

The origin myth of the Hampden Bowling Club pavilion

Andy Mitchell

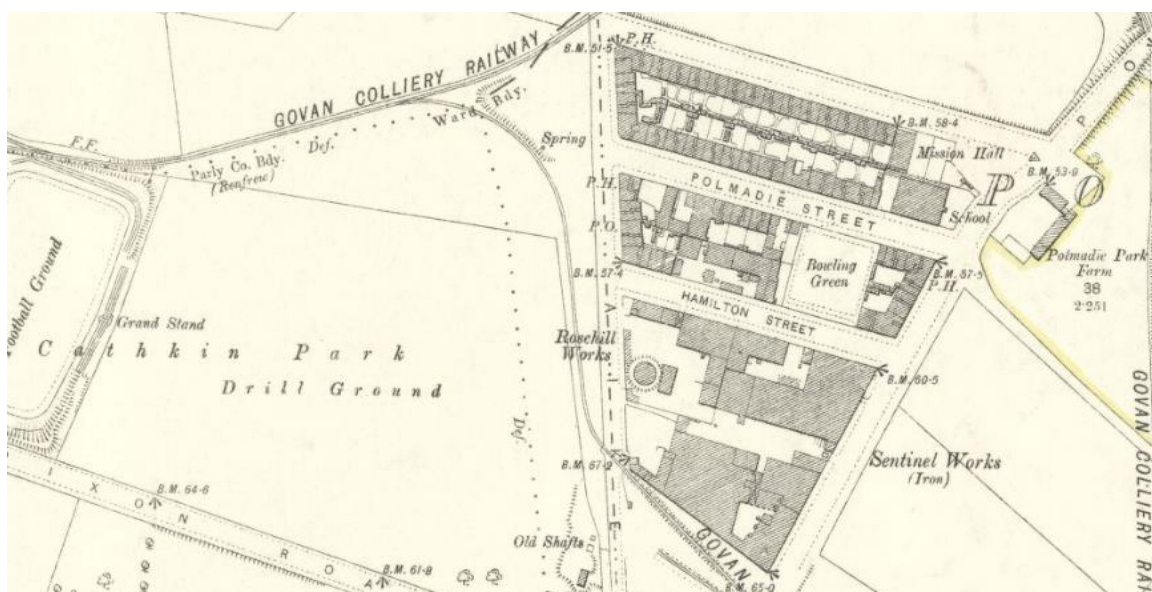
In recent years it has been claimed that the existing pavilion at Hampden Bowling Club in Glasgow is the same building as, or based upon, the pavilion which originally stood at the first Hampden Park.

However, the claim does not stand up to scrutiny and this origin story can be rejected on the following grounds:

1. The size, design and layout of the Queen's Park pavilion, demolished in 1903, bear no relation to the size, design and layout of the Hampden Bowling Club pavilion, built in 1905. There are no obvious architectural features which are replicated.
2. The demolition of the Queen's Park pavilion took place in August 1903, at a time when the Polmadie Bowling Club was still operating, albeit with an uncertain future. The construction of the Hampden Bowling Club pavilion started in March 1905. It is implausible that any building materials were bought 'on spec' and then stored for over a year and a half until they were required.

To reach this conclusion, I have researched in detail the story of the creation of Hampden Bowling Club in 1905 and the building of a new pavilion.

The impetus for the creation of Hampden Bowling Club was the closure of Polmadie Bowling Club in 1903. The green at Polmadie had opened in 1877 and the club was a popular local institution but when the land was required for building it was forced to leave and find new premises.



Location of Polmadie Bowling Club, in the Ordnance Survey map of 1895.

POLMADIE CLUB.—Fred. Kreger has won the championship of this club. The directors have received intimation that the green will be required at the end of the season for building purposes. They are hopeful of getting a piece of ground in Smith Street at the corner of Calder Street; or in Butterbiggins Road. The club is one of the oldest in the South Side district.

Daily Record, 16 September 1903. Polmadie BC told to vacate the green.

season. The green will be closed this Saturday.
POLMADIE CLUB.—Mr. James Jamieson has won both the President and Vice-President Prizes connected with this green. The directors are hopeful of getting as much ground from the Corporation in Queen's Park Recreation Ground near Crosshill Station as will suffice for a new green.

Daily Record, 30 September 1903. This was the last event at the old club.

Since the Polmadie bowling green closed last year negotiations have been a-foot for the promotion of a club for the residents of Govanhill and district. On the 22nd inst. a public meeting will be held in the Dixon Hall for the furtherance of the scheme.

