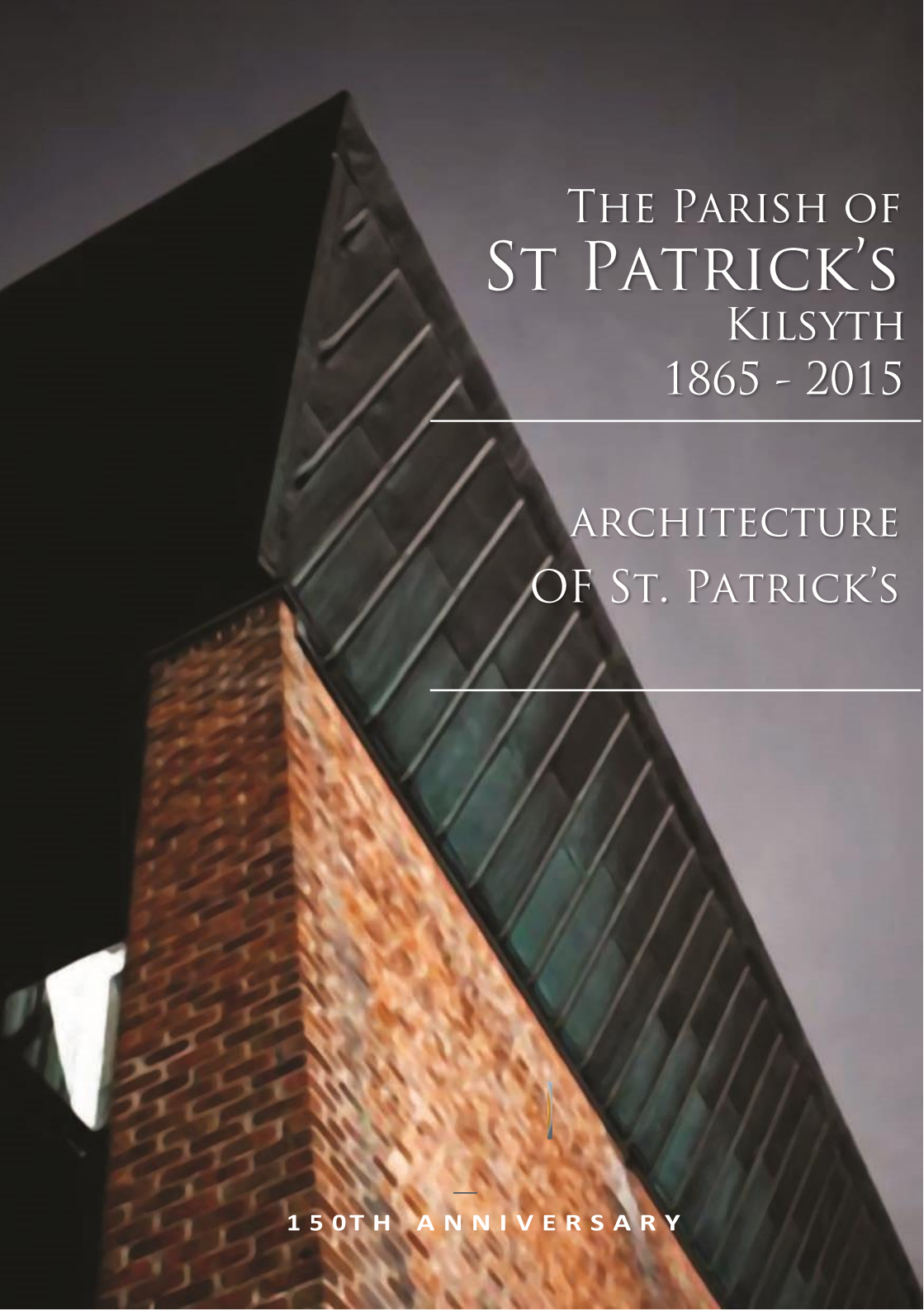


The Parish of St Patrick's Kilsyth 1865 - 2015

Architecture of St. Patrick's

150th Anniversary

Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh

The Parish of St. Patrick's

Chapel House: 30 Low Craigends, Kilsyth, Glasgow G65 OPF

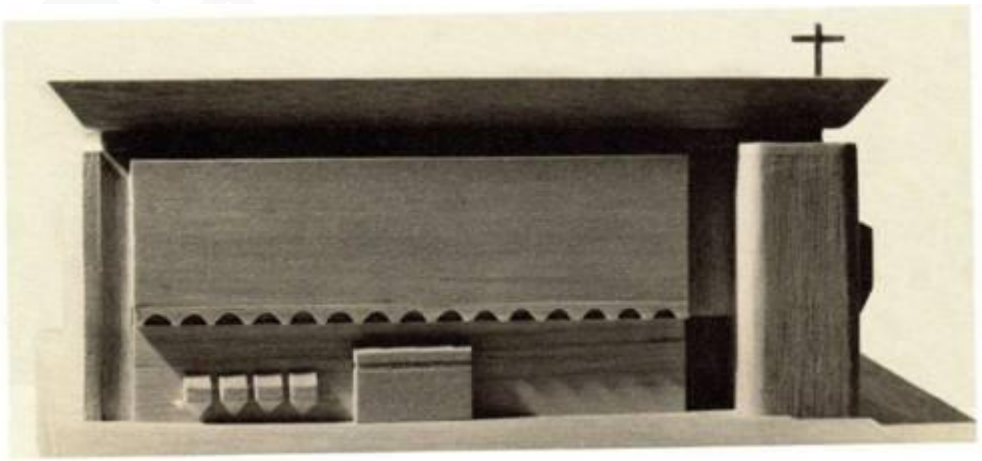
Website: www.saintpatrickskilsyth.org.uk

Email: pp.stpatricks@gmail.com

Tel: 01236 822136 / Hall Bookings Tel: 07538260848

St Patrick's Church Kilsyth

The Building



Preface

This short paper is intended to capture some of the basic facts surrounding the architectural heritage and history of St Patrick's Kilsyth for use within the parish or for visitors to the building – in particular for Open Doors day each year.

For a long time, the parishioners of St Patrick's have had a love hate relationship with the fabric of their church due mainly to concerns over the practical usability of the church. For many years the building was cold, the roof leaked, and the striking modernist design sat uncomfortably on the shoulders of those more used to the familiar friendly features of their old, now demolished, traditional stone built church.

Fortunately, however after a successful, sensitive and extensive restoration in 1999 and 2000 there is now an emerging pride in the building which can at last be appreciated for what it is, rather than having to be concerned with wet benches, water damage and penetrating cold.

St Patrick's is now a grade 'A' listed building and forms one of an extensive portfolio of ecclesiastical designs by the Glasgow Architectural firm of Gillespie Kidd and Coia (GKC) for the Catholic Church in Scotland. It is visited regularly by architectural and design students from all over the world as an appreciation grows for the works of GKC more generally in the period where their two principle designers were Isi Metzstien and Andy MacMillan.

This paper contains the views of the author only and many other facts edited together from a variety of sources acknowledged in the bibliography whose copyrights persist.

Introduction

The visionary and prolific patronage of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland of a Glasgow Architectural practice, Gillespie Kidd and Coia, in the post war decades of the 20th century, has contributed in no small part to possibly the most successful and distinctive expression of building design to emanate from Scotland since that of Charles Rennie MacIntosh in the early 1900's. A succession of church designs for the expansion of the various diocese into Scotland's new towns in particular, created the foundation for one of the most critically acclaimed portfolios of modernist ecclesiastical architecture anywhere in Europe, arguably only surpassed by the great Mario Botta's works in Germany, Italy and Switzerland. Although only Jack Coia, one of the eponymous founders of the practice, was still alive during this period his influence in securing these commissions from the various Archdiocese within Scotland was profound. The broad merit for the aesthetic design influence however, lies firmly with Isi Metzstien and Andy MacMillan who worked their way up eventually to being partners within the practice.

St Patrick's Church in Kilsyth, is now recognised by Historic Scotland as a grade 'A' listed building and is one of a handful of these buildings which is still in its original use today and in a largely unaltered state, having undergone a sensitive restoration in 1999 and 2000. Whilst the building is now recognised as part of the architectural heritage of Scotland, it is fair to say that the parishioners of the Parish have had a love-hate relationship with the fabric of the church for many years. Only now, some forty years after the original occupation of the building, is this mellowing into a proud appreciation of the style and design.

A number of the other ecclesiastical works by Gillespie Kidd and Coia have also merited listed 'A' and 'B' status most notably amongst them St Peter's Seminary, Cardross which was said to the influencing factor for the award of the RIBA Gold Medal for outstanding quality and achievement in architecture in 1969 and which is listed in The World's Top 100 most Endangered Architectural Heritage Sites. That building still owned by Glasgow Archdiocese, has now been allowed to fall into a sad state of dilapidation although there are many plans to renovate the site.

The patronage of this architectural firm did ultimately lead to some well documented troubles in both St Patrick's and with the other Churches in the portfolio. Whilst during the 1960's there was a courageous and forward-looking endorsement of modernist form and design by the Scottish Catholic Church, which was utterly radical for its time, it was subsequently and quite quickly clear the church authorities were guilty of not

applying such diligence to the supervision of construction contractors or use of quality materials. This combined with a number of latent detailed design defects lead to a host of problems in many of the GKC buildings and at St Patrick's where these defects were manifest too, these flaws rendered the building at best unsightly and at worst almost uninhabitable for decades.

