

CHAPTER ONE

The Founding of the Mount Royal Club in 1899 and its Position within Montreal's Cultural and Social Milieu

In 1899, the year the Mount Royal Club was founded, Montreal was at the apex of its power and influence. It was a time of unparalleled prosperity and exponential growth resulting from the city's privileged geographical location and the spread of industry, railroads and emerging steamship transportation.¹ By 1905 the city was referred to as "the chief city – principal seaport and the financial, social and commercial capital of the Dominion of Canada."² The English and Scottish minority of Montreal dominated the economic life of the city and it was they who profited most from this "unbridled capitalism."³ In particular, the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway at the west coast of Canada in 1885 and its positioning of the company's eastern terminus in Montreal, brought wealth and prosperity to the city.⁴ This powerful corporation worked in tandem with the Bank of Montreal: "symbolically, in 1885, it was the bank's principal shareholder, vice-president and soon-to-be president, Donald Smith (later to become Lord Strathcona), who hammered in the last spike on the rails of Canada's first

¹ Paul-André Linteau. "Factors in the Development of Montreal" in *Montreal Metropolis 1880-1930*, Isabelle Gournay and France Vanlaethem eds. (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1998), 28.

² Frederick George, *Montreal: The Grand Union Hotel* (Montreal: The Benallack Lithographing Printing Co., 1905), 2.

³ Francois Rémillard, *Mansions of the Golden Square Mile: Montreal 1850-1930* (Montreal: Meridian Press, 1987), 20.

⁴ The period between 1900 and the end of the Great War have been called "the halcyon days before income tax." Donald MacKay, *The Square Mile: Merchant Princes of Montreal* (Vancouver, London: Douglas & McIntyre, 1987), overleaf.

transcontinental railway.”⁵ Both these institutions were visible symbols of the financial domination of the English-speaking minority in the city.⁶ Several of the founding and charter members of the Mount Royal Club were executives with the CPR, the Bank of Montreal or both. For example, Lord Strathcona (1820-1914), one of the CPR’s founders and first president of the Mount Royal Club and Richard B. Angus (1831-1922), General Manger of the Bank in 1869 and Vice-President of the CPR in 1887 collaborated in the financing of the CPR line to the west coast.⁷ Other Mount Royal Club members who sat on the boards of the CPR and/or the Bank of Montreal were Senator George Drummond (1829-1922), Sir Edward Clouston (1849-1912) and Sir Vincent Meredith (1850-1929). This tight-knit group of bankers and industrialists had extensive connections throughout the business, social and cultural communities of Montreal, and it was the close association of this group within the Mount Royal Club, in other words, their social capital, that would influence the selection of McKim, Mead and White as architects of their new clubhouse.

Pierre Bourdieu defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintances and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively – owned capital, a ‘credential’ which enables them to credit, in various senses of the word.” The amount or volume of a person’s social capital will depend on

⁵ Sweeney, 35-36.

⁶ The Bank of Montreal at this time was involved in the financing of industrial activity in the country and the CPR was its most important investment.

⁷ Mackay, 122.

the size of his or her connections and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) that these connections possess. Naturally, the more capital invested in one's own social and professional network the higher the value.⁸

By the end of the nineteenth century, private men's clubs in North America were multiplying and the English institution of gentlemen's clubs was closely copied on this side of the Atlantic Ocean. In New York City, for example, it was assumed that no new club could be successful unless it patterned itself on the London clubs.⁹ The Reform Club in London founded in 1836 was one such example that served as a prototype for American institutions, both in its "particular set of manners and customs,"¹⁰ as well as in its palazzo-style architecture designed by Sir Charles Barry in 1837-1841.¹¹ Symbols of wealth and power with little or no ethnic diversity, these conservative, highly elitist and often misogynist institutions, became important fixtures within the lives of the members. They functioned as gathering places for the nation's elite, and were ostensibly established for the pleasure and entertainment of its membership. It was in these clubs, however, that unwritten, gentlemanly contacts were made and advice given and received by those who

⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital" trans. Richard Nice in *Soziale Ungleichheiten (Soziale Welt, Sonderheft 2)* Reinhard Kreckel, ed. (Göttingen: Otto Schartz & Co., 1983), 183-198. http://www.viet-studies.org/Bourdieu_capital.htm. (Accessed 8 January 2006.)

