

# History by Norbert Schoenauer

## Introduction

University education of architects in North America began during the late 1860's and represented a new approach to professional training.

William Baston Rogers, president of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, established the first School of Architecture. From the beginning, when M.I.T.'s charter was granted in 1860, Rogers had included architecture in his plans for technical higher education, first, because he modeled M.I.T. on the German Polytechnic of Karlsruhe, and second, because, having taught for seventeen years at Jefferson's Charlottesville campus, he was appreciative of architecture. Rogers chose William Ware, a former student in Richard Morris Hunt's atelier, to head the new School. Ware began his teaching in 1868 after having studied European architectural education for a couple of years.

The second school of architecture was established at the University of Illinois in 1867, and instruction commenced in January 1870. The first teacher at this school was James Bellangee who was a graduate in science and had but briefly worked in an architectural office in Chicago and, one and a half years later, the Swedish architect Harald M. Hansen, who had studied for two years at the BauAkademie in Berlin, was appointed to lead the school.

Cornell University established its School of Architecture in 1871. This third school was headed by Charles Babcock, a pupil and son-in-law of British trained Richard Upjohn.

During the following two decades, seven other new schools of architecture were founded in the U.S.A.: Syracuse University was fourth; University of Pennsylvania, fifth; University of Michigan, sixth; Columbia University, seventh; Columbia (later George Washington) University, eighth; Armour (now Illinois) Institute of Technology, ninth; and Harvard University, tenth.<sup>1</sup> McGill University's School of Architecture was established one year after Harvard's in 1896.

Prior to the introduction of formal architectural education in the United States and Canada, the conventional method was the office training system whereby students worked usually for a small wage, or no wage at all, in an architect's office as pupils to gain experience. This training was often augmented by attendance at courses offered by technical schools or institutes in the evening.<sup>2</sup> A second and more elitist path was to attend the Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris which became fashionable in North America in the second half of the 19th century after Richard Morris Hunt

returned to New York from Paris and opened an office (1856) organizing it a year later as an atelier after the Beaux-Arts model.

Both traditional methods of architectural training relied on individual tutoring and therefore proved inadequate in producing a sufficient number of trained architects for the increased opportunities offered by a growing economy and expanding society. Moreover, members of the organized professional architects associations became aware of the necessity of an increased science content in architectural education, a need that could obviously best be met in a formal educational setting. Hence, conditions were appropriate in the last decades of the 19th century for the establishment of university programs providing a third path for architectural education.

In 1890 the Province of Quebec Association of Architects obtained a provincial charter and adopted a constitution requiring, for the first time, compulsory architectural examination of candidates seeking membership in the professional association. This requirement necessitated a more systematic education in architecture and, in the absence of such opportunities locally, many young Canadians aspiring to be architects "went to colleges in the States to obtain what was difficult to obtain satisfactorily in their own country." Several members of this new Association headquartered in Montreal "realized that if adequate teaching could be obtained in Montreal it would be of a great value to the profession, the community and the Dominion. Representations were made from time to time by the Architects' Association to the governors of McGill to take the matter into their earnest consideration." Lack of funds rather than disinterest on the part of the university postponed the inauguration of a School of Architecture until 1896 when through the benefactions of W.C. Macdonald education in Architecture commenced at McGill.

Before the establishment of formal architectural education at McGill, lectures had been given periodically by local practising architects in some of McGill's four affiliated religious colleges, and it is probable that the content of these lectures was restricted to the history and design of church architecture. For example, A.C. Hutchison, a distinguished Montreal architect, gave a course in Ecclesiastical Architecture at the Presbyterian College in the fall term of 1893. The college's journal recorded that "the popularity and growing fascination of these lectures was sufficient proof that they are enjoyed." A similar course was also given at the Diocesan Theological College by Andrew Taylor, another notable architect.

The transition from conventional to collegiate education was gradual. While formal university education as we know it today came to dominate the training of architectural students during the 20th century, initially it merely complemented conventional methods of office and atelier training, and, in fact, several early collegiate schools were under the direction of men who had received their

architectural training "on-the-job" or at the Beaux-Arts, sometimes at both. And, the latter was the case with the McGill School of Architecture.

## **The beginning with Stewart H. Capper**



The history of the McGill School of Architecture can be divided into three phases, with the first (1896- 1903), representing the brief formative years during which architectural education was introduced into the Faculty of Applied Science headed by Dean Henry Taylor Bovey (1878- 1908), a civil engineer.

In 1896, Sir William C. Macdonald, a great benefactor of McGill University, endowed a chair in Architecture which was offered to and occupied in that same year by Stewart Henbest Capper, a graduate in art history of the University of Edinburgh and once a student of the Beaux-Arts School in Paris. Recommended by Professor Gerald Baldwin Brown of Edinburgh (a close friend of McGill's principal) and meeting the requirements of the new position as a well-trained teacher, competent practising architect and a person "of the very highest character," Professor Capper was selected by Principal Sir William Peterson (1895-1919) to be the first director, laying the foundations of the present school and its architectural library.

Stewart Henbest Capper was born of English parents in Greater London in 1859 and received his education. from his ninth year onwards, in Edinburgh. After completing classical studies at the Royal High School, where he was "dux", or head student during his final year, he entered the University of Edinburgh. His education here was interrupted by one session spent at Heidelberg University. He graduated in 1880 with a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree with first class honours. During the next four years he was attached to the household of Sir Robert Morier, a distinguished British diplomat who was stationed first in Lisbon and then in Madrid, serving as tutor to the diplomat's son and on occasion as the diplomat's personal secretary.

In 1884 Capper went to Paris to study architecture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and in the following year, he joined the "atelier libre" of Jean Louis Pascal (1837-1920), a Grand Prix winner (1866) and a favorite of students from England. After three years of study and without proceeding to the State Diploma, Capper returned to Edinburgh to practice architecture. He joined the office of Sir George Washington Browne to gain practical experience in architecture and after becoming an associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects, he commenced practice first in partnership with F.W. Simon and then on his own with an address on St. Andrew Square. A girls' orphanage in Whitewich (a suburb of Glasgow), and a model workmen's dwellings in Blairhoyle, Perthshire, were the better known buildings designed by Capper, but of equal significance is his work as a conservationist in collaboration with none other than Sir Patrick Geddes, the noted botanist, regionalist and town-planner.

In 1887, one year after his marriage, Geddes moved to the Old Town of Edinburgh in order "to play a more direct role in the social and physical regeneration of the Old Town, in part through developing it as an academic/residential quarter, with the first halls of residence for students of the University. Geddes was active in conserving many old buildings near the famous Royal Mile in the historic part of Edinburgh, and Capper appears to have worked closely with him on several of his enterprises. Wardrop's Court (453- 461 Lawnmarket), Riddell's Close, and Nos. 3 and 5 James' Court, the latter for student accommodation, were either restored or rebuilt in accordance with Capper's designs. Capper also designed a five storey block of flats called Ramsay Garden, located on Castle Hill at the west end of the Royal Mile. Operated on a cooperative basis, Ramsay Garden was "commissioned, conceived and financed in part by Sir Patrick Geddes,"<sup>12</sup> who also occupied one of its large apartment suites after the buildings' completion in 1893. And, it is of interest to note, that the construction of this building was done with the intent to lure men of professional standing and their families back to live in the Old Town which by the end of the 19th century had become an unfashionable part of the city.

In 1891 Capper was appointed a University Extension Lecturer at the University of Edinburgh to give a course in architecture, and also served as an examiner in Archaeology and Art for the M.A. degree. At this stage, at 37 years of age, he was called to McGill.

Professor Capper was known to have been by both temperament and habit a teacher, a scholar and an administrator. He was a good speaker and had a winning address and a sunny personality. Always helpful, he was the best of companions and the most loyal of friends; moreover, he was a tactful and courteous person with an exceptional linguistic ability. Apart from his mother tongue and a good knowledge of classical Greek and Latin, he was fluent in French, Portuguese, Spanish and German, knew some Italian and learned to master, toward the end of his life, Arabic as well.<sup>13</sup> In addition, he was a good pianist with a special fondness for Beethoven sonatas. He was never known to be a brilliant draughtsman, but was a good architectural critic of students' projects. He was above all a rationalist architect, keenly interested in the construction of buildings and retained throughout his life a penchant for Greek archaeology, and later on Egyptian.

Before Capper organized formal architectural education at McGill, as noted before, lectures had been given periodically by local practising architects in some of McGill's affiliated religious colleges, but with the appointment of a full-time professor of architecture to the newly created chair, lectures were formalized and structured into a four year course with a widened scope appropriate to the preparation of students for a professional degree. First year was preparatory and its Mathematics, Science, Descriptive Geometry and Drawing courses were taken jointly by both architectural and engineering students. Second year continued with a shared science content, but History of Architecture ("from the Heroic Age to the reign of Queen Anne"), Elements of Architecture, Building Construction and Design were added to the curriculum for architects. In third year, History of Art, History of Architecture, Design, Drawing and Model hug were taught parallel with Theory of Structures and "Hygiene", the latter a building services course. Emphasis on Design, Drawing, and Modelling continued in fourth year with Domestic, Public and Ecclesiastical Architecture, Specifications and Hygiene concluding the lecture course series.

All architectural lectures and studio courses were given by Professor Capper, some in alternate years, and the only other full-time teacher in the School, Henry F. Armstrong, a lecturer, taught Descriptive Geometry, Freehand Drawing, Lettering and Modelling. Women students were allowed to take Architectural and Modelling classes if special permission was granted.

The School of Architecture was housed in the old Macdonald Engineering Building. Two rooms in the northern half of the top storey of this building were allocated as studios for the architecture students. Freehand Drawing was given in one studio, an atelier-like "museum room," with a large collection of casts of friezes, metopes and figure sculptures lining its wall in the Beaux-Arts tradition. "All round the room, below the level of the clerestory (sic) windows, representative pieces have been arranged, about ninety feet in all, from the famous frieze of the Parthenon," replicas of the so-called Elgin frieze now housed in the British Museum additionally, three metopes from the Parthenon, and 'a series of bas-reliefs, illustrative of mural surface decoration, Ancient Egyptian, Ancient Assyrian and Medieval Moorish' also were placed on the wall. Casts of six famous pieces of antique sculpture, the Venus of Milo, the Victory of Samothrace, the Madrid Museum Faun, the Diadumenos from the British Museum, the Mars of the Louvre, and the Discobolus of the Vatican Gallery stood around the room.

In the second studio both Architectural Drawing and Design was taught, and it too contained many casts of detail and ornament. These were arranged in four groups, namely, Greek, Roman, Gothic and Renaissance. Full size half capitals of the Parthenon, the Erechtheion and the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli, half size Doric and Ionic orders of the Theatre of Marcellus, "full-size reproductions of a caryatid figure, the famous Canephoros of the South Porch of the Erechtheion, now in the British Museum, complete with entablature and stylobate," were the samples of classical antiquity. The 15th century Gothic Madonna of Nuremberg and Michelangelo's The Slave and Il Penseroso, were some of the Medieval and Renaissance examples respectively.

Professor Capper organized the acquisition of appropriate drafting room equipment that proved to be satisfactory years beyond his tenure as well as a collection of photographs and lantern slides used in history courses. Moreover, he also acquired splendid collections of architectural books and periodicals as well as works on Archaeology and the Fine Arts for a special architectural section of the University Library. (Apart from having endowed a chair in Architecture, Macdonald had also provided a very considerable sum for the initial expenses of equipment including an annual endowment for their maintenance and extension.)

