

Sellars, James 1843 - 1888



James Sellars was born in the Gorbals, Glasgow, Scotland on 2 December 1843 and was articled to Hugh Barclay of Barclay & Watt in Glasgow at the age of 13 in 1857. He left Barclay's employ in 1864 and from 1864 to 1867 worked as an assistant in the office of James Hamilton, an architect with practices in Glasgow and Belfast. He left Hamilton after three years and in 1870 joined the office of [Campbell Douglas](#) (1828-1910) in Glasgow. By 1872 he was a partner in Douglas's practice which became Campbell Douglas & Sellars. They remained in partnership until Sellars' death.

The influence of Alexander 'Greek' Thomson (1817-1875) is evident in much of Sellars' work.

Sellars was admitted a member of the Glasgow Institute of Architects in 1872. He died at his house, 9 Montgomerie Crescent in Glasgow on 9 October 1888, the result stepping on a rusty nail at the 1888 Glasgow International Exhibition. The incident led to blood poisoning.

A biographical file on James Sellars is available on request at the Enquiry Desk, Royal Institute of British Architects Library, London

Worked in

UK

Works

Sellars came to prominence at the age of 28 when he won an international competition to design a monument to late Lord Provost Robert Stewart, who had been responsible for establishing Glasgow first water supply from Loch Katrine. Notable among Sellars' architectural achievements was the design of a major department store [later House of Fraser] on Buchanan Street, Glasgow in 1883. He also designed St Enoch's Free Church, Old Dumbarton Road, Glasgow (1871); the Stewart Memorial Fountain in Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow (1872); Andrew's Halls [subsequently the Mitchell Theatre] in Glasgow (1873); Netherhall House in Largs, Ayrshire for Lord Kelvin (1875); offices of the Employers Liability Assurance Corporation, 75 Nelson Mandela Place Glasgow (1876-77); Greek Orthodox Cathedral of St Luke in the Dowanhill district of Glasgow (1877); Kelvinside Academy, an independent day school in Glasgow (1877); Kelvingrove Parish Church in Derby Street, Glasgow (1878); extension of Ayr Town Hall (1878-81 in Ayr, Ayrshire) ; the New Club at 144-146 West George Street, Glasgow (1879); offices of the Glasgow Herald newspaper on Buchanan Street, Glasgow (1879); Glasgow Victoria Infirmary, a teaching hospital situated at Langside/Battlefield, Glasgow (1882); the entrance archway to Lambhill Cemetery in Glasgow (1882); Gorbals Medical Mission at 46 Gorbals Street, Glasgow (1883-84); various buildings for the International Exhibition in Glasgow (1888); and Anderson College of Medicine at 56 Dumbarton Road, Partick, Glasgow (1888-89; completed after Sellars' death)

Bibliography

Directory of British Architects 1834-1914. Compiled by Antonia Brodie, et al. Volume 2: L-Z. London; New York: *British Architectural Library, Royal Institute of British Architects/Continuum, 2001*

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Walker, D. M. 'James Sellars, architect: work in Glasgow 1880-1888 - 2.' *Scottish Art Review* no. 2, 1967 pp. 21-24

'Obituary'. *The Builder* vol. 55, 1888 p. 272

'Obituary'. *Scottish Art Review* vol. 1, 1888, pp191-93

Links

- Wikipedia

<https://www.google.com/search?q=%22JAMES%20SELLARS%22%20architect&ie=utf->

[8&oe=utf-8](#)

- Glasgow Sculpture Database
http://www.glasgowsculpture.com/pg_biography.php?sub=sellars_j
- Dictionary of Scottish Architects
http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=200063
- Mackintosh Architecture <http://www.mackintosh-architecture.gla.ac.uk/catalogue/pdf/M011.pdf>
- ART UK <https://artuk.org/discover/artists/sellars-james-18431888>
- Gazeteer for Scotland <http://www.scottish-places.info/people/famousfirst2912.html>
- Archiseek <http://archiseek.com/tag/james-sellars/>
- Ann Fotheringham. Sad story behind death of Glasgow's House of Fraser architect James Sellars. Glasgow Times 7 December 2020
<https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/18918397.sad-story-behind-death-glasgows-house-fraser-architect-james-sellars/>
- North Ayrshire Heritage <https://naheritage.co.uk/stories/james-sellars>