horstmann: the design was contemporary with that of the guest bedroom at Derngate and the famous stripes that actually didn't keep Bernard Shaw awake.

THE FURNITURE

The bedroom suite itself was bought by Horstmann 'for £100'¹⁵ from or via Bassett-Lowke. They have been described as 'friends' and 'business acquaintances' – or both.

The furniture was mostly made of mahogany – variously inlaid with mother of pearl and aluminium. The original set was apparently made for Bassett-Lowke's parents' house when he still lived there prior to 1917. It is believed that four sets of the suite were made – as we have seen, by German cabinet-makers interned on the Isle of Man. It is likely that the set from Horstmann's bedroom was one of these. The original and the other copies are in private ownership and the Horstmann suite is the only known set of this bedroom furniture available for public display – designed by Mackintosh and duplicated by Bassett-Lowke; it is not known if Mackintosh ever received a commission for duplication.

Alison was born in one of the beds designed by Mackintosh and, as her mother never really warmed

¹² Billcliffe 1986. p.234

¹³ Image, May 1999.

¹⁴ Interview by Angela Collins, CRM Society, 2006.

¹⁵ Image, May 1999.



German internees in carpentry shop, Knockaloe, 1917.

© 78 Dergate Northampton Trust



Mackintosh-designed furniture awaiting dispatch at Knockaloe, 1917.
© 78 Derngate Northampton Trust



Catalogue for Mackintosh centenary exhibition, Edinburgh, 1968.

to the room, Alison slept there when she was between three to eight years old. Her mother used to say the chairs were very uncomfortable. Alison remembered the

seasoned wood, and how the drawers of the dressing table slid perfectly when used. She recalled her father say, 'One day this suite will be in a museum.'

After the Horstmanns moved to their new home, Fairlawn in Weston, Bath, a large Victorian villa in expansive grounds, they took the furniture with them where it stayed until after Sidney's death in 1962. It was acquired from his widow Frances in 1966 by the V&A who said they 'had very little money but could offer us £200'.¹⁶ Part of the suite was displayed at the Bethnal Green Museum, London in 1966 for the exhibition '50 Years of Modern Design' and the wardrobe and a ladder-back armchair were then included in the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Centenary exhibition in Edinburgh in 1968. The chair was Mackintosh's last variation of the ladder-back.¹⁷ The furniture has since been in store at the V&A, with the dressing table being exhibited at the National Museum of Scotland in 2017.

The Horstmanns left Onega Lodge in September 1935¹⁸ having been carrying out work at Fairlawn for some months in advance of their move. The Lodge eventually became a garage (Onega Garage) with petrol pumps and workshop. In 1977 an application was made to Bath City Council to demolish the building. Despite objections (including from the author) and four refusals by the Council, an Appeal was allowed by the Secretary of State in 1979 for permission to demolish the house being of the opinion that 'Onega Lodge...does not make a positive contribution to the appearance and

¹⁶ Image, May 1999.

¹⁷ Young, 1968. p.58

¹⁸ Horstmann sent a note to the City of Bath Electrical Engineer, J.W. Spark, 'Please disconnect the supply at Onega Lodge on 28th inst. and oblige.' This is unlikely to have been the action of a tenant - suggesting his ownership by this time.



Letter from Bath City Council planning department 1977 and Secretary of State Appeal notice, 1979.

character of the ...Conservation Area'; a Lucas Service Centre was subsequently erected on the land. It is not known if the Mackintosh decoration still existed beneath paint or wallpaper at that time.¹⁹

In 2017 plans were submitted to replace the Service Centre with apartments.

(Fairlawn itself was demolished in 1972 and a new 'Fairlawn' in a Georgian style was erected on the site in 1975 at the same time as an estate of contemporary houses was built on the rest of the grounds.)

¹⁹ Crawford says that the decoration of Onega Lodge was painted over. However, given the confusion in the records between Onega and Fairlawn was this report based on what people thought or did this come from Horstmann and people thought he meant Fairlawn? Did Sidney and Frances paint it over after a few years.