The fact that St. Patrick's Church remains one of the few largely unaltered and carefully restored works of Gillespie Kidd and Coia partnership from the Metzstien and MacMillan era is largely due to the tireless work of Fr. Gerry Hand, who, for 15 years starting in 1993, dedicated much time to the fabric restoration project. Fr. Hand together with a small group of advisors, notably David Miller (of variously Brooke & Associates and Brooke, Miller, Peden architectural practices) and a number of knowledgeable parishioners of St Patrick's with technical and building qualifications (particularly Joe Livingston, Austin Gallagher and most especially Joe Fitzgerald), were instrumental in guiding both Parish and Diocese into making sensitive restoration works rather than allowing radical redesign to perpetrate what could easily have become an act of architectural vandalism. (There were several proposals to the Diocesan Fabric Committee to partition the space and create a church and hall under the same roof – thus rendering the original concept of space and light redundant.)

To navigate this minefield required much financial diligence, technical knowledge and astute political activity to overcome the objections from various sources within the Parish and the Diocese that scarce funds should not be lavished upon fixed assets and that there was nothing wrong with applying a 'few more buckets of tar' to the leaky roof!

Above artist sketch plan for the unsuccessful proposal to place the altar on the west wall and box off the current sanctuary as a parish hall.

Fortunately, Fr Hand's ability, vision and persistence paid off and he was able to construct a financial solution where the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland together with the Parish and the Diocese were able to complete a restoration and improvement package for £1.2m in 1999 whereby both the church and the grounds were restored and improved.

The main contractors 'Lilley Construction' together with sub-contractors 'Morham & Brochie' and 'Forbes Leslie' were able to fulfil not only a stunning improvement to the internal fabric and appearance, remove most of the latent implementation defects but were also able to fulfil the original design concept of Jack Coia in providing piazza areas to the front and rear of the church where the people could socialise before and after Mass – an integral and important aspect of the social as well as religious function of the building.

Fr Hand inspects the copper cladding during the 1999 restoration project.

In 1991 and only 24 hours before the building was to receive a grade 'A' listing status, the Archdiocese of Glasgow took a decision to demolish St Benedict's Drumchapel. The loss felt by the Architectural community in Scotland was palpable and the Archdiocese were reviled as '*philistines*' and '*vandals*' from every corner including the hitherto architecturally ambivalent editorial columns of The Glasgow Herald and the front pages of many other broadsheets. The story caught the imagination of the national printed press and also the Scottish broadcast media.

It was a decision which was in fact short sighted and the loss of such a magnificent building is of course, a great regret. There was no small sense of irony in Kilsyth as the demolition contractor emblazoned in newspaper photographs and TV screens at the time was none other than George Beattie Ltd, owned by a Parishioner of St Patrick's, Kilsyth! Geordie Beattie like all of his contemporary parishioners of St Patrick's, was well aware of the shortcomings of the design practicalities of another of Gillespie Kidd and Coia's creations and few tears were shed by anyone in Kilsyth at the time for the passing of this gigantic and magnificent but flawed structure in a far-flung part of Glasgow.

This episode was truly seminal for the restoration of St Patrick's in so far as it served to highlight to the authorities and to the public, the financial burdens which were being placed upon the owners of buildings that were deemed to be of great historical or architectural significance but without the necessary supporting infrastructure. The Glasgow Archdiocese had of course demolished St Benedict's for fear of being compelled to maintain a listed building but without the necessary financial means to do so. Later the creation of scope for the National Heritage Lottery to fund architectural restoration projects was in part a response to these kinds of financially driven ill-fated decisions. Now grants can be sought once a building is listed, but only where there is merit in the saving and restoring of a building. Naturally there is a price to pay and as a beneficiary of Public funds the building owners are obliged to open the buildings up for public inspection and viewing at certain times of the year.

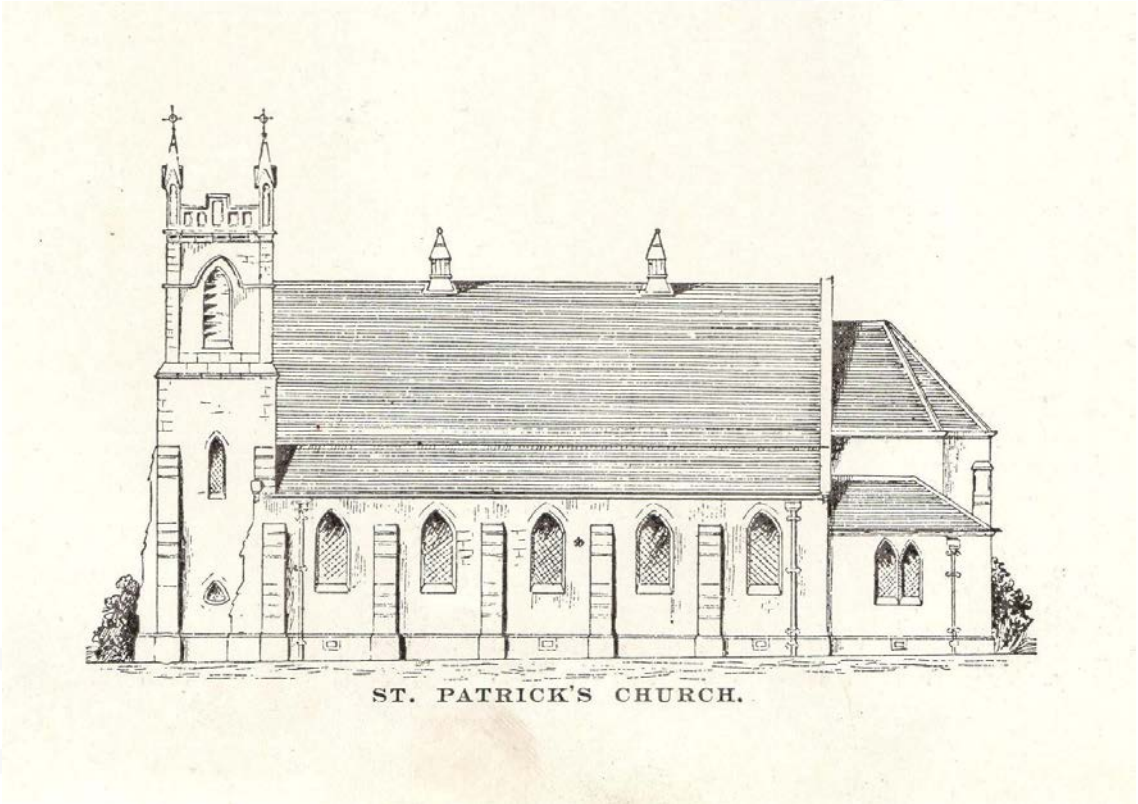
St Patrick's was thus to benefit, ultimately from the premature death of another great church from the family of GKC (St Benedict's had only been built in 1971, 7 years after St Patrick's). If only the same approach that can be taken towards funding mechanisms today was understood then in 1991, Scotland would not have lost one of the best examples of Gillespie Kidd and Coia in St Benedict's. Yet another (remember also St Peter's Seminary) fateful decision that no doubt the Glasgow Archdiocese has lived to regret when it comes to their stewardship of the Gillespie Kidd and Coia portfolio for which it is responsible.

The History

After the Irish famine in 1847 many Irish Catholics were attracted to settle in Scotland due to the comparative economic stability and the availability of work. In Kilsyth, it is recorded that about 100 Irish had settled in the town as result of coal mining, quarrying and the construction of the Forth and Clyde Canal giving employment. This congregation was serviced in a religious sense by way of a Catholic Mission to Kilsyth from St Machin's Campsie run by Fr Gillon who celebrated the first recorded post reformation Mass in the town on Christmas Day 1847.

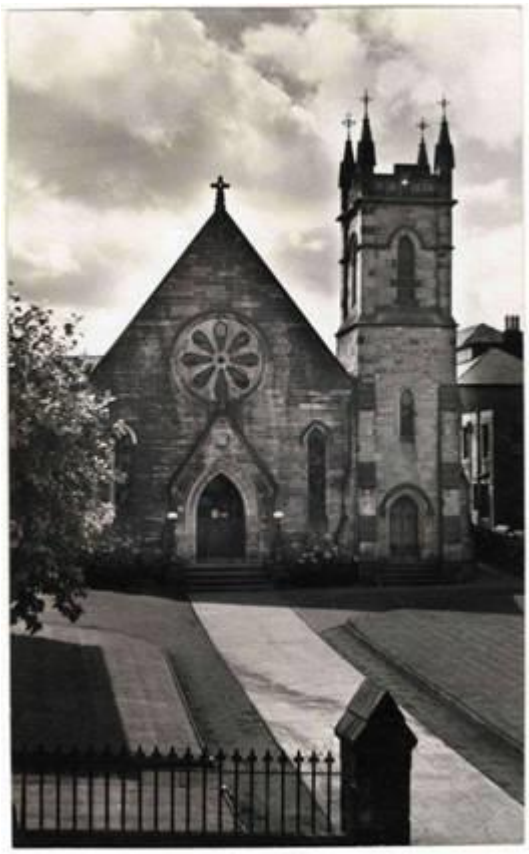
By 1862 there was now a population of over 400 Catholics but there was still no permanent Priest or church building and Bishop Gillis, Vicar Apostolic of the Eastern District of Scotland, at the second time of asking, granted a permanent Priest Fr John Galvin who arrived on the 5th Jan 1865.