Daily Record, 17 March 1904. Notice of a public meeting for a new club in Govanhill.

GOVANHILL CLUB.—Mr. James Gibson, the secretary of the new bowling club, has received official intimation from Mr. James G. Monro, the Town Clerk, that the Corporation has agreed to rent the club the piece of vacant ground adjoining the Queen's Park children's recreation ground in Kingsley Avenue for a bowling green, at a rental of £10. The club will be required to enclose and lay out the ground to the satisfaction of the Superintendent of Parks.

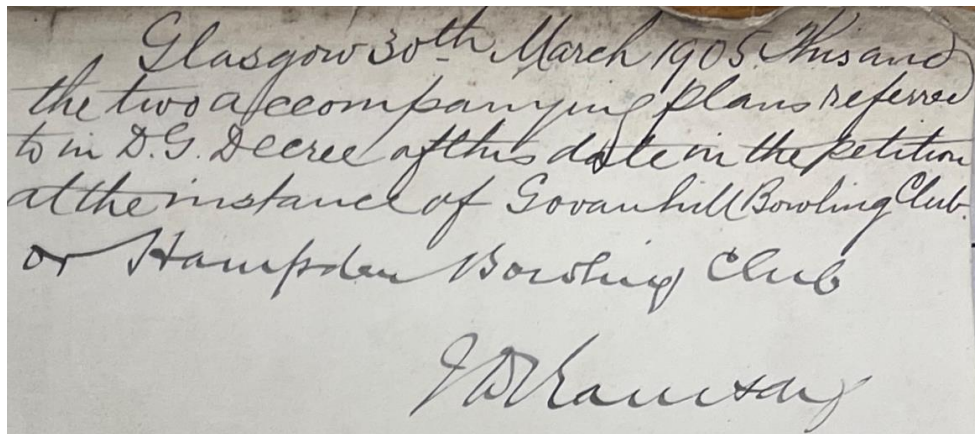
Daily Record, 22 March 1904. Glasgow Council agreed to rent an area of ground for the new Govanhill Bowling Club, at the eastern end of Queen's Park Recreation Ground, adjacent to a children's playground in Kingsley Avenue. It will have to be laid out to the satisfaction of the Superintendent of Parks.

HAMPDEN CLUB.—A meeting of the promoters of this new club was held in the Dixon Halls, Govanhill;—Councillor Dr. Garey presiding. Plans were submitted for the bowl-house, which were passed and arrangements made to submit them to the Dean of Guild Court. It was agreed that the limited liability company should raise funds privately, and not by public subscription. The new green will be opened this season. The following office-bearers were elected:—Hon. president, Sir Hugh Shaw-Stewart, M.P.; president, Councillor Dr. Garey, J.P.; vice-president, ex-Ballie Thomas Calderwood, J.P.; Treasurer, Mr. Andrew Crawford; secretary, Mr. James W. Hillhouse; directors—Messrs. John Sinclair, James Macdonald, John Braidwood, William Morrison, and James Jamieson.

Daily Record, 21 March 1905. Founding meeting of the new club, now called Hampden Bowling Club. Plans for the bowl house were agreed and were submitted to Dean of Guild Court, where they gained approval.

Construction of the bowling pavilion

The following plans were submitted to Dean of Guild Court in March 1905 for construction of a new bowl house for Govanhill Bowling Club, also known as Hampden Bowling Club:



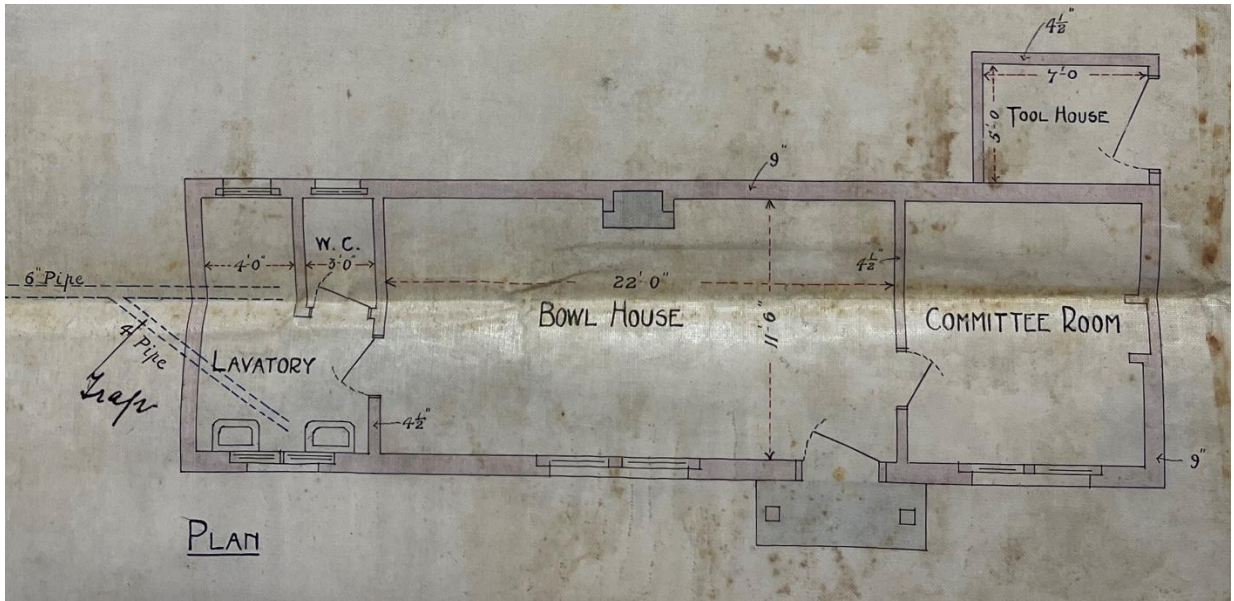
Glasgow 30th March 1905. This and the two accompanying plans referred to in D.G. Decree of this date in the petition at the instance of Govanhill Bowling Club or Hampden Bowling Club

J. M. Murray

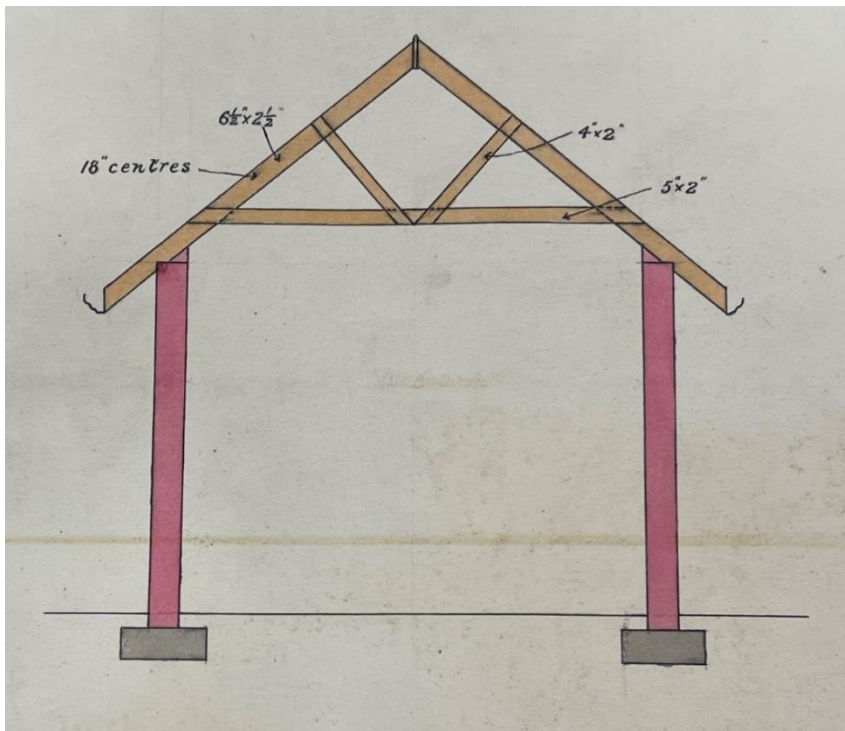
'Glasgow, 30th March 1905. This and the two accompanying plans referred to in D.G. [Dean of Guild] Decree of this date in the petition at the instance of Govanhill Bowling Club or Hampden Bowling Club.'



The front elevation of the new bowl house for Hampden BC.