George Taylor Hyde, Norman M. McLeod and Frank Peder (who had completed the preparatory year before Capper occupied the Chair of Architecture) were the first students to graduate with a B.Sc. (Architecture) degree in 1899. Other students also availed themselves of the new course, namely, W.W. Colpitts, A.F. Byers, S.R. Coote, and E.B. Staveley, the last three, however, were registered as partial students only.

Professor Capper was fond of soldiering and joined the third Battery of the Canadian Field Artillery while in Montreal. At McGill, he organized the Officers Training Corps and carried the rank of Captain.

Capper's tenure at McGill lasted only seven years. In 1903 he returned to Britain to establish another new school, this time at Victoria University in Manchester which, by the way, was the fourth School of Architecture to be established at a university in the British Commonwealth, preceded only by those of the Universities of Toronto(1890) Liverpool (1894) and McGill (1896).

After his return to Britain, Professor Capper headed the Manchester School for nine years and commanded the Victoria University Officers Training Corps. He retired in 1912, after a serious riding accident followed by pneumonia. When the First World War broke out, Capper, who by this time held the rank of Major, joined his battalion and went to Egypt. Being then in his fifties and declared unfit for active duty for reasons of health, he did not take part in the unsuccessful Gallipoli assault, but was assigned to desk duty as a military censor. After the war, he remained in Egypt and worked for the Ministry of the Interior at Cairo Where he died, unmarried, at the age of 66, leaving the residue of his estate for teachers' stipends of the Schools at McGill and Manchester.

## Legacy of Nobbs



The second phase in the history of the McGill School of Architecture saw the entrenchment of formal architectural education in the Faculty of Engineering under the instruction of three distinguished professors who constituted the backbone of the school: Percy Nobbs, Ramsay Traquair and Philip Turner. These three represented a formidable team since Nobbs was a talented designer and successful practitioner in possession of enviable talents in draughtsmanship and modelling, Traquair, an accomplished scholar of architectural history and theory, recognized internationally as an authority on Byzantine Architecture and later as a pioneer in the study of Quebec's vernacular architecture, and Turner, a pragmatic architect and practitioner whose forte was a thorough knowledge of building construction practices. This diverse experience in design, history and building construction manifested itself in a successful collaboration with the unifying force of similar educational backgrounds in Britain characterized by humanism, traditional romanticism and, most of all, a marked influence by the arts and crafts movement. Each of these men became director of the School, Nobbs from 1903 to 1913, Traquair from 1913 to 1939, and Turner as acting director between 1939 and 1941, and their length of tenure varied as much as their individual expertise.

Percy Erskine Nobbs was born at his mother's family house in Haddington, Scotland, in 1875, but since his father worked for a bank in the capital of Russia, his early childhood was spent there where he also received his first artistic training attending classes at the St. Petersburg School of Design. At age 12, he returned to Scotland for his secondary schooling at the Edinburgh Collegiate School, but continued to complement his formal education by attending classes in drawing, modelling and design, first at Heriot Watt College, then at the School of Art and finally at the School of Applied Art. Like his predecessor, Stewart Henbest Capper, Percy Nobbs

received his higher education at the University of Edinburgh and obtained a Master's degree in Arts. Just before his graduation, in 1894, Nobbs travelled to Russia, attending the coronation of Czar Nicholas II as an artist correspondent. In 1896 he was articled in the office of Sir Robert Lorimer, a distinguished Scottish architect known as a romantic traditionalist and follower of the arts and crafts movement. Elected an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects, after successfully passing the Institute's examinations and winning the Tite Prize in 1900, Nobbs travelled for several months in Europe spending considerable time in northern Italy. with colleagues, Ramsay Traquair and Cecil Burgess, the beginning of a long association in education in later years in Canada.

After his return from the continent, Nobbs moved to London where he worked first for the London County Council and later for various practising architects. In London, he was interviewed by the Principal of McGill, William Peterson, and despite his being only 28 years of age was offered the Macdonald Chair of Architecture.

When Percy Nobbs arrived at McGill there were only two architectural students waiting for him, G.H. Blackader and H.E. Shorey, who had just completed the preparatory first year. Nobbs immediately began to reorganize the four year architectural course into two streams, one leading to the new Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch.) degree, and the other to the Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Architectural Engineering. While he retained much parallel instruction with civil engineering students for the latter, including the prerequisite of Applied Science Matriculation for admission, the former was liberated from some of the more demanding technical courses of the Faculty of Applied Science and replaced with courses from the Faculty of Arts; moreover, for admission to the B.Arch. program the less stringent Arts Matriculation (with French compulsory) sufficed. Thus, the preparatory first year of the B.Arch. program now became separate and distinct from that of the B.Sc. program. As before, architectural studies proper began in second year and the amount of time devoted to design studio work increased gradually in the upper years.

With increased enrollment it became necessary in 1906 to add three new assistants to the School's staff. Cecil E. Burgess was appointed to teach History of Architecture (Egyptian to Byzantine) and Building Construction, E.E.S. Mattice, Structural Engineering, and Marcel C.T. Beullac of the Dominion Bridge Works, Professional Practice. Nobbs himself taught Design, Theory and Evolution of Architectural Form, Building Trades, Ornament and Decoration, Science of Planning, and two history courses Gothic Architecture and Renaissance Architecture.

Philip J. Turner joined the staff in 1909 to teach Building Construction, while Burgess took charge of the History of Medieval and Renaissance Architecture, both of which he relinquished a year later to Thomas Ludlow, a newly appointed Assistant Professor. A new instructor, Henri Hubert, a well-known sculptor, was appointed in 1910 to teach Modelling.

The growth of the School is reflected by the increased number of graduates from two in 1906 to eight in 1912. Of course, with the establishment in 1907 of a second School of Architecture in Montreal, the Ecole Polytechnique on St. Denis Street, and in 1923, the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, there was no pressure to grow very rapidly, but by far more restricting to growth were the effects of World War I and the Great Depression of the late twenties and early thirties.

Shortly after his arrival in Montreal, Nobbs also sought professional involvement in the practice of Architecture arguing that a practice was essential to demonstrate to students the application of good architectural values. And indeed, only one year after his arrival in Montreal, he succeeded in obtaining from the Governors of McGill the commission to design the McGill University Union - now the McCord Museum on Sherbrooke Street West. Although the design was his, the building was executed in association with the firm Hutchison and Wood, since Nobbs himself had not yet established an architectural office.

The Macdonald Engineering Building was damaged extensively by fire in 1907 and rebuilt to Nobbs' design on very short notice to be operational for the fall semester of the same year. The location of the School of Architecture was moved from the top floor of the Engineering Building to the ground floor where the Engineering Library used to be in the 60's and 70's. A wide stone ledge protected by a handrail and resting on huge stone brackets on the two sunny facades of the Engineering Building attests to its former use by students for making reproductions of their drawings, since in the early days of blueprinting prints were made individually by placing drawings over sensitized paper in glazed frames and then exposing them to sunlight. These frames were placed on the above mentioned stone ledges outside the windows and after proper exposure retracted and the sensitized paper processed in metal tubes with the help of ammonia.

In 1910, Nobbs entered into a partnership that lasted until 1944 with one of Capper's first students, George Taylor Hyde, who graduated from McGill with a B.Sc. in Architecture in 1899 and later studied at M.I.T. This lasting partnership resulted in the design and execution of many renowned buildings both institutional and domestic. Noteworthy on or near the McGill campus are, in addition to the Union Building, the University Library Extension (1921), the Osler Memorial Library (1921), the Pathological Institute (1922-24), the Pulp and Paper Research Institute of Canada (1926-28), and the Royal Victoria College Extension (1930).

Nobbs' architectural practice was extensive. He is credited with the design of many fine domestic buildings including one designed for himself on Belvedere Road in Westmount which he built in 1914, five years after his marriage to Mary Cecilia Shepherd of Montreal. This was the house where his two children were raised.

Notable non-residential buildings by Nobbs and Hyde in Montreal are: The New Birks Building, Cathcart Street (1911); Edward VII School, Esplanade Avenue (1912); University Club of Montreal, Mansfield Street (1912); Bancroft School, St. Urbain Street (1914); and the Drummond Medical Building, Drummond Street (1929). Finally, Nobbs' Master Plan for the University of Alberta and the design for the Arts and Medical Buildings of the same University deserve special mention.

Professor Nobbs wrote extensively on architecture and architectural education including a book entitled *Design: A Treatise on the Discovery of Form* (1937). From his writings, it is apparent that he subscribed to the time tested values espoused in the arts and crafts movement in Great Britain and that he shunned both the flamboyancy of eclecticism and the nakedness of modern architecture; instead of these stylistic extremes he preferred the middle road of sober architecture, well-built, functional and respectful of its surroundings with an appropriate balance between simplicity and the measured use of ornamentation that had meaning, and then only in

selected places. In short, he was a man of strong convictions and an experienced architect. He had a deep passion for architecture not only as a designer but also as a builder; he was, for example, never reluctant to do craftsmen's work as a demonstration on the building site when it became necessary.

Moreover, he was a versatile man who had a wide range of interests and was an expert in several of them. He was a skilled artist and craftsman, and as well an accomplished sculptor and painter. He was also an athletic man who won a silver Olympic medal in foiling display (London, 1908) and, as an outdoorsman, was very fond of fishing and an expert in making flies for both trout and salmon fishing. *Salmon Tactics* (1934) and *Fencing Tactics* (1936) are two books authored by Nobbs that substantiate his expertise in these two domains.

It is not surprising that this versatile but somewhat temperamental man had little patience for school administration which led to his request in 1909 to be relieved from this responsibility. His replacement as director was effected a few years later with the appointment of Ramsay Traquair (with whom he had travelled in Italy many years before) to the Macdonald Chair in Architecture. Nobbs, however, remained on the staff of the School as a Professor of Design until his retirement.

## Legacy of Traquair



Ramsay Traquair came to occupy the Macdonald Chair in Architecture in the fall of 1913 and, like his two predecessors also had a Scottish background. Born in Edinburgh in 1874, Traquair grew up in a very stimulating home environment with an atmosphere permeated equally by science and art. His father was a distinguished geologist, paleontologist, and curator of the National History Collection of Edinburgh's Royal Museum of Science and Art; his mother, an Irishwoman, was a well-known painter of miniatures and murals, the first woman artist to be elected to the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA), an artist in whom "the authentic spirit of the 13th century was manifested to the delighted amazement of Ruskin and Watts."

Traquair received his secondary education at the Edinburgh Academy, then spent a year at Edinburgh University, and a year at the University of Bonn, followed by an apprenticeship as an architect in the office of Stewart Henbest Capper. After Capper left Scotland to teach at McGill, Traquair continued his architectural studies at the School of Applied Art in Edinburgh, an institution that later became the Royal College of Art. On a scholarship, Traquair spent a year in the study of historic buildings in Scotland and was elected Associate of the R.I.B.A. in 1900. He travelled in the same year in Europe and sojourned a few months in Northern Italy with Nobbs. Returning to Scotland he worked for Sir George Washington Browne for a while, then sought experience in offices in London and Dublin, returning to Edinburgh to work for Sir Robert Lorimer, and later for Sydney Mitchell and George Wilson (the latter, Professor Stuart Wilson's

grandfather.) In 1905, he started a practice of his own, with his most notable buildings being the First Church of Christ Scientist in Edinburgh and the Skirling House for Lord Carmichael of Skirling in Peeblesshire.