CONJECTURE: THE MISSING JIGSAW PIECES

The jigsaw as presented at the beginning of this story may be completed by imagining a story of the bedroom based on hearsay and recognising some anomalies.

The key to the story is Wenman Bassett-Lowke, a 'modern' man and member of the DIA; he was also a member of the Institution of Locomotive Engineers (later to become the Institution of Mechanical Engineers). Whilst on holiday in Cornwall in 1915 he heard of a 'modern' designer and architect: Charles Rennie Mackintosh. He was to hear of him again from a colleague in the DIA, William Foxton, a textile manufacturer who had received some designs from Mackintosh and Margaret. They were trying to earn a living during the war by providing textile designs for manufacturers including Foxton. Janet Bassett-Lowke maintained that Bassett-Lowke's search for Mackintosh took him to Glasgow because Newbery's daughter recalls him staying or visiting the Newberys. It seems strange however that Bassett-Lowke would go all the way to Glasgow to find Mackintosh when a simple letter to Newbery would have elicited his address in London.

Around the turn of the year he contacted Mackintosh with a view to designing some furniture for his bedroom in his parents' house in Northampton to be made by the German cabinet-makers who were interned on the Isle of Man; it was made to a high standard. He had also decided to alter the internal structure of 78 Derngate to provide more space for the home he was to set up when married in 1917. He engaged a Scottish architect, living in Northampton, Alexander Ellis Anderson, to submit the plans for approval. Anderson had worked on a shoe factory for Crocket & Jones, the shoe manufacturers in Northampton. In the summer of



Advertising label for Bassett-Lowke, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 1915.

© The Hunterian, University of Glasgow

1916 he asked Mackintosh to design the decoration of the house and to design some furniture and fittings. However, Bassett-Lowke was a man who knew his own tastes and mind and was careful to manage the work himself; he would meet Mackintosh in London – probably at Mackintosh's home in Chelsea but also perhaps at The Trocadero (where he liked to lunch), his club or at the Institution. Mackintosh didn't go to Northampton during 1916 when the plans were being developed and the builders were in. Was this because he was restricted from making journeys outside London during the war years following his brush with the authorities in 1915? In any case Bassett-Lowke was allegedly careful with money and he went to London almost weekly with a season ticket. On one occasion, he deferred a meeting with Mackintosh since his season ticket wasn't valid until the following day! He gave Mackintosh detailed written instructions for furniture design but surely he could have borne the cost of a day return on the train? Apparently not!

Mackintosh therefore never saw the house at this stage but suggested a small bay to the front and designed a full height extension at the back. In *Ideal Home* in 1920, there is no acknowledgement of anyone being involved except Bassett-Lowke. He was clearly a man who knew his own mind and vision.

When Bassett-Lowke moved into Number 78 in March 1917 his bedroom furniture stayed in his parents' house. However, there is a suspicion that initially it went to 78 since the new design for the furniture wasn't ready – this could explain why the *Ideal Home* article didn't appear until 1920. Meanwhile he had copies made for his friends and acquaintances since he saw that it was difficult to acquire new furniture during the war.

How did Bassett-Lowke and Horstmann meet? He may have met Horstmann at Institution meetings. However, there is no evidence that Horstmann was a member of the I. Mech.E. It is likely that Bassett-Lowke approved of the novel features and clean lines of the motor cars that Horstmann had produced and we may wonder if Bassett-Lowke had met Horstmann at that first Motor Show before the War. This too is unlikely since Bassett-Lowke never drove or owned a car. Given Bassett-Lowke's admiration for German design and skills he may well have been intrigued by the name 'Horstmann' and sought him out at War Office briefings for the precision instruments they were both producing at this time