This young Priest then set about raising funds to build both a Church and a house. The land occupied by the present St Patrick's was donated by Sir Archibald Edmonstone, Bart of Duntreath. When funds were raised, a small stone church designed by architect Duncan McFarlane of Greenock and built by a contractor Mr Gow, was supervised by A. McIntosh of Glasgow. It is remarkable that it was built within 14 months of Fr Galvin's arrival in Kilsyth. Much of the stone was quarried by the parishioners and many of the labourers used in the construction were members of the congregation themselves.



St Patrick's 1st Church 1866 - 1962

So, the first St. Patrick's church was built on the same site as the modern church during 1865 and was opened on 17th March (St Patrick's Day) 1866. It was a modest sandstone building and was built in the traditional Puginist modern gothic style which was universally used for places of worship at the time. Following a fire in 1954 the old church was finally closed after 94 years on New Year's Day 1962 and was then demolished. Building work on the current St Patrick's church began on the 8th of October 1962 and the laying of the foundation stone by His Eminence Gordon Cardinal Gray took place on St Patrick's Day 1964. Exactly a year later the current building was opened by Cardinal Gray on 17th March 1965 precisely 100 years after the original church commenced construction.



In this picture, to the left of the original St Patrick's Church, part of the church halls complex still standing today is visible. This building is due for demolition in 2009, but gives us a valuable reference point for the location of the old church.

Who were Gillespie Kidd and Coia?

The Glasgow architect James Salmon established his first practice in 1830 which continued for 2 further generations and by 1891 the practice was known as James Salmon & Son and was run by the son, William Forrest Salmon.

He in turn hired John Gaff Gillespie and the company name was changed in 1903 to Salmon & Son & Gillespie, with by then James Salmon jnr, grandson of the founder, and John Gaff Gillespie as partners.

William Alexander Kidd who had previously joined the firm in 1898, worked his way through the ranks and became a partner with Gillespie, a promotion perhaps precipitated in 1918 by the departure of James Salmon jnr, who had by then left the company. The firm was then renamed Gillespie & Kidd.

Kidd subsequently became sole partner on Gillespie's death in 1926.

Meanwhile in 1915 the 16-year-old Jack Coia (1898-1981) had joined the firm as an apprentice where he stayed until 1923 when he left for London. On hearing Coia was back in Glasgow after returning north due to family issues, Kidd appealed to him to return to assist in the reconstruction of the Smith warehouse as the Ca' d'Oro building, for which on his death Gillespie had left only sketch designs. Shortly after taking Coia into partnership, Kidd himself then died in 1928 while the work was in progress.

And so it was that Jack Coia inherited the practice in 1928 which he continued as Gillespie Kidd and Coia. At the height of the great depression there was little business so Coia joined the staff of Glasgow School of Art where he taught nearly full time for two years whilst maintaining the practice.

It was much later that he was subsequently joined by Isi Metzstein in 1945 and Andy MacMillan in 1954. Design control was passed from Coia to Metzstein and MacMillan in 1955 which allowed the practice to flourish in its distinctive modernist design interpretation. Coia continued as the figure head of the practice running the business affairs and securing the commissions but in reality, it was Metzstien and MacMillan who were the creative forces throughout the notable period of Gillespie Kidd and Coia's work for the Catholic Church in Scotland.

By 1959 their distinctive Modernist style was fully evident for arguably the first time with their design of St Paul's Church, Warout Road, Glenrothes – ironically the Church where Fr Gerry Hand now serves as Parish Priest having left St Patrick's Kilsyth in 2006. Metzstien and MacMillan's creative force and influence was not perhaps recognised externally to the firm as widely as it should have been, until as late as the 1980's.

Gillespie Kidd & Coia closed as an architectural practice in 1986.

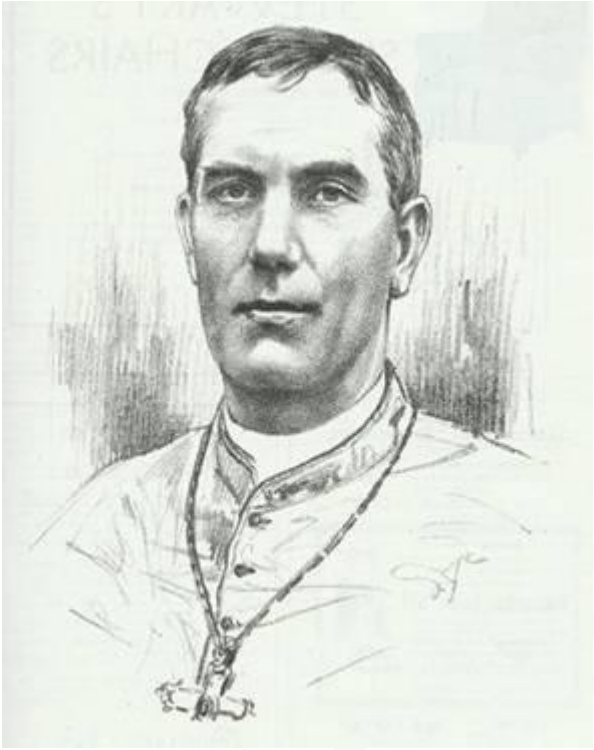
Jack Coia

Jack (baptised Giacomo) Antonio Coia was born in Wolverhampton on 17 July 1898, the eldest of the nine children of Giovanni Coia, the sculptor son of a farmer from Filignano in Italy. His mother, Maria Ernesta Vannini was a circus artist and dancer of Italian stock whom Giovanni had met in Paris. In 1898 the family made its way to Glasgow, where Coia's father opened an Italian café at Parkhead Cross, Jack going to school at St Michael's Primary School and St Aloysius College for his secondary schooling.

In October 1915 John Gaff Gillespie took Coia into his office as an apprentice at a salary of 4 shillings a week. Coia then attended evening classes at Whitehill School in building construction and mathematics to qualify for entry to Glasgow School of Architecture, then jointly run by Glasgow School of Art and the Royal Technical College under Professors Gourlay and MacGibbon: he did not have to serve in the First World War because of poor eyesight – he was distinctive by the 'bottle bottom' glasses which he had to wear for all of his adult life. On leaving Gillespie's office he worked for a time with Alexander Nisbet Paterson and with Alexander Hislop. His studies were aided by his gaining of two prizes: the A. Leslie Hamilton Memorial and the Haldane Traveling Scholarship, which enabled him to make his first study visit to Italy in 1923 spending his time mainly in Venice. He was admitted ARIBA on 3 March 1924. Coia then moved to the office of Herbert A Welch and Hollis in London, but family problems caused him to return home in 1927.

Towards the end of his career and for his work in Architecture he was appointed CBE in 1967 and awarded the Royal Gold Medal in 1969 followed by honorary degrees from the Universities of Glasgow (1970) and Strathclyde (1976). In person he was in Patrick Nuttgens's words, '*small, intense, unkempt, angry and bloody-minded*'. The poverty of contemporary architecture outside of their ecclesiastical commissions, dissatisfaction with the competition system for public works and the destruction of some of his favourite buildings also coloured his outlook in his later years, his views being trenchantly expressed at the Royal Fine Art Commission of which he was for a time a member. In his retirement he spent much of his time at Glendaruel. He died on 14 August 1981, the funeral homily being preached by his former pupil Father Kenneth Nugent SJ.

Coia - A forceful, charismatic and charming personality.



Archbishop Donald Mackintosh (1876 – 1943) ordained a priest 1900, appointed Bishop 1921.

In 1931 Coia, at the time the only surviving eponymous partner in the practice of Gillespie Kidd & Coia, out of desperation for work in the heart of the great depression, approached Archbishop Donald Mackintosh (1876 – 1943) of Glasgow Archdiocese for work on the program of Parish extensions. The program was planned to meet the needs of the Catholic population who were dispersing from the poverty of inner city slums of Glasgow, to the newer more affluent suburbs. Whether as a result of Coia's charismatic strength of character, architectural capabilities or Italian Catholic background we do not know, but Archbishop Mackintosh commissioned several churches from Gillespie Kidd & Coia including St Anne's Dennistoun, St Patrick's Greenock, St Columba's Hopehill Road and St Peter in Chains, Ardrossan.

This resulted by 1939 in a series of architecturally important brick-built churches of continental inspiration in a modern interpretation of Italianate Romanesque style.

From the off, Coia was determined to break with the modern gothic built in local stone and so opted for brick as a principle material where we can see the early seeds of the post war move to out and out modernism so favoured by Metzstien and MacMillan. Despite post war austerity from 1946 onwards, the relationship with the Archdiocese of Glasgow continued with St Eunan's Clydebank, St Kevin's Bargeddie, St David's Plains and St Matthew's Bishopbriggs – all utilitarian and architecturally plain standard church designs to lower quality of fit, appropriate for the economic climate of the period where even obtaining a building permit, post war, was difficult and materials were scarce.