"Few church architects had sites as spacious and attractive on which to build as that made available to Ramsay Traquair for the erection of the First Church of Christ Scientist on Inverleith Terrace. On either side of the broad, pleasant church are terraced gardens which fall away to the Water of Leith beyond." Traquair exploited the sloping site to provide a generous and well-lit hall below the street-level main body of the church. The building was designed in a rubble-built Scots medieval style with a wide transverse saddleback tower, a barrel-vaulted interior, and round-arched nave windows.

Traquair's teaching career started in 1904 with his appointment as Lecturer on Architecture in the Royal College of Art where four years later he became the head of its newly established day course in Architecture leading to a Diploma that was accepted as equivalent to the intermediate examination of the R.J.B.A. While teaching at the College, Traquair was appointed a student of the British School of Archaeology in Athens, spending the summer of 1905 in Greece and Istanbul. He contributed to Professor A. van Milligen's book *Byzantine Churches of Constantinople* as well as to the *Annual of the British School of Athens*, with two essays on medieval architecture on the Peloponnese entitled, *Laconia: Medieval Fortresses and Medieval Fortresses of the North Eastern Peloponnesos*. Four years later, in 1909, he spent a second season in Greece working for the Byzantine Fund studying medieval architecture, documented in the essay entitled, *Chuches of Western Maina*.

In December 1912, Traquair applied for the Macdonald Chair in Architecture at McGill promising to regard teaching as his life's work with only so much practice as was necessary to keep in touch with realities, a promise that he lived up to after his appointment in 1913, only one year before the start of World War I. The design of the Baillie library window, some bookplates and woodcuts as well as the flag that flies over the Arts Building are the only physical reminders on campus of his designs.

Traquair was a scholarly person with great strength of character and at times a slight sententiousness of manner; he was a clear and good lecturer who enjoyed his loquacity. Good-natured and in possession of a good sense of humour he was also a great deal more warm-hearted towards his students than the Scots half of him would allow him to admit. All of these characteristics, however, made him a good and popular teacher with considerable influence upon his students; he justly enjoyed their esteem as well as that of his colleagues.

The orientation of the School during the tenure of Traquair - like that of his two predecessors - was governed by a pragmatic philosophy of architectural education which was concerned with traditional values and sound building practices in the manner that the three teachers (Nobbs, Traquair and Turner) were taught in Great Britain. The architectural program offered by the School continued to attract students but the graduating class peaked at 10 graduates per year in the thirties; thus the student body of the School, in comparison to the current enrollment, was small enough for everybody to know each other very well.

World War I and its aftermath, the Great Depression, limited the growth of the School. Nobbs was called to war service overseas and attained the rank of major. He came back to McGill in 1919 to continue teaching, but some of his former students did not return from the war. The names of four of these war casualties are familiar to every McGill student in Architecture: Gordon Blackader, Hugh McLennan, Murdoch Laing, and Louis Robertson.

Gordon Home Blackader was one of the two students enrolled in Architecture when Nobbs arrived at McGill. Graduating successfully three years later, Blackader went to Paris to continue his studies at the Beaux-Arts and joined the atelier of Victor Alexandre Frederic Laloux (1850-1937), a favorite of American students, who won the Grand Prix of Rome in 1878 and opened an atelier in 1890. Blackader's McGill training must have served him well since several of his esquisses were rewarded with the prized Premiere Medaille. Returning from Paris, he worked for a couple of years for the famous New York firm McKim, Meade and White before settling down in Montreal to start his own private practice.

At the outbreak of the war Blackader enlisted in the 42nd Battalion of the Royal Highlanders of Canada and later served with distinction commanding a company in France. In the battles near Ypres, he was seriously wounded which led to his premature death two months later in London. The following year, in 1917, the Blackader Library of Architecture was founded in his memory with a very generous endowment provided by his parents. This library is still the pride of the School and its rich collections serving as a fountain of knowledge for students and staff alike are unmatched today in any other university architectural library in Canada.

Hugh McLennan studied Arts at McGill and then went to Paris to study Architecture at the Beaux-Arts. He was home on vacation in 1914 when war broke out. He immediately joined the 5th Battery of the 2nd Brigade Canadian Field Artillery and in the Battle of Ypres, 1915, he too was an early casualty. In 1929 his family established the Hugh McLennan Memorial Travelling Scholarship to be awarded annually to an outstanding graduating student in Architecture who gave promise of creative ability. Almost every year since then, with only a very few exceptions, a student has received this award. There is no doubt that travelled to the broadening of the recipients' outlook as well as to their appreciation of "the work and ideals of architects in other lands."

Murdoch Laing graduated in Architecture in 1915 and shortly thereafter joined the 24th Canadian Infantry Battalion. He was killed in action at Courcellette on September 18, 1916, a year after his graduation. In her son's memory, Florence B. Laing, established the Murdoch Laing Prize for The design of a city house. The award is made yearly to the winner of a competition held during the summer prior to the final year of the architectural program.

John Louis Robertson also graduated in Architecture in 1915 and was killed in action on July 18, 1916. In memory of their son, Mr. and Mrs. John A. Robertson founded the Louis Robertson Prize, a book prize for the student obtaining the highest standing in History of Architecture I.

The Honour Roll of World War I lists in addition to the above McGill architects, Pte. Allen Davenport Harvey (Arch. '17), Capt. Benjamin Bertram McConkey (Arch. '14), Pte. Archibald McLeod (Arch.'15), Lieut. George Donald McLeod (Arch.'15), Lieut. Clarke Hall Popham

(Arch.'17), Gunner Alan Irving Richardson (Arch. '11), and Robert Ward Shepherd Robertson (Arch.'16).

Many McGill graduates in Architecture returned from the war having distinguished themselves in service to their country: Major W.C. Hyde (Arch.'15) received the Distinguished Service Order, Lieut. W.A. I. Anglin (Arch.'16), Lieut. G.A. Birks (Arch. '19), Lieut. K.G. Blackader (Arch.'19), Capt. B.B. McConeky (Arch.'14) and Lieut. S.M. Sproule (Arch. '12) were awarded the Military Cross and, Lieut. P.E. Amos (Arch.'19) and Lieut. H.P. Illsley (Arch.'17) received the "Croix de Guerre" of France.

During the war, in 1916, the course for the degree of Bachelor of Architecture was extended to five years. The first year was still preparatory and the object was "to impart such general culture, scientific knowledge and skill of hand as will prepare the student to profit by the work of the succeeding years."<sup>35</sup>The course work of the next four years was grouped under seven main headings, namely, Design, Aesthetics, History', Science', Construction, Professional Practice, and Drawing".

After his return from the war, Percy Nobbs taught Design in second, third, fourth and fifth years and gave two complementary aesthetic courses, Theory of Design, and Theory of Planning. Ramsay Traquair lectured in History, Ancient and Classical Architecture, Medieval Architecture, Renaissance Architecture and Modern Architecture and also gave four aesthetic courses, Decorative Heraldry, Ornament in Form, Metal Work and Color Decoration, in addition to Historical Drawing, which included experience in measured drawing. It was in this latter course that Traquair with the help of his students assembled the extensive collection of measured drawings of the old architecture of Quebec which 'vas to become his principal legacy to McGill. Philip Turner gave courses in Building Construction, Building Materials, Professional Practice and Specifications. Architectural engineering courses complemented the curriculum.

Two new staff members, W.E. Carless and E. Dyonnet, were appointed in 1920; both were distinguished teachers and taught for many years.

William Edward Carless (F.R.I.B.A.) was born in Staffordshire, England and studied architecture in London and Paris before coming to Montreal. He too was a pioneer of the study of the early architecture of French Canada on which he became an authority. As an assistant professor, Carless taught two "aesthetic" courses: The Elements of architecture and The Elements of Composition, and three "drawing" courses: Architectural Drawing, and Architectural Geometry I and II Carless left the School in 1929 and returned to England where he died in 1949.

Edmond Dyonnet (R.C.A.) was born in France and studied art in Italy before emigrating to Canada in 1875. He was a noted artist, principally a figure painter, who not only taught at McGill, but also at the Ecole Polytechnique, at the Council of Arts and Manufacturers, and at the Montreal Art Association. Dyonnet instructed in Modelling and later in Freehand Drawing; he was a colorful teacher and artist whose studio was located along a hidden lane behind Bleury Street near St. Catherine. Dyonnet served for a long time as the Secretary of the Royal Canadian Academy and co-authored this institution's history.

Throughout the twenties, Traquair, Nobbs, Turner, Carless and Dyonnet were the principal teachers at the School. It may be of interest to note, that for one academic year (1919/20) Ernest Cormier, a distinguished Montreal architect, assisted in design and that D. Stuart Forbes taught the aesthetic and drawing courses that Carless inherited. In 1929, Frank B. Chambers replaced Carless and remained at the School until 1942. While at the School, Chambers wrote *The History of Taste* published by Columbia University Press. Like most of his confreres, Chambers was a skilled draughtsman and architect who had received his training in Britain.

In the twenties and thirties, new ideals in Architecture were being expressed in Europe, but this so-called modern movement professed by the Bauhaus School at Weimar (1919-1924) and Dessau (1925-1932), as well as in the radical writings of such avant-garde architects as Le Corbusier, had little influence upon the teaching at McGill, although students had ready access to modernism through the journals and books in the Blackader Library. Copies of *L'Esprit Nouveau* - now in the reserved section of the library - were found by the author in the stacks among the *Baumeister* and *RIBA Journals* of the 1920's.

McGill, in its apparent disregard of the modern movement was not unique among established university Schools of Architecture on the North American continent and in Europe. Although this may imply an oversight, it was not. We must recollect that the Weimar Bauhaus was initially merely a continuation of an Arts and Crafts school established by the Grand-Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach and its teachings were based on premises also advocated by William Morris and therefore quite analogous to the principles underlying the McGill curriculum. But the Bauhaus, with the reorganization initiated by Walter Gropius in 1919, became more industrial design oriented and emerged as an experimental school whose diploma was not perceived as equivalent to a university degree. Nor did Le Corbusier, a self-educated protagonist of a new architecture, initially enjoy much recognition by the architectural profession, even in France, and his *Voisin Plan* (1922) portraying a visionary architecture on the site of Paris (all old buildings gone with the exception of such monuments as The Louvre, Notre-Dame Cathedral, Sacre-Coeur, L'Arche de Triomphe and the Eiffel Tower, to free place for parks, high-rise apartments and cruciform sky scrapers) must have appeared shocking to people who believed in gradual change and who had a strong attachment to the traditional values exemplified by the timeless beauty and "sterling qualities" (a Nobbs expression) of medieval and classical buildings.

Among his colleagues, Percy Nobbs was the most outspoken about his likes and dislikes, and hence one can form an opinion of what he taught his students in the Design studio. In an article written late in his life and published in the *RAIC Journal*, he reflects upon "Architecture in the Province of Quebec during the Early Years of the Twentieth Century." Accordingly, of the existing buildings that he found in Montreal on his arrival, he liked the Board of Trade Building by Brown and Miller, the Bank of Montreal on Place d'Armes by McKim, Meade and White and the old McGill Chemistry Building by Sir Andrew Taylor, while the "Ruskinian freakishness" of Saxon Snell's Royal Victoria Hospital did not please him at all. He liked the Church of the Grey Nuns on Dorchester Street (now Boulevard) by Bourgeau as well as St. Patrick's also on Dorchester by Rev. Father Martin, S.J., while the Notre-Dame Church on Place d'Armes by James O'Donnell he found to be very dull, admitting, however, that it had "an adroit plan accommodating an enormous congregation"; the St. James Cathedral (now Mary Queen of the World Cathedral) on Dominion Square he viewed as "merely a quarter half-scale model of St.

