

Abstract

For forty years from 1948 to 1988 S. Arthur Townend practised architecture in Sudbury, Ontario, during a period of change and growth. His artistic architectural imagination was formed, influenced and developed first by his upbringing and early education in Jamaica, secondly by the rigorous architectural training at McGill University in Montreal, and thirdly by the apprenticeship and practice of architecture in Sudbury. After World War II, with a new sense of permanence and optimism brought about by increased prosperity, Sudbury experienced great change and renewal and there were many opportunities for architects to design different kinds of buildings. Inspired by the topography, light and space of Northeastern Ontario, Townend introduced the latest building styles and techniques, bringing to Sudbury a new cosmopolitan vision. Townend specialised in the design of hospitals and health care facilities, but also, with his partners, he designed churches and public buildings. His principles and vision are best demonstrated in his houses, which are highly prized by their owners. Here can be appreciated the concepts that were important to him as an architect: landscape, light and space; keeping things simple and not necessarily doing them exactly the way everyone else did; visualising the whole thing; images, memory and imagination, and especially to be an artist who built as well as he could, designing solid, convenient and beautiful buildings. Since so little has been written on Sudbury architecture, this study is a pioneering effort.

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Figures 2 and 3: Canadian Architecture Collection, Blackader-Lauterman Library, McGill University

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Figures 22, 25, 38, 39, 40: the author

Introduction

During the second half of the twentieth century the architecture of S. Arthur Townend had a significant impact on the human environment of Sudbury, and other parts of Northeastern Ontario. This study presents an opportunity for discussing how human interpretations and values can be expressed in buildings. Architecture at its best epitomises "Humanism" since by means of the creative architectural imagination the architect transforms the world we live in and prepares it for human use.

In spite of numerous modern theories of architecture, in order to assess how well an architect has created a human world, no test is better than the tried and true trinity of Vitruvius who insisted that buildings must be durable, convenient and beautiful. I wish to demonstrate that S. Arthur Townend, by means of his artistic architectural imagination, designed buildings of "firmness, commodity and delight" to provide a human world for the enjoyment, use and benefit of people of Sudbury in Northern Ontario.

Since this dissertation discusses architecture, it may be appropriate to think of the organisation of the material as a metaphor for the construction of a building. The first two chapters can be thought of as the "foundation", that is, the concepts that were important, and the background, education and training that were essential to the development of Townend's artistic architectural imagination. The third chapter, "environment and site", examines the history and geography of the area where Townend applied the theories he had learned to specific architectural problems in Sudbury. The fourth and fifth chapters are the "building": that is, the body of work made up of the hospitals, churches, public buildings and houses.

The first chapter (the “concept”, the first part of “foundation”) is a more philosophical section, which examines *how* different concepts, ideas and values influenced Townend’s attitude toward design and building to provide a successful human environment. By looking at concepts that impressed him we find clues to the working of Townend’s architectural imagination. The concepts that Townend suggested were important to his working as an architect were: landscape, light and space; building “as well as you can”; visualising the “whole thing”; images, memory and imagination; and, above all, to be an artist.

The second chapter (the second part of the “foundation”) attempts to answer the question, *who* is Townend the architect? This is a biographical section showing how his artistic architectural imagination was developed, first, by his upbringing and education in Jamaica, and, secondly, with more emphasis on the influence of the teachers and the curriculum at the McGill School of Architecture.

In the third chapter (“environment and site”) the emphasis is on *why* and *when* Townend decided to chose Sudbury. This historical and geographical section deals with the realities of the city Townend found at the end of the World War II. His arrival coincided with changes in the aspirations and attitudes of Sudburians, which, in turn, produced a desire for changes in the built environment and in planning for the future. The time and place offered him great opportunities to practise and develop his architectural imagination with the practical experience of constructing buildings in tune with the period.

The last two chapters (the “building”) is a discussion of *what*, after starting his own firm in 1964, he designed and built. By the time Townend started his own firm, he

had served his apprenticeship and knew the geography and the climate, what worked and what did not. These two chapters are partly an architectural history of his buildings, but also look at Townend's work more from the point of view of interpretation and values (the main themes of the Interdisciplinary MA in Humanities.) The buildings are experienced directly in order to find out what's there, and thus see whether they demonstrate Townend's concern with human values, solid construction, practical and convenient layout, and how, using the concepts and ideas that were important to him (discussed in Chapter I), he solved problems of design, location, climate, materials, in both complex projects, like large public buildings (in Chapter IV), and in more simple undertakings like private houses (in Chapter V).

Chapter I - Concept: The Architectural Imagination

From the time after World War II when Townend began his career in architecture until his retirement in 1988, there were many different theories of modern architecture. During that period, architectural theory was first dominated by formalism and functionalism of the Modernist ideal (“form follows function”); then, as Modernism fell into disfavour in the mid 1960s, architectural theory was influenced by developments in many other disciplines from which post-modernism evolved, such as semiotics and structuralism in literature, aesthetics theory, communication theory, phenomenology, and “critical theory that evaluates the built world and its relationships to the society it serves.”¹

Townend was not a theorist himself. He several times said that, although many of his fellow architects were very good at writing about architecture, he did not do it himself. He would rather that the buildings speak for themselves. He was both an artist and a pragmatist. This means that we must experience his designs by walking around and looking directly at his buildings, which will be the task of Chapters IV and V. It also means discussing concepts that impressed him and which were guiding principles behind his work. The latter is the purpose of this chapter.

When asked what he considered to be the most important attribute for an architect, after some reflection Townend answered, “to be an artist.” Then he added, “You can always hire an engineer.”² What did Townend mean by saying an architect should be “an artist”?

Morris Weitz was sceptical of theories of art:

Is aesthetics theory, in the sense of a true definition or set of necessary and sufficient properties of art, possible?....If nothing else does, the history of aesthetics should give one enormous pause here. For, in spite of the many theories, we seem no nearer our goal today than we were in Plato's time. . . . Art, as the logic of the concept shows, has no set of necessary and sufficient properties, hence a theory of it is logically impossible and not merely factually difficult.³

While heeding Weitz' warning, this chapter deals with a number of concepts that Townend suggested were important to his working as an architect: landscape, light and space; keeping things "simple and not necessarily doing them exactly the way everyone else did"; building "as well as you can"; visualising the "whole thing"; images, memory and imagination; and, above all, to be an artist. What did being an artist mean to him as an architect?

To Be an Artist

For Townend being an artist meant imagining buildings that would be solidly built, fulfill their function as well as possible, human in scale and pleasurable to the senses. Kenneth Clark confirmed Townend's opinion about the importance to an architect of being an artist:

One of the reasons why medieval and Renaissance architecture is so much better than our own is that the architects were artists. . . . This has given to their work a power of plastic invention, a sense of proportion and an articulation based on the study of the human figure which knowledge of the tensile strength of steel, and other requisites of modern building, do not always produce.⁴

In a similar line of thinking, one reason that the architecture of Old Quebec was considered good by Alan Gowans, and others, was that the builders were artists in the medieval tradition of the guilds that built the great Gothic cathedrals:

Perhaps the most immediately striking thing to us today about these craftsmen is the extraordinary continuity of their work over generations and centuries. . . . When in most other parts of the Western world the ancient system of family apprenticeship inherited from the Middle Ages was breaking down or long defunct. . . the medieval inheritance survived in Quebec practically unchanged, almost into the twentieth century.⁵

At McGill, as will be seen in Chapter II, Professor Ramsay Traquair thought these early buildings of French Canada so important that he had his students in architecture make detailed measured drawings of them. The study of these early buildings in Quebec, which were human in scale, “carefully sited for the conditions of the site and the climate”⁶ and solidly built with suitable materials for their purpose, was an important part of the course in Professor John Bland’s revised McGill curriculum in architecture which Townend followed in 1943.

In the Renaissance, Palladio (1508-1580) similarly had observed and measured “very minutely with the utmost diligence”⁷ as many of the ruins of classical antiquity as he could visit. His own designs for buildings, however, did not duplicate the buildings of Ancient Rome; but from his study of them, fulfilling the requirements of Vitruvius, his imagination was stimulated to design buildings of “firmness, commodity and delight” which are “convenient, durable and beautiful.”⁸

Firmness, Commodity and Delight

Architecture certainly requires “firmness.” Buildings must be solid; they must not collapse. Science and engineering dominate this aspect of architecture. To achieve “firmness” in his buildings, a knowledge of materials and their properties and qualities is essential to the architect. It was in the hope of producing architects who would understand the importance of firmness that John Bland introduced engineering elements into the McGill curriculum.⁹

And “commodity”? A building must satisfy the needs of its users. It should be functional. It must be designed so that it will be suitable and convenient and appropriate for human beings to occupy and conduct whatever business they need to do there.

If buildings only had to satisfy these first two requirements they would successfully follow Louis Sullivan’s dictum of form following function. In his early association with Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright was totally enchanted by the pseudo-poetic musings of his *lieber meister*. (Wright even wrote his own autobiography in the same third-person, sickeningly self-conscious style as Sullivan. In both cases, their buildings were infinitely more satisfying than their writings.)

A favourite, much used book belonging to Townend (signed on the fly leaf, “S. Arthur Townend September 1960,”) was an anthology of Wright’s writings, containing numerous illustrations of his buildings, published the year after his death in 1959. How much Townend had read the writings of Louis Sullivan or Frank Lloyd Wright is not known, but he certainly saw illustrations of their work and heard about them from

Professor John Bland at McGill who had especially asked for books on them to be brought from Chicago by Gordon Webber.¹⁰

When asked why Frank Lloyd Wright's work appealed to him, Townend seemed puzzled by the question and did not answer directly. "At McGill," he said "we weren't pushed in any direction, but we were exposed to a lot. The fashionable ones were Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe."¹¹ He couldn't say why they didn't appeal to him. Their buildings often seemed stark and cold by comparison with Wright's warmer tones and more human scale. Neither Le Corbusier nor Mies van der Rohe had the lyrical, imaginative quality so evident in Wright's artistic images of his own buildings. A friend and fellow student of architecture at McGill, J. Malcolm "Mac" McLean corroborated this view: "I would say that Art was very much taken with Frank Lloyd Wright who was also an artist. Now, Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier (or Corb, as we called him) were very structural . . . steel columns and glass, as opposed to flowing elements."¹²

McLean remembered Townend's artistic ability when they were both students at McGill. The two of them and Maurice Girard entered a competition sponsored by the Central Mortgage and Housing for small house designs. They all worked together on the project for the low-cost, small house design, but, in addition Townend drew the perspectives of the houses that the three of them had designed, "the pretty picture."¹³

For an architect, however, artistic ability alone is not enough. An architect must also be able to design buildings that do not collapse, and which are solid and functional. McLean summed it up: "It's a combination of both. The artistic architect certainly has an

advantage over the non-artistic architect. And, I would classify Art as an artistic type of architect.”¹⁴

Townend was an artist who had benefitted from not only instruction and practice in art, particularly painting in water-colour, but also from a rigorous professional training at McGill, which included engineering and science, where he had shown great aptitude, especially in physics. After graduation, practical experience, first as a draftsman, and then as a practising architect and junior partner, let him experience not only the euphoria of making successful designs, but also the disappointments or mistakes that can happen in designing a building.

The latter was demonstrated to him soon after he started work in 1948 on the General Hospital project. Someone else, who was working for the contractors as a draftsman, made a drawing of a “toilet with sewer pipes from the toilet having to pass a steel beam in the floor.” Townend remembered this as a very important, practical lesson, and he was always grateful that it had occurred so early in his career. “You don’t put a toilet just anywhere you want. You put a toilet where the pipes that go to it don’t have to go through a steel beam.” Referring to the young man who had made the mistake, Townend then added, “But he was a very good draftsman, though.”¹⁵ Being a good draftsman, however, is not enough when designing a building.