As an Architect, Coia was a practitioner of the Atelier Method. Taking its name from the French word for "artist's studio," the Atelier Method is a form of private instruction in which an artist works closely with a small number of students to progressively train them. Some observers therefore attribute much of the actual design work of the practice to others within his office and not Coia himself. His genius ultimately lay not in the detail of design but in running the company, obtaining the commissions, and allowing design flair of others in the practice to flourish. Perhaps because of his poor eyesight or perhaps because of his practice of Atelier Method it is in fact clear in retrospect (not least because of the personal testimonies of Metzstien and MacMillan) that he

did farm out much of the design work to partners whilst he concentrated on obtaining the commissions, continuing his teaching at Glasgow School of Art and being the public face of the firm.

Coia was always a relentless networker. A study of his diary for 1954 revealed that as well as running the company simultaneously he was also…

• Governor of Glasgow School of Art
• Associate of the Royal Scottish Academy
• Vice President of the Glasgow Institute of Architects
• Member of the Joint Standing Committee of Architects Surveyor and Contractors in Scotland
• Member of the Institute of Fine Arts
• Council Member of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland
• Active Member of the Catholic business organisation – The Catenian Society

Hardly surprising then that he had little time and possibly little appetite for detailed design work. History does indeed show that design control was vested mainly into the hands of Metzstien and MacMillan by 1955.

In 1969 Coia won the RIBA Gold Medal for outstanding quality and achievement in his buildings putting him in the exalted company of architectural giants such as Lutyens, Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier. It was said at the time that much of the credit for this award came from the recognition of the design for St Peter's Seminary in Cardross. It was also felt by many observers that Coia was being credited for the achievement of the practice and not necessarily his own architectural body of work, a feeling later echoed by Metzstien and MacMillan themselves with whose work he was effectively being credited.

Metzstien and MacMillan

Andy MacMillan (left) and Isi Metzstien (right) re-visit St Patrick's Kilsyth in 2007.
Reproduced by kind permission of Kieran Dodds ©

Due to the pressure of Nazi oppression in pre-war Berlin the Metzstien family who were originally Polish Jews, left Germany for Glasgow in 1939. Isi's father had died in 1933 leaving his mother, alone, to bring up a family of 5 as a single parent, a foreigner in Germany and Jewish in a land that did not want them. Having witnessed first-hand the inhumanity of Kristallnacht, the burning of synagogues and political violence, Metzstien's faith in God lapsed. His close family were to disperse from Glasgow across the western world as part of the wider Jewish Diaspora after the war, but Isi remained in Glasgow fired with the fervour of a new faith – his belief in architecture and its force for good in the world.

He started off as a 17-year-old apprentice at Gillespie Kidd and Coia in 1945 where ultimately he would end up as a partner. Working at Gillespie Kidd and Coia during the day, Metzstien was to commence studies at the Glasgow School of Architecture, now the Mackintosh School of Architecture based within Glasgow School of Art. Classes were hard work on top of the day job being a commitment of 5 nights a week - it was therefore necessary to have the almost religious zeal of a new convert to keep on top of his studies.

It was at the Glasgow School of Architecture where Metzstien first met MacMillan who was also a student there. Andy MacMillan was a native of Glasgow having been born and brought up in Maryhill, the protestant son of a railway worker. At the age of 16, MacMillan sat the Glasgow Corporation exam where he came sixth and was rewarded with his choice of career within the Corporation. He opted for Architecture and worked for 10 years in building works for the City which at the time was undertaking huge social projects and was rapidly expanding. His work was varied anything from prefabricated bungalows to tenement blocks to shopping centres were all within the demise of his brief. Subsequently for a short period he was to work at the East Kilbride Development Corporation, but when his old friend Metzstien from GSA contacted him to say there was vacancy at Gillespie Kidd and Coia the prospect of the relative artistic freedom of the private sector was overwhelming.

Immediately they were to form a working partnership which lasted for the rest of their career, arguably achieving far more together than they would have individually. Metzstien the intellectual, MacMillan the experienced pragmatic. Quickly they were to adopt a modernist approach and a style which came through many and varied influences, but which would not have been possible without the freedom afforded to them from the Atelier approach practiced by Coia.

Ironic then, that the most influential designers of Scottish Catholic ecclesiastical architecture in the 20th Century were a Jewish atheist and his lapsed Protestant partner, who were willingly given design authority at an early stage in their career from their intermittently practicing Catholic employer Jack Coia who had the patronage of the Catholic Archdioceses across the whole of central Scotland.

In recent years the Scottish Architectural community have belatedly come to recognise Isi Metzstien and Andy MacMillan as the elder statesmen of Scottish architecture. After the highly successful 2007 exhibition at the Lighthouse in Glasgow where a retrospective appreciation of their work was hailed, they were recognised also by Glasgow University, gaining an honorary degree which they were awarded on behalf of the GUSA based at the Glasgow School of Art.

Andy MacMillan (left) and Isi Metzstien (right) re-visit St Patrick's Kilsyth in 2007.
Reproduced by kind permission of Kieran Dodds ©

In May 2008 they were both inaugural joint winners of the RIAS Lifetime Achievement Award and in December 2008 were named as joint winners of the prestigious RIBA Annie Spink Award for Excellence in the development of Architectural Education and Teaching in Scotland.

In 2016 the ScotStyle event run by the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland which was part of the Edinburgh Festival of Architecture listed the top 100 buildings in Scotland of the past 100 years. St Patrick's Kilsyth was one of those building which was listed as were a number of the others from the GKC portfolio.

Themes and Influences

The revived post-war practice enjoyed Jack Coia's legacy of the continued patronage of the Catholic Church for whom GKC designed a further 17 churches in Scotland, 44 churches in total before the partnership was to close. Secular commissions reflected the burgeoning rise and gradual decline of the Welfare State where they were also involved in the design of a number of Catholic and also non-denominational Schools. Their commissions included housing, hospitals and education buildings mostly built in suburban settings in Glasgow and the Scottish New Towns. For instance, some children from St Patrick's will be familiar with Our Lady's High School in Cumbernauld – originally conceived as Our Lady's High School for Girls at the outset of Cumbernauld New Town. This range of building types offered unique circumstances and opportunities in which sacred design informed and influenced their secular design.

The overarching theme within the practice was that of a serious concern for a building's context, the fullest consideration of all aspects of a site invariably informing the nature and arrangement of the building layout to suit function.
Metzstien and MacMillan were clearly socially and intellectually motivated as opposed to other architectural groups at the time who they felt were too commercialistic or too artistic in inspiration or influence.

In his GUSA lecture Metzstien said that Charles Rennie Mackintosh was his greatest influence by far, working in the School of Art building in Glasgow everyday absorbing the way the building works, particularly the lesson of how important light is to define a space and how light changes throughout the day – something that was clearly a consideration in the design of St Patrick's.

It is clear also (particularly from the design of St Peter's Cardross) that Le Corbusier, the seminal modernist French architect, was a considerable influence on the early careers of Mezstien and MacMillan for two reasons – firstly his leading modernist credentials and secondly his patronage from the French Catholic Church. Metzstien traveled to see his work in the Chapel of Notre Dame Du Haut at Ronchamp and the Seminary he designed at La Tourette.

External view of Notre Dame du Haute by Le Corbusier

Built in 1958 this church in Ronchamp in France is almost like a cartoon version of St Patrick's. This building looks as if it was St Patrick's Kilsyth seen through the eyes of Picasso! Le Corbusier was at the height of his influence over European Architects and Izi Metzstien travelled to photograph the finished building just before starting work on the design of St Patrick's Kilsyth.

Photo credit - *'Colline Notre-Dame du Haut, Ronchamp - site officie'* ©

Internal view of Notre Dame du Haute by Le Corbusier

This photograph illustrates some of the architectural language which can also be seen in St Patrick's Kilsyth. Windows extending from floor to ceiling height - casting long beams of light. A clearstory high in the apex of the walls and roof. Wooden cladding on the ceiling. Niches and boxes recessed into the extremely thick external walls emphasising their depth around the openings. Stark wooden benches in modernist style - all translated features into many of the GKC works but particularly St Patrick's Kilsyth.

Photo credit - *'Colline Notre-Dame du Haut, Ronchamp - site officie'* ©

A body of work – a new architectural dialect

The entire portfolio of work by Gillespie Kidd and Coia from the modernist period is identifiable by a series of distinct themes that were developed throughout the period from 1956 onwards. Theirs is not a new language, indeed many critics thought that the designs of MacMillan and Metzstien were so indebted to Le Corbusier that they did not merit the further recognition as they were not original works – but merely developments of a style variations on a theme invented by Le Corbusier. Indeed, MacMillan and Metzstien were quick to acknowledge their sources of inspiration and influence – Le Corbusier and MacIntosh being amongst the most prominent. Their style is however a recognizable dialect within modernism and St Patrick's is a repository many of these characteristics.

Firstly, and most obviously at St Patrick's is the use of red brick. Right from the off in 1932 Jack Coia was keen to move away from the traditional use of local stone in his construction and design of St Anne's Church and Presbytery at Dennistoun in Glasgow. This set a theme for materials to be continued and used by Metzstien and MacMillan throughout their whole career.

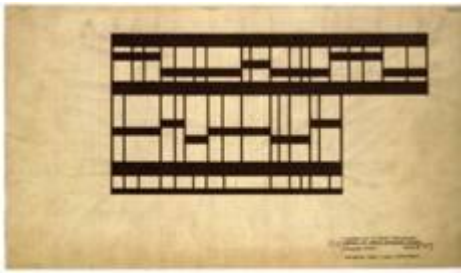
The use of brick for a church is not only pragmatic and cost effective it is a metaphor for the very existence of the building. The Church is made up of its members with God at its head – the building is made up of individual bricks which make up the whole for the glory of God. Furthermore, the brick is manmade – the work of human hands - in much the same way as bread and wine, which are the work of human hands, form an integral part of the sacrifice of the Mass.

