

CHAPTER TWO

The New McKim, Mead and White Building 1904-1906

After the destruction of the John Abbot house, a meeting of the Directors of the Mount Royal Club was convened at the Canadian Pacific Board Room in Windsor Station on 5 March, 1904. It was agreed that a clubhouse fully equipped in all respects inclusive of furnishings was to be built at a cost of approximately \$125,000.¹ A subsequent committee meeting was held about three weeks later to discuss the advisability of employing a New York architect, “but nothing definite was agreed upon.”² However, the architectural community in Montreal soon learned the Mount Royal Club was in the process of hiring for its new building and considering employing an American. On 8 April, 1904 Club president, Richard B. Angus, received a letter from the city of Montreal Treasurer, William Robb which stated: “our own architects should be considered, as unlike the renovation of the Bank of Montreal under way at the time, which entailed features which were new [in the city]..., the restoration of the clubhouse is quite within the compass of our home talent.” He then offered to introduce his own son-in-law, the architect, David Robertson Brown (1869-1946) who was also a friend and associate of Edward Maxwell, the earlier architect of some of the Abbott House renovations.³

On 11 April a new building committee was formed, comprised of Alfred Baumgarten, head of the St. Lawrence Sugar Refining Company, Charles Meredith, a

¹ Mount Royal Club Archive: Minute Book, 5 March, 1904, 188-189.

² Ibid., 28 March, 1904, 194.

³ Ibid., Correspondence File, 8 April, 1904.

son-in-law of R. B. Angus and founder of the brokerage firm of Charles Meredith and Company, and Sir J. G. Shaughnessy, President of the CPR from 1899 to 1918.

Baumgarten was Chair and the banker, James Reid Wilson, would be added to the Building Committee one month later.⁴ They were instructed to solicit plans of “a building suitable for the purpose required” from McKim, Mead and White of New York, as well as from Professor Percy Nobbs of McGill University in conjunction with David R. Brown, architects Samuel A. Finley and David J. Spence, and architects Alexander C. Hutchison and George W. Wood, all of Montreal.⁵ There is no evidence in the Minutes if any of these Montreal firms actually submitted designs, perhaps because they sensed that they had little chance of receiving the commission.⁶ On 24 May the Minute Book reveals that Baumgarten submitted sketch plans of the new clubhouse prepared by McKim, Mead and White and that “after some discussion the plans were adopted and the Building Committee was instructed to have specifications prepared and to ask for tenders from responsible builders with the least possible delay.”⁷

⁴ On Wilson’s death the Club wrote a letter of condolence to his wife. Dated 19 May 1914, the letter states in part: “Ten years ago, invited to assist in the rebuilding of the clubhouse Mr. Wilson, with characteristic energy, assumed a major portion of the work and the clubhouse today is evidence of his unselfish activity.” Mount Royal Club Archive: Minute Book, 18 May, 1914, 190.

⁵Mount Royal Club Archive: Minute Book 11 April, 1904, 201.

⁶ In 1893 architects in Ontario and Quebec had boycotted major competitions in protest against the awarding of prestigious commissions to American architects under what they deemed were unfair competition regulations. By 1895 architects in Montreal and Toronto were beginning to form associations in an effort to check the trade in American design by (1) advocating competitions for important buildings be closed to Americans, (2) the levying of a tax on foreign blueprints and (3) the introduction of laws which would bar unlicensed Americans from practicing in Canada without registering with local services. Kelly Crossman, *Architecture in Transition: From Art to Practice 1895-1906* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1987), 10, 24.

⁷ Mount Royal Club Archive: Minute Book 24 May 1904, 202.

The new building designed by Stanford White commenced construction in June, 1904, just five months after the razing of the Abbott House. The new clubhouse was completed in October, 1906. (fig.6) Seventy years later, on 15 January, 1975 the building was classified as a “monument historique” by the Québec Ministère des affaires culturelles “in recognition of the building’s superior design, as well as an acknowledgement of the importance of McKim, Mead and White to North American architecture.”⁸ The Mount Royal Club was the first building that McKim, Mead and White would completely design in Canada. In 1900-1905 the firm had renovated and created a large extension to the Bank of Montreal on Place d’Armes and in 1912-1913 designed the Royal Trust Company building situated to the left of the Bank of Montreal. (fig.7) In 1913 they completed the Winnipeg branch of the Bank of Montreal at the corner of Portage and Main Streets.⁹

The New York firm of McKim, Mead and White (fig.8) formed in 1879 has been referred to as the most dazzling architectural triumvirate in America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries;¹⁰ and they designed and built nearly one thousand buildings between the years 1879 and 1919. The firm’s oeuvre was broad and eclectic ranging from rambling picturesque country and summer homes, to buildings almost exclusively

⁸ Mount Royal Club Heritage Plaque installed on the building’s grounds by Heritage Montreal in 1992.

⁹ The Firm was without Stanford White after his premature death in 1906. However, the name McKim, Mead and White was maintained.

The influence of McKim, Mead and White in Canada can be observed in several Beaux-Arts buildings constructed at the beginning of the century. For example, Union Station in Ottawa (1909) and Toronto (1913-1927) are inspired by New York’s Pennsylvania Station (1905-1910); while Montreal’s Palais de Justice (1926), Bibliothèque Municipale (1914-1917) and the Montreal Stock Exchange building (now Centaur Theatre) (1904) were all prompted by the Low Library at Columbia University in New York City (c. 1895). Jean Claude Marsan, *Sauver Montréal: Chroniques d’architecture et d’urbanisme* (Montréal: Boréal, 1990), 53-54.