So what did Townend mean when he said that being an “artist” was the most important qualification for an architect? It was the exercise of the imagination that produced the element of “delight” that made a building not only structurally sound and

functionally useful, but also which transformed the world into a pleasurable and fine setting for human beings.

Landscape, Light and Space

Townend's first opportunity to try out some of the ideas that interested him came when he designed his own house at 17 Boland Avenue (1952). After 1955, when he became a junior partner in the firm of *Fabbro and Townend*, Townend had more and more opportunities to create distinctive buildings, like the Hydro Building with Carl Pfister (1957), and the Federal Building (1958). Where did the creative ideas come from? The creative process is obviously very complex. Dacey and Lennon in *Understanding Creativity* stated, "No single process can be identified as the one kind of thinking that leads to creativity."¹⁶

As will be seen in Chapter II, certainly many influences and techniques had come from his training at McGill, especially from Webber and Lismer's design and art courses, and the sketching assignments in the Quebec countryside. With his apprenticeship as a draftsman he had learned through practical experience. The optimism and energy in Sudbury in the 1950s encouraged an atmosphere of adventure and innovation. Even the rugged landscape in Sudbury contributed to his ideas. Unlike Townend, however, Mac McLean, during his time working under Fabbro on the Sudbury General Hospital, had not been impressed by the Sudbury landscape, and he left at the end of a year. But, for Townend, Sudbury presented a "marvellous opportunity."¹⁷

Townend could not understand a doctor who made a presentation to City Council saying that he had been “sentenced to practise medicine in Northern Ontario. When I look around outside and see all that tremendous light and space we get up here, it would be a ‘sentence’ for me to practise architecture in southern Ontario. But, I suppose, each to his own.”¹⁸

Alan Gowans identified “space, light, and nature” as the spirit that determined the forms of architecture in Canada since 1945.

Superficially this may be explained as a result of using new materials and techniques, particularly steel frame and concrete slab. . . The tensile strength of steel makes it possible to span hitherto unimagined widths, and to fill them in with nothing but sheets of glass; and ferro-concrete construction allows whole sections of buildings to be cantilevered out into free space. Together, these new techniques allow architects to treat their buildings like sculpture, and mould great three-dimensional compositions of space and light. But - and this is equally obvious - you have to want to do it.¹⁹

Even in his early designs, Townend wanted to do it. His own houses on Boland Avenue and on Crown Street; the Hydro Building, even the small A-frame Yacht Club he designed in 1960, all demonstrated, in different ways, his attraction to space and light. Gowans said that the desire to do this was not an aversion to some other style so much as a designer’s basic concern “for effects of free-flowing space and flooding light. . . It is what people want and like.”²⁰

Attitudes to nature and the wilderness were quite different a hundred years ago than they are today. Especially to the Canadian settler, nature was seen then as a hostile, chaotic, objective world. Northrop Frye said,

[Nature] may have a shape and a meaning, but it doesn't seem to be a human shape or a human meaning. . . so you soon realize that there's a difference between the world you're living in and the world you want to live in. The world you want to live in is a human world, not an objective one: it's not an environment but a home; it's not the world you see but the world you build out of what you see.²¹

As will be seen in Chapter III, in the early days of Sudbury the pioneers cut down trees and made buildings of log to attempt to shelter and separate themselves from nature - wind, rain, snow, sun, bugs, wild animals. Fifty years later the same wind, rain, snow, sun, bugs and wild animals existed, so why had people's attitude changed towards nature? Gowans attributed this to a new enthusiasm for "applied science" which engendered a sense of confidence and a "new concept of Nature - as no longer an opponent to be conquered but a human instrument to be used and enjoyed. . . . Better than in any other of the arts, we can see in architecture what the idea that Nature is man's to create and mould means in practical and aesthetic terms."²² Modern architecture has the contradictory purposes of controlling nature and being one with nature. It is a delicate balance for if man becomes "one with Nature" he ceases to be human. Architects, said Gowans, understand this and architecture "must in some way take account and grow out of specifically human values - spiritual, intellectual, emotional."²³

Frank Lloyd Wright was one of the greatest champions (especially in his writings) of the unity of man and nature, advocating the design of a house “that is integral to its site; integral to its environment, integral to the life of its inhabitants.”²⁴ (As Brendan Gill has pointed out,²⁵ however, Wright often contradicted or ignored his own dicta in his actual buildings. Whatever he may have pontificated about, Wright understood full well that his buildings had to reflect “human values”.)

Townend was acutely aware of the environment and site of a proposed building, and, as will be seen in Chapters IV and V, he went to great pains to make his buildings not only reflect human values, by making them practical, comfortable, and beautiful, but also to fit in with and complement their settings. The distinguished Canadian architect, Arthur Erickson, also a graduate of McGill School of Architecture, thought that, amongst other things, architecture “is the art of relating a building to its environment.” Erickson was convinced that through careful listening to the *genius loci* an architect can actually improve on nature. “I learned this from the Greeks,” he said. “Their sites are enhanced by the buildings.”²⁶

Keeping things simple and building as well as you can

As will be seen in Chapters IV and V in discussion of Townend’s buildings, he constantly considered how he could reflect human values in his designs. He was one of a new breed of architects in Canada who around 1955 (the year he became a junior partner in *Fabbro and Townend*), lost the old defensive colonial attitude that considered that any design from elsewhere was better than a home-grown one, an attitude that was alive and well in

Sudbury, when Townend first came there, where there was little faith in local architects, as can be seen in Chapter III.

However much they might be influenced by ideas from Japan or France or the United States, or whatever may have been gleaned from images and impressions anywhere in the world, Townend's designs were still rooted in Northeastern Ontario. Here, inspired by the light and the space, he could respond to the *genius loci* and build buildings "as well as possible and show what an architect does,"²⁷ faithful to the lessons he learned at McGill of designing buildings appropriately for their function, of suitable materials, carefully positioned with regard to the site and the climate. He and his partners designed buildings that followed these criteria, unlike some architects from Toronto or Montreal who sent up designs to Sudbury for "generic" buildings that were not designed for specific purposes, nor for the use of appropriate materials, nor for the environment and climate of Northeastern Ontario.

In the early 1980s Townend's firm undertook the designing and building of Science North as a joint venture with another McGill graduate, the distinguished Canadian architect, Raymond Moriyama. Moriyama might well have had Townend and his partner, John Stefura, in mind when he said,

On a planet where everything is rapidly converging, healthy diversity can only be maintained by responding specifically and appropriately to local conditions, to local people, to their moods and premonitions. Those unsung architects who work closely with people in small communities to improve the local environment should be lauded and celebrated.²⁸

As will be seen in Chapters III and IV Townend and Stefura and their partners, in spite of responding appropriately to local conditions, and to the aspirations and needs of local people, were not sufficiently recognised and celebrated in their community for a long time. Townend himself was sceptical of the value of advertising and public relations for an architect. Again and again he said the buildings themselves would be the only worthwhile advertisement for his work.

Visualising the Whole Thing and Composer/Conductor

Again and again, Townend mentioned the collaboration required for drawing up proposals, especially for a large project; the design process itself involved not only the architects, but also the clients, planners and consultants, and those who would be the eventual users of the building. And in the construction stage so many more people are involved: engineers, and contractors with many different tradesmen. But, of the numerous people involved, only the architect, “visualises the whole thing”

The architect is not quite like a writer or a painter, who both work largely in isolation. Townend believed that an architect was more like a composer who, at the beginning of the project, “has it all in his head.” But then in putting the drawings together, and throughout the often lengthy construction process, he has to rely on a number of very skilled and talented people. At this stage the composer/architect becomes the conductor of his own work. What is the relationship between an architectural plan and the final building? The plan is the score and the building is the concretisation of an idea, or a number of ideas—the public performance of the composition.

Steen Eiler Rasmussen, Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, called architecture the art of organisation where

the architect is forced to seek a form which is more explicit and finished than a sketch or personal study. Therefore, architecture has a special quality of its own and great clarity. The fact that rhythm and harmony have appeared at all in architecture - whether a medieval cathedral or the most modern steel-frame building - must be attributed to the organization which is the underlying idea of the art.²⁹

Organisation, rhythm and harmony echo Townend's reference to the architect as composer. The Renaissance architects shared with the Medieval builders of the Gothic cathedrals a mathematical system of proportions, originally stated by the Roman architect, Vitruvius, which produced harmony in buildings.

Images and Memory

Images were certainly very important to Townend, like the mathematicians and physicists that Arthur Koestler referred to as "*visionaries* in the literal sense - that is, visual not verbal thinkers."³⁰ Townend said he was moved almost to tears when he first saw a church designed by Eero Saarinen in Columbus, Indiana. This was Saarinen's last building, designed in 1964, before his untimely death. Columbus, Indiana, has a tradition of fine buildings begun by far-sighted city leaders in the mid-nineteenth century. "Columbus architecture has been the subject of feature articles in national and international publications, and each year thousands of people visit the city to view the buildings."³¹ Even when buildings were no longer suitable for present-day needs, they were renovated and adapted for new contemporary purposes - something that could have happened in

Sudbury instead of demolishing older buildings like the Dominion Building. Modern architecture in Columbus began in 1942 with the First Christian Church designed by Eero Saarinen's father, Eliel Saarinen, who persuaded the congregation to break away from traditional neo-Gothic and neo-Georgian styles. Saarinen's geometric design is one of direct simplicity and dignity which continues to make it one of the most admired buildings in the city.³² Townend admired the work of both Saarinens, father and son.

Whiteson said that original images are rare. "Architects, like the rest of us, derive visual ideas from a ragbag of received images out of movies, magazines, newspapers, travel, television, books, history, and obscure social and personal memory."³³ Townend had benefitted from his upbringing in Jamaica and a cosmopolitan outlook which had enriched the process. He acknowledged also that many ideas that "go into buildings come from visiting other buildings, seeing illustrations of other buildings, or reading about them."³⁴

A more recent example of how important images and memory were to Townend happened after he had suffered a stroke. The first clear image he was aware of when he recovered was of twin towers "in Glasgow." It turned out that, just before he became ill, he had seen the design for millennial twin towers for Glasgow on the internet. When he learned that these were images which he had in fact seen, immediately before he became ill, Townend was reassured that his memory had not been too badly damaged by the stroke.

Koestler considered there was a danger that pictorial thinking could be too literal and not good at expressing abstract ideas. But if an architect is going in the opposite direction, trying to express an abstract idea in concrete form, then selecting suitable images that can convey the idea is important. Gowans considered “the hallmark of great Western architecture throughout history” as the “appropriate specific application” of abstract principles.³⁵

Images and memory are dependent on each other. Images in dreams, however marvellous, are not easily remembered after waking. Memory is not something that can be taken for granted as was demonstrated by the incredibly swift loss of the memory of the Graeco-Roman civilisation after the fall of Rome, or the individual loss of memory that can follow a stroke or other illness. The lesson is that if we lose cultural memory we lose civilisation, or, in the case of the individual, the integrity of the personality. Memory is not automatic; it is lost from generation to generation if there is no structure for retaining the collective memory. Is that not why those bent on destroying ideas make a priority of burning books?