The second element is the use of epic scale. This at St Patrick's is made possible by the steel spanning superstructure supported by columns hidden within the hollow load bearing brick diaphragm walls. The thickness of the walls is emphasised by the angular nature of columns and piers that become visible around windows. The space which this creates in which to say Mass is uninterrupted and the sight lines from all areas are excellent.

The third theme is the use of light in keeping with the influence from Macintosh. Dramatic effect in St Patrick's is created by the use of 4 architectural lighting devices.

1. The clerestory all around the top of the massive brickwork walls allowing direct sunlight and reflected light from the wooden ceiling to fill the massive volume of the interior.
2. The west wall with its glass from ground level to the full 12m of wall height which allows the sun to illuminate the benches and floor with large stripes of daylight which span the whole width of the building at certain times of the year.
3. The use of hidden sources of light. In St Patrick's there is both an angular roof light and a concealed full height window which illuminate the sanctuary from the rear, giving 18m height to the expanse of glass right from ground level.
4. The use of light chimneys which uses sloping faces of brick to reflect diffused light from a concealed window high above the brickwork on the eastern wall.

All of these features are used again and again throughout the body of work as well as at St Patrick's.



Above is the drawing of the West facing window at the rear of St Paul's Glenrothes the first modernist design by MacMillan and Metzstien. It bears remarkable similarity to the design of the western wall at St Patrick's in its use of thick horizontal elements and thin vertical elements.

Above are the light chimneys from St Brides East Kilbride which are similar to the light chimneys on the eastern wall of St Patrick's which allow diffuse light to fall into the gallery area from the concealed window above. Note also the similarities of the wooden benches.

The similarities with St Bride's continue with the use of angular roof lights. Another application of angular roof lights at St Mary of the Angels in Camelon – in fact it's earliest application in a church setting by GKC.

The roof light at St Patrick's and the full height window which illuminates the sanctuary from behind.

Above is Our Lady of the Angels at Camelon which also uses sloping roof lights.

The picture above is of St. Brides in East Kilbride. Here there is use of sloping roof lights to allow light into the heart of the massive space below.
In both Our Lady of the Angels and St Brides there is also the familiar use of red brick as the main building material.

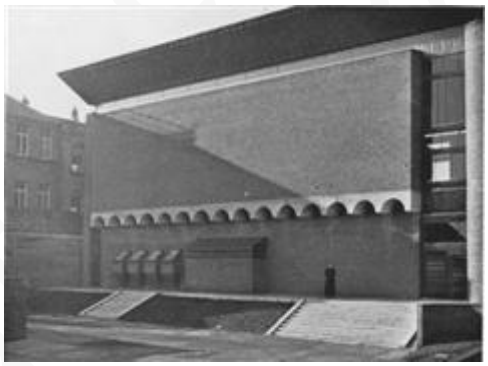
Above St Patrick's viewed from the south – the roof light above and behind the sanctuary can be clearly seen from this angle.

The use of large scale continuous clerestory windows positioned high in the apex of the roof and walls is very widespread in GKC churches and public buildings and is one of the most recognisable features of the Metzstien and MacMillan era. The effect in St Patrick's is to seem to minimise the weight of the roof – a vast spanning superstructure which in fact weighs many hundreds of tons of steel, wood and copper. The roof seems to float

in the air as if light as a feather above the massive brick walls. This technique of introducing high level light can be seen in almost every work from GCK but was used most dramatically of all their buildings in St Patrick's Kilsyth, St Josephs' Duntocher, St Benedict's Drumchapel, St Mary of the Angel's Camelon and Our Lady of Good Council, Dennistoun.

The fourth common element of the architectural dialect used by GCK is the use of poured concrete features as part of the internal and external finish. St Patrick's is distinguished by a layer of grey Portland concrete arches which support the length of the gallery and are a visible internal and external feature. A poured in situ concrete feature is an aspect of design which St Patrick's shares with many of the buildings but also with perhaps what is GKC's most acclaimed structure, St Peter's Seminary at Cardross which is listed as one of the world's top 100 endangered architectural heritage sites.

Cast concrete arches at St Peter's Seminary Cardross



Cast concrete arches at St Patrick's Kilsyth

The feature is striking but unfortunately upon closer examination the well documented issues with the quality of workmanship and supervision during the construction of St Patrick's is manifest in the internal finish of the shuttered concrete pour. In places where the mix was not wet enough or tamped into place firmly enough in the wooden moulding, the aggregate is still visible, and the otherwise smooth flat grey surface is broken. Obviously, the modern technique of continuous pouring was not yet available in 1964 as there are visible individual vertical cast boundaries which detract from the overall look of the feature. There are many other common themes in the GKC portfolio which are visible at St Patrick's. The use of Copper cladding on external weather surfaces, the large scale solid wooden doors with alternate layers of thick horizontal beams like at Our Lady of Good Council in Dennistoun. The stark modernist wooden benches and the wooden finish to the internal ceiling like in St Benedict's Drumchapel. The circular brick inlay in the piazza, the curving baptistery walls in an otherwise angular building and the limestone altar sitting on 4 short fat circular columns of limestone on top of a stepped square platform like at St Joseph's Duntocher. The brickwork fenestration and the epic use of size and span as in St Brides, East Kilbride or in St Benedict's Easterhouse.

External door detail at Our Lady of Good Counsel, Dennistoun which is very similar to St Patrick's.

Use of stark simple wooden benches and limestone block Altar supported by four columns of limestone at St Joseph's Duntocher - exactly the same as St Patrick's.

The architectural language of modernism was not invented by Metzstien or MacMillan – one could even say (harshly) it was not advanced by their work. However, the expression of their modernist ideas forms a local dialect of their own, a style which was in place well before St Patrick's was conceived as a building and which they soften the often too stark style of modernist reality by just enough to be in keeping with the ecclesiastical context. The themes visible at St Patrick's run through the rest of the GKC portfolio in a recognisable way and any layperson familiar with one building would recognise comfortably these features in other buildings in the family. St Patrick's was merely one step in a continuum of work where ideas were gradually evolving on a theme but execution for each design and project was different by degrees.

Themes – a journey through the space

Part of the design ethos of GKC was to consider fully not just the function and layout of the building but also the journey through a building being part of it's language – it's statement. This is a consideration, a theme which repeats throughout the late GKC years in both religious and secular works. Mark Bains in his 'Themes and Variations' contribution to 'GKC Architecture 1956 – 1987' edited by Johnny Rodger, observes that to get into the nave of St Patrick's from the Low Craigends (front) door, the parishioner or visitor has to first turn left to face the mortuary Chapel, then turn right ascend the stairs and after having paused at the baptistery platform then turn again and climb up into the light of the main church space. Four 90 degree turns in all, rising from the darkness into the light – from confined space, into the epic scale and span of the church. A journey which makes arrival in the nave all the more dramatic.

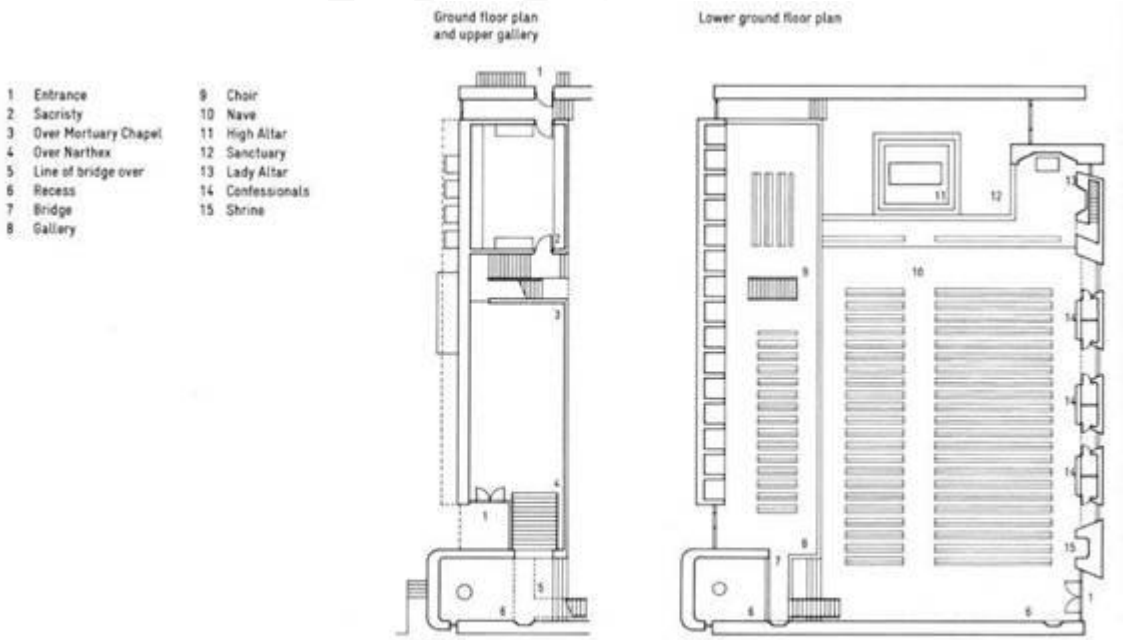
The light levels on this journey are deliberately graded – the darkest area being the mortuary chapel, until you emerge up the stairs into the brightly lit large dramatic space of the church with uninterrupted sight lines and scale by a factor from where you have been. There is also a metaphorical journey. On entrance to the church you confront the mortuary chapel immediately - a sudden reminder of your own mortality. Then on climbing the stairs there is hope – the baptismal font. Ahead and above, the main nave, a spectacular space for the religious life of the parishioner with literally the light of the world for company.