⁹ Membership in North American clubs consisted of a homogeneous class of leaders of business and industry comprised almost entirely of men of Anglo-Saxon heritage. These men presumably felt more at home in a British environment. Paul Porzelt, *The Metropolitan Club of New York* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications Inc. 1982), 1-2.

¹⁰ Porzelt, 2.

¹¹ Mary Anne Hunting, "The Reform Club in London: A 19th century collaboration – Architectural Design of Private Social Club." *Magazine Antiques*, June 1994. http://find.articles.com/p/articles/mi_m1026/15isn6_v145/ai_15516668-35k (accessed 10 March 2006.)

held the reins of political and economic power.¹² Clubs chose their members through an elaborate process of sponsorship and election, and membership in a good club served as an index of high social standing. The German sociologist, Max Weber, on a visit to America in the early nineteen thirties, observed that an affiliation with a distinguished club was essential above all else. “He who did not succeed in joining was no gentleman.”¹³ Members of private men’s clubs shared a common social capital. This was developed through their long-lasting connections within their own societal and business class since “clubs are often deliberately organized in order to concentrate social capital and to derive the full benefit of the membership: material profits, such as all the types of services accruing from useful relationships and symbolic profits such as those derived from association with a rare prestigious group.”¹⁴ Similarly in Montreal, as its wealth and power grew, and continued to be concentrated amongst an elite, connected through family, business and social relationships, the establishment of a private club in Montreal’s Square Mile seemed most appropriate. A private club situated close to many of their homes would also serve “to shield their private lives from the public gaze.”¹⁵

In his essay “The Rise of the Walled Cities,” Dennis Judd argues that contemporary gated communities created for a narrow subset of the urban population represent a separation between the private and public world, both physically and symbolically. He states that they are insulated environments composed of like-minded

¹² Nicholas King. Forward to *The Metropolitan Club of New York*, vii.

¹³ E. Digby Baltzel, *An American Business Aristocracy* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 374.

¹⁴ Michelle Petrusевич, “Social Capital Generators? A Case Study for the Industry Associations with the Vancouver New Media Cluster: Graduate Student Panel, 15 May 2003.” <http://www.utoronto.ca/isrn/documents/PetrusevichM%20Student%20paper.pdf>. (Accessed 8 January 2006.)

¹⁵ Stikeman, 15.

economically similar and committed residents who choose to live together in the same exclusive environment.¹⁶ While not obviously a walled city, Montreal's Square Mile was a homogeneous, exclusive district with precise boundaries: Atwater Avenue to the west, Bleury Street and Park Avenue to the east, Mount Royal Street to the north and the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks and de la Gauchetière Street to the south.¹⁷ Its main artery was Sherbrooke Street which for some time was often referred to as "the Fifth Avenue of Canada."¹⁸ This whole area measured roughly one square mile. The accumulation and concentration of wealth in Montreal was centered in this enclave and reflected the Anglo-Protestant's preminent position of wealth and power in the city. In *Montreal: Seaport and City*, Stephen Leacock refers to this *haute bourgeoisie* area by citing a McGill University professor who considered Montreal's Square Mile as having "an oppressive and plutocratic atmosphere."¹⁹

The idea that people's lives are shaped by their personal histories is closely linked to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus.²⁰ Briefly, habitus can be compared to a class subculture which produces a distinctive lifestyle and the upper-class English-speaking elite of Montreal during this time period can certainly be perceived in these terms. Bourdieu contends that a person's tastes are developed throughout one's lifetime of living

¹⁶ Dennis R. Judd, "The New Walled Cities" in *Spatial Practices: Critical Explorations in Social Spatial Theory*, eds. Helen Liggett and David C. Perry, 163 (London, New York, Delhi: Sage Publishing, 1995).

¹⁷ François Rémillard, *Mansions of the Golden Square Mile* (Montreal: Meridian Press, 1987), 21.

¹⁸ Charles W. Stokes, *Here and There in Montreal and the Island of Montreal* (Toronto: The Musson Book Company Limited, 1924), 23.

¹⁹ Stephen Leacock, *Montreal Seaport and City* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Limited, 1942), 229.