¹⁰ “*Buffalo as an Architectural Museum: McKim, Mead and White in Buffalo.*” <http://ah.bfn.org/a/archs/mck> (accessed 26 February, 2004).

developed from the architecture of the Renaissance. Such Neo-Renaissance buildings, noted for their classical good taste, functional, coherent planning and intelligent manipulation of space, were “restrained and discriminating rather than inventive,” and also adhered quite strictly to the tenets of the *École des Beaux-Arts* where McKim had received his architectural training.¹¹ Many of McKim, Mead and White’s buildings were monumental city works; of which Pennsylvania Station, New York (1905-1910), designed by Charles McKim, has been described as “not only the greatest railway station in the world, but also one of the greatest buildings of the twentieth century.”¹²

McKim, Mead and White were well connected to the ruling artistic, political, business, and literary spheres in New York City. Such social capital provided the firm with a broad client base that included the most powerful and socially prominent of that city. It is therefore not surprising that McKim, Mead and White were *the* club architects of New York City at the turn of the century, designing or providing alterations for several of the largest and most prestigious private men’s clubs. Amongst the finest were the Century Association (1891), the Harvard Club and the Metropolitan Club (both 1894) and the University Club of 1900.

The collaboration of Charles Follen McKim (1847-1909), William Rutherford Mead (1846-1928) and Stanford White (1853-1906) was established in 1879 when Stanford White replaced William Bigelow as a partner.¹³ Later William Symmes

¹¹ William Dudley Hunt, *Encyclopedia of American Architecture* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1980), 339.

¹² Steven Parissien, *Pennsylvania Station, New York, 1905-1910 Architects: McKim, Mead and White* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1996), unpaginated.

¹³ Bigelow had been a student at the *École des Beaux-Arts* and, although an excellent draftsman, appears to have had a limited role during this brief partnership. McKim had married Bigelow’s sister in 1874. The marriage ended in divorce in 1878 and Bigelow withdrew from the partnership a year later. Paul Placzek, *The Metropolitan Club of New York* (New York: Rizzoli, 1982), 140.

Richardson (1873-1931), who had worked closely with these architects, succeeded White at his death in 1906, and after the death of McKim in 1909, the architectural firm continued to function under its prestigious name until 1961.¹⁴ The quick success of McKim, Mead and White was a result of a combination of highly complementary but radically different temperaments. From the outset both McKim and White were the major designers, with White, who was a skilled artist and draftsman, given the responsibility for the ornamental or decorative details of a building. McKim was the more fastidious and particular of the three architects, endlessly studying details and proportions, while White worked at a much quicker pace, handling as many as fifteen commissions to McKim's one. Mead was the pragmatic partner in charge of the office staff, job management and construction supervision. His shrewd and quiet temperament and his timely criticism, often settled design differences between McKim and White.¹⁵ He is remembered today more for his managerial and diplomatic skills "than for his architectural genius."¹⁶

At the turn of the century historical symbolism appealed to the rich and powerful in North America, and the buildings constructed for this elite favoured the use of references from the Renaissance that could serve to legitimize social claims to political, economic and social dominance.¹⁷ One of the most frequent symbolic architectural associations at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries was the

¹⁴ Joseph A. Wilkes, Robert T. Packard, eds. *Encyclopedia of Architecture, Design, Engineering & Construction*, Vol. 3 (New York: Chichester: Brisbane: Toronto: Singapore, c. 1988-1990), 342.

¹⁵ Placzek, 141

¹⁶ Wilkes, 342.

¹⁷ Leland M. Roth. *McKim, Mead & White Architects 1890-1920* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 94.

Renaissance palazzo. Concurrent with the reinvention was a revival of the notion of “merchant prince,” originally applied to Quattrocento Florentine businessmen and bankers. This designation has also been employed to describe the wealthy of Montreal in the late nineteenth century who lived their lives in homes and private institutions designed to emulate Italian palazzi (or French chateau) with all their attendant association with culture, wealth and power.¹⁸

McKim, Mead and White adopted the Italian Renaissance palazzo as its preferred mode of design for the private clubs, often drawing on the clubhouses and mansions designed in the first half of the nineteenth century by English architect, Sir Charles Barry (1795-1860). By making a connection to the past either by abstracting or changing the traditional forms, or by using only fragments or incomplete sections of the Renaissance palazzo, the architects were able to design each building in such a way as to illustrate the profile of the club and its membership. This was accomplished without resorting to wholesale copying or pedantic imitation. For example, the Century Club in New York City designed in 1889-1891 (fig.9) which had many artists and literary figures in its membership, had an especially rich façade based on several variations of northern Italian palazzi, but recalling more specifically the Palazzo Canossa in Verona. The Century clubhouse with a façade, composed of richly textured terra cotta, a Palladian loggia and highly ornamented windows on the second level, was readily compared to the Metropolitan Club designed in 1891 and whose exterior was “more sumptuous and grave.” The more austere and imposing smooth marble façade of the Metropolitan Club was part of an enormous structure that resulted from the large budget allotted for its

¹⁸ Jean Rosenfeld. “A Noble House in the City: Domestic Architecture as Elite Signification in Late Nineteenth Century Hamilton” (PhD diss., University of Guelph, 2002), 29, 37.

design and construction; reflecting the membership of the city's most powerful and wealthiest.¹⁹