In the mortuary chapel, the overlapping levels of the light diffusing from the shallow vaulted white ceiling of concrete arches which support the gallery directly above, is low, soft and somber. The design allows only light to enter indirectly and at low levels even on the brightest day. By contrast the main chapel is fantastically well lit by daylight from every visible and invisible source. The baptistery is softly lit from above– like the light of a new dawn signifying the start of a life, the start of a journey. The curved brick walls on 3 sides – the only curved brickwork in the whole building - sheltering and cradling those inside the space.

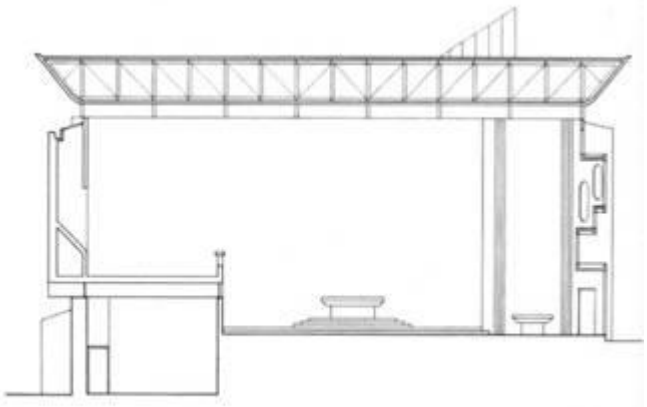
The best time of day for the illumination of St Patrick's is from after mid- day till 6pm when the light comes directly through the west wall and the columns and shafts of light sweep across the pews from different angles.

Unfortunately, there are very few services in the church at this time of day! Afternoon weddings on a sunny Saturday are perhaps when the building is at it's best.

The impact of light upon the space - the beams of light move throughout the day creating a 'living interior space'.
Photo: 40 Hours Adoration in October 2016



Final Floor Plan



Cross Section through the Nave

This modern colour picture shows the same view as the plate below.
Note the effect of sunlight from the southern clerestory is very similar.

This picture from the GUSA archive dated 1965, illustrates the effect of light filling the void of the church. Light is coming in from behind the camera via the west wall as the main source, through the clerestory windows and reflecting off the wooden roof, into the baptistery via the sloping light well and into the gallery via the light chimneys. The diagonal shaft of light is direct sunlight from the clerestory at the apex of the roof and the top of the brick wall behind the sanctuary.

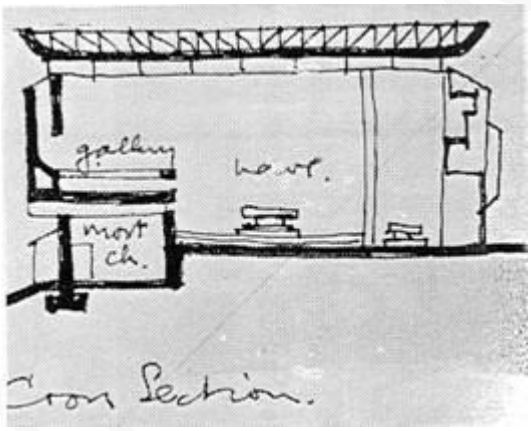
From a historical context note the original position of the Stations of the Cross and the Lady altar in the gallery.

Also note that glazing has now been installed in each arch – not an original feature of the building. This was installed as consequence of a radiant gas heating solution for the building during the 1970's so that individual zones could be used without having to heat the whole space. Hot air from the mortuary chapel would otherwise dissipate upwards into the main church. Unfortunately, the frosted glass used destroyed the sight lines out of the building to the east through the arches as was originally intended, where the community of Kilsyth outside was discretely visible inside.

A Love Hate Relationship

Initial sketch designs for St Patrick's had already started as early as 1958. Indeed, it was the timing of the initial conceptual design drawings for St Patrick's which ultimately are responsible for some of the flaws in layout of the church. The original idea that form, space, light and function would have combined into a solution which is greater than the sum of its parts was a bold and idealistic concept and fully part of the modernist agenda. In reality the end result was a building compromised by changing function for which the architectural form was never intended, and which could not be altered enough in time for a construction deadline which had to commence.

The sketch drawing on the left is in the hand of Jack Coia and dates to as early as 1958 showing that even though he was largely not involved in the detail of design by this stage, he was still involved in the initial conceptual process. This initial layout was almost exactly how the final plan would look.



Those who have studied the design of St Patrick's in the context of pre-Vatican II liturgical reforms conclude that had the practice of the liturgy not changed then the resulting building would have worked so much better – as it had been designed. The fact is that even with some fundamental flaws exposed, it is still a spectacular space in which to celebrate Mass. As a building it is becoming more appreciated with the passing years despite its flaws and this alone speaks to the fact that it is a work of great merit.

The Context

The Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican (2nd Vatican Council) opened under Pope John XXIII in 1962 and closed under Pope Paul VI in 1965. During this period of 4 years – almost all entirely co-incident with the design and construction of St Patrick's, the bishops approved the constitution on the liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium) as well as many of the other bulls and decrees to which the modern Catholic Church has become so familiar.

Taken together this body of work precipitated a radical change in the practice of the liturgy and the community of the 'living body of Christ' in a way that had never been anticipated at the time when St Patrick's was being designed. The laity were encouraged to participate actively in the celebration of the Mass. The priest had to orate aloud more of the important prayers of the liturgy and do so in the vernacular tongue. (An important point of historic note is that the last Mass said in the old St Patrick's church was a 'Latin Mass' of the Tridentine

form and according to the St Andrew's annual of 1965 the first Mass, a high pontifical Mass, in the new St Patrick's was notably held in the vernacular in keeping with the changing practice at that time.) Importantly the Priest was brought physically closer to the people and also to face the congregation during the Consecration.

Therefor in an unforeseeable way when the design was originally conceived, the 2nd Vatican Council altered radically the practice of the liturgy which meant that fundamentally the layout of the sanctuary had to be changed 'on-the-hoof'. The building had been designed for the Tridentine Mass where the priest said Mass, in large part, without the need always to be heard, with his back to the congregation, separated from the people. The original design concepts for space and light on paper were never to be realised in practice as the location of the Altar had to be brought forward to a more central position in the sanctuary in keeping with Vatican II. Crucially this removed the Altar from the shaft of light that had been designed to illuminate it from a concealed full height elevation of glass on the west wall which extended high into the roof space. The Altar was thus relegated to a darker less dramatically illuminated central location. In recent times and in recognition of both liturgical interpretation and architectural intent the Tabernacle has now been moved almost into this same space however with less visual impact than was originally intended for the Altar.

Metzstien and MacMillan, neither of whom came from a Catholic background and therefor neither of whom came with an innate understanding of the significance of Catholic liturgical theology and practice, had to study the Liturgy to aid their designs. Arguably their designs pre Vatican II and also post Vatican II work better as spaces simply because there was a clearer brief. St Patrick's was a transitional creation, designed for the Tridentine Mass and altered by degree as changes emerged over the 4 year period of the Council and throughout construction to suit the post Vatican II requirement. An inestimably difficult task from both a design perspective and also from a liturgical perspective.

Limitations of the site

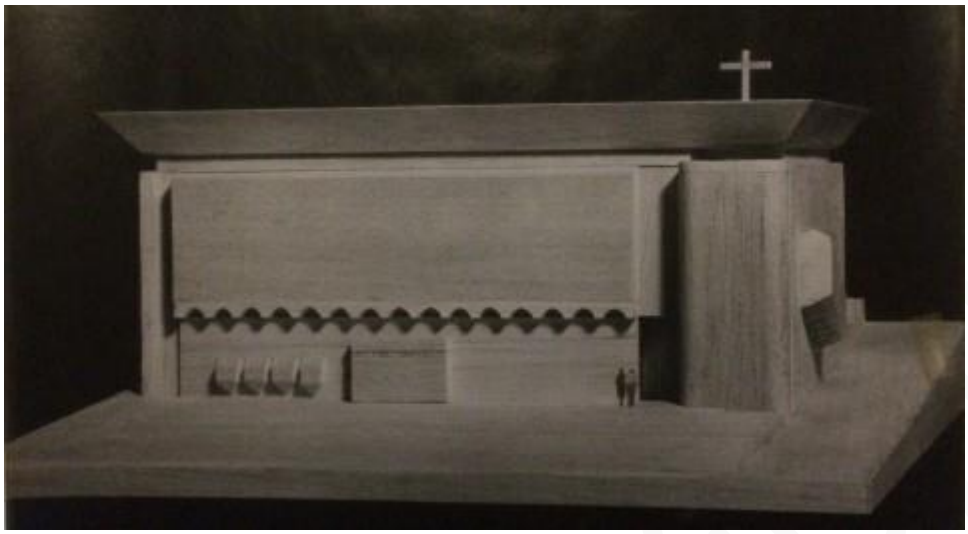
The limitations of the site also impinged upon the design, as did the change of levels east to west. The Mortuary Chapel can only be accessed by flights of stairs. As a place to conduct funerals from, it is totally impractical. For pall bearers to carry a coffin into or out of the space, it is extremely difficult. Very few funerals were ever conducted from this chapel. With the old St Patrick's Church, the tradition was that a cortege left from the Low Craigends door, through the Market Place to the Cross, down Howe Road and off to the cemetery – and so the location for the Mortuary Chapel was consistent with habit and social memory but flawed in practice. (Modern funereal practice is to exit the church on the flat surface into the rear piazza past Mansefield House and into UP lane.) Interestingly the pre-Vatican II location of the Altar in the Mortuary Chapel was never changed in the original design and altar was well sited for the purpose to which it was actually put for 30 years – a Blessed Sacrament Chapel where exposition and benediction could take place on the Altar which was located against the back wall with the priest standing in front – ideally suited for the purpose.