Peter's" in Rome, which of course it is. Nobbs also identifies in this article the architectural profession's "three giants" of the Pre-World War I period, namely, Norman Shaw in London, Ludwig Hoffmann in Berlin and Charles McKim in New York. The "new art" of Josef Hoffmann of Vienna (the "other Hoffmann" as Nobbs referred to him and in whose offices Le Corbusier decided to make architecture his own career,) Nobbs viewed to be in conflict with the forces of academicism. Derisively, he calls the followers of art nouveau "a frivolous lunatic fringe" and those of the modern movement emotionless "accommodation engineers." Were Nobbs still alive, he might feel vindicated in his view of "modernism" by the recent severe criticism of the International Style.

To be fair to Nobbs, however, one must understand the context in which his intransigent views were expressed, since they were directed towards frivolous "excesses" of modernism. Moreover, Nobbs' intransigence was not shared by all his colleagues and, therefore, rational rather than fanatic modernism appeared in students' design projects; for example, Dutch as well as Swedish contemporary design of the thirties was much admired. During the latter part of Traquair's tenure, the key words for design - according to Professor Stuart Wilson (B. Arch. '43) - were "purpose," "material" and "technique." And, as in the past, an emphasis on the development of drafting skills was nurtured in the School in order to equip each student with the ability to draw and sketch with ease. By 1921 Traquair had introduced a summer school in sketching and measuring for the study of buildings. This summer school had to be attended by all students between the second and third, and the third and fourth years. In addition, the summer school complemented a tradition of students' surveys of the traditional architecture of the Province of Quebec which had been initiated by Nobbs prior to Traquair's arrival at McGill. But it was under Traquair's guidance coupled with his course Historical Drawing that the surveys resulted in a copious record of Quebec churches, chapels, convents, as well as other rural and urban building types, which formed the resource base for numerous articles in the R.A.I.C. Journal and a comprehensive book entitled *The Old Architecture of Quebec*. For this pioneer work, the University of Montreal rewarded Traquair with an honorary degree. A portrait of Traquair, painted by one of his former students, F.B. Taylor, hangs on the north wall of the Blackader Library's reading room.

The annual dinner of the RAIC held at the Cercle Universitaire on April 24th, 1939, and a farewell dinner for Traquair given at the Faculty Club on May 5th of the same year, marked the end of an era at the McGill School of Architecture. At the first dinner, Percy Nobbs and Ramsay Traquair were awarded by the RAIC's President, R.H. Macdonald, the Association's medal for their outstanding contribution to architectural education; and, at the second dinner, presided over by Richard Eve, a graduate of the School, Philip Turner read the main address and P. Roy Wilson recited a farewell poem before Traquair was presented with a fine 18th century French Canadian armoire.<sup>39</sup> After his retirement, and still unmarried, Traquair went to live in his summer house in Guysborough, Nova Scotia. "There he was in complete harmony with his setting, cultivating his beautiful garden, fishing the local rivers, drinking tea at all hours on his verandah and talking to his friends. Within his own grounds, he normally wore a kilt and was always 'The Laird' to his close friends." He died in his 78th year in Guysborough and was put to rest there in the cemetery of this charming small community.

One year after Traquair's retirement, in 1940, Nobbs also retired, but he continued his architectural practice beyond his teaching career in partnership with George Hyde until the latter's death in 1944, then for a brief period with Hugh Valentine (B.Arch.'28), and finally with his son Francis Nobbs (B.Arch.'36). In 1957 Nobbs was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters by McGill and in 1964 he died about one year before his ninetieth birthday.

An important legacy of Nobbs is a collection of drawings and documents now housed in the Nobbs Room of the Blackader Library. A catalogue of his drawings entitled Percy Erskine Nobbs and his Associates: a guide to archives was published in 1986, edited by Irena Murray.

## Legacy of Turner



Philip Turner succeeded Traquair as acting director, a position that he held only for two years (1939-1941). Philip John Turner was born in Stowmarket, Suffolk, in 1876. His family was large, and Turner shared the attention of his parents with many sisters and brothers. After completing his secondary education at Framlingham College in Suffolk, proceeded to study architecture at the A.A. school in London. He was articled to Mr. John Corder at Ipswich and elected an Associate of the R.I.B.A. in 1901. Turner, like Nobbs, was also a fine draughtsman whose numerous measured drawings were published as supplements to contemporary journals under his nom de plume, Renrut.

Turner emigrated to Canada in 1906 in the company of another architect, Albert James Hazelgrove (later a prominent Ottawa architect,) and began a private architectural practice in Montreal the following year. Shortly after his arrival in Canada, he entered an Ice Palace Competition and won the first prize with his proposal. Thus, during his first winter in Canada, he saw the realization of his castle for "Our Lady of the Snows" as a focal point of the Winter Carnival celebrations.

In June 1910, he married Adeline Peddar from England. By this time, he not only had a good practice, but had also been appointed to lecture on Building Construction at the McGill School of Architecture. The scope of his teaching assignment was subsequently enlarged to include Materials of Construction, Professional Practice and Specifications. In addition, he was appointed Special Lecturer on Library Buildings (1926) in the McGill Library School, the latter function retained past his retirement from the School of Architecture. He was appointed Professor in 1933.

Turner was an accomplished architect. Apart from many fine residences, his works also include St. Phillip's Church in Montreal West, the Y.M.C.A. Chapel on Drummond Street, the Children's Chapel at the Cathedral, banks and commercial buildings in Montreal as well as the rebuilding of the Westmount Public Library. He was very active in the professional architectural associations

turner serving for many years on the councils of both the P.Q.A.A. and R.A.I.C., also serving on the latter as a representative of the R.I.B.A. He became the President of the P.Q.A.A. in 1933 and received the Gold Medal of the Province of Quebec Association of Architects in 1941. He was elected a Fellow of the R.I.B.A. and Senior Fellow of the R.A.I.C. Turner was a shy man with a retiring manner. He was a conscientious teacher who lectured and wrote on subjects that he painstakingly researched. He was frequently asked to lecture on English Architecture at various public functions of social groups not only in Montreal, but throughout the Province of Quebec. His lectures were engaging and radiated his love and enthusiasm for traditional English Architecture. Several of his articles were published in Canadian periodicals, such as The Canadian Geographic, The Montreal Churchman and, of course, the R.A.I.C. Journal.

Turner became acting director of the School at a time when student enrollment was decreasing drastically in the wake of the depression years and the outbreak of the Second World War. These events coupled with the retirement of Senior Professors Traquair and Nobbs placed McGill's School of Architecture in a vulnerable position and for a while Principal Lewis Williams Douglas (1938-39) contemplated phasing out architectural education at McGill.

A number of young architects, George F. Auld (B.Arch.'33); Richard E. Bolton (MIT'29); F. Roscoe Chaffey (U. of Manitoba'24); Richard Eve (B.Arch.'31); Harry' Mayerovitch (B.Arch.'33); J. Campbell Merrett (E.Arch.'31); and Robert Montgomery (B.Arch.'31): sent a memorandum on January 10, 1938 to Principal Douglas of the University and Dean Ernest Brown of the Faculty of Applied Science. After expressing their alarm about the rumour which suggested that "owing to the low revenue from fees as against the relatively high expenditure on salaries, the necessity of closing the School entirely may have to be considered." Several suggestions for the improvement of architectural education at McGill, were submitted in this document. Among the criticisms were listed the "out-of-dateness" of some courses, the "doubtful value" of the School's museum filled with antiques instead of the display of contemporary materials and building methods, the absence of courses in "Regional Planning," "Town Planning," and "Housing," as well as the lack of encouragement in "self-expression and original thought." This document also contained two suggestions, namely, the establishment of an "Advisory Committee of leading architects and designers," and the admission of women to the School both of which were implemented shortly thereafter.

Turner fought the threat of the closing of the School with all his strength and mustered the support of several distinguished Montreal architects to prevent it from happening. With their help and that of the newly appointed principal F. Cyril James (1939-1962), Turner, and his young Executive Secretary, John Bland, prevailed.

To ensure the continuity of architectural education at McGill, an Advisory Committee on the School of Architecture was established in 1939. On the committee, three distinguished architects, E.I. Barott, H.L. Fetherstonhaugh (B.Arch.'09) and J.C. McDougal (B.Sc.Arch.'09, B.Arch. '10), represented the profession, while Turner and Nobbs represented the School.

Under Turner's tenure as acting director of the School, the door to coed education in Architecture was opened, a no mean feat in the days of a male dominated Engineering Faculty, and in light of the fact that alterations had to be made to the engineering building in order to provide

washrooms for female students. At first, the curriculum of the School remained unchanged. Under Turner, the teaching load had to be redistributed after the retirement of Traquair and Nobbs. Design teaching was assigned to Fetherstonhaugh, History of Classical, Medieval and Renaissance Architecture to Chambers and Modern Architecture to Bland; Chambers also taught Theory of Planning, Architectural Drawing I and Modelling, while Bland also gave Elements of Architecture and Architectural Drawing II. Turner retained his two building construction courses as well as Building Materials and Professional Practice. P. Roy Wilson (B.Arch. '24), who had been a demonstrator in previous years, became a Special Lecturer in 1940 and taught Metal Work, Colour Decoration and Freehand Drawing.

Turner's health was already frail when he became Acting Director of the School, and the following year it deteriorated to such a degree that he entrusted the running of the School to his Executive Secretary, John Bland. In fact, Turner's tenure as a director can be viewed as a transitional period ushering in a new era and a third phase of McGill's School of Architecture since, in 1940, the architectural design program was reorganized by Turner and Bland.

First year was an introductory year. It was devoted to the teaching of drawing, both scale representations of objects in plan, section and elevation, and freehand drawing in pencil, charcoal and watercolour to study light, shadow and form. Simple methods of building construction were also taught in addition to the general study of mathematics, physics, mechanics, surveying and elementary graphical statics. In second year, design studio instruction embraced the planning of simple living and working places. Structural design was introduced at this point.

Third year building design involved site analysis with emphasis upon "Environment, Plan, Mass and Surface" and resulted in the production of quarter scale working drawings accompanied by full size detail drawings.

The fourth year design assignment was a large building with a complicated circulation problem and complex structural system. Detailed studies of building materials and construction methods was part of one assignment.

During fifth year, studio work entailed "group planning" in the first term, and individual thesis projects in the second. Professional practice, specifications and general office administration rounded off the final year architectural courses.

Turner retired in 1941. "The war worried him." He was hurt to see the destruction caused by the air raids and he was particularly concerned about the safety of his sisters who lived in an 'East Coast Town' (in England.) All this and his unfortunate illness weakened him". ..and two years after his retirement and after a lengthy illness confining him to a hospital, he died of a heart attack.

In his memory, the Philip J. Turner Prize was established by A.B. Darbyson (B.Arch.'15) and presented to the student in the School obtaining the highest standing in Design and Construction II.

## The School with John Bland: 1940s



A new phase of the history of McGill's School of Architecture began in 1941 with the appointment of John Bland to the directorship of the School.