Aristotle considered that memory belonged to the same part of the soul as imagination; images (*phantasmata*) were collected by the senses and stored in memory to fuel the imagination which was the intermediary between perception and thought. Frances Yates, in discussing Giordano Bruno’s (1548-1600) use of images, emphasised the significant role of the imagination in ordering images in memory.³⁶ The importance of training memory was well understood by the Roman orators, including Marcus Tullius

Cicero (106-43 B.C.) who advocated the use of images to help remember more complex abstract ideas. In the 13th century Thomas Aquinas, who apparently had a phenomenal memory, was completely familiar with this method.³⁷ Medieval manuscripts, and statuary, were full of imagery to recall abstract ideas of “Temperance,” “Prudence,” “Justice,” “Charity,” “Envy,” and the like. In the early 14th century Dante’s images of Hell and its punishments in the *Inferno* might well be interpreted as a kind of memory system.

With the rediscovery of ancient writings and thought in the Renaissance and the advent of the printed book there was no need for a cumbersome system of artificial memory which used statues, talismans and the like to create associations of ideas. A new interest, however, was kindled in the “Art of Memory” by those, who, like Giordano Bruno, were interested in the occult tradition. In the 1530s Giulio Camillo erected a “Memory Theatre in Venice at a time when the revival of the ancient theatre, due to the recovery of the text of Vitruvius by the humanists, was in full swing.”³⁸

Daniel Millette referred to how institutions have developed “sophisticated means by which emotive links are created between individuals, the collective and their memories. . . . Many of these links . . . are manifested through architecture, and whether intentional or not, each building acts as a monument that embodies specific messages.”³⁹ Buildings are an element of human memory. Embodying ideals and aspirations of a period, buildings, as Clark pointed out⁴⁰, can tell much about the society that constructed them. They can also house physical memories, not only in the obvious way in libraries, art galleries, museums, but also mental images in all kinds of ordinary buildings seen and used by human beings

on a daily basis. Buildings can evoke memories, too. In 1980 the Quebecois artist, Antoine Dumas, painted a picture, which he called *Reminiscence*, of a simple family home with “ghost” grandparents on the verandah and a “ghost” family coming to visit in their “ghost” car - a house that evoked the memories of people and times gone by.

Townend was very impressed by a modern adaptation of Camillo’s Memory Theatre by his cousin, Richard Henriquez, an architect in Vancouver. (A model of Henriquez’ Memory Theatre was displayed at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal and at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1993.⁴¹) Henriquez designed his Memory Theatre as a microcosm of his world to be an integral part of a room in his house, partly as an *aide-memoire* like Camillo’s theatre, and partly as a “Curiosity Cabinet,” as he said “being aware of and in touch with our past has to do with *everything*.”⁴² Henriquez was described by the dean of Canadian architectural education, Douglas Shadbolt, as “an architect with the eyes of an artist.”⁴³ Henriquez, the artist, had shown Townend something that he had always understood intuitively that buildings form links to the collective memory.

Imagination

At McGill Townend first experienced designing a building in his head before putting it on paper (see Chapter II). Professor John Bland gave his class an assignment of designing a chapel on a hill. Townend said he went home that evening and lay down on his bed, closed his eyes and imagined the chapel and its setting. When he had worked out all the details and had a complete image in his head, he made a painting of it. Le Corbusier and

Frank Lloyd Wright both “imagined” buildings in their heads before committing anything to paper. Le Corbusier described the process.

Lorsqu’une tâche m’est confiée, j’ai une habitude de la mettre *au dedans de ma mémoire*, c’est à dire de ne me permettre aucun croquis, pendant des mois. La tête humaine est ainsi faite qu’elle possède une certaine indépendance: c’est une boîte dans laquelle on peut verser en vrac les éléments d’un problème. On laisse aller “flotter”, “mijoter”, “fermenter”.⁴⁴

Frank Lloyd Wright advocated a very similar method: “Conceive the buildings in imagination, not first on paper but in the mind, thoroughly, before touching paper. Let the building, living in imagination, develop gradually, taking more and more definite form before committing it to the drafting board.”⁴⁵

Sullivan’s “formula” that *form follows function* had become a revered dictum by the time Townend and his fellow students at McGill heard it in the mid-1940s. But even for Sullivan there was an imaginative element: “He [Sullivan] discovered that in truth it was not simply a matter of form expressing function, but the vital idea was this: That the function *created* or organized its form.”⁴⁶ Steel revolutionized construction. No longer were buildings limited in height by masonry construction. This gave the architect a fresh opportunity to be creative, and according to Sullivan: “the lofty steel frame makes a powerful appeal to the architectural imagination.” Imagination, Sullivan considered, was the essential ingredient.⁴⁷

The Scot, William Duff, writing in 1767, studied the creative process and considered that imagination contributed the most. Duff thought that, “all discoveries and

inventions in science and art were the result of the imagination.” Judgment tempered imagination’s excesses, and taste added “a sense of aesthetics to the cold, evaluative nature of judgment.”⁴⁸

In writing on the aesthetics of architecture, Roger Scruton, also emphasised the importance of imagination in the creative process:

Since the eighteenth century, imagination has been the ruling concept in aesthetic theory. For both [Hume and Kant] it was imagination which knits together the scattered data of the senses into a patterned image of the world. [Kant] saw it as a capacity exercised in every act of perception, a force active in the formation of every image and every cognitive state.⁴⁹

Scruton himself, however, was sceptical of the role of imagination in creativity. “For what could it mean, to say that there is a single faculty exercised in seeing, remembering, and imagining, and that *imagination* is the proper name for it? . . . In memory and perception, however, the object is thought of as *real*: seeing is believing.”⁵⁰

The flowering of the architectural imagination involves many processes. Northrop Frye was not thinking particularly of architectural imagination when he observed, “the fundamental job of the imagination in ordinary life is to produce, out of the society we have to live in, a vision of a society we want to live in.”⁵¹ But this is precisely what the architectural imagination should do. It imagines a human environment where there had been none.

In discussing language, Frye distinguished between literature, the language of the imagination, and ordinary conversation or words conveying information. All three overlap,

however, as we use our imagination all the time in every-day conversation, in practical life, in dreams. But literature, says Northrop Frye, "speaks the language of imagination and the study of literature is supposed to train and improve the imagination."⁵²

If instead of language we substitute buildings, it is possible to make a rough analogy with Frye's argument. Human beings inhabit and use buildings of every kind every day. Even the most modest structure requires imagination to build it. But the work of the architect is the true interpretation and realisation of the buildings of the imagination. There is in both literature and architecture what Roger Scruton calls "a sense of the ordered achievement of meaning, rather than its random accumulation."⁵³ Needless to say, both in literature and in architecture there are failures of the imagination, or perhaps, rather, failures of skill to concretise the ideas successfully.

Delight

For Townend "being an artist" meant actively using his imagination to bring together images in his memory and to sort and select those that were appropriate for his purpose to produce "the ordered achievement of meaning" in a design. Images, memory and imagination together formed the great synthesiser that combined the science of building techniques and the knowledge of function and purpose to create Palladio's third component of successful architecture: "delight." Delight implies that it is not enough for a building to be solidly constructed and to have the requisite number and shape and size of functional divisions within it. A building should also provide a vision of society we want to live in. This is where the artistic architectural imagination plays such a pivotal role.

The Montrealer Michel Lincourt, now professor of architecture in Strasbourg, combined all of Palladio's ideas of "firmness, commodity and delight" to introduce the quest for "elegance" as the prime design objective in architecture. By elegance he meant the "symbiosis of excellence and magnificence; that is, to solve the problem thoroughly and fully with a frugality of means, and to erect buildings and cities that will endure and be considered elegant by present and future generations."⁵⁴

In order to "experience" buildings, Lincourt evolved a methodology based on the phenomenology of the German philosopher Edmund Husserl. "Phenomenology is a far-reaching system of thought that advocates a return to things themselves in order to describe those things as they appear to consciousness; that is, as phenomena perceived outside any preconceived ideology."⁵⁵ As was shown also by the Norwegian architectural theorist, Christian Norberg-Schulz, the phenomenological approach has wide applications. He used that method to study the writings of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger to examine the latter's attitudes to architecture. For instance, Norberg-Schulz comments on Heidegger's example of a bridge across a stream which, by its existence, creates a new human place in the landscape. Norberg-Schulz also interprets Heidegger's concept of dwelling as being at peace in a protected place, which architecture can bring about.⁵⁶ Using a phenomenological method Lincourt examined the architectural phenomena to discover the "character" or "essence," the "elegance" of a building that exists beyond geometric and material features.

Geoffrey Scott, in *The Architecture of Humanism*, described delight in architecture as follows:

Interwoven with practical ends and their mechanical solutions, we may trace in architecture a third and different factor - the disinterested desire for beauty. This desire does not, it is true, culminate here in a purely aesthetic *result*, for it has to deal with a concrete basis which is utilitarian. It is, none the less, a purely aesthetic *impulse*, an impulse distinct from all the others which architecture may simultaneously satisfy, an impulse by virtue of which architecture becomes art.⁵⁷

Koestler calls the aesthetic impulse the *emotive aspect*, which combined with the *intellectual aspect*, together produce the work of art: "the two together - intellectual illumination and emotional catharsis - are the essence of the aesthetic experience. The first constitutes the moment of truth; the second provides the experience of beauty."⁵⁸ This is the artistic "impulse" of the architectural imagination.

Chapter II - Foundation: The Making of an Architect

This chapter will show how Townend's background in Jamaica, education at the McGill School of Architecture, and his architectural apprenticeship in Sudbury all contributed to the development of his architectural imagination.

Jamaica

S. Arthur Townend was born in Cuba in 1924, but soon moved with his family to Jamaica where they owned a banana and coconut plantation called New Ramble. There was always much activity with about 500 people employed in tending the crops, hoeing and pruning, trucking the bananas to the wharf for shipping, extracting the coconut meat.

Townend may have inherited a predisposition for building from his father who converted an old shed into a furniture factory where he employed many people.



Figure 1 - New Ramble plantation house in Jamaica, childhood home of Townend

Townend's father was ingenious and inventive and loved solving problems: for instance, devising a gravity fed water supply from a spring in the hillside 100 feet above the house, or dryers for the coconut to make copra.⁵⁹ The family lived in a spacious colonial home, surrounded on the two storeys by shady

verandahs open to the breeze of the trade winds. (Figure 1)

In that climate people spend most of their time outdoors. There was a surrounding garden, full of tropical plants and trees, with a tennis court in the lower part. In the

“banana walk” was a swimming pool fed by another spring. Townend thought that Jamaica was “such a marvellous place to grow up in.”⁶⁰ His earliest artistic sensibility was formed by the bustle and variety of the plantation, and the brilliant light and colour and freedom of the tropics.

Jamaica did not have many good schools, and Townend, therefore, was considered very privileged to be able to go to a boarding school at a very young age. Later he went to Monro College, another boarding school with about 120 pupils, situated in the hills 2000 feet above sea level, on the south coast of the island, with splendid views of the Caribbean far below.

At Monro, Townend developed a sensitive artistic appreciation. He was not good at sports, so he was lucky to have an art master, Peter Carter, who recognised a talent for drawing and encouraged him to sketch. Seymour Thomas, another student at Monro, and Townend, painted whenever they had the opportunity. “All the spare time we could find when we were at school we painted.”⁶¹ There was an annual competition amongst all the schools in Jamaica for an “Art Shield” which was won for several years in a row by Arthur Townend and Seymour Thomas representing Monro College.