There were two principal reasons for hiring this prestigious New York firm: the first is that McKim, Mead and White were well-known to the directors of the Mount Royal Club, having done the renovations and additions to the Abbott House after the Club's first fire in 1902. Furthermore, architects from the firm were often in Montreal overseeing the work on the Bank of Montreal head office, and would have been in the city at the time of or shortly after the Mount Royal Club's final fire in 1904. Since the Club's beginnings, there has always been an overlapping of social and business interests between the board of the Bank of Montreal and the members of the Mount Royal Club. Such interweavings can explain why McKim, Mead and White were first employed on the Abbott House and why they were also asked to submit designs for the new clubhouse two years later. Secondly and more importantly, this would be the first private men's club built in Montreal and the 1904 commissioning of the New York firm would further enhance the status of this distinctly homogenous elite of Montreal. The practice of Canadians awarding commissions to American architects, particularly those from New York, was common at the turn of the century; and American technical and design expertise were considered superior to that within the Canadian architectural profession. Believed to be better trained, American architects were thought to be able to offer solutions new to Canada already tested at home, while at the same time providing a level of expertise that would result in the construction of a sturdy building created on time and

¹⁹ Roth, *McKim, Mead and White Architects*, 145-146.

within budget.²⁰ In addition, the type of society and economy then developing in the United States, particularly in New York City, was becoming increasingly attractive to an Anglo-Protestant upper class in Montreal “for whom American expertise had become the norm.”²¹ This, combined with the attraction of hiring architects whose competence had been established beyond a doubt, and who had completed commissions for several prominent private clubs, as well as private homes for many members of American society, would surely have determined the decision to hire McKim, Mead and White as their architects of their new clubhouse.²²

In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Pierre Bourdieu emphasizes the symbolic dimension of all social interaction and the continuance of class-based power and privilege over time. While Marxian theory claims that economic power is the ultimate power, and that all groups can be stratified according to the amount of economic capital they control, Bourdieu argues that there is another more pervasive and more potent form of power: symbolic power or capital. He claims that people accumulate symbolic capital in much the same way as they gain economic capital and there are similar returns. Different from social capital which entails social connections and networks, symbolic capital also involves a struggle for power and prestige resulting in a society divided between the dominant and the dominated. It necessitates the wielding of symbols, concepts and ideas in order that the dominant classes achieve and

²⁰ Isabelle Gournay, “Prestige and Professionalism: The Contribution of American Architects,” in *Montreal Metropolis 1880-1930*, eds. Isabelle Gournay and France Vanlaethem, 124 (Montreal: Stoddard Publishing, 1998).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 113.

²² *Ibid.*, 113.

maintain cultural domination.²³ Within this class system, one of the methods of accumulating symbolic capital is to “embark on the collection of goods attesting to the taste and distinction of their owner.”²⁴ In his analysis of Bourdieu’s concept of culture and power symbols, Gary Stevens argues that the integration of dominant classes, which in this case would be the members of the upper bourgeoisie of the Square Mile, is achieved by creating a commonality of culture. In other words, there is agreement amongst themselves on which symbols are important to perpetuate their position in the social order.²⁵

Architecture’s potential for symbolic capital has been in place since the Italian Renaissance when patrons consciously and successfully enhanced their symbolic capital by building monumental structures.²⁶ Bourdieu’s idea of symbolic capital can therefore be extended to the Mount Royal Club’s new building since the membership understood that it would further enhance the prestige of their association and the members’ symbolic capital. The hiring of the firm of McKim, Mead and White as the Club’s architects would indicate a “capital of consecration” (recognition and prestige) to the Club membership since their architectural designs were one of the most sought-after in North America at the turn of the century. As mentioned above, the members of the Mount Royal Club appreciated the firm’s reputation for creative and innovative designs of similar buildings in New York City and the architects would further extend their

²³ Stevens, 60.

²⁴ Derek Robbins, *The Work of Pierre Bourdieu: Recognizing Society* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991), 116.

²⁵ Stevens, 60.

²⁶ D. Evans, “Symbolic Exchange in the Field of Architectural Production”. *RMIT School of Architecture and Design*. <http://users.tce.rmit.edu.au/e03159/habitus/habitus.images/sh4a.jpg> (accessed 7 January, 2006).

“portfolio” of symbolic capital by their possession of what Bourdieu refers to as “the appropriate cultural goods.”

The Montreal firm Hutchison and Wood were chosen as the associate architects and Edward Maxwell was appointed consulting architect.²⁷ The construction firm of Lessard and Harris²⁸ were named as building contractors hired to do the work for the sum of \$117,000, excluding the plumbing and heating costs.²⁹ Hutchison and Wood and, obviously Edward Maxwell, were well-known to the members of the Mount Royal Club. Alexander Cooper Hutchison (1838-1922), who trained as a stone mason, had worked on the construction of Montreal’s Christ Church Cathedral (1857-1859) and the Parliament buildings in Ottawa during the period 1859-1866. By 1865 he was a practicing architect in Montreal and had become a favourite of the Anglo-Protestant upper bourgeoisie, designing their homes as well as their educational and cultural institutions such as the Redpath Library of McGill University (1880-1882) and the Erskine and American United church on Sherbrooke Street (1891-1894). Later in the early 1900s he founded a new firm with his son-in-law, George Wood and son, William Burnet Hutchison to form the architectural firm Hutchison and Wood.³⁰ Of significance to this study is that the Abbott House, chosen by the Club for its first clubhouse, was originally designed by the firm of

²⁷ William Maxwell is not mentioned being appointed along with his older brother Edward as consulting architect despite working together in partnership at that time. It is very probable that William may have exerted some influence on the design of the clubhouse since he had trained for just under two years in an atelier of the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris (1899-1901) and would have been in an excellent position to understand the Beaux-Arts aesthetic expressed by the chief architect, Stanford White. Bisson, 100-101

²⁸ Lessard and Harris would also become the contractors for the Montreal Art Association’s new building, designed by Edward Maxwell, erected on Sherbrooke Street in 1912.