Horstmann had acquired Onega Lodge in 1914 when it was a little over thirty years' old and in 1917 was anxious that it should be updated in a style more aligned with his tastes and Bassett-Lowke was able to help. He arranged for Sidney to have a set of the

furniture designed by Mackintosh, even adding some additional pieces for the larger Victorian spaces of Onega Lodge. His daughter recalled that he paid £100 for it which at 2017 prices is in the order of £8,000 – an extraordinary sum. Bassett-Lowke then asked Mackintosh to make some designs for the decoration of the room – based on dimensions and photographs that he had taken – Bassett-Lowke was a keen photographer and he employed this method on changes to 78. When the furniture arrived, it came complete with details of the decoration, a stencil for the frieze and material for the curtains and a panel behind the beds – evidence of Mackintosh's meticulous attention to detail. There is no evidence that Horstmann ever met with Mackintosh, indeed for many years he couldn't remember his name. Neither is there any record of correspondence between Bassett-Lowke and Horstmann²⁰ but it is quite possible that the friends would meet in Bath; Horstmann certainly stayed at 78 Derngate.

The guest bedroom at 78 reflects the style Mackintosh designed for Bath. Hence the now famous room with stripes that Shaw supposedly couldn't sleep in was a contemporary of A Bedroom at Bath with bold black and blue stripes and stencilled friezes. And so, a set of furniture designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh for a young man's bedroom in Northampton was made in the Isle of Man by German internees and installed in a modest villa in Bath, decorated to the designs of the creative mind of an architect who was to become world famous but at the time was virtually forgotten. But, as Sidney Horstmann said '*One day this suite will be in a museum.*'

20 Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton

Catalogue: description of the furniture

There were various versions of the bedroom furniture produced. The first set was made for Bassett-Lowke which was sold to a local furniture dealer, Mr Cave of Northampton when Bassett-Lowke moved to New Ways, and then sold by Cave's daughter at a Sotheby's auction in 1988. It is now in private ownership. Other versions were made for Messrs Franklin and Ling, business colleagues of Bassett-Lowke's. These differed in several respects from the previous versions and are also in private ownership.²¹

The 'Horstmann' suite is owned by the V&A and was exhibited in part at the Bethnal Green Museum in 1966 as part of the Half a Century of Modern Design, 11 November 1966 - 4 February 1967 exhibition; the wardrobe and the ladder-back armchair were then shown at the Edinburgh Centenary Exhibition of Charles Rennie Mackintosh 1868 – 1928.

²¹ See Billcliffe, 1986 p.271 for full description.



BED. Mahogany, h 116 x w 92 x l 203 cm

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Charles Rennie Mackintosh's **A Bedroom at Bath**

ARMCHAIR. Mahogany, h 104 x w 52 x d 46 cm.
With ebonised front feet and an upholstered
drop-in seat.

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London



WASHSTAND. Mahogany, h 172 x w 110 x d 55 cm. Part ebonised, inlaid with aluminium and mother of pearl, with a printed fabric behind the glazed splash-back.

The original Mackintosh-designed fabric used on Horstmann's stand had disappeared when acquired by the V&A in 1966 and had been replaced at some time by a similar, contemporary piece. This has been recorded as designed by the sculptor, Phoebe McLeish²², but is more likely to be by her sister the textile and ceramic designer Minnie McLeish.²³ (1876-1957)

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London



22 Crawford, p.169. (Phoebe McLeish married Harold Stabler of the DIA in 1906. The McLeish's came from an artistic family; their father had studied metalwork in Liverpool as a student of Harold's).

23 <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O131456/washstand-mackintosh-charles-rennie>



WALL MIRROR.

Mahogany, h 168 x
w 58 x d 2 cm.

© Victoria and Albert
Museum, London



BEDSIDE CUPBOARD.