The college buildings themselves had an impact on Townend. Many times he sketched the rather austere, stone buildings, which bore witness to the Scottish influence of the founder of the school. When Townend was in his teens, he saw plans for additions to the school buildings, and was fascinated to discover that they showed “where to put every stone, every brick, every nail, every bolt, and I just couldn’t believe that an architect could put all that information in a drawing.”⁶² Townend’s imagination was stimulated as

he suddenly realised the potential in those plans which unlocked secrets to the organisation of the building process. He thought that seeing these plans, along with the encouragement given him by Peter Carter in art, were the two most important factors in his eventually choosing architecture as a career.⁶³

After leaving school in 1941 Townend worked for a land surveyor. At that time there was no university in Jamaica, but he had heard about McGill where the son of the CEO of the Jamaica Government Railway, Charlie Fox, had gone to study engineering. Townend thought that McGill was only an engineering school; he did not know it was a university with many other departments and faculties.

The following year Townend set off for Montreal to study at the McGill School of Engineering. Every aspect of the trip was fascinating and exciting to him. He made the journey by flying boat from Jamaica to Cuba and on to Miami, and then north by train. For the seventeen-year old it was a great adventure where everything was new and stimulating. Not only the landscape, vegetation, light and colour were completely different from that of Jamaica, but also the man-made environment. He broke the journey in New York City where he was astonished by the height and density of the buildings. A business associate of his father arranged to have his young secretary show Townend the sights of the city, taking him to the top of some of the tallest skyscrapers. After a few days in New York he continued the journey to Montreal by train.⁶⁴

In Canada, during that late summer of 1942, men aged eighteen and over were at the war. Students under the age of eighteen, like the seventeen-year old Townend, went west to the Prairies to help with the harvest as their contribution to the war effort. Shortly

afterwards. Townend became ill and spent three months in the Montreal General Hospital. Eva Barnhill, who was training to be a nurse there in the Fall of 1942, remembered that, at first, nobody seemed to know what was wrong with him. After further investigation he was diagnosed with polio.⁶⁵ This lengthy stay in hospital had a lasting effect on Townend as he had plenty of time to think how the design of the buildings could be improved from the patient's point of view. By the time he had recovered sufficiently to go home to convalesce, Townend had discovered that McGill was a university, where there was not only a School of Engineering, but also a School of Architecture. After taking a year out to recover from polio, he returned to McGill in 1943 and this time enrolled in the School of Architecture.

McGill University School of Architecture

Townend could not have arrived at the School of Architecture at a better time. Not for the last time in his career, he was definitely in the right place at the right time. After years of difficulty, the School had a new Director, John Bland, who had instituted a new curriculum. This new curriculum, so rigorous, disciplined and demanding on the one hand, and so stimulating, inspiring and liberating on the other, provided the perfect balance, the *yin* and *yang* needed to engage eager young minds. The lessons Townend learned at McGill stayed with him for the rest of his professional life.

When he arrived at McGill, Townend was completely unaware of the history of the School and the people who had formed it. However, the new curriculum for the study of architecture did not appear out of a vacuum, but had grown out of the different influences that had formed the School. In 1896 the first university chair of architecture in Canada was

established at McGill University in Montreal. The first three directors of the School of Architecture had been trained in Scotland and this had an important bearing on how the school developed. Their accumulated legacy, refined over the years, influenced the curriculum that Townend followed in 1943.

Stewart Henbest Capper (1859-1925), the first Director 1896-1903, graduated with first class honours from the University of Edinburgh in 1880, then studied for three years at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris. He returned to Edinburgh where he and Sydney Mitchell (1856-1930) worked with the dynamic city planner Sir Patrick Geddes in the reconditioning and revitalisation of the Old Town of Edinburgh. A scholar and brilliant linguist (he had also studied at Heidelberg University and had worked for several years in Portugal and Spain)⁶⁶ Capper brought a wide range of humanistic interests, talents and ideas to the newly formed School of Architecture at McGill. An excellent administrator, Capper arranged for a well-equipped drafting room and obtained books and other publications for the special architectural section of the University Library.⁶⁷ He combined the Beaux-Arts techniques, which emphasised the “principle of clear, rational, ordered planning,”⁶⁸ with the fresh approach to simplicity and a return to “tradition” advocated in Edinburgh by Sir Rowand Anderson (1834-1921) as an antidote to mid-nineteenth century eclecticism.⁶⁹

Capper was followed by Percy Nobbs (1875-1964), Director 1903-1913, who spent his early years in St Petersburg before returning to his native Scotland to continue his education. Another graduate of the University of Edinburgh, Nobbs was an assistant to Sir Robert Lorimer (1864-1929), the influential Scottish architect, who had adopted Rowand

Anderson's ideas of "simplicity" and the integrity of traditional Scottish architecture of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Lorimer's work in encouraging the ancient Scottish crafts was akin to the Arts and Crafts Movement in England. Nobbs favoured "a sober architecture, well-built, functional and respectful of its surroundings."⁷⁰ In his attempt to produce a Canadian vernacular architecture, Nobbs combined aspects of Lorimer's work and of the Arts and Crafts Movement in England, with elements of the indigenous old Quebec architecture. (Nobbs served overseas in the army during World War I, but in 1919 he returned no longer as Director but as a teacher in the School of Architecture.)⁷¹

Ramsay Traquair (1874-1952), Director 1913-1939, was also educated at the University of Edinburgh, and at the University of Bonn and the Royal College of Art in Edinburgh. He had apprenticed in Capper's office and later worked for Sir Robert Lorimer and Sydney Mitchell. Traquair was a student at the British School of Archaeology in Athens studying Byzantine mediaeval architecture. At McGill he followed his predecessors in the "pragmatic philosophy of architectural education which was concerned with traditional values and sound building practices."⁷²

In keeping with the teachings of Rowand Anderson and Robert Lorimer, who advocated the direct study of old buildings in order to develop a truly national architecture in Scotland,⁷³ Nobbs had started summer school surveys of the traditional buildings of Quebec in his search for a national character in Canadian architecture. Traquair enlarged this practice, making the sketching and survey summer school a compulsory element in the architecture curriculum.

One of Traquair's successors as Director of the School of Architecture was a former student, John Bland, who remembered Traquair's infectious enthusiasm:

He was concerned with materials. He was concerned with traditional buildings for particular uses, buildings with good construction and good use of materials, building carefully on a site in respect to the conditions of the site and the climate. All these things were very real for Traquair. . . he discovered that the old French Canadian buildings followed these principles. He took us to see houses and churches where you could see the simplicity of the structure, the correctness of the use of stone and the use of big timbers, the clever construction of the roofs, and the carved-wood decoration of the interior.⁷⁴

(The surveys produced by the students working under Traquair resulted in a remarkable record published as *The Old Architecture of Quebec*.⁷⁵ Long out of print, this extraordinary resource was recently republished by McGill University as a celebration of the centenary of the School of Architecture.) For Traquair those old Quebec buildings epitomised Vitruvius' (and Palladio's) ideal architecture of "firmness, commodity and delight."

John Bland relates how Traquair had refused to take part in a competition, organised by the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC), to design a broadcasting centre, because "he objected to a Beaux-Arts fashion of designing a building that was an exercise in composing a façade and a plan . . . on no particular site, of no stated material, and for an ill-defined use."⁷⁶ Traquair's views on architecture influenced his students, including John Bland. Traquair retired in 1939, followed a year later by Nobbs who had been teaching *Design & Planning*.

The School of Architecture at McGill only barely survived the Depression. From 1929 until the outbreak of the Second World War there was much unemployment, little

optimism and almost no work for architects. Enrolment plummeted and Principal Lewis Douglas wanted to close the School. A group of young architects sent a memorandum dated 10 January 1938, to Douglas expressing their alarm about the possibility of the School's demise, and, at the same time, suggesting improvements and changes to the School, including the forming of an "Advisory Committee" and the admission of women. Some of the criticisms were "outdatedness of some of the courses, the doubtful value of the School's museum of antiques, the absence of courses in Regional Planning, Town Planning, and Housing, and a lack of encouragement in self-expression and original thought."⁷⁷

Philip Turner, the Acting Director of the School during this critical period from 1939 to 1941, enlisted the support of several distinguished Montreal architects and, with their help and that of his young Executive Secretary, John Bland, he managed to persuade the newly appointed Principal of McGill, F. Cyril James (Principal 1939-1962), to save the School of Architecture. Principal Cyril James, with admirable prescience, considered that the School of Architecture would play a key role in post-war reconstruction when there would be a great need for architects. James, in addition to being Principal of McGill, was Chairman of the Canadian Government's Advisory Committee on Reconstruction 1940-1943 and was co-author of the Report that advocated the establishment of a Federal Government Department of Reconstruction, which was eventually formed in 1944, with the dynamic Hon. C. D. Howe as Minister.

At McGill School of Architecture an Advisory Committee was formed in 1939 to address problems of curriculum, administration and, a big change, the admission of

women. As Turner was elderly and ill, John Bland involved the Advisory Committee, whose members by then were all unemployed, in the running of the School. In 1941, when Turner retired due to ill health, Principal James appointed John Bland Director of the School of Architecture: an important new era had begun.

John Bland was the first Canadian to head the School of Architecture at McGill, of which he himself was a graduate. After graduating from McGill in 1933, Bland went to Britain where he carried on like the student of Traquair that he was. "I walked mainly and took a sketch book and sketched things."⁷⁸ He enrolled in postgraduate studies in Planning at the Architectural Association School in London. After graduating with honours in 1937 from the AA, he worked for the Planning Department of the London County Council and travelled extensively on the continent. Then, with Harold Spence-Sales, Bland started an architectural and planning practice and together they won many competitions.

On his appointment as Director of the School of Architecture in 1941, with the support of Principal Cyril James, Bland started to revise the curriculum and appoint new members of staff. Bland took advantage of the Faculty of Engineering, to which the School of Architecture was attached, by requiring that all students in architecture have the same preliminary training for senior matriculation and take the same classes that the engineers had in physics, chemistry, and mechanics in first year Engineering. This foundation was to provide the knowledge and skill to build with "firmness." The students in architecture then could proceed to work with practising architects and others in architectural design, where they would learn about appropriate design for specific purposes. Bland thought that this was a good combination.⁷⁹

John Bland's insistence on including the stringent Engineering courses was vindicated later by Arthur Townend who began his studies at the School of Architecture in September 1943. He responded well to the rigour of the new curriculum, especially enjoying physics which was taught by Professor David Arnold Keys, who later went on to be Vice President of the National Research Council in charge of the Atomic Energy Project, Chalk River. Townend recalls:

Dr Keys lectured in a theatre that held about six hundred students from all the different disciplines, arts and science and architecture and engineering, so it was a very large elementary physics class. I know that I was one of the three top students when we did the exams for that class. Afterwards Keys said, 'Why don't you drop architecture and do physics?' Well, I always loved elementary physics, but I don't know anything about nuclear physics or advanced physics; but I found it useful to have that kind of understanding in architecture later on.⁴⁰

One of Townend's fellow students, J. Malcolm "Mac" McLean, added his reminiscences of Dr Keys' physics class, saying that he had a gift for teaching the lesson so that anyone could understand and remember it. On one occasion Keys hung a piece of wood on a wire and "took a gun and shot a bullet into the wood to get movement; this experiment was on momentum."⁴¹

At the McGill School of Architecture the aspect of "delight" in architecture was fostered by two unusual men, Dr Arthur Lismer and his former pupil, Gordon McKinley Webber, whom Bland had attracted to the School. Their teaching in art and design stimulated and disciplined the imaginations of their students. Their influence on the

budding architects was profound and lasting, and Arthur Townend and his fellow students were amongst the first to benefit from their teaching.