²⁰ Karen Robson. "Peer Alienation: Predictors of Childhood and Outcomes in Adulthood", Working Papers of the Institute for Social and Economic Research, Paper 203-21, Colchester University of Essex, August, 2003. <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/pubsworkpaps/pdf/2003-21.pdf>. (accessed 20 January 2006.)

within a special social stratum and that this generates specific sets of practices and establishes a “sense of place and out-of-place in a stratified social world.”²¹ It forms the basis of a person’s cultural competence and determines what appeals to him/her, and what is considered “tasteful.”²² In other words, a person’s habitus is a result of a long process of inculcation, beginning in early childhood that affects cultural and social formation. In the case of the dominant class, those attitudes and aptitudes which seem natural to its members are also naturally expected of them precisely because “they are the *culture* of that class.”²³ Therefore, not all social worlds are created equally nor are they available to everyone, despite’s one’s economic status or profession. Instead, your social status is based on your habitus: your personal history and life experience. Private clubs at the turn of the century had their own particular habitus. They were intimate places occupied largely by people who knew each other and came from the same socio-economic background. Anthony LeJeune states in *The Gentlemen’s Clubs of London* that private men’s clubs must always provide at least a sense of exclusivity. “A club, after all”, he states, “is a place where a man goes to be among his own kind.”²⁴

Historically, the upper classes have always intermarried, and the consequent personal interrelationships have proved crucial to maintaining social and financial power

²¹ Swartz, 106.

²² Elaine Cheasley, “*Handcrafting a National Industry: The Production and Patronage of Alexander Morton & Company’s Donegal Carpets*” (M.A. Thesis, Concordia University, Montreal, 1999), 8.

²³ Richard Harker, Cheleen Mahar and Chris Wilkes, eds. *An Introduction to the Work of Pierre Bourdieu* (New York: Martin’s Press, 1990), 87.

²⁴ Anthony Lejeune. *The Gentlemen’s Clubs of London* (New York: Mayflower Books, 1979), 19.

within a closed society.²⁵ Many of the members of the Mount Royal Club were related by marriage and these family alliances consolidated the social structure by limiting contact with groups outside the Square Mile's power and influence while "sustaining a dynasty and its landscape of privilege."²⁶ This privileged environment of business and social cohesion can be compared to the merchant-banking dynasties in the English class structure at the beginning of the twentieth century and the interests and forms of association and process of cultural assimilation that they enjoyed were similar to what was simultaneously occurring in Montreal's Square Mile.²⁷ H. Heward Stikeman states in *The Mount Royal Club 1899-1999* that "it was not surprising that within the Club's first year the founding members of the Club invited sixty-five of their like-minded friends to join their inner circle and become members and *without* ballot!" Like the founders, the membership represented wealth and power in the city and were closely allied by social, family and business connections. Among this group who joined without ballot were a son and two sons-in-law of R. B. Angus, a son of Senator George Drummond and two members of the Molson family, H. Hartland Molson and Dr. William A. Molson. The Club's lawyer, Charles S. Campbell and Dr. Francis J. Shepherd, Chief Surgeon and Professor of Anatomy and Head of Dermatology at the Montreal General Hospital were also elected by the same process. Amongst the friends and business associates who also

²⁵ Frederic Cople Jaher, ed. *The Rich, the Well Born and the Powerful: Elites and Upper Classes in History* (Urbana, Chicago & London: University of Illinois Press, c. 1973), 267.

²⁶ In his essay "Past Elites and Present Gentry: Neighbourhoods of Privilege in the Inner City." D. F. Ley states that examples of intermarriage between Montreal's Square Mile elite 'were legion' resulting in a segregated social area in which there was "social distancing between groups." Larry S. Bourne and David F. Ley, *The Changing Social Geography of Canadian Cities* (Montreal, Kingston, London & Buffalo: McGill-Queens University Press, 1993), 224.

²⁷ Michael Lisle-Williams, "Merchant Banking Dynasties in the English Class Structure: Ownership, Solidarity and Kinship in the City of London, 1850-1960" *British Journal of Sociology* XXXV no.1 (March, 1984): 333-334.

joined the Club within the first year were: David Morrice, father of Canadian artist James Wilson Morrice and head of what would become Dominion Textile, Alfred Baumgarten owner of the St. Lawrence Sugar Refining Company, Sir William MacDonald, the tobacco millionaire and one of McGill's great benefactors, and Thomas George Shaughnessy and Herbert Samuel Holt, both associated with the CPR.²⁸ It was this cultural hegemony and social cohesion, combined with economic power and political influence that characterized the founding and subsequently the character of the Mount Royal Club in its early years.