²⁹ Stikeman, 67.

³⁰ France Vanlaethem. “Montreal Architects and the Challenge of Commissions,” in *Montreal Metropolis 1880-1930*, eds. Isabelle Gournay and France Vanlaethem, 78-79. (Montreal: Stoddard Publishing, 1998).

Hutchison and Steele, (an earlier partnership), and they had also built the home of Lord Strathcona one of the Club's founding and most prominent members.³¹

As stated earlier, Edward Maxwell had worked on the first renovations to the Abbott House clubhouse. Through his architectural practice he had developed a special relationship among families and businesses linked with the CPR and the Bank of Montreal, having designed homes for R. B. Angus, Duncan McIntyre, T. G. Shaughnessy, William Van Horne and James Ross.³² In 1894 Andrew Allan, another founder of the Club and a nephew of Sir Hugh Allan, also commissioned Edward Maxwell to design and build a house on the corner of Pine Avenue and Peel Street for his daughter, Isabella Brenda on her marriage to Sir Henry Vincent Meredith, also a founding member, who later became president of the Bank of Montreal.³³ By 1897 Maxwell had designed five more buildings for members of the Allan family.³⁴ Through their social and business connections with members of this privileged social class, both Maxwell and Hutchison enjoyed social capital. According to Pierre Bourdieu, social capital was a key element in the perpetuation of patterns of social dominance and subordination as it provided access to those who are in a position to assist or benefit a person in their pursuit of power and wealth.³⁵ The relationship between Maxwell and

³¹ Bisson, 101.

³² Robert Sweeny, "Building for Power: The Maxwell Practice and the Montreal Business Community," in *The Architecture of Edward and W. S. Maxwell* (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1991), 35.

³³ Mackay, 202.

³⁴ Sweeny, 35.

³⁵ Stevens, 62.

Hutchison and members of the Mount Royal Club, as well as other members of Montreal's powerful business community, was a form of social capital that helped to advance the careers of both these architects. Social capital was then converted into economic capital not available to other Canadian architects who were not connected to this segment of Montreal's population. This would support Bourdieu's theory that people can also use their social capital for personal gain and may prevent others, who do not have the same access to "friends in high places" from getting the same results. Social capital is an asset for those in power and can further promote inequality taking away the opportunity from those already less privileged.³⁶

Hutchison and Wood reported both to the Building Committee and to McKim, Mead and White. They estimated the *probable* cost of the new clubhouse at \$100,000 (excluding the main doors and stairs, decorations, light fixtures or kitchen or refrigerator equipment.)³⁷ As a further part of their responsibilities they proposed working drawings, issuing and receiving of tenders for the construction of the building, as well as supervising the overall project. After McKim, Mead and White's design for the new building was accepted by the Mount Royal Club, there were many revisions to the original plans: some were minor while others more extensive. Several design changes were instigated by Club members and it was the associate architect's responsibility to make the necessary adjustments to the architectural plans. One substantial modification made by the Building Committee was to lower the height of the main floor by two feet. This change obviated the removal of the mezzanine story for the ladies' washroom and

³⁶ Michelle Petrusевич, <http://www.utoronto.ca/lsm/petrusevich> (accessed 12 January 2005).

³⁷ Letter from Hutchison and Wood to Sir T. G. Shaughnessy, Montreal, 12 May 1904. New York Historical Society Archive: Collection PR 42: Box No. 396, Mount Royal Club Folder.

required a new arrangement of the stairs leading to the ladies' room. Another revision was the removal of rooms in the basement and the private stairs to the main floor for use of members, and a suggestion to make the entrance from the side street to the basement exclusively for the use of the resident female help.³⁸ Hutchison and Wood also proposed revisions such as containing the back stairs "as it would be almost absolutely necessary in our winter weather for the stairs to be under cover." They also recommended a longer and wider flue for the chimney shaft stating that "it gives the chimney about eight inches greater width than shown upon your plans, but we think it is very desirable to have this large flue."³⁹ A letter written by McKim, Mead and White to Robert M. Hill, Secretary of the Club on 13 August 1909, concerning dry-rot damage to the floor of the private dining room, reiterates the responsibilities of the Montreal architects. The letter states in part: "The superintendence of the construction of the building was, as you know, entirely in the hands of Messrs. Hutchison and Wood and while I would not care to imply any negligence on their part, it is of necessity to them and not to us that your committee must apply for an explanation and remedy."⁴⁰

Hutchison and Wood's responsibilities increased as the building progressed and, on 7 April 1905, they approached McKim, Mead and White for "extra compensation." They reasoned that when they made arrangements for the supervising the work of the new clubhouse they did not anticipate that so much time and labour would be spent not only on meetings and consultations, but also on the preparation of a new set of

³⁸ Ibid., 28 May, 1904.