Changing Budget

In recent times, an early architectural proposal put to the Parish by GKC was discovered during a clear out of the chapel house. This proposal shows a far more complex design that was ever realised in practice. The proposal, which was exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy of Fine Arts and is now in the hands of the GKC archive at the Glasgow University School or Architecture at the Glasgow School of Art Archive for safe keeping, shows two photographs of an architectural model build to illustrate the first concept and a set of floor plan drawings which are also far more complex that the final building.

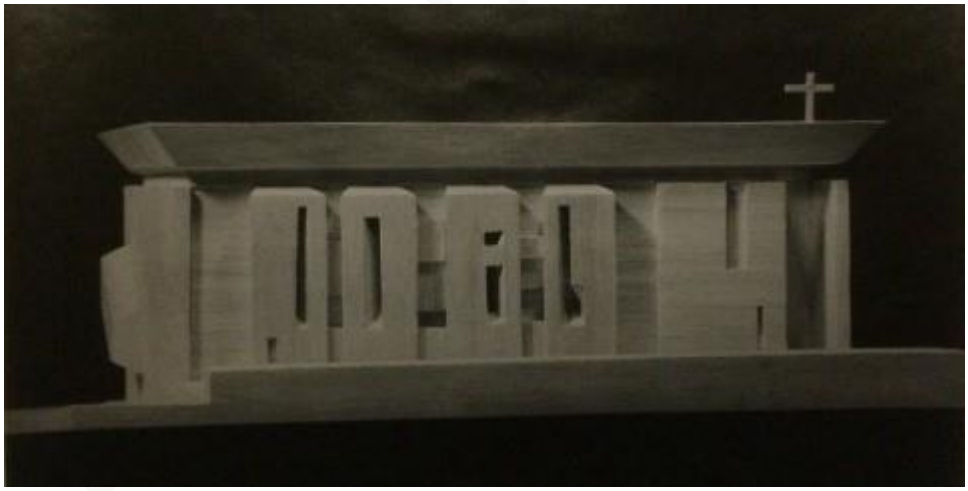
Obviously, the building was to evolve in design over the period of dialogue with the client and, most likely for budgetary reasons, the design was simplified. The original concept would have make the building much more like its sister building, St Brides in East Kilbride, with more complex brickwork in the west wall and more elaborate sources of natural lighting for the internal aspects of the hollow brick piers. Instead what was

ultimately constructed was a far plainer and box like structure with flatter surfaces, easier and cheaper to construct.



Early Proposal - East Elevation

This elevation remains largely unchanged in the final building, but the cross was mounted on the curving wall of the baptistry and external cantilevered box on the north wall, which would have housed the staircase to the gallery and overhung the lane, was never built.



Early Proposal - West Elevation

This elevation was radically altered. The brickwork was simplified to present plain exterior walls to the 4 brick piers rather than the more complex design shown here. The effect of this was to make the interior of the brick piers dark. It is clear from this original proposal that there would have been many more windows in the west wall and the hollow interior of the brick piers were originally conceived as being features which would have had internal sources of light via these window features.

Wind Tunnel

The exposed west elevation of St Patrick's is of great significance to the natural lighting of the building as can be seen below, but also exposes the building to the elements. The predominant westerly wind lashes rainfall against the large glass windows and another unforeseen effect is that the weather, combined with the surrounding buildings and narrow lanes conspires to create large differences in air pressure between the western and eastern elevations. The result is that during the entry and exit of the congregation both west and east doors can be open at the same time and an internal wind can be created strong enough to slam doors on old ladies or break glass or make papers take flight. The retro fitting of a porch (a pastiche of the original design and an obviously bolted on afterthought from an architectural perspective) to the Western elevation from the original design allowed for double doors at this side of the church in an attempt to alleviate this effect. Equally a glass partition door arrangement was added to the eastern exit onto the lower piazza exit for Low Craigends. Each modification having the effect of an airlock so as to cut down through drafts to an acceptable level.

Natural lighting from the west elevation is a significant feature of the overall design.
The space is circled above by the clearstory window which seems to make the roof 'float' above the building
The hollow brick peirs are dark internally due to the changed design.

Latent Defects and a Lack of Supervision

There were many latent defects in the end product of the finished building, some visible to the congregation and some invisible. The most obvious sign that something was wrong can be seen clearly in the earliest photographs from 1964. A striking white crystalline efflorescence can be seen on all the photographs of the church randomly growing across every wall. Even after treatment, painting and a restoration program to ensure that building is water tight, this white leaching is still a cosmetic problem today in 2009.

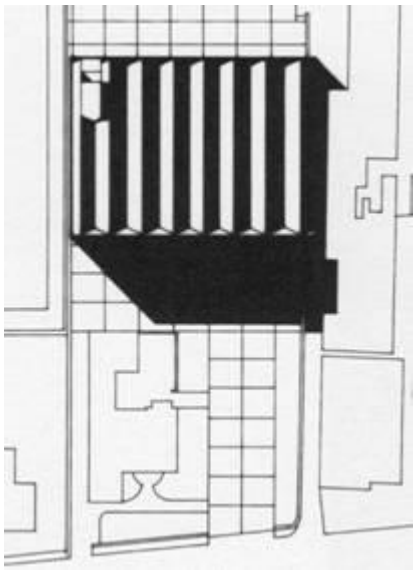
The root cause of this staining is the crystallisation of salts to the dry side of the wall from within the brick material itself. A combination of factors such as poor quality of manufacture, perhaps wrong choice of porous materials for the Scottish climate and ineffective drainage and ventilation within the hollow load bearing brick walls are all a factor.

Due to well documented poor supervision by the diocesan fabric clerk of works, there is widespread evidence of poor workmanship from the building contractor being overlooked. Bricklaying can be seen high on the outside of the west elevation at its northern end where pointing is non-existent. High on the southern end of the inside west elevation above the sanctuary there is exceptionally poor mixing of pallets where individual batches of slightly different colours of brick can be seen in clumps. Each clump representing a day's work for a bricklayer.

The lack of supervision combined with poor initial detailed technical design of some aspects of the roof in particular allowed a number of other faults to fester over the years. Down pipes, never tested at the end of building works, all over the building were blocked with construction rubble and as a result would back up all the way to the roof with standing water. Some down pipe joints had failed under the pressure of backed up vertical columns of water providing a source of dampness into the hollow cavity of the external walls – feeding the crystalline leaching with a constant supply of water for decades worsening the visual whitening effect. A design failure to provide proper ventilation to these spaces and the absence of inspection chambers to allow access for maintenance perpetuated these flaws for 4 decades until the restoration works in 1999 and 2000. It remains to be seen if the efflorescence will ever subside or whether this is a terminal flaw, forever to destroy the visual amenity.

The combination of blocked drainage together with yet another latent defect meant that the roof void would regularly flood. The roof is made up of 6 pitched roofs running east west abutted together by valley gutters and surrounded with the visible outward sloping metal clad up stand around all four sides. This gives the roof the appearance of a solid heavy flat structure floating above the brickwork, seemingly without support - so intrinsic and characteristic to the modernist design of the building. Within the valley gutters there are catch pots designed to rapidly swallow the vast quantities of water which pour from the metal clad pitched roof surfaces.

The original design of the valley gutters was far too shallow to handle the volume of water which can disgorge from each side. The catch pots were simply not big enough in size, nor numerous enough in number to cope with the necessary volumetric flow of water in heavy rain. The backwash from the blocked down pipes combined with these defects meant that large areas of standing water were gathering after each heavy downpour and taking a very long time to drain away. The water level was regularly rising above the level of the first sheet metal folds in the roof cladding and was seeping through the folds via capillary action and into the roof void in vast volumes.



The 1960's under floor electric heating was never up to the job of heating the vast internal space and parishioners were always cold – not helped by our own microclimate of wind passing through door to door! As a result, radiant gas heating technology was installed in the late1970's which solved the heating problem but which further detracted from the visual amenity of the internal finish. Furthermore, a by-product of burning gas is water vapour, which would naturally condense onto the coldest surfaces such as windows thus providing a further stream of dampness, rotting window frames and accelerating the leaching process on the brickwork – this time from the inside.

The roof void itself had virtually no means of ventilation. The dark and by now damp environment meant that it was the ideal habitat for wet rot and large areas of wooden super structure were affected by spectacular fungal growths. All of this had to be removed and replaced during the restoration works of 1999/2000.