John Bland was born in Lachine, in 1911, and received his elementary schooling at Montreal High School and secondary education at Loyola College. At the young age of seventeen, he was admitted to the McGill School of Architecture and graduated in 1933 with Honours. After graduation he went to England to pursue postgraduate studies at the Architectural Association School in London. There he became the Librarian of Planning and received the A.A. Diploma in Planning with Honours in 1937. Thereafter, he worked for the Planning Department of the London County Council and travelled in 1938 in France, Germany and Austria. In the following year, with Harold Spence-Sales, he co-authored England's Water Problem, a book sponsored by the Country Life Publishing Company for the purpose of evaluating drought conditions in southern England. After being elected an Associate of the R.I.B.A., John Bland commenced an architectural and planning practice in association with Spence-Sales. They entered and won prizes in several competitions such as the Timber Development Association Camp Competition (1937), the Liverpool Trades Association Housing Competition (1937) and the News Chronicle Schools Competition (1938). Their architectural work included a restaurant in Westminster (1937), a School for 80 children at Merstham, Surrey (1938), a House at Tadworth, Surrey (1938), and a General Store in Newhaven, Sussex (1939). Their planning work included The South London Survey for Sir Walter Layton (1937), Vulnerable Area Survey G.B. for Col. Doland, M.P., Chairman, Evacuation Sub-Committee (1938), and Future Development Section of the R.L.B.A. Road Exhibition (1939).

### The Nineteen-Forties

The foundations of a new phase of architectural education at McGill University were laid during the war years with revisions to the old curriculum and preparations for the anticipated influx of young veterans seeking architectural training after their return from the war. Cyril James, the new principal of the University, supported this development and encouraged broadening the scope of architectural education to include housing design and town planning; both of which Bland rightly assumed would play an important role during the reconstruction years in Canada following the end of World War II.

With the retirement of Turner, the Advisory Committee in Architecture was now chaired by John Bland. Two additional members J.J. Perraut (B.Arch.' 15) and J. Campbell Merrett (B.Arch.'31), were appointed to the committee. Changes in the curriculum and new staff appointments were gradually introduced, and by the end of the war the School was restructured.

During these transitional years, two older members of the Advisory Committee, Fetherstonough and McDougall, became involved in teaching. The former taught Design, the latter Professional Practice. Moreover, Harold Butler Little (B. Arch.'20), a successful local architect, took over Turner's Building Construction courses. And, after Frank P. Chambers left in 1942 and P. Roy Wilson in 1943, Bland gave all history courses. S. H. Maw was assigned to teach Architectural Drawing I and II (1941-43), and Frederick B. Taylor (B.Arch.'30) Freehand Drawing (1941-43), Modelling (1941-43), and Sketching School (1942-43).

Two teachers whose influence on students in Drawing and Basic Design were to be very profound in subsequent years were Arthur Lismer and Gordon Webber.

Arthur Lismer, a founding member of the "Group of Seven," came to Montreal in 1940 as the Educational Supervisor for the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and after Chambers left McGill in 1941, Lismer accepted the invitation by Bland to teach part-time at the School of Architecture. Initially, Lismer taught History of Art and Theory of Design, later he replaced Taylor in Freehand Drawing, and from 1955 onward he taught only freehand drawing and continued to conduct the Sketching School with Gordon Webber.

Gordon Webber had been a student of Laszlo Moholy-Nagy at the New Bauhaus (later the Institute of Design) in Chicago, and a pupil of Arthur Lismer before that. He was an artist and an exceptional teacher with an innate ability to identify objects of beauty in the world that surrounded him. His love of life was particularly touching since he was severely handicapped from a car accident in his childhood.

Constantly experimenting with colour, texture, light, and equilibrium of forms in his studio course Elements of Design, he guided his students' development in basic design. Webber believed that the eye was trained to observe, the hand to express, and the mind to relate design, and accordingly his course was structured "to co-ordinate the eye, the hand and the mind, in the basic elements of line, shape, texture, colour, light, space, and movement. "Webberism" became a frequent expression in the vocabulary of students for visual and tactile sensations of form and texture. Webber became not only a well-liked teacher, but also a trusted friend of most students, retaining that status long after they had graduated.

After having secured these two design positions in the early 1940's, Bland now turned to complement the artistic expertise in the School with competent building construction, sociology, and professional practice education. Building Construction was entrusted to Frederic Lasserre who had received his training in Toronto and Zurich, Social Observations for Architects to Professor Dawson of the Faculty of Arts, and Professional Practice to L. Austin Johnson, a lawyer. Finally, engineering course requirements were expanded and architectural students once again had to take several courses with engineering students.

Because of its relatively small size, the School for administrative purposes mainly was from the very outset attached to the Faculty of Engineering, but it had a special status which was expressed by identifying the head of the School as a Director while those of the Engineering Departments were Chairmen. Initially, however, there were very close ties between architectural and engineering education which unfortunately slackened during the period between the wars so

that by 1941 there was little correspondence in the education of architects and engineers although three minor courses were still given to the architects by the staff of the Engineering Faculty. Moreover, admission requirements had become rather lenient. Architectural students, for example, could enter the architectural program directly after junior matriculation while a qualifying year in Arts and Science was a prerequisite for admission to engineering programs. When the engineers' qualifying year was transferred from the Faculty of Arts and Science to the Faculty of Engineering, Bland requested that this qualifying year also be mandatory for architectural students, a request that was approved. "The intention was to merge the few architects with the engineers, in so far as it was possible, in all subjects dealing with buildings, to eliminate descriptive courses that had been used for training in structural and mechanical engineering design (and which were very poorly regarded in the Faculty) and at the same time to overcome the inferiority architects at McGill were made to feel in relation to their engineering brethren by virtue of their inadequate preparation."

The conviction that the disciplines of engineering and architecture must be brought together to resolve modern building problems led to Bland's insistence that students follow some engineering courses even if it was "painful for the man with a flair for design to suffer the minutiae of structural calculations." Bland also believed that time spent at the University was also time for the development of good habits and self-confidence, and disapproved of an architectural education based merely on a "formalistic, thoughtless academic design both old and new."

It was during the first post-war years that John Bland's approach to architectural education became well-established. This approach entailed giving students a certain freedom in experimentation and the opportunity to specialize in a field of their own interest, provided that the basics of history of architecture and building construction were observed.

By 1945 a new five year program had been adopted that remained essentially unaltered for two decades. First year was a preparatory year shared by architectural and engineering students, but with the architects having to take in addition a studio course called Architectural Drafting and Colour I. The second year curriculum consisted of History of Art, Architectural Drawing and Colour II, History of Ancient and Classical Architecture, Building Construction and Drawing.

In third year, students took Design, Theory of Design, Planning, History of Medieval Architecture, Building Construction II, Social Observation for Architects, Freehand Drawing, and Sketching School. Fourth year courses were Design, History of Renaissance Architecture, Freehand Drawing, and Plumbing(a service course).

In fifth year students took Design, History of Modern Architecture, Professional Practice, Specifications, and Studio Work.

Over and above the aforementioned courses, architectural students had to take the required structural engineering courses. In addition, each year students had to prepare a report of about 3000 words upon their summer employment. Finally, before the degree was granted, students had to prove to the satisfaction of the Faculty that they had at least six months' working experience.

As foreseen, there was, after World War II, a great surge in university enrollment and the School of Architecture had to increase the number of staff and double its physical accommodation, which in the short term, necessitated the use of McGill's Dawson College located in St. Jean, Quebec. First and second year students in all departments of the Faculty of Engineering had to be resident students at Dawson, living in converted army barracks and eating in former mess halls. Many students were veterans who had had wartime responsibilities and naturally these students were older and more mature than those who came directly from high school. Nevertheless, despite the age gap, the two groups worked closely together, complementing each other, all sensing that a great many opportunities in re-building and expanding cities lay ahead of them. By 1947, increased student enrollment made the cramped quarters of the School in the Engineering Building unacceptable and a new home was found in a former Victorian residential building at 3484 University Street opposite the Diocesan College and near the Milton Street entrance to the campus. After the building was vacated by the International Labor Organization (which had been headquartered in Montreal during the war years and repatriated to Geneva after 1945), the entire two upper stories and half of the ground floor of the building was allocated to the School.

On the ground floor was the lecture room and administrative offices, on the upper floors the various drafting studios and teaching staff offices, and in the basement a darkroom for "light experiments" and photography, the latter under Webber's supervision. Also in the basement was the students' common room, the so-called "Focus Room," with its "low diwans" (actually mattresses on the floor) where such visitors as Lewis Mumford and Philip Johnson were entertained after their lectures. Students enjoyed their new home and the liberty it offered them. The building, a rambling neo-medieval mansion with turrets, secret nooks and crannies, and a picturesque but complex roof, became the setting for the teaching of "modern" architecture. "A hard doctrine had found a soft refuge" was the verdict of the students. But the new quarters with "cubby-holes" were much preferred to the old large "hall-drafting-room" of the Engineering Building. And no one missed the can hanging on a string in the corner of the old drafting room which everyone struck on leaving.

Apart from the expansion of the School's physical facilities, increased student enrollment also demanded an increase in the teaching staff. The appointment of new teachers was further necessitated by the resignation of Fred Lasserre who was invited to establish and to head the new School of Architecture of the University of British Columbia. Lasserre, who before returning to Canada worked for a while for "Tecton" (an avant-garde architectural office in London and the most important representative of the International Style in Great Britain at the time), was deeply committed to a modern architecture "without frills" and eager to take up the challenge of starting a new school. He had the encouragement of John Bland, and McGill graduates Catherine Chard (B.Arch. '43), Peter Oberlander (B.Arch.'45) and Arthur Erickson (B.Arch. '50) who became teachers in the formative years of Lasserre's school.

After Lasserre left McGill, Watson Balharrie who had worked with Lasserre in Ottawa was asked to give Lasserre's courses. Balharrie was also a pioneer of modern architecture with a successful practice in Ottawa (Abra, Balharrie and Shore). He was a self-educated man who had a profound sense of building construction and a clear, orderly way of planning. His buildings had an easy sense of looking good without any contrivance to achieve attention or to compensate for

lack of ornament." Balharrie commuted willingly for years between Ottawa and Montreal to give his classes, often flying his own plane, weather permitting.

Also in 1946, Harold Spence-Sales was appointed Associate professor of Design, joining the staff in the fall semester. He had actually been appointed Assistant Professor six years earlier, but due to the war had been unable to occupy the post.

In 1947, when the School moved to its new location, Enrico de Pierro (B.Arch.'41) was appointed Sessional Lecturer with Balharrie to give subjects previously taught by Lasserre while Spence-Sales headed both 4th and 5th year design studios.

The following year, Robert C. Esdaile (B.Arch.'41) joined the staff as a Sessional Lecturer replacing de Pierro who now was asked to take charge of 4th year design. De Pierro and Esdaile left at the end of the academic year, the former to practice and teach at the A.A. School in London, and the latter to become the head of the Trondheim School of Architecture in Norway.

Shortly after his arrival in Montreal, Spence-Sales established with John Bland the first post-graduate architectural and planning program in Canada. The planning program was organized along interdisciplinary lines with a Master's Degree being conferred in the candidate's undergraduate discipline. The studies in urban planning were conducted under the supervision of a "Committee on Physical Planning" chaired by Spence-Sales. In 1947, three students, an architect, an economist, and a sociologist enrolled in the planning program and in its subsequent twenty-one year duration eighty-three planners graduated, many at whom now occupy key positions in the Canadian planning profession.

Bland and Spence-Sales were influential in the formation of the Canadian Universities Co-ordinating Committee on Planning Education (1950) and in the establishment of the Fellowships program of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation available to students of planning.

Harold Spence-Sales was born in 1908 in Lahore, India (today Pakistan). After private schooling, he entered the University of New Zealand, graduating with a B.A. degree which entitled him to Associate Membership in the New Zealand Institute of Architects. He continued his studies in England, at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University of London, and the Architectural Association School of Planning; from the latter he received the Planning Diploma with Honours in 1937, and became an Associate Member of the Town Planning Institute (U.K.).