³⁹ Ibid., 22 June, 1904

⁴⁰ Letter from McKim, Mead and White to Robert Hill, Secretary of the Mount Royal Club, 13 August, 1909. New York Historical Society Archive.

specifications for retendering work that was initially considered too expensive by the Building Committee.⁴¹ A letter of 21 May 1907 to McKim, Mead and White from Hutchison and Wood indicates that they ultimately received a 3% commission based on the total cost of the building.⁴²

As mentioned earlier, the Mount Royal Club was the first private men's club to have a building specially designed for their own use. Other clubs at that time were housed in private homes that the clubs had purchased. For example, the St. James Club, Montreal's oldest club founded in 1857 was installed in a large limestone and red brick Queen Anne-style house at Dorchester Boulevard and University Street. (fig.10) The Engineer's Club (1902) moved from meeting rooms in the Windsor Hotel to the Strathern House at the corner of Beaver Hall Hill and Dorchester in 1906, (fig.11) and the Mount Stephen Club inaugurated in 1925 (fig.12) had their headquarters in the baronial mansion on Drummond Street that had previously belonged to Lord Mount Stephen. The University Club of 1907 (fig.13) was also initially housed in a private home at the corner of Dorchester and St. Monique Streets before it commissioned a clubhouse in 1912 on Mansfield Street, immediately south of Sherbrooke Street and adjacent to McGill University.

The Engineers Club and the Mount Stephen Club were both designed by William T. Thomas (1829-1892), the architect of the St. George's Anglican Church at the corner of La Gauchetière and Peel Streets 1886-1899, and were done in the Italianate manner

⁴¹ Letter from Hutchison and Wood to McKim, Mead and White 7 April 1905. New York Historical Society Archives.

⁴² Ibid., 21 May 1907. There is no archival documents relating to the fees that McKim, Mead and White received for the design of the clubhouse.

favoured by Montreal's privileged bourgeoisie in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁴³ While the architects of the Mount Royal Club took only elements of the Italian Renaissance for their building's façade such as the two Ionic fluted pilasters that frame the central bay, both the Engineers and Mount Stephen clubs were more elaborate in their use of porticos, varied window treatments and large overhanging cornices. The richly decorated interiors of both these buildings were also a contrast to the more classic, restrained spaces of the Mount Royal Club. The University Club designed in the Arts and Crafts style by Percy Erskine Nobbs took its inspiration from the English Georgian terrace houses of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. While this building's design is dissimilar to the Beaux-Arts style of the Mount Royal Club, both buildings were more conservative in design than other clubhouses in Montreal during that period. At a time when North American eclectic architecture with its elaborate and sometimes excessive ornamentation was popular, it appears that both the clubs preferred a less flamboyant style.⁴⁴ The Arts and Crafts treatment of the interior of the University Club with its carved woodwork, Morris wallpaper and dark paneling, was also more subdued and restrained than the interiors of the Engineers and Mount Stephens Clubs.

One of the tenets of McKim, Mead and White's philosophy was the importance of the building's relationship to its urban environment through a dialogue with the street, both in the manner of their siting and the use of materials and ornamentation.⁴⁵ The

⁴³ Guy Pinard, "Le Club des Ingénieurs," in *Montréal, son histoire, son architecture*, Tome 4 (Montréal: Méridien, 1991), 109-110.

⁴⁴ Luc Noppen, "University Club de Montréal," in *Les Chemins de la Mémoire, Monuments et Sites Historiques du Québec*. Paul Louis Martin and Jean Lavoie, directeurs, 106 (Québec: Publications du Québec, c. 1990).

⁴⁵ Stanley C. Ramsey, *Masterworks of Architecture: McKim, Mead and White* (New York: Charles Scribners & Sons 1924), 14-15.

Mount Royal Club was therefore conceived in relation to its location and to the other buildings on Sherbrooke Street described in *The Unique Guide to Montreal* of 1905, as having the most beautiful homes in the city “where we find the mecca of style and where wealth is lavishly displayed.”⁴⁶ (fig.14) *The Canadian Architecture and Builder* in 1905 states: “The Mount Royal Club is now roofed in. The building which is designed by McKim, Mead and White, is of simple design, severe even to Spartan severity, but needless to say, detracts nothing from the dignity of the neighbourhood.”⁴⁷ In close proximity to the club were the homes of several club members: Sir William Van Horne’s home was on the north-east corner of Sherbrooke and Stanley Streets, Senator Louis Forget lived next door to the Club and Lord Atholstan resided directly across the street. (fig.15) The simplicity of the Mount Royal Club’s façade complimented the latter building which was designed in the more elaborate Beaux-Arts style. A few blocks south west at the corner of Dorchester Boulevard and Fort Street was the palatial home of Lord Strathcona, while just a few blocks east of the Mount Royal Club was the McGill University campus with all its attendant classically-inspired buildings. Royal Victoria College designed by Bruce Price and the palazzo-style McGill Students Union (now the McCord Museum) designed by Percy Nobbs in 1907, were situated slightly east of the McGill University campus. Other important buildings in the area included: the Ritz Carlton Hotel (1909) designed by American architects Warren and Wetmore, the AAM’s Beaux-Arts building by Edward Maxwell and erected in 1912, the Erskine and United

⁴⁶ Frederick George, *The Unique Guide to Montreal: The Grand Union Hotel* (Montreal: The Benallack Lithographing Publishing Company, 1905), 2.

⁴⁷ *The Canadian Architecture and Builder* 18 no. 10 (1905): 157. <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/cab> (accessed 29 June 2005).

Church (1891-1894) and the Church of the Messiah at the corner of Simpson and Sherbrooke, constructed at the end of the century. Together this micro-enclave provides a contained assemblage of the preferred architectural attitudes of Montreal's Anglo-Protestant elite.