To retrace the steps: in March, 1899 twenty members of the St. James's Club located at the corner of Dorchester Boulevard and University Street elected to break away and form a new association. They believed that the St. James's Club membership had become too broadly inclusive for their tastes, and desired a new and more selective association, catering to members of similar cultural, business and social backgrounds and providing a more intimate atmosphere than that of this Club.²⁹ The decision to form a new club may also have been due in part to the fact that the majority of these men lived in opulent mansions in the Square Mile, and a club situated close by on Sherbrooke Street would have easy accessibility. In other words, they could walk to their club to enjoy an after-dinner cigar, a round of bridge and the camaraderie of the club membership, without venturing too far from home.

²⁸ Stikeman, 22, 80.

²⁹ Pierre Bisson "Le Club Mont Royal", in *Les Chemins de la Mémoire: Monuments et Sites Historiques du Québec* Tome 11 Paul Louis Martin & Jean Lavoie, directeurs, 100 (Québec: Les Publications Québec, c. 1990).

The founders of the Mount Royal Club were well-known figures in the business, social and cultural life of Montreal. All but two were either of English or Scottish descent: ten were born in Canada, four in England, five in Scotland and one in the United States.³⁰ Deeply implicated in the economic development of Montreal, their success in their own business careers resulted in their counsel being solicited by other national enterprises and consequently, they served on the boards of many of Canada's leading corporations. Integral also to the lives of the rich and powerful during this era was a spirit of *nobless oblige*. The majority of the founders used part of their wealth to found and foster many of Montreal's major cultural, educational and health institutions which were established by members of this social class through direct gifts and/or philanthropic organizations. For example, many of the original members supported McGill University with sizable donations and buildings, and were also generous in their support of health services ranging from Montreal's major hospitals including the Royal Victoria Hospital, the Montreal General Hospital and the Montreal Institution for the Insane, as well as the Red Cross of Canada, the St. John Ambulance Society and the Montreal Association for the Blind. They were also well-known patrons of the arts who actively supported the Art Association of Montreal (AAM; later the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts).

The three most illustrious founders were George Alexander Drummond (1829-1910), (fig. 2) Richard Bladworth Angus (fig. 3) and Donald Alexander Smith, 1st Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal. (fig.4) At the turn of the century George Drummond, industrialist, financier and senator, was an influential member of Montreal's business and social oligarchy and is described in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* published in

³⁰ Stikeman, 19, 21.

1998 as being one of the last remaining members of the financial elite that made Montreal a metropolis. Trained as a chemical engineer in Scotland, Drummond emigrated to Canada in 1854. John Redpath (1796-1869), whose second wife was Drummond's sister, invited him to Montreal as a technical manager for his refinery, Redpath Sugar on the Lachine Canal. Drummond soon became a partner with other members of the Redpath family and continued to work for the firm until 1876 when tariff changes forced it to close. After a two-year sabbatical abroad, he returned to Montreal in 1879 to establish and become president of the Canada Sugar Refining Company. In 1882 he became a director of the Bank of Montreal and from 1887-1896 served as its vice-president. He became defacto president from 1897 to 1904 while the official head, Lord Strathcona, was in London as Canada's High Commissioner. In 1905 Drummond became President, a position he maintained until his death in 1910. He sat on the boards and invested in companies closely linked to the Bank of Montreal: The Royal Trust Company, the CPR, The Mexican Light and Power Company, the Trinidad Electrical Company, the Demerara Electric Company, The Intercolonial Coal Mining Company, The Ogilvie Milling Company, the Canada Jute Company and the Labrador Company. Drummond also took a lively interest in politics and was a loyal supporter of Sir John A. MacDonald and Confederation. He was appointed to the Senate in 1885 and subsequently worked under Sir Wilfrid Laurier's Liberal administration, chairing for a time the Senate's Standing Committee on banking and commerce. Both Drummond and his second wife, Grace, a leader in the movement for women's rights, were actively involved in the cultural life of the city as well as in philanthropic work. Drummond served as president of the AAM from 1896-1899 and helped found the St. Margaret's Home for Incurables in 1894. He

was also an active member of the Citizen's League, which sought to improve the quality of life of Montreal citizens, and served as President of the Royal Edward Dispensary for Tuberculosis.³¹

The second founder, Richard Bladworth Angus was a prominent and respected financier in Montreal and one of the major promoters of the CPR. Born in Scotland in 1831, R.B. Angus came to Canada in 1857 and started his career as a junior clerk for the Bank of Montreal. By 1861 he had attained the position of general manager. In 1879 he resigned from the Bank of Montreal in order to become general manager of the St. Paul, Minnesota and Manitoba Railway which had been bought by Donald Smith (later Lord Strathcona), George Stephen and two other financiers. It was the success of this enterprise that established the Angus' fortune. In 1880 he became a member of the syndicate formed for the construction of the CPR to the west coast and in 1910 he was appointed president of the Bank of Montreal succeeding George A. Drummond. He held this position until his retirement from the bank in 1913.