After graduation, he was appointed an instructor at the A.A. School of Planning (1937-38), and with John Bland practiced architecture and planning for two years.

Endowed with a keen analytic mind and an enviable command of the English language, Spence-Sales established a reputation as an engaging and provocative lecturer. His enthusiasm for natural beauty and an innate comprehension of the importance of enabling planning legislation made him a constructive and inspired physical planner of human settlements. His influence upon his students was far-reaching. In the early 1940's there was a considerable reliance on part-time teachers, a measure imposed by stringent budgetary conditions. As late as 1947/48 only two full-time professorial appointments were held in the School, namely, by Bland and Spence-Sales, the

other teachers being Sessional Lecturers or Sessional Instructors. With the large enrollment of students and veterans, however, two additional staff appointments with design experience became necessary. In 1948, Stuart Wilson(B.Arch.'43) joined the staff as an Assistant Professor and the following year Fred Lebensold was appointed with the rank of Sessional Lecturer; Wilson was asked to teach 2nd year Building Construction and Design, and Lebensold became the Design and Building Construction II teacher in 3rd year. Later he taught in 4th year Design, and finally in 5th year Design, in the latter replacing Spence-Sales who was increasingly occupied with the graduate program in planning.

Stuart Anthony Wilson was born in Montreal in 1912. He entered the McGill School in 1912 to commence studies in architecture, but for financial reasons had to withdraw midway through his fourth year. Subsequently, he found employment in architectural offices in Montreal and continued his studies at the Montreal Technical Institute between 1936 and 1942 under the tutorship of John Roxburgh Smith. He returned to McGill in 1942 and graduated with a B.Arch. degree in the following year.

Always an artist by temperament and inclination, Wilson continued his education in summer and evenings at the School of Art and Design of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts under Arthur Lismer, and twice received the I.B.M. Scholarship for his work. Gordon Webber, Goodridge Roberts, Jacques de Tonnancourt, Alfred Pinsky, were his teachers among others. As an accomplished artist, Wilson had several solo exhibitions of his work.

Wilson's publishing record is also impressive with scores of articles that appeared in the R.A.I.C. Journal, The Canadian Architect, Architecture Canada, Habitat, Architectural Science Review, and the Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians. At present, he contributes weekly to The Downtowner articles on Art and Architecture, and occasionally visual work.

Wilson too had a profound influence upon his students. Being in charge of the first design studio in third year, he initiated students in "architectural" design, building construction methods, and working drawings for wood framed buildings. A "Building Workshop" for students was eventually organized by him to complement studio work. To pass third year design was considered by students a milestone and proof that they were now truly on the road to being architects.

With Lismer and Webber, Wilson also taught at Sketching School exemplifying with his artistic ability the significance of architecture's dual nature of art and science.

At the Spring Convocation of 1981, Wilson was named Emeritus Professor of Architecture and he continues to teach two lecture courses at the School.

David Frederick Lebensold was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1917, and received his primary and secondary education in his native country. Before the beginning of the Second World War, he went to London to study architecture at the Regent Street Polytechnic. After graduation in 1939, he enlisted in the British Army and served with the Royal Engineers until 1947. Returning to London after the war, he taught design first at the Central School of Arts and Crafts where he

was the Head of the Department of Interior Design and Architecture, and later at London's Polytechnic School of Architecture.

Shortly after he immigrated to Canada, he was appointed to teach at the McGill School (1949-55). As a skilled draftsman and talented designer, Lebensold is remembered by his students as a demanding teacher and a tough critic. He held his teaching position for only six years because his growing private practice demanded his undivided attention.

Lebensold is best known as a gifted theatre designer, but he was also active in domestic, commercial, and public building developments as well as historic building rehabilitation. In fact, with his former neighbor Eric McLean, the Gazette Music Critic he became a precursor of the restoration work to be undertaken in "Vieux Montreal" where he resided before moving to Toronto. He bought the old Hatton Fish Market at 430 Rue du Bonsecours and converted the upper floor-levels and the rear into a multi-family residential building with offices at ground floor-level and a boutique in the basement. His own residence occupied the rear, the former cold storage area; it had a spacious two storey living room and a mezzanine master bedroom overlooking the upper part of the living room.

In spite of the demands of his practice, Lebensold found time to attend design crits at the School and served as a Visiting Professor during the 1968/69/ and 1971/72 academic years. He died in July 1985 of a heart attack.

During the 1940's, the School of Architecture prospered under Bland's leadership and experienced an unprecedented growth. When Bland joined the School there were only 23 students enrolled, but over the next decade student enrollment consistently rose reaching 133 fulltime students during the 1949/50 academic year.

### **The School with John Bland: 1950s**

Commencing with the session 1949/50, training in architecture was changed from a compulsory preengineering year in the Faculty of Arts and Science to 5 years in the school of Architecture to 6 years in the School. This reorganization was initiated by the Faculty of Engineering, and the School followed suit with 1st and 2nd year students following basically the same courses as Engineering students, the only exception being an additional course, Architectural Drawing and Elements of Design, for architects in second year.

The early 1950's saw the addition of three new teachers, Hazen Sise, Guy Desbarats, and John Schreiber. Sise was assigned the teaching of History of Modern Architecture and Architectural Report; Guy Desbarats was asked to teach Design in 5th year as well as a special applied building technology course; and John Schreiber was given the task of teaching drawing in 2nd year, and the 4th year Design studio. The policy of part time appointments continued in the fifties as exemplified by the '52/'53 academic year when Maxwell C. Baker, Watson Balharrie, L. Austin Johnson, David F. Lebensold, Arthur Lismer, Anne Luke Marien (B.Arch.'48), Vincent J. Rother, Hazen Sise and Gordon Webber were listed in the calendar as sessional lecturers. Several of these teachers were engaged in the practice of the profession of architecture and they brought

with them a wealth of practical experience which complemented theoretical studies. Hazen Edward Sise was born in 1906 in Montreal. He attended the Selwyn House School in Montreal, Bishop's College in Lennoxville, and the Royal Military College in Kingston before entering the School of Architecture of McGill University. After two years of study at McGill (1925-27), he transferred to M.I.T. in Cambridge where he graduated in 1929.

After graduation, he went to London, England, to do post-graduate studies in architecture and town planning, but when the Spanish Civil War broke out he joined the Canadian Blood Transfusion Unit attached to the "Loyalists" and worked with Dr. Norman Bethune, often driving a Red Cross Ambulance. Returning to Canada just before the beginning of World War II, he joined the Staff of the National Film Board of Canada serving first in Ottawa and later in Washington, D.C. After the war he was invited by Bland to give lectures in architectural history at the School.

Hazen Sise was a compassionate man, an outspoken advocate of social justice and a faithful follower of the modern movement. He worked for a short while in Le Corbusier's atelier and attended several C.I.A.M. (Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) meetings.

In Montreal, he was an active member of the city's Parks and Playgrounds Association, contributing to the restoration and preservation of urban open spaces; for example, he designed the Beaver Lake Pavillion in collaboration with Guy Desbarats (B.Arch.'48).

Guy Desbarats was born in 1925 in Montreal. After a College Classique education in Montreal, he entered the McGill School of Architecture and graduated with a B.Arch. degree in 1948. He was also a gifted designer, and his house design entry (with Fred Lebensold) won first prize in the Canadian Home Journal competition in 1953. (R. T. Affleck and V. Prus placed second in the same competition.) Desbarats joined the School in 1952 as a Research Assistant and the following year was appointed Sessional Lecturer. He taught design as well as a practical extension course in building construction complementing Wilson's course. In this special course, students were instructed together with students of the Ecole des Beaux Arts at the Laboratories of the Montreal Building Trades Training Centre at 5205 Parthenais Street of which Desbarats was named co-director. This training centre was organized in accordance with principles set forth by Howard T. Fisher, a Chicago architect, who had lectured at McGill during February and March 1953. Three years later Richard Buckminster Fuller was invited to conduct a project involving the design of a geodesic dome which was then erected at the training centre by the students.

Engaged in private practice and also a founding member of Arcop, Desbarats resigned from the School in 1958. In the 1960's, however, Guy Desbarats was asked to organize a new school of architecture to replace the existing Beaux Arts School. He became the director of this new School of Architecture at the Universite' de Montreal and when the Institute d'Urbanism merged with the new School, he was elected Dean of the newly formed Faculte de l'Amenagement, a faculty which later also embraced landscape architecture, and industrial design. Several graduates of the McGill School are now teachers in this faculty: Leonard D. Warshaw (B. Arch.'55), Melvin Charney (B.Arch.'58), Jacques Derome (B.Arch.'61), Louis Pretty

(B.Arch.'61), Lada Patricia Falta (B.Arch.'64, M.Arch.'72), Ronald F. Williams (B.Arch.'64), Pierre Larose (B.Arch.'64), Pierre L. Teasdale (B.Arch.'65), and Aurele Cardinal (B.Arch.'70).

John Schreiber was born in Poland in 1921. He received a baccalaureate from the Stefan Bathory Lyceum in Warsaw. Shortly after the German occupation, he fled his native country crossing through Hungary and France. He eventually reached England in 1940 and joined the Polish Navy under British Operational Command, attended the Naval College (Executive Branch) and served in the Navy throughout World War II. In 1946 he was discharged with the rank of Lieutenant and enrolled at the University of Glasgow to study Architecture. He graduated in 1951 with a B.Sc.(Arch.) degree, and emigrated to Canada the following year.

He worked for a short period for Philip Goodfellow (B.Arch.'47) and was appointed to the School the year after his arrival in Montreal. In 1957 he became Assistant Professor and nine years later Associate Professor, a position that he still retains. A C.M.H.C. Fellowship and a sabbatical leave in 1963 enabled him to study under Sasaki and to obtain a Master's degree in Landscape Architecture from Harvard University. Morris Charney (B. Arch.'62), who just returned from Harvard with an Urban Design Master's Degree, took over Schreiber's teaching assignments during his sabbatical leave.

From the outset of his teaching career, Schreiber complemented his academic activities with a small architectural practice which was later expanded to include planning and landscape architecture. A joint entry with Lebensold in the Alcan Architectural Competition received 3rd Prize, and joint entries in both the Quebec and Ontario Region of the National Housing Design Competition 1979 (with David Covo, B. Arch.'71; Norbert Schoenauer, M.Arch.'59; and Ron Williams, B. Arch.'64), received a Special Mention.

For Expo '67 Schreiber designed the Children's World at La Ronde and the landscape of the Atlantic Provinces Pavilion. He collaborated on the design for the roof garden of Place Bonaventure (1966) with Hideo Sasaki and Dawson DeMay, and designed the landscaping for Complex "C" (1969) of Cite Parlementaire and Jardin Grande Allee (1972), both in Quebec City. He was also a design consultant for the New Town of Fermont (1970-75) and more recently developed with Ron Williams the Master Plan for the Civic Centre of Sherbrooke (1984).

As a designer with a flair for the appropriate use of natural building materials. Schreiber built residences in Quebec and Ontario. His former home at 520 Landsdowne Avenue in Westmount, and his present residence at 1167 St. Mark Street demonstrate his unusual ability to create exciting, spatial sequences in dwellings with, of course, much attention given to detail and the improvised use of discarded building elements and materials.

In 1973, Schreiber requested a part time status at the School to devote more time to his practice, but continued to lecture in Landscape Architecture annually publishing his students' assignments in booklet form, entitled first Landscape As I See It and then A Spirit of Place.

