

Small, John William 1851 - c. 1911

John William Small was born in Dundee, Forfarshire, Scotland in October 1851 and was articled to an unidentified architect in Dundee. By 1870 he was working as a draughtsman in the office of Robert Rowand Anderson (1834-1921) in Edinburgh. He then worked as a senior assistant to Peddie & Kinnear in Edinburgh from c.1873 to c.1876.

Small commenced independent practice as an architect in Edinburgh in 1876. Over the next four years, because of lack of commissions he worked as an assistant to William Scott Morton. Small resumed his architectural practice in 1880. He also began working as a furniture and interior decorator. In c.1885 started manufacturing furniture to his own designs at 65-67 Wallace Street, Edinburgh and later at his own workshop in Forth Street , Edinburgh.

An inexpensive bedroom suite designed by Small is illustrated in The Cabinet Maker & Art Furnisher August 1883 (p.31). The illustration is taken from his book Ancient and Modern Furniture (Edinburgh: J.W. Small, 1883).

Other books by Small included Scottish Woodwork of the Sixteenth & Seventeenth Centuries (Edinburgh: D. Douglas, 1878); Leaves from my Sketch-Books (Edinburgh: J.W. Small, 1880); Scottish Market Crosses (Stirling: Eneas Mackay 1900; and Scottish Architectural Details (Stirling: Eneas Mackay 1901).

In 1891-92 Small was briefly in partnership with Edward Howell and (?) Alexander in Alexander, Howell & Small, a house and ship furnishing firm in Glasgow.

Between 1880 and 1883 Small exhibited eight architectural drawings at the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh. He was a member of the Edinburgh Architectural Association and sketches by him of details of Birnie Church, Greyfriars Church, Bishop's Place in Elgin, Elphinstone Tower, Ratho Church, Duddingston Church, and Dunfermline Abbey Church by him are illustrated in the Edinburgh Architectural Association Sketch Book - Volume 2 1887-1894 (Edinburgh: George Waterston & Sons, 1894 plates 40, 41).

In 1902 Small emigrated to South Africa and established a practice in Johannesburg. He died in South Africa in 1911 [or 1919 or 1930 - sources differ]

Worked in

UK

South Africa

Works

Congregational Church in Coatbridge, Lanarkshire (1878); North British Art Furniture Works factory and showrooms in Stirling, Stirlingshire (1886); Heathfield, a house in Stirling, Stirlingshire (1886); and alterations to Kirkintilloch Parish Church in Lanarkshire (1890).

Bibliography

Smith, Norma. John William Small: his life and work. M.A. dissertation, University of St. Andrews, 1991

Links

- Dictionary of Scottish Architects 1660-1980

https://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=203787

- Artefacts

<http://www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/archframes.php?archid=1570>

- ART UK <https://artuk.org/discover/artists/small-john-william-18511911>