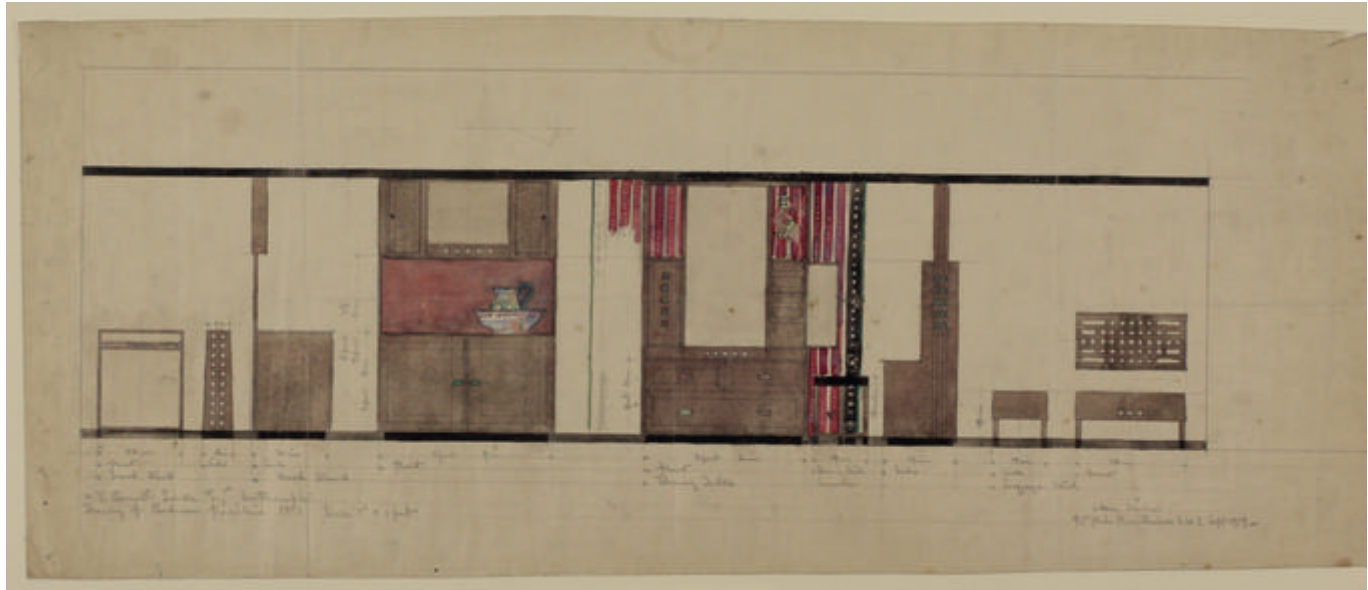
Mahogany, h 122 x w 36
x d 35 cm. With one large
lower cupboard and two
smaller upper cupboards,
ebonised base.

© Victoria and Albert
Museum, London



TOWEL RAIL. Mahogany,
h 71 x w 61 x d 19 cm.

© Victoria and Albert
Museum, London



FURNITURE DRAWINGS. Drawing of Bedroom Furniture, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, September 1917. The towel rail design is to the left and the luggage bench to the right.

© The Hunterian, University of Glasgow



LADDER-BACK CHAIR. Mahogany, h 87 x w 48 x d 43 cm. With ebonised front feet and upholstered drop-in seat.

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

*The following items are not on display at the exhibition “A Bedroom at Bath”,
Museum of Bath at Work, 2017.*

DRESSING TABLE. Mahogany,
h 173 x w 109 x d 52 cm. Inlaid with
mother-of-pearl, with aluminium
mounts, on an ebonised base.

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London





LUGGAGE BENCH. Mahogany, h 35 x w 70 x d 35 cm.
With ebonised feet.

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Charles Rennie Mackintosh's **A Bedroom at Bath**

WARDROBE. Mahogany, h 180 x w 130 x d 52 cm. With ebonised wooden base and inlaid with mother of pearl or aluminium.