After Lebensold's resignation in 1955, Ray Affleck was placed in charge of 5th year design, a position which he retained for two-and-a-half years. Born in 1922 in Penticton, British Columbia, Raymond Tait Affleck was raised in Montreal where he had also received his

architectural education, graduating in 1947 with Distinction. Following graduation, he travelled for a while in Europe and studied at the Federal Technical Institute in Zurich. After returning to Montreal, he did his indentureship with Vincent Rother and established a private practice in 1953. With Sise, he designed the Post Office building in the Town of Mont Royal for which they received the Massey Medal and in 1955 he joined in the foundation of a partnership known by the acronym Arcop, which stood for architects' co-partnership. All six founding members of this distinguished Canadian firm, Ray Affleck, Guy Desbarats, Dimitri Dimakopoulos (B.Arch.'55), Fred Lebensold, Jean Michaud (B. Arch.'45) and Hazen Sise were either graduates, or teachers, or both of the McGill School of Architecture. And, when Arcop became associated with I.M. Pei and Partners for the design and construction of Place Ville Marie (1958-63) Affleck too resigned from the School to devote his full attention to their growing practice.

When Hazen Sise left the School, history courses in architecture were again taught by John Bland but now with the exception of Modern Architecture, he was assisted in three other courses: History of Classic, Byzantine and Medieval Architecture, History of 16th, 17th and 18th Century Architecture, and History of Residential Buildings, by Orson Wheeler, a Lecturer in Fine Arts at Sir George Willims University.

Orson Shorey Wheeler was born in 1902 in Barnston, Quebec. He studied at Bishop's University, attended the Royal Canadian Academy classes at Montreal, and continued his art education in New York City at the Cooper Union and the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design. After his return to Montreal he became a recognized sculptor and teacher. Always interested in architecture, Wheeler made several hundred comparative scale models of famous buildings of the World to illustrate the history of architecture. These "plastiline" models, some with a cut-away section to enable a view of the interior space, were marvelously instructive in the study of the relative scale famous monuments. As an Auxiliary Professor, Wheeler still lectures at the School, and his models of historical architectural achievements continue to inspire students.

A landmark in the teaching of history of architecture at McGill was in 1956 when Peter Collins was appointed. During his subsequent 25 year tenure at the School he taught History, of Architecture to a generation of students, and through his published works influenced countless others in their study of architecture. At McGill he established an international reputation as a peerless architectural historian and critic.

Peter Collins was born in 1920 in Leeds, England where he received his primary and secondary education. In 1936 he enrolled at the Leeds College of Art, but had to interrupt his studies at the outbreak of World War II. He joined the Yorkshire Hussars as a Trooper. After two years in the British Army, he became an Intelligence Officer and was stationed first in Palestine and Egypt, and later in Italy. Finally, with the rank of Captain, he was assigned to the General Staff of the War Office in London.

After his discharge, Collins returned to Leeds and obtained a Diploma in Architecture with Distinction in 1948. Following his graduation, he travelled in Switzerland and France, and eventually worked for Auguste Perret on the reconstruction of Le Havre.

In 1951 Collins returned to Great Britain and was appointed to lecture in Architecture at the University of Manchester where Capper, the first director of the McGill School, had founded the School of Architecture. In 1954 Collins published an essay on Jacques-Francois Blondel for which he received a Silver Medal from the R.I.B.A. He undertook graduate work under the supervision of Professor Cordingly at Manchester and upon completion of his thesis *The Development of Architectural Theory in France in the Mid-eighteenth Century* he graduated with an M.A. degree in 1955.

A Fulbright Travelling Scholarship and an appointment to lecture in Architectural History at Yale University brought him to North America and on one occasion, while visiting his wife's family in Ottawa. He stopped in Montreal and inquired from Bland whether there was an opening in the School to teach history. Sise, who taught History of Modern Architecture, had resigned the previous year, and Bland offered Collins a teaching position which he accepted.

Initially, Collins taught History of Classics, Byzantine and Medieval Architecture and History of 16th, 17th and 18th Century Architecture, but he reorganized the undergraduate courses as History and Theory of Architecture courses and took charge of them, with the exception of History of Architecture in Canada which was given by Bland.

Peter Collins complemented his teaching with an impressive publication record. *Concrete, The Vision of a New Architecture* earned him the Henry Florence Architectural Book Scholarship in 1960; it was translated to Italian under the title *La Visione di una nuova architettura*. *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture* (1965), perhaps his best known book, was translated into Spanish with the title *Los ideales de la arquitectura moderna*. His last book, *Architectural Judgement* (1971) was written after he received a Master of Law degree from Queen's University.

Equally impressive was Collins' output of scores of articles and reviews which appeared in numerous architectural journals in North America and England. He was for a while the architectural correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, and editor of the *SAH Journal* (1967/68). He wrote the entry *Architectural Theory* for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and one of his essays was reprinted in Dr. Bissell's *Centenary Anthology: A Century of Great Canadian Writing*.

Collins was not only an eminent scholar, but also an exceptional teacher whose lectures were meticulously organized and well prepared. He exacted discipline and full attention from his students, and despite a strictness which was in the early 1970's an anathema to students in general, he was admired and liked by his own students. He conducted several summer schools in England, France, and Italy which were memorable experiences for those who attended because of his thorough knowledge of the architectural history of these countries. But above all, P.C. as he was affectionately known was an authority on French architecture and a guided tour through Paris with him was an enlightened adventure.

During his tenure at McGill, he was often invited to lecture at other Universities. For example, he held a visiting professorship in 1964 at Smith College. Two years later he lectured at Cambridge University, became a Research Fellow at the Yale University Law School in 1968, and in the late 70's lectured at the Cincinnati School of Architecture.

Fully and unpeccably bilingual, Collins was elected an honorary corresponding member of the 'societe' des architectes diplomes par le gouvernement of France and a Fellow of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.

Peter Collins' death on June 7th, 1981, brought to a sudden end a brilliant career of a devoted teacher and a distinguished writer and critic.

During the winter term of the 1957/58 academic year, Affleck resigned from the School to devote more time to his practice and H.P. D. van Ginkel was asked to temporarily replace him. In the following year Douglas Shadbolt was appointed as a full-time Assistant Professor to teach the 5th year design studio.

In 1946 Douglas Shadbolt had enrolled as a second year student at the School but left two years later without graduating, and returned to the West Coast where he had been born. During his student days at McGill, he worked during the summer for Watson Balharrie in Ottawa, and while in Victoria for Sharp & Thompson, Berwick, Pratt and Chas. L. Craig. He was invited to teach in the School of Architecture and Allied Arts of the University of Oregon in Eugene while completing his studies there, and in 1957 he graduated with a B.Arch. degree.

Shadbolt had gained experience in architectural offices not only on the West Coast but also in Boston where he worked for both Carl Koch and Associates as well as The Architects' Collaborative headed at that time by Walter Gropius. A very gifted designer and draftsman, Shadbolt was committed to demystifying design and teaching it in an organized way, stressing the importance of evaluating the building program as a first step in the design process and rejecting reconceived design solutions with emphasis on appearance rather than content. Most of all, he was a dedicated teacher with no private practice commitment who was readily available throughout the week to guide his fifth year students and consequently enjoyed great popularity. With Shadbolt's appointment, design studio teaching acquired a "full-time" status which set the standard for subsequent years.

During the late fifties, the Macdonald Engineering and Workman Building were no longer adequate to house the burgeoning engineering departments and through the munificence of J.W. McConnell, Senior Member of the Board of Governors of McGill University, an expansion of their physical space was planned near the Milton Street entrance of the campus which necessitated the demolition of the Victorian building that housed the School of Architecture. In January 1958, temporary quarters for the School were found in two town houses on McTavish Street and on Founders Day, October 3, 1958, the corner stone of the new building was laid by Chancellor R.E. Powell. Designed by Robert P. Flemming (B.Arch. '37) and John Roxburgh Smith the building was inaugurated on November 30th, 1959, by His Excellency Georges P. Vanier, Governor General of Canada, and the School moved into its designated place, the north-eastern wing of the new building.

Student enrollment during the 1959/60 academic year was essentially the same as it had been a decade earlier, namely, 136 compared to 133. Physical space rather than a lack of student applications limited further growth. But, during the following decade when an additional four

stories were added to the McConnell Building, student numbers again were allowed to be increased.

## **The School with John Bland: 1960s**



One of John Bland's appointments in the early sixties was Maureen Anderson, who eventually became the Administrative Assistant, and who has been in charge of administrative affairs ever since. Her sensitivity and loyalty have made her an invaluable counsel to members of staff and students alike. In 1980, Maureen Anderson was made Honorary member of the Architectural Undergraduate Society of McGill University, an honor bestowed sincerely. For graduate students, who often come from far away countries with a different culture, she became a compassionate and trusted friend and their gratitude is evidenced by their continued contact with her after the completion of their studies at McGill. On a personal note, the author is deeply indebted to Maureen Anderson for her counsel and editorial skills which she so generously offers; the publication of numerous articles and manuscripts, including this article describing the history of the School, reflects her contribution.

Douglas Shadbolt's tenure at McGill lasted only three years. In 1961 he was invited to organize a new school of architecture at the Nova Scotia Technical College in Halifax - a task that he was asked to repeat a decade later when it was decided to establish a school of architecture at Carleton University in Ottawa.

The year Shadbolt left, upper year students of the McGill School of Architecture published an article entitled Time for Stock-Taking in the Journal of the R.A.I.C. The editors of this article, George Pollowy (B. Arch.'62), Morris Charney (B. Arch.'62) and Moshe Safdie (B.Arch.'61) had sent out questionnaires the summer before to all McGill graduates asking them to state their professional position and experience, appraise their education and give personal advice to students." Since the students found the responses to these questionnaires to be both "conflicting and ambiguous," they settled for a kaleidoscopic sampling of work done by graduates and drew attention to general concerns of the time, such as the consumerism of the privileged, the need for low-income housing, vehicular traffic problems, urban core deterioration, urban sprawl, and "the rape of the land." Their attitude towards education at the School was realistic by accepting the fact that "schools cannot hope to give the student all the knowledge he will need in practice."<sup>51</sup>

In 1961 Bland appointed two design teachers, both recent recipients of a M.Arch. degree from McGill's graduate program: Jonas Lehrman, who received his undergraduate training at the A.A. School of Architecture in London, and Norbert Schoenauer, the author of this article, who

previously studied architecture in Budapest and Copenhagen. In accordance with John Bland's principle of assigning the responsibility of design instruction to a single individual for each year, Lehrman was put in charge of fourth and Schoenauer of fifth year design, but a significant change was proposed by a coordinating committee (Wilson, Lehrman and Schoenauer), that is, to complement studio courses with building construction lectures in order to emphasize the close relationship between "good design " and "good building construction" and to extend students' design appreciation beyond the boundaries of aestheticism. Bland approved the proposal and Design and Construction I, II, and III, replaced Building Construction and Design, Class A, and B; D + C became the popular name of these new courses.

Also during the early sixties, the M. Arch. program was expanded to include Housing Design (Lehrman and Schoenauer) in addition to the existing programs of Architectural Design (Bland) and Planning (SpenceSales).

An accomplished artist and art teacher, Gentile Tondino, joined the School in 1961. Tondino, who taught with Lismer at the Museum of Fine Arts, was appointed Sessional Lecturer in charge of Freehand Drawing courses, and after Gordon Webber's death, replaced him in the yearly Sketching School.