Angus' business interests were far-reaching and he was a director of several companies in Quebec including the CPR, the Canada North West Land Co. Ltd., Laurentide Pulp, the Dominion Coal Company, The London and Lancashire Life Assurance Company and the Royal Trust Company. Considered as one of the richest men in Montreal, Angus gave generously to the AAM and served as president in 1887. Other institutions that he supported both by financial contributions as well as serving on their

³¹ Michèle Brassard & Jean Hamelin, "George Alexander Drummond" *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* Vol. XIV (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 310-312; William H. Atherton, *Montreal from 1535 to 1914 Under British Rule 1760-1914* Vol. 2 (Montreal, Vancouver, Chicago, The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co, 1914), 304-310.

boards were McGill University, the Royal Victoria Hospital, The Montreal General Hospital, the Alexandra Contagious Diseases Hospital of Montreal and the Victorian Order of Nurses. In 1910 a knighthood was offered to him, but he declined the honour.³²

The third founder, Donald Alexander Smith, 1st Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal (fig. 4) was the “oldest and most revered of the Founders of the Mount Royal Club.”³³ Arriving in Montreal in 1838 from Abernathy, Scotland, Strathcona’s first employment was with the Hudson’s Bay Company as a clerk in its warehouse in Lachine. Much of his early career with the Hudson’s Bay Company was spent working in isolated trading posts in Quebec and in the wilderness of Canada’s northwest. He spent twenty-five years in Labrador and in 1852 was appointed Chief Trader. In 1869 Strathcona was promoted Chief Factor in charge of the Labrador district and his experience in the north led to a government mandate to negotiate with the Manitoban rebels led by Louis Riel during the Metis uprising in 1869. He would later become the first administrator of the new Province of Manitoba when it entered into Confederation in 1870. A year later he was elected to the Federal House of Commons as a conservative member for Selkirk, Manitoba, a seat he held until 1878. Strathcona returned to Montreal in 1869 to succeed Sir George Simpson as head of the Hudson Bay Company. He quickly adapted to urban life acquiring a home on Dorchester Street where he entertained lavishly.³⁴ In 1896 he

³² William Atherton, 7; George Maclean Rose, ed. *A Cyclopaedia of Canadian Biography being Chiefly Men of the Time* (Toronto: Rose Publishing Company, 1888), 465-466; Dr. C. W. Parker. *Who’s Who and Why. A Biographical Dictionary of Men and Women of Canada and Newfoundland* Vols. 6 and 7 (Vancouver: International Press, Limited, 1915), 299-300.

³³ Stikeman, 22.

³⁴ An entry in the personal diary of E. B. Greenshields, a member of the Mount Royal Club dated 9 November 1901 records an example of this lavish lifestyle. It reads: “Dined at Lord Strathcona’s and one hundred and fifty gentlemen attended. It was the King’s birthday.” “E. B. Greenshield Diary 1900-1911.” *Greenshields Archive* The McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montreal.

was appointed Canadian High Commissioner taking up a permanent residency in London, England. Despite living abroad, Strathcona always regarded Montreal as his home, returning yearly until his death in 1914.

Lord Strathcona was an outstanding figure in Canadian finance and was involved in a number of corporations as a shareholder, director or chairman. He also had wide-ranging business interests in the United States and was an extensive power broker; the guest book at his home “included the names of a small army of European royalty and North American politicians, judges, clerics and generals.”³⁵ He sat on many boards including the London and Lancashire Life Assurance Company, the New Brunswick Railway Company, the Dominion Coal Company and the Canadian Bankers’ Association. In 1897 he was elected president of the Bank of Montreal and in 1905 became the bank’s honorary president. During this period he also served as president of the Montreal Safety Deposit Company (later Montreal Trust) and the Royal Trust Company. Strathcona was a financier of the CPR, the St. Paul and Duluth Railway (the basis of the Great Northern Railway, the largest railroad monopoly in the United States) and the Burma Oil Company which would become British Petroleum. As a key figure in the 1885 completion of the CPR, he was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1886 and raised to the peerage in 1897 in recognition of this accomplishment.