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London



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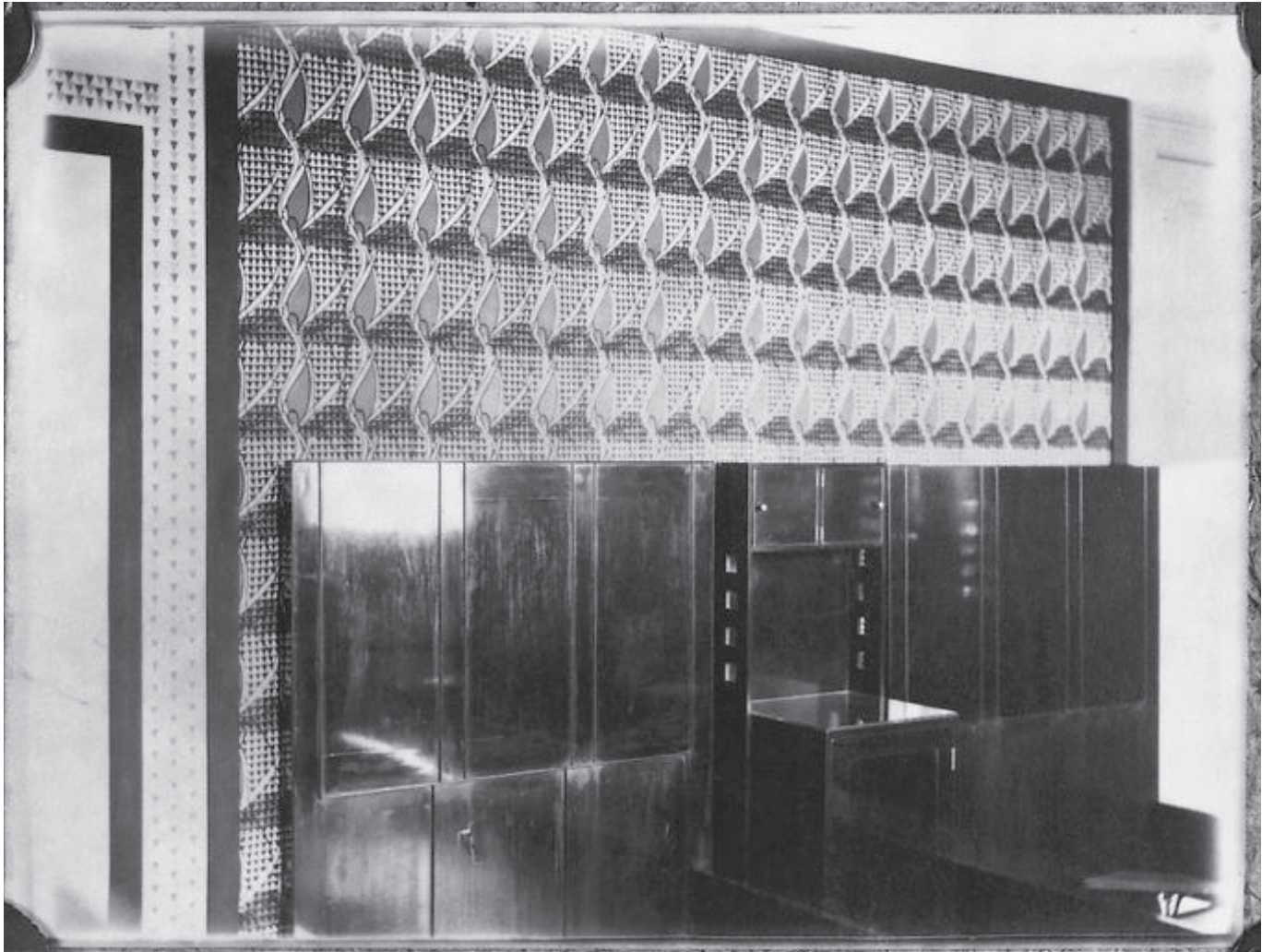
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Bedroom, Omega Lodge, c1920.

Courtesy of Roger Billcliffe, collection of the V&A

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HORSTMANN

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Courtesy of Roger Billcliffe, collection of the V&A.

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