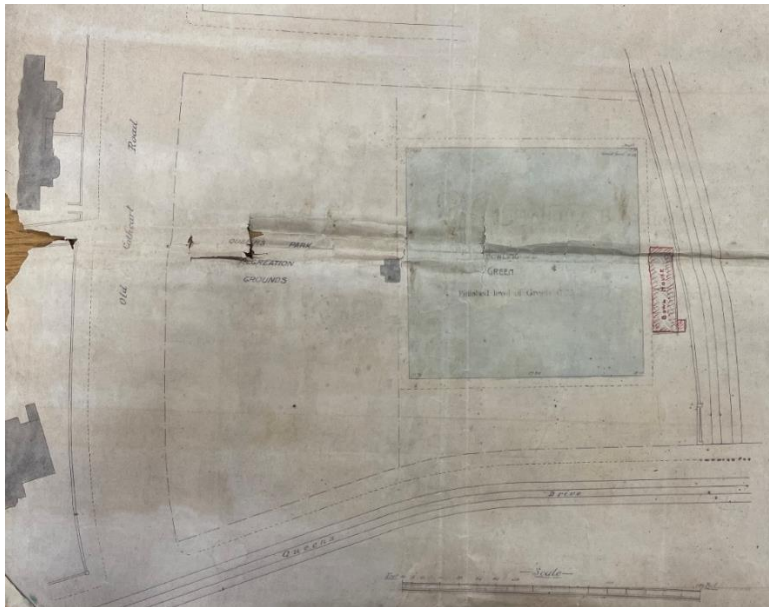


A floor plan of the new bowl house.



Cross section of the exterior walls and the roof timbers.

Govanhill Bowling Club
Proposed New Bowl House
Section
Scale 1/4 in = 1 ft.



A map of the location of the bowl house and bowling green.

Hampden Bowling Club Glasgow 27th March 1905

The first meeting of the Directors of Hampden Bowling Green was held within the Liberal Association Rooms Bankhall Street on Monday 27th March 8³⁰pm - Dr Harry President in the Chair, present Bailie Calderwood Vice President W. Morrison J Mac Donald J Jamieson J Bairdwood A Sinclair A Crawford Treasurer J W Houston Secretary

Dr Harry reported interview with Mr Leslie Contractor regarding the desirability of appointing Green Keeper to fresh green in order at once. Mr Leslie also gave us his opinion that the weight of Green rollers was excessive and that it would not be judicious to use it after the fresh 6 weeks, and then a smaller one should be used. The Directors after full discussion were unanimous in the opinion that the Green should be completed get for plan by the Contractor and that the Secretary be instructed to write to Mr Leslie to this effect. The question of the appointing of Green Keeper to come up at next meeting. Mr Mac Donald was authorised to make overtures to the assistant at Queen's Park.

The President then intimated the progress made in the arrangements for the building of the Bowl House, plans of which had been submitted and passed by Dean of Guild Court subject to certain alterations in Fire Places - Bailie Calderwood intimated that he had made a start and hoped to have the building up within a fortnight.

The President concluded to see as to

Minutes of the first meeting of the newly-constituted Hampden Bowling Club on 27 March 1905. These confirm that plans had been submitted to Dean of Guild Court and were passed, subject to certain alterations in fire places. Bailie Calderwood intimated he had made a start and hoped to have the building up within a fortnight.

Hampden Bowling Club committee members in 1905, listed in first minute book:

President: Dr John Garey, Ravenston, Albert Road East

Vice President: Bailie Thomas Calderwood, 31 Albert Road East

Treasurer: Andrew Crawford, 233 Langside Road

Secretary: James W Hillhouse, 4 Belleisle Street

Directors:

William Morrison, 323 Allison Street

James MacDonald, 485 Cathcart Road

James Jamieson, 68 Langside Road

John Braidwood, 350 Allison Street

John Sinclair, 11 Kingsley Avenue

An opening ceremony for Hampden Bowling Club was held on 18 May 1905:



Daily Record, 19 May 1905

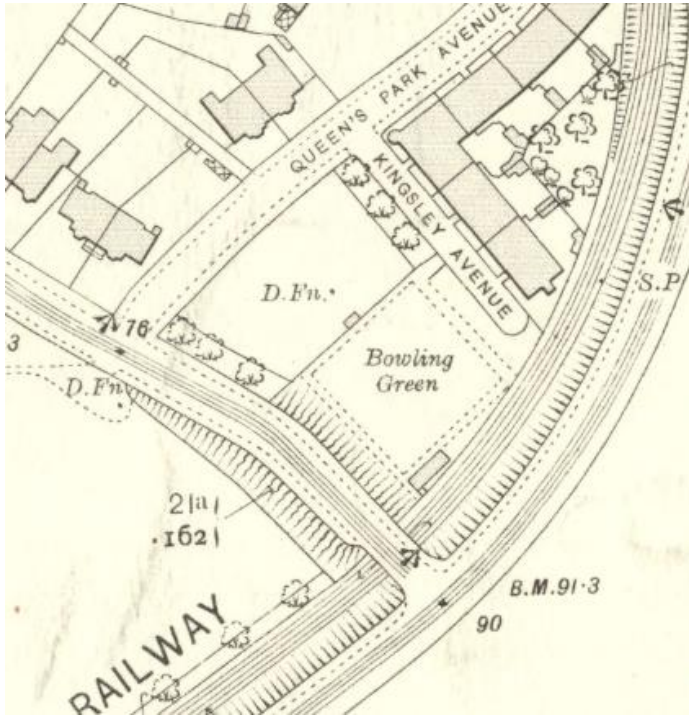
The Southern Press newspaper detailed the contractors involved in building the clubhouse:

Slates: W. Watson Newton (of Newton, Robertson and Co, slate merchants, 52 St Enoch Square)

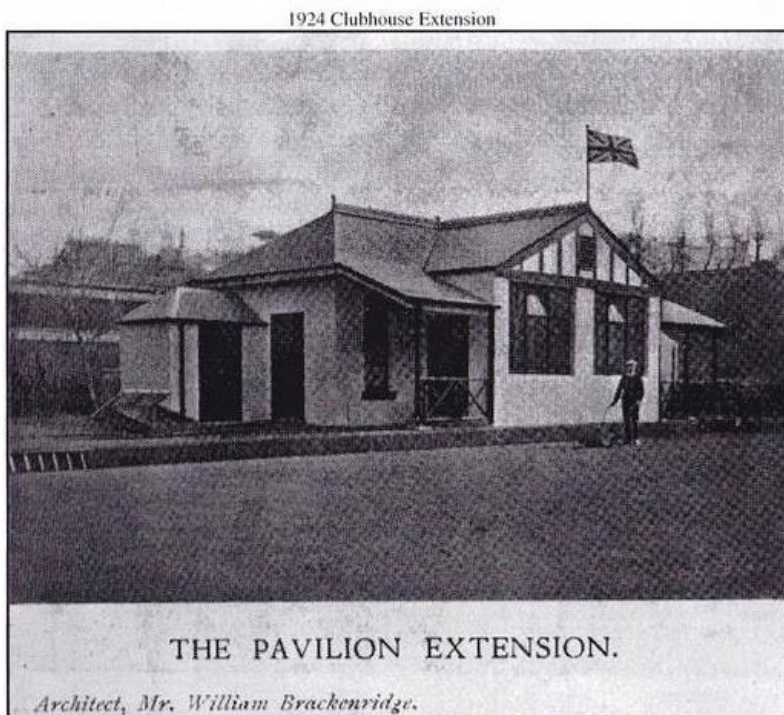
Plumbing: James M. Symington (registered plumber, 571 Cathcart Road)

Artistic furnishings and furniture: John Sinclair (of A. Sinclair & Sons, cabinet makers and upholsterers, 20 Great Clyde Street).

There is no mention in any press coverage of the pavilion, or parts of it, having been recycled from Hampden Park.



The 1910 Ordnance Survey map confirms the location and layout of the Hampden Bowling Club pavilion as per the 1905 plan. It remains in the same location today, albeit with some later extensions, notably a gable added in 1924.



From 'The History of Hampden Bowling Club, 1905-2005', this image shows the front gable extension which was added to the building in 1924, together with small verandas at either side. Some of the original structure of the 1905 pavilion, including roof line and a single front window, can still be seen.



Contemporary view of the Hampden Bowling Club pavilion, front.



Contemporary view of the Hampden Bowling Club pavilion, rear.



Interior of the Hampden Bowling Club pavilion. The main beam on the ceiling shows the position of the original front wall of the building.

Further background

The above report was shared with Historic Environment Scotland, who had been asked to consider an application for listed building status for the pavilion. The application was dismissed in February 2026.

See

<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:decision,500004136>

Designation Report of Handling



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA

Case information

Case ID	300077353
Name of Site	Hampden Bowling Club, 10 Kingsley Avenue, Glasgow (on the site of the First Hampden football ground)
Postcode (if any)	G42 8BU
Local Authority	Glasgow City Council
National Grid Reference	NS 58751 61970
Designation Type	Listed Building
Designation No. and category of listing (if any)	N/A
Case Type	Designation (does not meet criteria)
Received/Start Date	21/11/2024
Decision Date	26/02/2026

1. Decision

Our assessment using the selection guidance shows that the bowling pavilion building does not meet the criteria of special architectural or historic interest. The decision is not to list the building. We have found part of the wider site to the NE of the pavilion retains archaeological remains related to the early football ground and have proposed its designation as a scheduled monument (see separate report: [Remains of First Hampden football ground pavilion, Kingsley Gardens, Glasgow \(300085180\)](#))