Gordon Webber had died suddenly of a heart attack in 1965, but having bequeathed his eyes for transplant, his eyes lived on. In accordance with his wishes, he was cremated, and his ashes strewn in the "hollow" in the campus. With the exception of his paintings, all his material possessions were left to the School to provide aid for needy students."

Leslie Doelle (M.Arch.'64), Seymore Levine and Arthur Mendel were appointed Sessional Lecturers in 1964 and taught Acoustics, Mechanical Services and Electrical Services respectively. These service courses had previously been given by the staff of the Faculty of Engineering, but with increased specialization in the Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Departments the younger staff members were no longer interested in building service courses. However, the close link with structural engineering continued unaltered, and to this day required courses such as Statics, Surveying, Strength of Materials, Soil Mechanics and Foundations, Structural Steel and Timber Design Reinforced Concrete Design and Structures are given to architectural students by members of the Civil Engineering Department.

During the second half of the sixties, three teachers joined the staff who were destined to play an important role in the School during the seventies and eighties.

First, Derek Drummond (B. Arch.'62) was appointed in 1965 initially assisting Stuart Wilson in Design and Construction I. Two years later, he also took charge of Graphics and Design Elements, an introductory course for second year students, and by the end of the sixties, Bland appointed Drummond Assistant Director of the School with responsibility for student affairs and admissions.

Second, Radoslav Zuk (B. Arch.'56), while on leave from the University of Manitoba was asked to assist in 6th year "Design" while Lehrman was ill. In the following year he received a full-time appointment replacing Lehrman who left the School to teach at the School of Architecture

in Winnipeg. Third, Bruce Anderson (B. Arch.'64) joined the staff in 1966 shortly after returning from graduate studies at Harvard University. In fact, he had already taught a course in History of Architecture during the fall semester of 1964 while Collins was on leave at Smith College, but when Anderson returned to the School he developed a new course called Communication, Behaviour and Architecture which was to replace Webber's Elements of Design, but with expanded content and organized as a course where visual communication skills in drawing, model-making, and photography were taught parallel to the D + C courses. The photo laboratory established by Anderson occupied the second floor of the McConnell wing of the School and became an important resource center with a most sophisticated equipment serving later as a model for other schools to follow.



To strengthen links with the profession, Bland appointed three distinguished practicing architects as visiting professors in 1966: John C. Parkin, Harry Mayerovitch (B. Arch.'33) and Victor Prus. Visiting professors were resource persons invited to "design crits" not only to evaluate students' designs, but also to share their experiences with the students. The following year Ray Affleck became a visiting professor, followed by Fred Lebensold, Andre Vecsei (M.Arch.'77) and John Burchard, and thereafter by Thomas Blood, Moshe Safdie and Ronald Williams (B.Arch.'64).

Gavin Scott (B.Arch.'62) was appointed lecturer in 1967 and assisted Wilson in third year design. Two years later he became an Assistant Professor, but in 1972 he resigned to pursue post-graduate studies at the Université de Montreal.

In the late sixties, when the so called Baby Boom generation reached adolescence, new provincial legislation on education was introduced with the objective of creating a unified and democratic secondary and post-secondary school system accessible to the entire population of Quebec. This scholastic reform not only entailed the administration of the parallel systems (Catholic and Protestant) by a Department of Education, but also the creation of community colleges or CEGEPs (Colleges d'enseignement general et professionnel) with a two year course as a preparatory stage for university education, or a three year course leading to a diploma. The two year CEGEP preparatory course for university education replaced the first two years of architectural education which meant that the previous six year course now became a four year program. Moreover, since a university degree had to be attainable after three years of study the School implemented an intermediate non-professional degree known as B.Sc.Arch. Approved during the 1968/69 session, this degree became for the McGill students a prerequisite for entry to the fourth year (transfer students with equivalent academic background could be admitted to the third year, but were not eligible for the intermediate degree) leading to the professional degree of B.Arch.

The late sixties were turbulent years for all North American universities and McGill was not an exception. Students demanded throughout the university representation on all faculty meetings and committees, a request that was granted. At the School, dissatisfaction with some aspects of the curriculum led to a short boycott of classes, but in comparison with the confrontations at the Schools of Architecture of Columbia and Yale Universities, this was a minor event. Nevertheless, this student unrest led to the establishment of a joint staff-student advisory committee which deliberated on the expansion of optional courses and future development of architectural education. This was also a time at the School when every course was scrutinized as to its "relevance" to contemporary architecture; for example, the teaching of history of "slave based" Greek and Roman architecture was questioned. While several other architectural schools gave in to the demand to eliminate the teaching of history, or at least to make it optional, McGill's School to its credit stood firm on the issue of mandatory education in history.

A greater awareness of contemporary social issues, however, was not neglected by Bland and led to the establishment of the graduate Minimum Cost Housing program chaired by Alvaro Ortega (B.Arch.'44), a Colombian architect who was on a three year leave (later extended to four) from his post as Interregional Advisor to the Center for Human Settlements of the United Nations. Funded by a C.M.H.C. grant, graduate students were enabled to study and research means to alleviate the overwhelming housing conditions of Third World countries. A series of publications by Ortega and his students, such as *The Problem Is*, *The Ecol Operation: Ecology + Building + Common Sense*, *Stop the Five Gallon Flush and Use it again*, *Sam*, received wide circulation and ensured the continuation of this program beyond the initial years of C.M.H.C funding. Eventually this program evolved into the Centre for Minimum Cost Housing where graduate students participate in funded field research while completing their studies under the guidance of Witold Rybczynski (B.Arch.'66, M.Arch.'72) and Vikram Bhatt (M.Arch.'75), both graduates of this program.

Another course addressing housing issues of the underprivileged, was the Community Design Workshop initiated by Joseph Baker who joined the staff in 1968, after having been a visiting professor the year before. Trained at the School of Architecture of Victoria University in Manchester (the school established by Capper) and with architectural experience gained in Toronto and Montreal, Baker first taught Design in fifth year, and later introduced Community Design Workshop, an optional course for fifth and sixth year students. Based on the model of the legal and medical clinics established in low-income communities, the aim of these workshops was to provide architectural services to community groups, to demonstrate to students the political, administrative and financial constraints imposed upon a real project. Field offices with four to five students each were opened in Griffintown, Mile End, Verdun, Pointe St. Charles and Milton Park, and the groups were expected to carry out the bulk of their work for the course in these offices. Funding for this experimental design teaching program was received from the Principal's Discretionary Fund, the McGill Centre for Learning and Development, the Parish of the Ascension of our Lord in Westmount, and the Westmount Rotary Club. After Baker was invited in 1975 to head the Laval School of Architecture in Quebec City, the program continued in a modified way. Warren Chalk, founding member of the Archigram Group, joined the staff as a visiting Professor in 1970 and replaced the author while on sabbatical leave; he conducted another fifth year design studio which reflected Archigram's tenets by exploring the potentials of

technology applied to a futuristic architecture. He returned to the A.A. School of Architecture in 1973.

In 1970 Bland appointed Roy LeMoynes (B.Arch. '51) Auxiliary Professor, to teach Professional Practice and Specifications. A practising architect with a wealth of experience in running an architectural office, LeMoynes also served many years on the examination board of the architectural association and was an authority on the laws governing professional practice. His lectures were informative, concise and illustrated with numerous case studies.

After Spence-Sales retired, the post graduate planning program was reorganized by David Farley (B.Arch.'59). Farley had graduated in Urban Design and Town Planning from the Graduate School of Design of Harvard University and after practising and teaching in New York and Boston, was invited to return to Montreal to establish an accredited program in Urban Planning at McGill.

The last few years of Bland's tenure involved the transition from a six year course with year-end exams to a post-CEGEP eight term course (representing only four years) and based on a new system with "course credit promotion" of students at the end of each term.

## **Conclusion**

John Bland's tenure as Director of the School lasted 31 years and throughout this period he occupied a preeminent position in Canadian architectural education. In fact, many of his students became heads of other Schools of Architecture, or architecture related faculties and departments not only in Canada, but also in the United States, England, Norway, Israel, Colombia and India. And many more were teachers at numerous universities throughout the world.

The orientation of the school during Bland's tenure could best be described as having been based on the modern movement's teaching of rationalism and functionalism, but without resorting to extreme doctrinaire positions. Perhaps one of Bland's most significant attributes was the ability to attract teachers to the School who were singularly capable, whether architects, historians or artists. A second equally important attribute was giving to his staff the freedom to teach what they believed in which of course, resulted in "dedicated" teaching.

In a paper delivered at a meeting of the Ontario Association of Architects (February, 1964), Bland confirmed that at McGill the "members of the architecture staff have been chosen for what they can offer the students in their own expert ways while following a briefly stated curriculum." At this meeting, he also expressed his disapproval of a "chorus line staff" all teaching the same architectural ideology since he felt that "students gain from lively diversity of opinion and thereby can more easily develop their own point of view." But more important, he feared that with the chorus line" approach the spectre of the whole staff getting out of date at one time was far more likely than with a diversified staff. In fact, Bland witnessed such an occurrence when he was a student of Traquair, Nobbs, and Turner.

During his tenure, Bland was also actively involved in the practice of architecture. The partnership Rother/Bland/Trudeau won first prize in a national competition for the design of the Ottawa City Hall (1957-59), and was responsible for the design of several large developments including the Jeanne Mance Housing Development in Montreal (1957-58) and the New Town of Port Cartier, Quebec (1958-59). After the death of Vincent Rother and the retirement of Charles Trudeau, Bland in subsequent years and under new partnerships with Roy LeMoynes (B.Arch.'51) and Anthony Shine (B.Arch.'53), and at various times with Gordon Edwards (B.Arch.'54) and Michel Lacroix (B.Arch.'63), all former students of his, designed major works such as McGill's Chancellor Day Hall (~1965), the Labyrinth for Expo '67, the Library for the University of Windsor (1970), and Pollock Hall of the McGill Schulich School of Music (1973).

Bland served on the Council of the Province of Quebec Association of Architects from 1942 to 1954 and as President in 1953; he was a member of the Council of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada from 1950 to 1954. He was elected to the R.A.I.C. College of Fellows in 1954 and to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in 1967. John Bland also served on several commissions appointed to safeguard the historical and cultural heritage of Canada, such as the Jacques Viger Commission of the City of Montreal, and was appointed a Member of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Heritage of Quebec.

Bland is the co-author of several books on Architectural History: *Housing and Community Planning* (1944), *University Housing in Canada* (1966, co-authored with Norbert Schoenauer), and *Three Centuries of Architecture in Canada* (1971, co-authored with Pierre Mayrand). Bland contributed numerous articles in professional journals and co-authored several exemplary planning reports on Canadian cities, years before planning legislation was introduced.

Honours accorded to Professor Bland include the *Medaille de Merite de l'A.A.P.Q.* (1971), a Massey Medal for the Ottawa City Hall, an Honorary Doctor of Science degree from Carleton University (1975), and the R.A.I.C. Gold Medal (1985).

In 1953, Bland was appointed to the Macdonald Chair in Architecture, a position he occupied until his retirement, and has been since 1979 Emeritus Professor. At present, he is the Honorary Curator of the Canadian Architecture Collection at McGill and, in the tradition of his predecessors, assembles new material for the expansion of the archives that are housed in the Nobbs Room of the University Library. The archives are made available to historians and researchers which resulted in several recent publications. Thus Bland's commitment is not only to safeguard an invaluable trust, but also to disseminate awareness and appreciation of Canada's building heritage. He continues to lecture in History of Canadian Architecture at the School of Architecture at McGill which he imbued over the years with a standard of excellence in architectural education that serves as a model to his successors.