The Mount Royal Club is a prime example of McKim, Mead and White's Beaux-Arts classicism and its expression of restrained elegance and discreet design. Its free standing and cubic shape reflects the palazzo prototype, as well as Stanford White's rejection of the more ornate elements of the French Beaux-Arts style. Carroll Meek's comment on contemporary Beaux-Arts style states: "The new standards were vague but stressed restraint, formality, good taste, correctness, the unexciting, the inconspicuous, and refinement" and is applicable to the Mount Royal Club with its sparer more modern aesthetic.⁴⁸ The absence of pediments, temple fronts, heavy columns or cornices is replaced by allusions to the classical orders and retains classicism's severity of scale and proportion. The Metropolitan Club in New York (fig.16) has been compared to the Mount Royal Club as both were designed by Stanford White and share a simplicity and surface treatment that is dependant almost entirely on symmetry, surface texture and simple relief and the suggestion of mass, reminiscent of the palazzo.

The Mount Royal Club is a three-storey building, symmetrically disposed with a central and transverse axis, and equal projections on the east and west sides. Its facade is fashioned entirely out of Deschambault limestone from the Saint-Marc-des-Carrières quarry in Quebec's lower St. Lawrence. The hard, almost refractory Quebec limestone

⁴⁸ Carroll Meeks, "Wright's Eastern-Seaboard Contemporaries: Creative Eclecticism in the United States around 1900," in *Acts of the Twentieth International Congress of the History of Art, Vol. 4: Problems of the 19th and 20th Centuries Studies in Western Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 64.

was an excellent stone to use on this type of building. *The Canadian Architecture and Builder* notes that the delicate little mouldings, broad plain surfaces, and slightly projecting pilasters and bands exhibit “the delightful grey stone of this material to perfection.”⁴⁹ The base is constructed of grey granite from Stanstead, Quebec. The Sherbrooke frontage is 23.7 meters in width by 34 meters in depth and 13 meters in height; the Stanley Street elevation dimensions are 10.5 meters by 3.6 meters while the elevation facing west measures 22.25 meters in depth by 3.65 meters in width in the front and 6.24 meters in the back.⁵⁰ The length of the building equals twice its height: a reference to classical proportions “that import a sense of stability and permanence to the structure.”⁵¹

The front façade is broken into five equal bays with the main section framed by two fluted pilasters crowned with Ionic capitals that rise to a continuous entablature and align with the top lintel of the windows. There is a granite staircase with granite side railings leading up to a sober entrance comprised of a large double-leaf seven-foot oak door supporting a clear leaded glass rectangular transom and decorated with carved discs set in square panels. Above the entrance is a small shallow stone balcony, of similar width with a balustrade supported on each end and on the top by small stone consoles. The main entranceway and the window over the balcony are framed by a simple

⁴⁹ “Montreal Notes, in the *Canadian Architecture and Builder* (18th July 1905), 109. In their June, 1906 issue this same journal states: “The buildings of the Mount Royal Club and of the McGill Student Union, both on Sherbrooke Street, are faithful to the Montreal limestone and both have sufficient breadth of surface to exhibit the unsurpassable delicacy of this great stone.” “Montreal Notes: in *Canadian Architecture and Builder* (June, 1906), 84.

⁵⁰ Guy Pinard, “Le club Mont-Royal.”, 116.

⁵¹ Donald Martin Reynolds, “Cast-Iron buildings and their Legacy and the Palazzo Style,” in *The Architecture of New York City: Histories and Views of Important Structures, Sites and Symbols* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1994), 140.

moulding that slightly protrudes. The overall classicism of the building's other facades reiterates that of the main design with only one principal difference at the east elevation on Stanley Street which has a much smaller staircase that functions as the women's entrance.

The rejection of any extraneous elements on the building's façades and its overall classicist severity and refinement clearly communicates and defines the Club's character in a manner similar to the exterior of the Metropolitan Club in New York, despite the difference in size. The Club's almost anonymous façade reinforces notions of class and privilege by its implication of a self-contained physical entity. Its comparatively restrained entranceway reinforces the transition from the public space of Sherbrooke Street to the private space of the Mount Royal Club. The main stairway's shallow projection of stairs, columns and balcony serves as a boundary of exclusion. (fig.17) The staircase is simple and efficient, without appearing particularly welcoming or restrictive. In comparison, the large side plinths, which are connected to the entrance door pilasters suggest a type of psychological barricade, like sentinel boxes. This spatial distinction is further symbolized by the fact that there is no overt indication of the building's function or proprietor and, in fact, to the passer-by, it could easily be a private residence as a private club. The small lawn and simple landscaping in front of the building further separates it from the street. Such anonymity announces to the public that these are exclusive precincts that are difficult to penetrate.

The elegance and refinement of the Club's exterior façade is carried through to the building's interior which is subdued and formal, dispelling any notions of grandeur or ostentation. Letters in the Mount Royal Club and New York Historical Society Archive

indicate that Georges A. Glaenzer, a Parisian-trained interior designer from New York City, was responsible for the interior decoration.⁵² Prior to this commission, he had been employed as the decorator of Frederick William Vanderbilt's mansion in Hyde Park, New York designed by Stanford White.⁵³ Such restrained use of ornamentation, where every detail has been carefully considered in relation to the whole, was in keeping with the austere, unadorned quality of American classicism in early twentieth century design. The layout of the interior echoes the plan of the exterior in its ordered, symmetrical and axial design – a fundamental feature of Beaux-Arts style which focused attention to the circulation and progression of people throughout the building.⁵⁴

Stained glass windows are a notable feature in the interior design of the clubhouse because of its otherwise highly reserved, decorative scheme.⁵⁵ A combination of opaque coloured glass and painted glass where the light and shade are painted on the glass, they add colour and a festive element. The eighteen windows depict heraldic crests of the City of Montreal, the Province, the Club Crest with its gold and maroon glass detailing the Club's name and founding date painted on its oval centre, (fig.18), as well as those with floral designs. The most impressive windows are located on the main floor at

⁵² Mount Royal Club Archive. Minute Book 29 August 1905,220; New York Historical Archive: Letter from James R. Wilson to McKim, Mead and White 1 December 1905.