Arthur Lismer, a painter and teacher, a founding member of the Group of Seven, was the Educational Supervisor for the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. In 1941 Lismer agreed to teach part-time in the School of Architecture where he taught *History of Art*, *Theory of Design* and later *Freehand Drawing*. John Bland remembered that Lismer's "lectures were vivid and surprising because he would draw what he wanted to talk about. People would take photographs of the blackboard after his lectures were through. They were astonishing."² The students were just as impressed as the Director of the School. Arthur Townend recalled how, during drawing classes, "Arthur Lismer would come over and do a quick pencil sketch of a model then crumple up the paper and throw it away."³ After class students would retrieve the crumpled drawings from the wastepaper basket. "Mac" McLean added, "Lismer was such a gentleman and a charming man. Some people can teach and some people can't teach, and he had the rare ability to be able to get you out of your shell, your mechanical shell, and open you up."⁴

McLean met Townend in their first year. There were only twelve students in architecture so it was easy to get to know everyone; "I had Art come to my home in Aylmer, Quebec, for the odd weekend, that sort of thing. The first two years I didn't live where he did. The third, fourth and fifth years we lived in the Anglican Diocesan College right across the hall from each other." While they were staying at the Diocesan College, McLean was asked to a dance at the Montreal General Nurses' Residence. "I went to Art's room right across from mine and said I've got a blind date, and her name is Eva Barnhill.

So he turned around and picked a photograph album from a shelf, and he said, 'there she is.' Eva had nursed him when he had polio."⁶⁵ Not long after graduation Eva and Mac were married. Their connection with Townend continued after their McGill days, their paths crossing and re-crossing over the years.

In their fourth year at McGill, Townend and McLean and another student, Maurice Girard, entered a competition for small house designs sponsored by Central Mortgage and Housing. For this project McLean moved "Arthur's bed into my bedroom and set up three drafting tables in his bedroom. . . . Art's job was to do the perspective of the houses that the three of us designed . . . [and] this is where I really recognised his freehand ability."⁶⁶ Townend's sketching talent had already been recognised at school in Jamaica and clearly under the inspired teaching of Arthur Lismer this ability developed and flourished as never before.

It was Lismer who had suggested to John Bland that he engage Gordon Webber, a former pupil of Lismer at the Ontario College of Art. Webber was to teach a course in *Elements of Design*, based on the modified Bauhaus courses of the School of Design in Chicago where Webber had studied under Lazlo Moholy-Nagy. The original Staatliches Bauhaus, founded in Germany in 1902, had similar aims to the Arts and Crafts movement in England, namely, to encourage the work of artisans and craftsmen. In 1919 Walter Gropius introduced the idea of combining the arts and crafts with technology and engineering in design. The influence of the "New Bauhaus" teachings took root in the United States with the arrival there in the late 1930s of several of the Bauhaus former teachers such as Lazlo Moholy-Nagy, Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe.

In reply to a request for more information on his work by W. E. Carswell of the University of Toronto School of Architecture, Webber said that his courses were designed "to explore the basic elements of visual matter, whether two or three dimensional; the relationship to architecture is made clear to the student at the beginning of the study."⁸⁷ Line, shape, light, colour, texture, space and movement were studied in depth. Bland was very happy that Webber's course in the basic elements of design complemented so well the basic courses in mathematics, physics and chemistry provided by the Faculty of Engineering.⁸⁸

Webber taught courses or workshops in *The Basic Elements of Design* in the second, third, fourth and fifth years. After his experience in Chicago, he sought only structural pattern, colour, texture and essence of design in things that caught his eye. Lismer saw his talent for design analysis . . . as almost the reverse of design in architecture and imagined he would be a stimulating influence in the McGill School. At first he [Webber] was incomprehensible, not a persuasive lecturer and often vague and inconclusive. Students had their own idea of what design was, and found his first assignments painfully disciplined. In time it became clear that even [when] arranging two bricks together, or choosing the place for an opening in a wall, there were design opportunities.⁸⁹

Webber's influence on McGill students was profound. J. Malcolm McLean described an assignment, referred to by John Bland, which was also remembered vividly by Arthur Townend.

Gordon Webber, I would say, was the most important professor in my remembrance of McGill. We used to have a colour workshop with him one or two afternoons a week. And such elementary, or seemingly elementary, things as taking a piece of show card about 20 by 30, and putting in about 100 squares about 2 inches square. The exercise this

week was to take one dot, and put that dot in 100 different squares. The next lesson would be to take two dots. Then we did it in colour as well as in black and white. I used to think this was the most idiotic sort of thing I could be doing: I thought I was down there to study Architecture. But, now that I think back about it, and during my whole architectural career, I felt that he contributed as much, if not more, than any other professor. I found that when you design an elevation and you are arranging fenestration, I would think of Webber continually, about his dots and his dashes and his straight lines and his crooked lines.⁴⁰ (Figure 2)

As noted earlier, Professor Ramsay Traquair had demonstrated the value of the summer sketching school to hone not only skills in drawing and watercolour, but also to develop keen senses of observation and critical appreciation. Continuing Traquair's tradition, from 1942 onward, Arthur Lismar, joined the following year by Gordon Webber, taught the

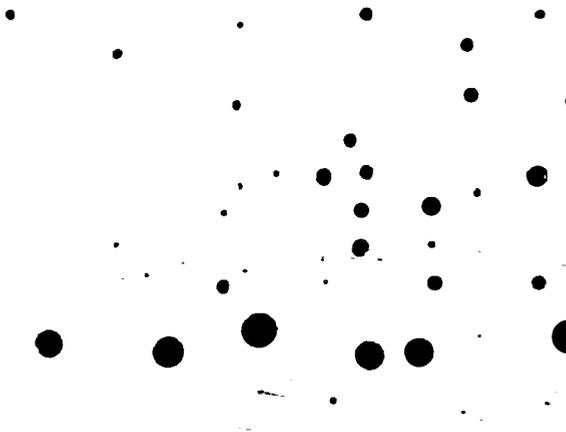


Figure 2 - Webber's exercise of dots and straight lines

sketching course in a different location

every year, usually a small-sized town.

The students had to explore the area in

detail and make sketches studying the

relationship of townscape to landscape.

Townend revelled in these excursions,

reminiscent of his early experiences in

Jamaica, but with the fresh challenge of

trying to capture the character and spirit of a new land. McLean also remembered the

sketching courses as

really wonderful experiences. The purpose was to capture the spirit of the locality. [One time] in Quebec City, in the narrowest street in North America called Sous-le-Cap, there

were clotheslines across the street and all sorts of clothes hanging there. We were down there sketching, including the clothes, and I remember this lady coming up behind me and she was so excited. "Voila, mes culottes!"⁹⁰

On a sketching trip to Orford in the mid-

1940s, Webber made lists (written in

coloured crayons) of items that were to

be recorded by the students in many

different media with notations "about

time, climatic and place conditions. All

following materials are units related to

others which together make up the

character of this region - wood (living,

dead, green, dry, waterlogged,

processed), rock, earth, water, vegetation,

atmosphere, animals, people - all these

having shape, structure, colour, texture, and relationship to time, wear, climate, use."⁹²

(Figure 3)

Bruce Anderson, a graduate of the School of Architecture in 1964, a former Director (1985-90) and still a Professor there, wrote a monograph on Gordon Webber in 1996, in which he quoted many reminiscences of Webber from his former students all praising Webber's skill as a teacher.⁹³ Webber taught students "how to select and use materials for their texture and form; how to enhance structural elements. . . . The 'light

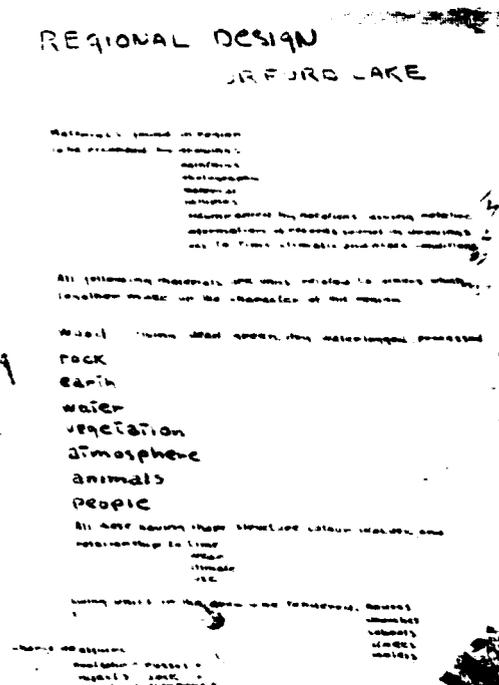


Figure 3 - Orford sketching school instructions in Gordon Webber's handwriting (Canadian Architecture Collection, Blackader-Lauterman Library, McGill University)

modulation' exercises stressed the importance of 'eyeing' architecture and art by means of photography.⁹⁴

Arthur Erickson, who designed many fine buildings including Simon Fraser University, the Courthouse and the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver, was also "inspired by his teachings."⁹⁵ In the Catalogue of the National Gallery of Canada, the entry under Arthur Erickson, Architect, mentions his studying with only one professor, "Gordon Webber at McGill University, 1946-50."⁹⁶ Another illustrious graduate of the School was Moshe Safdie, architect of the National Gallery of Canada and the Desmarais Building of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Safdie credited Webber with "appropriately opening our minds to the improbable and showing us that we were constrained by nothing but our own imaginations."⁹⁷

Townend found Webber's unusual classes liberating and inspiring. Some of the most memorable of Webber's exercises for Arthur Townend were what Anderson called the textural "feelies." Townend described the experiment as follows:

One of the things that sticks in my mind was that Webber had us design by touching. You couldn't see; you could only feel it. I remember putting my hand into a long hose and feeling the different things, but you didn't see them. You recognised them by touch. Gordon Webber worked with Arthur Lismer and he worked with the Director of the School, John Bland. But he was a remarkable man in his own right.⁹⁸

Webber's disciplined approach to design stayed with Townend. Not only the texture of materials, but also the importance of colour and light became features of Townend's work in the future.

One of Bland's great strengths was the ability to attract to the School excellent teachers who had great freedom to teach what truly interested them. No specific ideology (the French classicism of Beaux-Arts, or Modernism of the Bauhaus, for instance) was taught, but rather the students were exposed to a great diversity of ideas and approaches to architecture. In this way Bland thought that at McGill they had the "opportunity of helping people develop themselves."⁹⁹

Moshe Safdie remarked on the balance of teachers, each with his own emphasis. "John Bland created this mood in the school through a potent blend of tolerance and openness on one hand, and, on the other, deeply rooted convictions of what architecture is about," namely, "the art of building, rooted in technology of construction and forever in search of the appropriate interpretation of programme and purpose, and its imprint on the spatial organisation of the building."¹⁰⁰ Having been educated in this McGill environment, with the ideals of "firmness, commodity and delight," Safdie himself was appalled when he went to Harvard in 1978 to find students "regurgitating the already regurgitated formulations that passed as revisions to modernism" without considering "how a building might respond to its purpose and programme, what might be the tectonic means of its construction? How might it fit in and draw on the potential of its site and setting?"¹⁰¹ Safdie's reactions were very similar to those of Traquair when asked to design a Beaux-Arts Broadcasting building.

