

Gowans, James 1821 - 1890



James Gowans [also known as Sir James Gowans] was born in Blackness, near Falkirk, Scotland, on 1 August 1821. His father was a quarrymaster and builder, and part of his training to work in the family business attended classes at a private architectural academy run by David Bryce (1803-1876) in Edinburgh. In 1844-47 Gowans built the head office of David Rhind's Commercial Bank in Edinburgh and in 1846-49 the Edinburgh Gas Works Chimney. From 1847 until the early 1870s the firm was heavily engaged on commissions for railway companies.

In 1849 James Gowans took total control of the family business and over the next three decades was engaged on numerous architectural and civil engineering projects, mainly in Edinburgh.

Gowans was one of the organisers of the Edinburgh International Exhibition of 1886 for which he was knighted. He died in Edinburgh on 25 June 1890

Worked in

UK

Works

Randolph Cliff and north section of Randolph Crescent, Edinburgh (1846); Rosebank Cottages, Edinburgh (1854); Redhall Bank Cottages, Edinburgh (1857); Rockville, Napier Road, Edinburgh (1858); 23/25 Blasket Place, Edinburgh (1859); Lodge house at Redhall, Edinburgh (1863); School and schoolhouse at Kingscavil, West Lothian (1870); Workmen's Cottages, Drumbowie, West Lothian (1871); and New Edinburgh Theatre, Edinburgh (1875); 68-78 Colinton Road, Edinburgh

(1884); Waverley in Edinburgh (1886); Model Workers' Houses for the Edinburgh International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art (1886); various buildings and engineering projects for railway companies (late 1840s-1870s), including stations at Creetown (1859) and Lochee, Dundee (1861).

See also: Historic Environment Scotland [*link below*]

Bibliography

Directory of British Architects 1834-1914. Compiled by Antonia Brodie, et al. Volume 1: A-K. London; New York: British Architectural Library, Royal Institute of British Architects/Continuum, 2001

McAra, Duncan. Sir James Gowans: Romantic Rationalist. Edinburgh: Paul Harris Publishing, 1975

Taylor, Nicholas. 'Modular rockery'. Architectural Review vol. 141, February 1967 pp. 147-151 [Discusses Rockville, the house designed by Gowans for himself on Napier Road, Glasgow in 1858]

Links

- Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Gowans_%28architect%29
- Dictionary of Scottish Architects 1660-1980
http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=200540
- Find a Grave <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/20120/james-gowans>
- Gazetteer for Scotland <https://www.scottish-places.info/people/famousfirst1031.html>
- Historic Environment Scotland - 35 architectural projects by James Gowans
<http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/hes/web/f?p=1505%3A200%3A%3A%3ANO%3ARP%>