Lord Strathcona was one of the most generous benefactors of the early twentieth century, donating or bequeathing in excess of \$7,500,000 particularly after the completion of the CPR. Together with his cousin, Lord Mount Stephen, they donated \$1,000,000 each in 1887 and purchased a site on Mount Royal for \$86,000 for the

³⁵ Ley, 223.

construction of the Royal Victoria Hospital, Montreal. Between 1897 and 1898, Strathcona also endowed the hospital with \$100,000 in Great Northern Railway securities. Lord Strathcona was an important benefactor to McGill University and served as its Chancellor in 1902; he was a particularly generous supporter of the McGill Faculty of Medicine contributing \$750,000 during his lifetime. He also gave funds for the higher education of women at McGill, donating \$300,000 for the construction of the Royal Victoria College for women at McGill. He engaged American architect, Bruce Price to design the building and subsequently established a \$1,000,000 endowment to ensure that the new building would not be a financial burden to the university. Early in 1900 Strathcona equipped a regiment “Strathcona Horse” at his own expense to fight in the Boer War.³⁶

In 1899, the Abbott House on the corner of Stanley and Sherbrooke streets considered “more in keeping with their ideas of club life” became the first home of the Mount Royal Club.³⁷ (fig.5) This large three-and-a-half storey brick and stone mansion had belonged to Sir John Abbott (1821-1893) who served as the CPR’s chief lawyer, a mayor of Montreal, Dean of Law at McGill University and Canada’s second Prime Minister serving a short term from 1891 to 1892.³⁸ Apart from his home on Sherbrooke Street, Sir John Abbott also owned a 300-acre country estate in Senneville, Quebec. He

³⁶ Alexander Reford, “Smith, Donald Alexander, 1st Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. XIV, 1998. 939-947; Mackay, 127; Atherton, 29-30. Please consult Appendix C for short biographies of the other seventeen founding members and guarantors.

³⁷ Stikeman, 43.

³⁸ Mackay, 122.

has been described as “a clever, discreet and persuasive power broker who had remained the seasoned advocate of English Quebec’s powerful community.”³⁹

The Abbott house was designed in 1884 by the Montreal architectural firm of Hutchison & Steel in the popular late-Victorian Queen Anne style. After Abbott’s death in 1892, it remained vacant until the winter of 1894-1895, when it became temporary home of Lord and Lady Aberdeen, Canada’s Governor-General at that time. The building’s colourful and textured exterior was comprised of red pressed brick with trimmings of olive green sandstone and red sandstone for the foundation and front steps. The picturesque exterior included several gables, two bay windows facing Sherbrooke Street, soaring chimneys and a large conservatory on the ground floor. According to Harry Stikeman, “it resembled more the cluttered, late-Victorian extravaganzas, in which most of the Mount Royal Club members lived, than the refined and timeless edifice commissioned after the fire of January 5, 1904.”⁴⁰

Several fires occurred at the new Club premises in the early years that required the building to undergo extensive renovation. The first took place after it had undergone remodeling to make the Abbott House more suitable for club use. Edward Maxwell (1867-1923), a prominent Montreal architect, had been commissioned to draw up plans and to oversee this work. After renovations were completed, another fire occurred on 26 August, 1902, causing damage to the building and its furnishings amounting to more than \$38,000. It was after this event that the Mount Royal Club first made contact with the

³⁹ Carman Miller, “Sir John Joseph Caldwell Abbott” *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography* Vol. X11, 1999, 4-9.

⁴⁰ Stikeman, 43.