Townend considered that Bland himself played a vital role as a teacher, stimulating the imaginations of his students. As mentioned in Chapter I in the discussion on "imagination", Townend remembered one class assignment that Bland gave where he

suggested that the students design a chapel on a hill. Townend said he went home that evening and lay on his bed imagining the chapel on the hill. Next day he did a watercolour of his imagined chapel and presented it to Professor Bland. Bland was so impressed by Townend's painting that he hung it on the wall for all to see. Years later when Townend graduated, Bland remembered that painting and remarked upon it.¹⁰² Among other courses, Bland taught History of Architecture, while Arthur Lismer taught History of Art. Townend realised, through these courses, the important role that history played in revealing human values, hopes and aspirations through architecture.¹⁰³

The Class of '48, which included Townend and McLean, had been exposed to many different architectural ideologies and schools of thought. They had experienced a course of studies that Bland thought "sound in its Sciences and free in its Arts." Douglas Shadbolt, Professor Emeritus, School of Architecture at the University of British Columbia, illustrated how "free in its Arts" was demonstrated by John Bland's own course in the *History of Architecture*. . . [wherein] he deliberately and carefully took steps to offset the fanaticism of de Piero on Mies, and Esdaile on Le Corbusier, by introducing us to *Kindergarten Chats* by Louis Sullivan and to Frank Lloyd Wright."¹⁰⁴ Arthur Erickson summed up Bland's contribution to the education of the young architects: "McGill, due to John Bland, was the epitome of civilisation. He gathered a staff with highly conflicting views; quirky, eccentric and fascinating. And he gave us license to explore our impulses as far as we wishedFor everyone, university was the time that the magic of their future vocation was revealed."¹⁰⁵

When Gordon Webber was appointed to the School in December 1942, he had written Bland asking if he could bring any new books for the library. Bland requested books, amongst others, on and by Louis Sullivan, and Frank Lloyd Wright.¹⁰⁶ Wright shared important concerns with those in the Arts and Crafts movement in England. "Morris had insisted upon an honesty anticipating the modern preoccupation with 'truth to material' and suggested that buildings should be an intrinsic part of their environment. Members of the second generation of the movement in England had, in addition, insisted upon the relationship between the design of the building and its contents."¹⁰⁷ In 1898 Wright was a founding member of the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society and his "Prairie" buildings reflected many of their ideals. Wright differed, however, from the purist members of the Arts and Crafts Society who believed in the sanctity of hand-made objects. He thought that modern machinery and technology should be harnessed to provide economic designs. Machinery, for Wright, was just another tool in the hands of the craftsman. This idea was later developed in the 1920s by Walter Gropius at the Bauhaus.

Frank Lloyd Wright's work captured Townend's imagination. Arthur Townend felt a great affinity with Wright's philosophy and work which he thought was truly North American, in contrast to the European perspectives of Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe. Townend thought Wright's approach to designing buildings in the United States could provide a model for a more Canadian indigenous architecture. He instinctively understood Wright's insistence on trying to make a building blend into the landscape and be appropriately designed for its purpose, aims that were emphasised constantly in the McGill curriculum, following the tradition of Percy Nobbs, Ramsay Traquair and John Bland.

In the summer of 1945, on the recommendation of another student in architecture at McGill, Ray Affleck, who had worked in Sudbury the previous summer, Townend came to work in the office of Louis Fabbro. Appropriately, with the end of the war and the returning veterans, the very first building that Townend worked on that summer in Sudbury was the new Legion Building (now the union hall of the United Steelworkers Local 6500) at the corner of Froad Road and College Street.

I came here in 1945 for summer work and we worked a little bit on the Canadian Legion Building (now the Steelworkers' Hall). Ray Affleck had worked on that building too, the previous summer. Ray was a year ahead of me when he came up here and worked. Ray Affleck later became the principal of a large firm of architects in Montreal [Affleck, Desbarats, Dimakopoulos, Lebensold, Michaud and Sise] who, amongst other things, did the construction documents for Place Ville-Marie. He told me that Sudbury was a pretty good place to go to. I totally enjoyed the summer of 1945 in Sudbury.¹⁰⁸

After graduation in 1948, Townend was interested in Japanese architecture and hoped to go to Japan: "I was intrigued by the idea of the tatami mat, which dictated the size of a Japanese building, as an early form of modular architecture."¹⁰⁹ Since he did not have enough money for this trip, he decided to work for a while again in Sudbury to earn enough to go to Japan. (He never did go there till very much later but the concept of building in a modular fashion stayed with him.)¹¹⁰ Thus, in 1948, after two decades of Depression and World War II, at the beginning of a period of prolific building and radical social change in Canada, Arthur Townend began his professional career as an architect working for Louis Fabbro in Sudbury, Ontario.

Chapter III - Environment and Site: A Marvellous Opportunity

This chapter will show how Sudbury's geographical setting, the topography of the site and the history of its built environment affected Townend. Here he found a great opportunity to do his architectural apprenticeship in a city on the verge of post-war change and expansion, where he could put into practice and experiment with what he had learned at McGill.

Following his graduation from McGill in 1948, Townend went back to Jamaica where his parents very strongly suggested that he should practise architecture down there. Townend said, "It is interesting because I don't know what my life would have been like there. But I felt I wanted to do something on my own instead of being spoon-fed with work in Jamaica."¹¹¹ As already mentioned, Townend thought he would like to go to Japan, but, as he did not have any money, he decided he would first try to earn some in Sudbury. He wrote a letter to Louis Fabbro, with whom he had worked in the summer of 1945 when he was still a student at McGill. In this way S. Arthur Townend, B.Arch. began his professional career in Sudbury working as a draftsman for Fabbro.

When he first arrived in Canada in 1942 Townend experienced the Canadian landscape when he travelled west by train from Montreal to the Prairies through the rugged Canadian Shield. He had also seen something more of the Canadian Shield in Sudbury in the summer of 1945. The Canadian architect John C. Parkin said that every time he travelled across the country he was moved by the Canadian landscape. "Half the continental land mass is occupied by thick, bony plates of Precambrian rock. The rest is a dwarfing sweep of Prairie, or a convulsion of fresh jagged mountain peaks. No one can

live with such geography without being shaped by it.”¹¹² Townend found himself on the thick bony plates of Sudbury’s Precambrian rock and over the next forty years the landscape challenged, inspired and influenced his imagination.

Sudbury’s built environment also shaped Townend. For a second time, Townend was in the right place at the right time. After World War II, Sudbury benefitted from a period of “growth, prosperity and unbridled optimism.”¹¹³ The mining industry expanded to meet the demands of the Korean War (1950-1953), when the United States decided to stock-pile nickel. During the 1950s, the “mining camp” mentality of Sudburians was being replaced with a sense of permanence and a future.¹¹⁴ Sudburians wanted better facilities, and a better standard of living. There was, therefore, no shortage of work for architects responding to demands for housing, hospitals, schools, cultural and sports centres, churches, union halls, libraries, retail shopping centres.

When Townend returned to Sudbury after graduating from McGill in 1948, he started work as a draftsman on the new Sudbury General Hospital (described as a Stalin-Eisenhower baroque citadel)¹¹⁵ designed by Louis Fabbro. The new hospital was commissioned and owned by the Sisters of St Joseph of North Bay who, with other nursing orders, had been pioneers in providing hospitals and health care in Northern Ontario. This was a lucky break for Townend, part of the “marvellous opportunity” that Sudbury offered a newly graduated young architect. First, he was lucky that the Sisters of St Joseph, unlike most other organisations who sought architects in Montreal and Toronto, had retained a Sudbury architect, Fabbro, to design their hospital; secondly, Townend was lucky that he learned about hospital design from his first day on the job.

What has been written about architecture in Sudbury

Little has been written about the architecture of Sudbury. There is almost no mention of Sudbury either in specialized architectural journals, in books on Canadian architecture or in historical works dealing with Sudbury and North-Eastern Ontario. While in the social sciences there has been a plethora of books on many aspects of life in Sudbury and Northern Ontario, on the relationship between the mining industry and the community, immigration and the distribution of population, the geography and environment, there is scant mention of architecture.

Dr Carl Wallace directed a valuable study at Laurentian University on the historic buildings of Sudbury. Almost no architects are mentioned except for W. Harland, from North Bay, who designed several fine Edwardian buildings in the years 1907 and 1908.¹¹⁶ Also, in *Sudbury: Rail Town to Regional Capital*,¹¹⁷ Wallace discusses buildings in the general historical context. In the same book, Ashley Thomson states that, though P. J. Gorman (or O’Gorman) is credited as the “pioneer architect of Northeastern Ontario,” the first professional architect in Sudbury was Russell Halton, who arrived in 1903, but how long he stayed or what he designed is not revealed. Thomson also mentions W. Harland.

Although Dieter Buse writes most appreciatively of the new buildings that were transforming the city centre in the 1970s, there is no mention of the architects. As will be seen in Chapter IV, many of the buildings, which Buse and Wallace describe so lyrically, including St Mary’s Ukrainian Catholic Church, “a couple of striking office buildings,” St Andrew’s Place, the Civic Square complex, and the “stunning, multi-layered” Taxation

Data Centre,¹¹⁸ were designed by Arthur Townend and his partner, John Stefura, and their firm.

A brief look at the history of Sudbury's built environment

Kenneth Clark said, "If I had to say which was telling the truth about society, a speech by a Minister of Housing or the actual buildings put up in his time, I should believe the buildings."¹¹⁹ In order to understand the context, therefore, in which the post-war building boom occurred in Sudbury it is necessary to make a brief outline of the history of the existing built environment.

Sudbury came into being with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway from 1883 to 1885. The land was typical of the Precambrian Canadian Shield, very rugged, with numerous lakes, streams and swamps scattered between the rocky pine-clad hills. Beset by black flies and mosquitoes in the heat of summer, or by the bitter cold of winter, thousands of men laboured at the hard and dangerous construction on the unforgiving terrain. The men were lodged in temporary rough log shanties which were erected quickly from materials at hand.

Sudbury's beginnings were of a temporary, accidental nature, with no promise of a future, especially when the construction crews moved on to Biscotasing in 1885, and the population of the fledgling settlement decreased significantly. Survive it did, however, largely due to the importance of the great pine forests to lumbering.

Within a few decades, building styles included not only the basic "folk" log buildings of the CPR temporary construction camp, and the shanties of the lumber camps, but also a developing Sudbury "vernacular,"¹²⁰ simple, small one-storey frame houses,

made possible by the availability of lumber with standardised measurements from the nearby sawmills at Minnow Lake, Junction Creek and Lake Ramsey¹²¹ (Figure 4). Plans were easily obtained from the T. Eaton Company, which “first included houses and building materials in its 1910 catalogue.”¹²² At the same time “polite” two-storey buildings were built in brick, especially after a council by-law of 1910 stipulated the use of brick, in the hope of reducing the danger of fire.¹²³



Figure 4 - Sudbury vernacular houses.

The original “folk” phase of log building, however, was what awaited the CPR physician, Dr W. H. Howey, who arrived in Sudbury with his wife on 1 July, 1883. They were amongst the first inhabitants of the new village, several months ahead of the railway. Mrs Howey described the bunkhouse built for the construction crew,

of rough logs, about sixteen feet square, the crevices stuffed with moss for warmth, and banked up outside with sand or snow as the season permitted. . . . The roof of the building was made of “scoops” which are fair sized logs sawn in two lengthwise, hewn off smooth on the bark side and hollowed out (scooped out) out on the flat side. The roof was covered with these, concave side up, then others were fitted into them convex side up This roof made a water shed and drain.¹²⁴

In the Sudbury area the “folk” style of log buildings persisted much longer in the building of “summer camps,” especially amongst the Finns. Townend and his family still have a

much beloved log “camp” on Lake Penage which was built in 1935 by the father of the Hon. Judy Erola, Niilo M. Jacobson. Townend designed a separate sauna in the old Finnish tradition, one of his favourite “tiny projects. The steam bath at camp was pretty spectacular. It probably would have won design awards!”¹²⁵ In recent years he has also added a screen porch which blends in sympathetically with the existing log building and the steep pine-covered terrain surrounding it.