After 20 years the internal damage was profound. For almost the whole of the 1980's St Patrick's was covered in buckets as the rainwater which had penetrated the roof void had only one place to go – through the decorative wooden ceiling and drip onto the congregation below. To this day, even after the roof has been fixed, even after the restoration has been completed, the shadow of the steel superstructure above the wooden ceiling is indelibly stained onto the pine planking. The water penetration, more than any other fault, almost rendered the church uninhabitable and for a while the future of the building looked bleak.

Whilst the congregation could live with damage to visual amenity from the white efflorescence on the brick work, it was impossible to avoid wet seats. I vividly remember one service where (and with no poetic licence for effect whatsoever) several members of the congregation had umbrellas up inside the building throughout Mass. Ironically it had stopped raining outside but the latency in the leakage through the roof meant that it was still 'raining' on the inside!

The congregation already split on the merit of modernist architectural aesthetics versus their old stone Puginistic style church, with familiar gothic revival pastiche and unchallenging friendly familiar features, hardened opinion against the new St Patrick's. There was universal distain brought about by experiencing the failure of functionality rather than any thought given to the assessment of design merit and fuelled by nostalgic hankering for the past.

Post 1999/2000 restoration works. The same view of the southern elevation as in the black and white plate above. Significant improvement to the white efflorescence staining on the sanctuary wall is clear – although not removed entirely. The above picture is dated Dec 2008.

The Future

Now in 2009 as we approach the 10th anniversary of the major restoration works carried out by Fr Hand, it is appropriate to think of the future and appreciate what has been done.

In that 10-year period the interior fabric of the church has matured and although no further major works have taken place, the stark modernist interior has been softened by banners, plants and decor. The financial burden of operation and maintenance of such a large building on a decreasing population of parishioners is a long-term concern and it remains to be seen if the epic size of the project will ultimately become a mill stone for the Parish.

However, throughout the whole period since 1999 there has never been a serious problem of rook leakage – although there is the odd condensation drip from the steelwork above the wooden ceiling during cold weather. The heating, lighting and sound systems all upgraded during the restoration continue to provide good service. The original intent to have meeting areas on the piazzas before and after services is now taken for granted as part of the social aspect of the congregation coming together. The car park to the rear, so long a gap site covered with red blaze since the demolition of the first St Patrick's Parish School is filled to capacity for each Sunday Mass.

It is amazing to think that we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of this 'new' St Patrick's building in only a few years' time. It has already stood for half the time that the original St Patrick's church was in use and even today, all these years later on from the initial concept, the striking design of the building is by far the most modernist (and indeed most modern) looking building in Kilsyth. Just think how avante-guard this building must have appeared in 1964! It was truly a brave endorsement of modernism to commission a church in this style all those years ago when contemporary architecture was so bland and existing buildings were so conservative. A decision we can only marvel at today.

It was also a statement commission. The statement was that the Catholics of Kilsyth so long the poor working class 'dirty Irish' had arrived and were amongst the new establishment. No longer is there talk of how flawed the building was and how much Parishioners long for their old church. Parishioners below the age of 45 today do not remember the old church and take for granted the sight lines and the epic scale of the current building. The architectural vocabulary and literacy of that generation is different having experienced large scale public buildings and places of work in which modernist features are commonplace. It therefor takes a conscious effort to stop and consider that St Patrick's has already stood the test of time that so many other modern (and modernist) buildings have in the intervening time already failed. It is a building that will look modern as we

move into the future and for many more years to come and it will also service the glory of God and provide it parishioners with a bold statement of a church in which to worship for many years to come.

The Building Contractors

The contracting companies that were used in the original construction of St Patrick's Kilsyth were.

General Contractors.....Speirs, Dick and Smith Ltd 136-140 Glenpark Street, Glasgow.

Structural Steelwork.....Flemming Bros (Structural Engineers) Ltd. Stanchion House, Park Gardens, Glasgow.

Joiner Work..... J Grant (Builders) Ltd 18 Holland Street, Glasgow.

Metal Windows..... Standard Maclean Ltd, College Milton, East Kilbride.

Glazing Work..... Robert F Milligan. 92 Gallowgate, Glasgow.

Plumbing and Copper Roofing..... Hugh Twaddle and Son Ltd. 130 London Road, Glasgow.

Tiling..... James Duncan Ltd. 106 West Campbell Street, Glasgow.

Electrical Work..... Edelman (Electrical Contractors) Ltd. 31 Argyle Street, Glasgow.

Painting ..... Scot Decorators Ltd. 249 West George Street, Glasgow.

Altars..... Galbraith and Winton Ltd, 48 Balnain Street, Glasgow.

Quantity Surveyor..... William W Rae Esq. FRICS. 121 West Regent Street, Glasgow.

Structural Consultants..... Leonard and Partners. 12 Melville Street, Edinburgh.

Architects..... Gillespie, Kidd and Coia. 20 Park Circus, Glasgow.

Works by Gillespie Kidd and Coia for the Catholic Church in Scotland

As we have discussed, St Patrick's Kilsyth is one of an architectural family of other churches throughout the country. There are many other works which GKC undertook and this is not a full list. Not all of these commissions were directly for the Catholic Church some being for local education authorities etc, but represent none the less a significant contribution to the Scottish Catholic's experience of modernist architectural heritage in which we have come to pray or be educated. Both schools and churches were part of the GCK legacy together with other public buildings that are more open to the general population.

The greater body of work from GKC is larger, obviously, than the subset of work creditable to Metzstien and MacMillan. It extends to a period and a design ethos far removed from and predating the influences of either. This list is intended merely to illustrate that St Patrick's is one of a lineage of Churches and other buildings from GKC stretching back to 1932.


1932 St Anne's Church and Presbytery Dennistoun Glasgow


1934 St Patrick's Church and Presbytery Greenock


1937 St Columba's Church Glasgow


1937 St Peter in Chains Ardrosan Ayrshire


1938 The Glasgow Empire Exhibition

RC Chapel Pavilion Bellahouston Park

1938 St Columbkille's Church and Presbytery Rutherglen

1946 Holy Family Church Port Glasgow

 1948 Our Lady of Good Aid Motherwell

1948 St Aloysius College War Memorial Glasgow

1950 Our Lady and St Francis School Glasgow

1950 St Aloysius Church and Presbytery Springburn (Post War Repairs)

1950 St David's Church Plains, Airdrie

1950 St Eunan's Church Clydebank

 1950 St Kevin's Church Bargeddie, Coatbridge.

 1950 St Matthew's Church, Bishopbriggs.

1950 St Saviour & Sacred Heart School Bellshill

1951 St Laurence's Church Greenock

1952 St Bernadette's Church Carntyne Glasgow

 1952 St Michael's Church Dumbarton

1952 St Michael's Church and Presbytery Linlithgow

1953 Buchanan Memorial Church & Hall Oatlands Glasgow

1953 Church of the Sacred Heart Bridgeton Glasgow

1953 St Andrew's Church Airdrie

1953 St Peter and St Paul's Church Arrochar

 1954 St Joachim's Church Carmyle Glasgow

1954 St Mary's Church Glasgow

1955 St Maria Goretti Church Cranhill Glasgow

1955 Turnbull Hall Chapel Glasgow

1956 Retreat House Craighead Bothwell

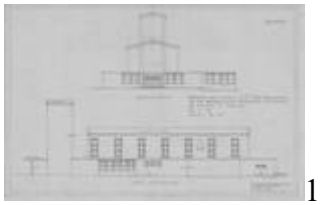
1956 St Peter's Church Partick Glasgow

 1959 St Paul's Church, Glenrothes.

 1957 Lawmuir Primary, Sacred Heart Primary and St Saviour's Secondary, Lanark.

1958 Our Lady & St Francis School, Glasgow.

 1959 St. Charles' Church, Glasgow.

 1959 St Paul's Church, Shettleston Road, Glasgow.


1961 St Aiden's Church Hall, Wishaw.


1961 St Martin's Church, Castlemilk, Glasgow.



1961 St Mary of the Angels, Camelon, Falkirk.


1961 St Mary's Church, Bo'ness.


1962 John Ogilvie Halls, Langside, Glasgow.


1963 St Bride's Church, East Kilbride.


1963 St Joseph's Church, Duntocher.


1964 Sacred Heart, Kildrum, Cumbernauld.

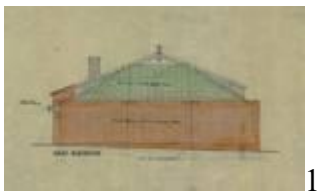

1964 St Patrick's Church, Kilsyth.


1964 Our Lady & St Francis School, Charlotte St, Glasgow.


1965 St Benedict's Church, Easterhouse, Glasgow.


1966 Our Lady of Good Council Church, Dennistoun, Glasgow.

  1966 St Peter's Seminary, Cardross.

 1968 St Maria Goretti Church Hall, Cranhill, Glasgow.

 1968 Our Lady's High School (for Girls), Cumbernauld.

 1968 St Francis Primary School, Merilee, Glasgow.

 1969 Notre Dame College, Bearsden, Glasgow.

 1970 St Benedict's Church, Drumchapel, Glasgow.

 1972 St Margaret's, Clydebank.

Bibliography and Acknowledgements

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