⁵³ Stikeman, 73.

⁵⁴ Rosalind Peppal, "Beaux-Arts Design in North America," in *Building a Beaux-Arts Museum* (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1986), 87.

⁵⁵ Stikeman, 72. Classical architecture does not as a rule employ stained glass windows. The American Renaissance (1876-1917) was the era that reconciled classicism to stained glass. Polzelt, 67.

the rear of the building (fig.19) and in the main dining rooms. Although their designer is unknown, it is probable that they were crafted in the United States. A letter from Hutchison and Wood to McKim, Mead and White dated 9 May, 1905 states:

We would like to get your ideas as to the kind of glass to be put in this window. You have a blue print of the rear elevation showing that it is divided into three lights with two cast iron mullions. No wood work will be made for this window until the style of leaded glass is arranged for. We think from the conversation we have had with Mr. Angus that he would like a pretty good piece of work with figures introduced into the panels. We would like to get your suggestions in regard to this at your earliest convenience, and to know whether you will make the design for the leaded glass or if you would ask designs from Messrs. Cotier or Tiffany, or should we send to some of the arts in London for designs.⁵⁶

The Daily Star indicates as well that the windows were made in the United States when it reported on the gala opening of the Club stating that “American glaziers supplied the surprising harmony of translucent lights for the different windows.”⁵⁷

The front set of doors of the clubhouse leads into a small vestibule with two small “blind guard windows” at the left and right.⁵⁸ One then enters the principal hall which is framed on either side of the entrance by two sandstone pillars crowned with Ionic capitals. The billiard and morning rooms stood to the right of the hall while the main dining room and morning or coffee rooms are directly opposite. The billiard room, now named the Honourable Hartland de M. Molson Room, is notable for its stained glass windows decorated with sporting motifs of lacrosse, stag and fox-hunting, while the main

⁵⁶ McKim, Mead and White Archive. New York Historical Society. Letter from Hutchison & Wood to McKim, Mead and White, 9 May, 1905.

⁵⁷ “The Mount Royal Club Formally Opened Last Night – A Brilliant Gathering of Members and Friends” *The Daily Star*, 13 December, 1906, 5.

⁵⁸ This interesting architectural feature recalls the Quattrocento Florentine palazzo which served as a fortress as well as a family dwelling. These had guard rooms on either side of an entrance which prevented intruders from hiding or crouching below a single window to escape detection. Porzelt, 57.

dining room's windows feature scrolls, foliage and fanciful centaur-styled winged creatures which border the top of the windows. The sporting motifs may have related to the outdoor activities of the members, particularly the fox hunting motifs, since some members were active in the Montreal Hunt Club. Located in the south-western corner facing Sherbrooke Street was the club or smoking room, now the Honourable George Alexander Drummond Lounge, which, like the billiard and dining room is wood paneled.⁵⁹ Opposite the door to the lounge and off the central hall is the main staircase leading to the second floor, which on the landing has a large arched stained glass window depicting flowers and vines in its outer rim with a stylized flower in its center. (fig. 20)

At the hall's extreme end is a small, open room slightly elevated and framed by two columns similar to those framing the entranceway. This area, which is the most striking feature of the main floor, exemplifies the spatial hierarchy that prevailed in private men's clubs at the turn century. The room functioned as the "Strangers Room", containing a fireplace and leaded windows displaying heraldic motifs, the Club's crest, and the rose, thistle, maple leaf and beaver; early Canadian and Montreal symbols.⁶⁰ At the Metropolitan Club in New York, the Strangers Room enabled members to entertain certain guests and in its constitution, a "stranger" was defined as a person not residing within fifty miles of New York and not having an office in the city. He was permitted to use the facilities for a period of one week but only the Stranger's wing. Residents of New York could be invited for lunch or dinner in the Strangers' Dining Room, but not

⁵⁹ McKim, Mead and White had originally suggested that these rooms be paneled in grey oak. The Building Committee rejected this treatment and Hutchison and Wood were instructed to ask for estimates for "the paneling from floor to ceiling in oak for the dining and billiard room and the paneling of the smoking room with Italian walnut eight feet high." Mount Royal Club Archive: Minute Book, 14 March 1905, 218.

⁶⁰ Stikeman, 70.

more than once every seven days.⁶¹ There could have been a similar arrangement at the Mount Royal Club that permitted visits by non-members (other than guests or wives and daughters of members); however, there is no archival documentation that defines a guest in a manner equivalent to that of the Metropolitan Club to support this hypothesis.

Nevertheless, while members enjoyed full access to all spaces of the clubhouse, guests and ladies were more restricted. In this respect North American clubs copied the manners and customs of the British clubs and set restrictions to limit how many or what kind of guests a member might invite.⁶² The Mount Royal Club was no exception as

Articles Thirteen and Fourteen of the Club's Constitution state:

A member may bring a friend to breakfast, lunch or dinner and admit them when so introduced into the smoking room and reading room, but not to the billiard and card rooms providing always that such friend not be introduced more than once during the same period of two weeks and that not more than eight persons be permitted under this rule upon one day except with the consent of the committee. No person other than a member shall under the foregoing rule be admitted to the Club at any time except for the purpose of viewing the house, then only when accompanied by a member.⁶³

The rules and customs outlined in the Club's Constitution restricted movement within the clubhouse's clearly demarcated private and "semi-private" spaces and, at the same time, demonstrated the exclusive barriers that existed between those who enjoyed full membership in the Club and those who did not. The private spaces within the Club were the members' exclusive territory. The card and billiard rooms for example, provided a congenial setting where members could spend their leisure time among friends in

⁶¹ Polzelt, 130.