Figure 5 - Bell Mansion, now the Art Gallery of Sudbury

The first pioneering industry in the Sudbury area was lumbering. From before the advent of the CPR, the tall stands of pines had attracted attention. The railway made it easier to penetrate new areas and to transport lumber. For the first quarter of the twentieth century lumbering continued to be important.

Some of the most interesting “polite” houses that remain from the first decade of Sudbury’s existence were built by “lumber barons” like D. H. Haight (442 Ramsey Road, built in 1906) and A. J. Bell (the “Bell Mansion,” built in 1907, now the Art Gallery of Sudbury)¹²⁶ (Figure 5).

Many of Sudbury’s successful citizens were involved in the lumber trade . . . W. J. Bell, W. B. Plaunt, Haight & Dixon, W. C. Cochrane, L. Laforest and W. H. Poupore. It was companies such as these and their employees whose purchases of food, supplies, equipment, lodging and entertainment, kept the town prospering during the early,

uncertain days of the mineral discoveries and the first mines.¹²⁷

As the forests were cut down the second industry, agriculture, developed. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, farms were established in the Valley, where the rich soil produced good root crops. Other farms in the low-lying areas around Sudbury were principally involved in dairying. The modest farm buildings themselves were very similar to the frame farm houses and barns found in southern or eastern Ontario, and in Manitoulin Island, at the end of the nineteenth century.

After a slow start, copper and nickel mining began with the creation of the Canadian Copper Company in 1886. Due to the problems and expense of refining nickel, it was not until after 1890, when the Americans were persuaded that nickel-steel was the best material for armour and armour plate for building warships, that mining in Sudbury was considered viable. Over the next twenty years nickel and copper production steadily increased and with it Sudbury's prosperity and faith in a more permanent future. In addition to the existing small frame houses, more grand "polite" houses appeared such as the two Queen Anne Revival style homes on Cedar Street, designed by W. Harland of North Bay. Solid brick public buildings were constructed, including a new Courthouse (1893) replacing the early frame building, the Water Pumping House on Lake Ramsey (1896), and in 1915, dominating the centre of town, the stone-built Dominion of Canada Post Office (demolished in 1957). Also at about the same time in Copper Cliff, the company town, were built the Canadian Copper Company's Hospital (1912) and the Copper Cliff Club (1915).¹²⁸

From the time of World War I and on the development and prosperity of the region became dependent on the ups and downs of the mining industry. Sudbury was more completely a mining town with fortunes tied to a single resource-based industry with the attendant “bust and boom” economy. After World War I the demand for copper and nickel plummeted. This caused mine closings, lay-offs and unemployment. But by the mid-1920s prosperity gradually returned, culminating in 1930 with the opening of the new Copper Cliff smelter. The 1921 census showed that there was a decline in British residents, that the number of French-Canadians remained constant, and there was an increase in “others” (Finns, Italians, Ukrainians)¹²⁹: the city began to take on a more cosmopolitan character. The population of 8,621 in 1921 grew to 18,518 by 1931 as Sudbury became the hub of the region.

With the two trans-continental railways, CPR and CNR, and lines east and west from Ottawa, via North Bay, to Sault Ste Marie, Sudbury became the important distribution centre for the mining communities around it. By 1915 an electric street railway had joined Copper Cliff and Sudbury so that it became more possible to live in the latter and travel to work in the former. Improved roads and the advent of the affordable automobile in the mid-twenties accelerated this trend. Employees of the mines still tended to live near their place of work (for example, Coniston, Garson, Levack, Creighton), but Sudbury was the centre, not only of communications, but also for commerce and banking, health care, and entertainment. It was logical, therefore, that a large number of professionals- -accountants, lawyers, teachers, doctors, and business leaders settled in Sudbury.

As a result, the 1920s saw an increase in residential housing which was accelerated by the post-war provincial Housing Act, which financed about eighty houses a year, and the CPR sale of remaining townsites at bargain prices.¹³⁰ Surrounding the centre of the city there arose clusters of communities, each with a distinctive ethnic, religious, and occupational atmosphere.



Figure 6 - Arts and Crafts style house in Sudbury's Kingsmount area

Prosperous middle class housing sprang up on Kingsmount, "the Rosedale of Sudbury,"¹³¹ while the Marymount/ Brébeuf area (to the south of the Flour Mill district) became "the French Kingsmount." An eclectic mix of styles is evident in the buildings in these areas. Many houses show Arts and Crafts leanings, steep gabled roofs and asymmetrical façades, inspired by the designs of Eden Smith in Toronto and Percy Nobbs in Montreal (Figure 6). Percy Nobbs, it will be recalled (Chapter II), had been the second Director of the School of Architecture at McGill, who, like his successor Ramsay Traquair, was interested in developing a Canadian vernacular style of architecture by blending English and Scottish influences with elements of the local domestic tradition. In Scotland he had worked with Sir Robert Lorimer who had ties with the Arts and Crafts movement. William Morris (1834-1896) and Phillip Webb (1831-1915), founders of the Arts and Crafts movement, sought truth in design and materials and upheld good craft traditions.¹³²

In 1929, between Kingsmount and the older established Anglo-Saxon residences

closer to Lake Ramsey, R. D. Parker of

Inco built a "California Spanish colonial"

house for his wife, Myna Bayne Parker.

After occupying their new house for less

than five years, Inco insisted that the

Parkers move to the company town,

Copper Cliff, and their house then

became the happy home of the Merwin



Figure 7 - "California Spanish Colonial," John St., Sudbury (now Laurentian University president's residence)

family for the next thirty years. In 1966, Mr B. Merwin, a prominent lumber merchant, who owned many other commercial enterprises, sold the house to the new Laurentian University as the residence of the President (Figure 7).

Inco built a Medical and Employees Centre (now the Cambrian Foundation) in the centre of town. A fine Art Deco building, it was designed in about 1937 by J. B. Sutton, who was later to design several other important buildings in the early fifties, including the Sudbury Arena, the YMCA (prior to the 70s addition), and the Salvation Army buildings on Lorne Street and Larch Street.¹³³

In 1929-1930 nickel and copper production were at record levels. But eventually the effects of the Depression crushed exploration and expansion in the mining industry. By 1932, employment dropped dramatically from nearly 9,000 in 1930 to about 2,000. "Nickel production and value by 1932 were one-quarter of 1929 levels."¹³⁴

By the middle of the 1930s, however, this situation changed as the overseas demand for nickel escalated. As a job market, in the midst of the Depression, Sudbury was the beneficiary of this boom in exports. The principal buyers of nickel were Germany and Japan. Prophets like the Reverend Percy Frank Bull, rector of the Church of the Epiphany, warned of the dangers of war. But Inco President R. C. Stanley insisted that all nickel was being used for peaceful purposes.¹³⁵

Depression-hungry workers from all over Canada flocked to Sudbury in search of jobs. Belching stacks were a sign of prosperity, no matter what the cost to the environment. The expanding population of hourly workers "caused haphazard growth of cheap dwellings in a city that showed no capacity for planning and had little money for services."¹³⁶ Houses were very modest, sometimes tiny, one-storey frame dwellings, smaller than the national average, many with no indoor plumbing. The numerous single men who worked in the mines lived in cheap boarding houses. By 1943 overcrowding combined with poor sanitation produced health problems with the danger of serious epidemics. To help solve some of these problems, Inco built a new company town, Lively, to provide healthier living conditions for the workers.

After World War II the growth rate in Sudbury was very high. Much of the building that occurred was "in the form of urban sprawl, either as isolated pockets, or as linear strips along the major highways."¹³⁷ This haphazard development was a result of the lack of regional planning. The mixture of neighbourhoods and eclectic building styles, a result of many *ad hoc* decisions based on historical accidents, produced the Sudbury that Townend first encountered when he arrived.

Planning study

On 30 January 1950 the City Council engaged the services of Townend's former professor and Director of the McGill School of Architecture, John Bland, and his partner, Harold Spence-Sales, to carry out a town planning survey of the City of Sudbury. Their recommendations were to have a far-reaching effect on the ultimate reconstruction of Sudbury in which Townend and his partners were to play a significant part.

In their report of July 1950, Bland and Spence-Sales identified many of the problems and made several recommendations.¹³⁸ They strongly advised that the City of Sudbury should apply to the Ontario government to define the boundaries of a new planning area which would include the surrounding districts, and that the City obtain control of planning of all subdivisions. In addition, the City should appoint: (1) a committee that would coordinate all City departments "to ensure that all municipal activities are unified for planning purposes"; (2) a Town Planning Officer, and (3) a Town Planning Commission.¹³⁹

Bland and Spence-Sales remarked on the area south of John Street and Kingsmount as containing "a number of the finest houses in Sudbury." Interestingly, in contrast to the usual reaction to Sudbury at that period, they were "particularly impressed by the beauty of the landscape surrounding Sudbury," but "equally impressed by the lack of facilities for the public enjoyment of the magnificent panoramas that are obtainable from certain points."¹⁴⁰ They abhorred the suburban "ribbon development" along roads (referred to above with Saarinen's description of buildings in "linear strips along the major highways") which

made the provision of schools and services, sewer and water connections costly and difficult.

Bland and Spence-Sales gave much consideration to the problem of the railways that took up so much of the centre of the City. They recommended that an underpass "be created at Douglas Street leading directly to the central area by passing under the Canadian Pacific Railway" and that Elgin Street be extended to form a ring road around the central core, which "should be devoted to the location of public buildings," linked to the other areas with an improved road system to the north and south. The "public buildings" would form the Civic Square complex that Townsend and his partners would eventually design in the mid-1970s.

Bland and Spence-Sales commented favourably on the new buildings going up in the area: the Community Arena, the new Legion (now Steelworkers' Hall), the YMCA and the site of the proposed Public Library, and recommended that the City Market "should be greatly improved and adequate land should be set aside for its expansion and improvement." (Fifty years later that is now happening.) The cosmopolitan character of Sudbury is remarked on again and again, and Bland and Spence-Sales urged the City to respect this aspect and to make sure that these lively neighbourhoods were enhanced and not destroyed in any planning. (Jane Jacobs, whose influential book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* would not appear for another eleven years, would have approved of Bland and Spence-Sales' concern and their desire to respect the character of the "ethnic" neighbourhoods.)¹⁴¹ When the report was made public at the end of July 1950 great prominence was given to it for several days by *The Sudbury Daily Star*.¹⁴²

Building the future and developing an architectural imagination

When Townend arrived in Sudbury after the war, he considered that Sudbury presented him with a “marvellous opportunity” since so much new building was going on. In addition, Townend found people most welcoming and hospitable. They were ready to accept new ideas of modern architecture which seemed synonymous with “progress.” “They didn’t care where you came from, but were very accepting. It was a great atmosphere to work in.”¹⁴³

In a city where sport held such a prominent position, the first new buildings, to which priority was given, were the new Sudbury Arena (1951), which “gave the community the possibility of competing not only regionally but nationally,”¹⁴⁴ and an addition to the original 1930s community YMCA (1953). As mentioned earlier, these two buildings were designed by J. B. Sutton.¹⁴⁵

At the same time, within a year or two of each other, three new hospitals were built: the Sudbury General in 1950, the Sudbury-Algonia Sanatorium in 1952, and the Sudbury Memorial Hospital in 1956. Although Townend was not involved in the original design of the Sudbury-Algonia Sanatorium he later was retained often to make alterations and improvements both to it and the Sudbury General Hospital throughout the rest of his career.¹⁴⁶ Other new buildings of that period included the Sudbury Public Library (1952), and the first section of Pioneer Manor (1953), neither one designed by Sudbury architects.