American architectural firm, McKim, Mead and White who would eventually become the architects for the new clubhouse that would be built in 1904-1906. Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting of 2 September 1902 record: “It was resolved that an expert in club buildings be sent from New York for consultation regarding proposed alterations in the Club premises after recent fire and that a special committee be appointed to discuss and arrange the matter.”⁴¹

On 5 September another meeting was convened and the Minutes reveal that “Mr. W. R. Mead, Architect of New York would be consulted on Tuesday, 9 September to ask suggestions from him regarding building new dining and billiard rooms, also regarding the ladies entrance and that Honorable G.A. Drummond, Mr. Humble and other members of the committee would meet with Mr. Mead and go over the building with him.”⁴² At that time, Senator Drummond was vice-president of the Bank of Montreal, where McKim, Mead and White were at its Place d’Armes head office doing renovations and an enlargement to the bank’s banking hall and dome. William Mead was the partner overseeing this project and would have been well-known to Senator Drummond, R. B. Angus and James Ross, who formed the bank’s building committee.⁴³

By 9 September, Mead had viewed the premises of the Mount Royal Club and was instructed to submit plans; Edward Maxwell was to contract out for the repair of the roof damaged by the fire and was selected to act as local architect for the renovations that

⁴¹ Mount Royal Club Archive: Minute Book, 2 September, 1902, 57.

⁴² Ibid., 5 September, 1902.

⁴³ Stikeman, 48.

were to be carried out by the New York firm.⁴⁴ By 7 October the plans for rebuilding were approved and Maxwell was instructed to obtain the necessary tenders.⁴⁵

This new renovation was more ambitious than the previous one designed by Edward Maxwell which had been principally a matter of adapting the Abbot House to its changed status. The new design called for the removal of the conservatory and the construction of a large addition to the western side of the building. The final plans prepared by the Maxwell office also called for changes to the building's façade. These included new windows and an enhanced entrance, all of which were to be ornamented with carved stonework by the prominent Canadian sculptor, George W. Hill, a personal friend and collaborator on many of the Maxwells' building projects. The interior of the clubhouse would also be greatly reorganized with changes in the function and location of several rooms. Alternations were also made to the northeast corner of the building where a ladies' section with a separate dining room, cloak room and entrance from Stanley Street was installed.⁴⁶

A second fire occurred on 10 January, 1903. Although less severe than the previous one, it caused \$4,167.23 of damage and delayed the re-opening of the Club until 1 October, 1903. On the morning of 5 January, 1904 a third and more disastrous fire occurred, completely destroying the Club's premises. It was later believed that this fire was caused by faulty wiring, most probably in the telephone box despite it being certified as "safe" by an inspection done by The Scottish Union Insurance Company on 25

⁴⁴ Mount Royal Club Archive: Minute Book, 9 September, 1902, 158.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁴⁶ Stikeman, 49-50.

September 1903.⁴⁷ *The Gazette* of 6 January stated that the house manager and caretaker had discovered the fire in the ceiling of the furnace room at 6:40 a.m. but was unsuccessful in attempting to extinguish it with a chemical fluid extinguisher. According to one fireman “it was a quick fire, for inside of five minutes the whole building was in flames.” There were two fatalities: a fireman who was crushed by a large falling stone and a member, Colonel Liarder, secretary of the Club, who had jumped from a window on the second floor to escape the flames.⁴⁸ An inquest was held on 14 January, 1904 at the Montreal Morgue with the jury bringing in a verdict of “no crime,” despite two of the jurors refusing to sign the statement. Having examined the building after the fire, the two dissidents claimed that the stone which killed the fireman was “little better than pasted on.” There was no proven evidence, however, of any foul play or negligence on the part of any of the employees of the Club.⁴⁹

On the very day of the fire, members of The Mount Royal Club held an emergency meeting at the office of R. B. Angus in Place d’Armes to seek an immediate course of action for rebuilding.⁵⁰ By 7 April matters had progressed to the point that The Honorable George Drummond, Angus W. Hooper, Fayelle Brown, Charles Meredith and R. Mac D. Patterson had already discussed plans for a new clubhouse.⁵¹ Four days later another meeting was held and a new Building Committee was named, consisting of Alfred Baumgarten as Chairman, along with Charles Meredith and Sir. J. G.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 53.

⁴⁸ “Mount Royal Fire Cost Two Lives,” *The Gazette*, 6 January, 1904.

⁴⁹ “Throws Little Light on Cause of Fire,” *Montreal Star*, 14 January, 1904.

⁵⁰ Stikeman, 57.

⁵¹ Mount Royal Club Archive: Minute Book, 7 April, 1904, 200.

Shaughnessy.⁵² It was such decisive action on the part of the members, coupled with their commitment to the Mount Royal Club that would result in a new and outstanding building that would be completed in 1906.

⁵² Ibid., 11 April 1904, 201.