⁶² Ibid., 130.

⁶³ Mount Royal Club Archive: Club Constitution, 1899, Articles Thirteen and Fourteen.

“homogeneous harmony,”⁶⁴ secure in the knowledge that non-members were not permitted. This territorial behaviour can be defined as a “self-other” boundary regulating mechanism involving the demarcation of a space as private, owned by a person or group who establish rules about what can occur in this space. It was a social behaviour that served not only as a means of attaining privacy, but also as a means of stabilizing relationships.⁶⁵

Kevin Hetherington argues in *Expressions of Identity, Space, Performance, Politics* that making a space for oneself – a turf – is a major source of identity within identity politics.⁶⁶ The Mount Royal Club therefore represented a place of one’s own for like-minded gentlemen where issues of inclusion and exclusion could be determined by the established membership. This private space also reflects Pierre Bourdieu’s theories concerning individuals who share equivalent positions in the form of cultural, economic and social capital, and who also share comparable conditions of class condition.⁶⁷ By barring non-members from certain spaces within the Club, members were able to define themselves in opposition to them, thereby making use of their private space within the Club as a form of social distinction as well as social location.

The original plans of the second floor indicate that a reading room, two card rooms and a second billiard room were situated at the front of the building. A central

⁶⁴ Polzelt, 2.

⁶⁵ Jon Lang, “Privacy, Territoriality and Personal Space-Proxemic Theory,” in *Creating Architectural Theory. The Role of the Behavioral Sciences in Environmental Design* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1987), 149.

⁶⁶ Kevin Hetherington, *Expressions of Identity: Space, Performance, Politics* (London: Sage, 1998), 18.

⁶⁷ Swartz, 154, 162.

corridor runs north and south with two dining rooms of different sizes facing each other. Of particular interest were the ladies' quarters at the back of the building.⁶⁸ This area comprised a large room with a fireplace, a parlour, a cloak room and a service area with a staircase to the kitchen below.⁶⁹

The Mount Royal Club was one of the last clubs in Canada to bar women, and remained a solid male bastion until 1990 when, after considerable deliberation, women were finally welcomed as members. In 1938 women were admitted but only as "lady associates." Alan Hustak states in a 1999 article on the Mount Royal Club in *The Montreal Gazette*: "It is not hard to believe that only a decade ago some club members opposed admitting women because the high pitch of their voices would interfere with gentlemanly conversations."⁷⁰

Women belonging to the family of a Club member and residing in his house could have the privilege of lunching in the clubhouse; however, there were certain restrictions. The following entry dated 5 November 1901 in the Minute Book outlines the Club's policy towards women: "The Committee has under consideration the limitation of the use of the Club by ladies and, until further notice, shall be limited to twelve and not more than twenty shall be allowed to dine or take luncheon on one day."⁷¹ Following complaints from members that women were not being kept to their special quarters, a meeting was held of the Executive Committee on 19 November 1903

⁶⁸ The American clubs, while adopting many of the English customs, often found a compromise to excluding women by building separate wings for them.

⁶⁹ Stikeman, 71.

⁷⁰ Alan Hustak, "Club was Tough to Crack." *The Montreal Gazette* 16 October, 1999.

⁷¹ Mount Royal Club Archive: Minute Book, 5 November 1901, 150-151.

and the following resolution was passed: “Ladies are not permitted in any of the rooms of the Club other than those set apart for their use. But when accompanied by a member they may be admitted to view the house on any Tuesday or Thursday between the hours of eleven or twelve in the afternoon.”⁷²

As to be expected, there was a further hierarchal spatial order in the clubhouse between personnel working for the Club and its members. This desire to maintain social distance was reflected in the layout of the basement where all the major service areas were situated. The “upstairs-downstairs” hierarchy in the clubhouse’s layout strictly adhered to the “served and servant pattern.”⁷³ The large tiled kitchen, boiler room, coal cellar, cold room, head chef’s pantry and the lavatories for the personnel, were all situated “downstairs.” The corridor, which traverses the main section of the basement, accessed the wine cellar, storeroom and linen room situated on the east side and the dining room for personnel and a room used by the chef and the head of the servants on the west side of the building. At the front of the building situated off the main corridor were three bedrooms, a salon, a dining room and a store room. The bedrooms were reserved for the Club Manager and for the personnel who stayed the night at the Club. A second set of stairs lead to the Secretary’s office on the ground floor, creating a middle space between the “upstairs and downstairs.”⁷⁴

In designing the Mount Royal Club, McKim, Mead and White had to fit the needs and aspirations of the City’s most powerful elite. The new building was described on its

⁷² Ibid., 9 November 1903, 183.

⁷³ Stikeman, 71.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 71.

official opening as “a magnificent building, complete in every detail with every modern convenience, luxurious in its appointments, and planned to cater to the needs and wants of the most fastidious member.”⁷⁵ The article continues to say: “In a sense it has no rival in Montreal or in Canada, so thoroughly unique is it in its architectural lines and its interior appointments.” The Mount Royal Club, in the heart of Montreal’s Square Mile, with its simple and classic lines, has been a timeless and dignified addition to Sherbrooke Street since its completion in 1906 and serves as a testament both to the New York architects and to the ambitions and capital of the Club membership.

⁷⁵ *The Daily Star*, 13 December, 1906, 6.