Hospitals

Townend went to work as a draftsman for Louis Fabbro on the site of the new Sudbury General Hospital (Figure 8). As far as his future career was concerned, this was Townend's "marvellous opportunity". First, he was working for a Sudbury architect who had secured the commission from the Sisters of Saint Joseph whose Mother House was in North Bay. The Sisters were unusual in that they had chosen a local architect rather than, what was generally the custom in Sudbury at the time, a firm from Montreal or Toronto. Secondly, right from the beginning of his career, Townend obtained extensive experience in hospital design.

This new building was a far cry from the first hospital in Sudbury which was a log building constructed by the CPR in 1883 for Dr Howey, the physician hired by the Company to tend to the needs of the railway construction crews. Years later Mrs Howey wrote about their pioneering in the Northern Ontario bush. She described the hospital building "of rough logs."¹⁴⁷

Dr Howey's small log hospital was soon inadequate for the growing community. In 1898 St Joseph's Hospital was built by the Grey Sisters of the Cross from Ottawa at their own expense.¹⁴⁸ There is no mention of the architect who designed the handsome, three-storey, frame building faced with a brick veneer. This was the principal medical centre for Sudbury and district for the next half century, until the



Figure 8 - Sudbury General Hospital, a "Stalin-Eisenhower baroque citadel"

explosion of hospital expansion in the 1950s with the advent of the General, Sudbury-Algoma and Memorial hospitals. St Joseph's Hospital closed in 1975, when the new Laurentian Hospital, commissioned by the Grey Sisters of the Cross, and designed by S. Arthur Townend, opened its doors.¹⁴⁹ The old building was adapted and renovated to provide accommodation for various French cultural groups, including the Centre des Jeunes which had been founded in 1950 by the Jesuit Pere Albert Regimbal.¹⁵⁰ The building is now called Le Carrefour Francophone.

As has already been noted, from the beginning of his professional career Townend gained valuable experience in hospital design. John Stefura remarks,

For a recent graduate, the practical experience of actually being on site during construction was a huge bonus. . . . Being a member of a small office force Townend had the opportunity to participate personally in a myriad aspects of design and construction.¹⁵¹

Townend remembered his experience on the Sudbury General Hospital as a good learning process: "the office was right on the site and we watched the building take shape before our eyes, from drawings prepared the previous day."¹⁵²

Townend's friend from McGill, J. Malcolm "Mac" Maclean, also came to work with Fabbro on the Sudbury General Hospital. He and Eva lived in the Stafford House, an elegant mansion with beautiful oak panelling and oak floors, "even in the attic." It was situated right next door to the three-stemmed hospital building designed by Fabbro. Fresh from the influences of McGill, Maclean was horrified to find "they spent I don't know how many months excavating rock out of the ground. I couldn't believe this would happen. Why don't you build on top of the rock?"¹⁵³ This is exactly what Townend would do when he

came to design Laurentian Hospital as discussed in Chapter IV. The McLeans left Sudbury at the end of that year, not to return until many years later when, due to a series of strange coincidences, their little grandson, Brendan, was born in 1989 in the Sudbury General Hospital that his grandfather had helped build over thirty years before. Since then, the McLeans have visited Sudbury regularly.

After the completion of the Sudbury General Hospital, much of the work in Fabbro's office, where Townend was still employed as a draftsman, involved renovations to hospitals owned by the Sisters of Saint Joseph, with whom Fabbro had a close connection. The Sisters also had a hospital in Port Arthur (now Thunder Bay) and Townend went there periodically to supervise construction.¹⁵⁴

Through the close connection with the Sisters of Saint Joseph, Fabbro's firm received other contracts in North Bay, and with the Grey Nuns in Sault Ste Marie. Townend became very friendly with the Nuns in the Soo where he went frequently to supervise construction. Townend, a keen sailor, remembered often rushing back from the Soo to Sudbury to try "to get to the start line on time for a race."¹⁵⁵

Through the Grey Nuns in the Soo, Townend eventually made contact with the Grey Nuns from Ottawa. His experience and expertise in hospital design grew extensively.¹⁵⁶ Eventually by 1964, this led to his obtaining the architectural contract from the Grey Sisters of the Cross to design the new Laurentian Hospital which, said Townend, "in retrospect took about 25% of my professional life."¹⁵⁷

Churches

The Grey Nuns, who built the first St Joseph's Hospital in 1898, had had a long connection with Sudbury since the early days when they had been asked by the Jesuits to come to minister to the sick and injured in the new village. The CPR and the lumber companies were not the only organisations pioneering in the area. From the beginning the Roman Catholic Church, represented by the Jesuits, established a presence in the small settlement.

In 1883, Father Jean-Baptiste Nolin erected a squared-log mission chapel and presbytery which was called Ste-Anne-des-Pins. Although of log construction, it was already a more sophisticated building than those put up by the CPR—a transition between the “folk” and “vernacular.”¹⁵⁸ There was no “scooped” roof here, but fine shingles, and elegant dormer windows. A new, more impressive wooden church of Ste Anne was built in 1889, only to be destroyed by fire in 1894. By the end of that year, however, it was replaced by a well-proportioned, simple brick building, with a central tower and belfry at the south end. As in the case of St Joseph's Hospital, there is no mention of who designed it. It was evident from the size and permanent nature of Ste Anne's Church and St Joseph's Hospital that the Roman Catholic Church early recognised the potential for a more sustained future for Sudbury.

By the early 1900s there were enough English-speaking Roman Catholics to form their own parish. Eventually, in 1914, this led to the building of the basement of the present Church of Christ the King. Because of World War I and other problems this church, designed by P. J. O'Gorman in an Italianate style, was not completed until the late 1920s.

By the late 1880s Protestant churches also appeared. The early churches were small rectangular frame buildings, replaced in the early 1900s by more solid constructions. St Andrew's Presbyterian Church on Larch Street, built of local stone, was begun in 1908 and opened 19 June 1910.¹⁵⁹ As will be seen in Chapter IV, this building was to collapse in the late 1960s due to the unstable swampy ground on which it was built. Townend and his partners were then retained to build its replacement, with John Stefura the architect in charge. The new St Andrew's Place was opened on 27 May 1973.

By the 1930s the population of Sudbury had expanded enormously. The French-Canadian population had outgrown the area surrounding Ste-Anne-des-Pins and had moved further north into the "Flour Mill" area. A request was made for the formation of a new parish there to be called St-Jean-de-Brébeuf. A new parish church was to be built close to the Jesuit Collège du Sacre-Coeur at the corner of Kathleen and Notre-Dame. Enough money had been collected for the basement to be built in 1930, but then the Depression, followed by the war, prevented further building until the mid 1950s.¹⁶⁰

Townend was still a draftsman with Louis Fabbro when he did the drawings for St-Jean-de-Brébeuf Church. "It wasn't my style of church by any means, but that's what the priest wanted and that's what we were going to provide for him."¹⁶¹ What the priest, Monseigneur Côté, wanted was a "traditional" Québécois parish church (Figure 9). Although bearing a superficial outward resemblance to the old styles, Louis Fabbro's design did not reflect the old construction methods found in Québec churches of the 18th and 19th centuries. Instead, with a fine flight of architectural imagination, he used parabolic

arches in the style of Dom Paul Bellot (1876-1944), a Benedictine who had revolutionized Church architecture in Québec in the 1930s, designing, amongst others, the Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Benoit-du-Lac overlooking Lake Memphramagog in the Eastern Townships south of Montreal. "Dom Bellot's touch is evident most notably in the cloister. Exquisite parabolic arches of red brick, supporting a wood roof, define a space that is illuminated by repeated small stained-glass windows."¹⁶²

Mgr. Côté of St-Jean-de-Brébeuf

decided he wanted the church to be bigger. "It was at least twice the size it was originally to be," said Townend. "But the structure remained the same so the addition was also done by making parabolic arches out of 1 x 6 [boards] and bending and laminating them together."¹⁶³

He may not have cared for the old-fashioned style of the building that the priest wanted, but Townend was impressed by the method of the construction, which may have been the



Figure 9 - St-Jean-de-Brébeuf Church, Flourmills area, Sudbury.

inspiration for the arches used later in the design of the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. St-Jean-de-Brébeuf was consecrated in 1956 and opened in 1957. It was to be the

first of many churches with which Townend would be associated in his architectural practice.

Houses

Sudbury offered Townend yet another marvellous opportunity as he met his future wife there. Two months after they met, S. Arthur Townend and Mary Evelyn Sheahan were married on 14 January 1950, "not a record but it didn't take long to make the best move I ever made."¹⁵⁸ Sailing, as has already been mentioned, was a favourite recreation for Townend. It was not surprising, therefore, when Evelyn said that their first date was to go for a sail on a boat Art had just bought from the Agnew estate.

The wedding ceremony was performed by Monsignor Humphrey, in his study at Christ the King Church, since it could not be performed in the church proper as Townend was not a Catholic. Evelyn, descended from Ottawa Valley Irish farmers, had been born in Chapleau where her father was the general practitioner for thirty-five years. On the death of her husband in Chapleau in 1942, Mrs Sheahan moved her family to Sudbury. The house she bought on Baker Street was designed by and belonged to P. J. O'Gorman, Sudbury's first architect to remain for any length of time in the city (1919 to 1959). O'Gorman designed many of the local "schools, hospitals, churches and commercial buildings, among them the Lansdowne School . . . and Christ the King Church and the Mackey Block."¹⁵⁹

Evelyn and Art's first son, Gordon, was born in 1951. Being married and starting a family was an incentive for Townend to build a home of his own. A year later, Gordon's next sibling was a house. Thus, a couple of years after his marriage, Townend designed and built his first independent building, a major developmental experience for the architectural

imagination as, inspired also by images from his "memory ragbag," he applied the theory of his McGill studies. For the first time he actually had to design and construct a building from scratch on his own. In the next ten years five more children were to join their older brother in this house.

"Canadian buildings have been shaped by a historical experience peculiar to Canada, so that, properly understood," said Gowans, "Canadian architecture is not some dull and colonial reflection of glories elsewhere but a tangible record of the growth of a nation, important in its own right."¹⁶⁰ Parkin thought that Canadian architecture was most successful where "the best available solutions have been borrowed and adapted to the unique Canadian circumstances."¹⁶¹ Still

fresh from the influences of university,

Towrend put into his design for their new house on Boland Avenue (Figure 10) many

of the ideas he was forming about

architecture. "I was still fresh from the

influences of Frank Lloyd Wright in the

States and Le Corbusier in France. The

concept of keeping things simple, and not

necessarily doing them exactly the way everyone else did was still very strong. I suppose

living on this side of the ocean, the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright was quite a bit

stronger than Le Corbusier."¹⁶²



Figure 10 - House no. 1. "the first flat-roofed house in Sudbury"

This new house was a complete contrast to the existing houses, or to designs of other new houses in Sudbury. A typical house design, built at this period, was a one-storey bungalow with a garage attached at one side, with the livingroom and front door facing the street, no matter what the exposure. "Until the mid-twentieth century houses in most cities and towns were almost invariably placed with no regard for their views; the fronts of most homes just stared at one another across the street."¹⁶³ An example of this design, which can be seen in New Sudbury, and in surrounding towns like Hanmer, was shown in *The Sudbury Daily Star* in the summer of 1950: "*The Queenshaven*: This bungalow is designed for 100-foot suburban lot. . . . This is another in the series on practical home planning by Harold C. Beckett, Windsor architect, drawn up for readers of *The Sudbury Daily Star*."¹⁶⁴ A "generic" house, *The Queenshaven* was designed for no particular site, user, or materials, by an architect who lived far from Sudbury.

Unlike *The Queenshaven*, Townend's house was designed carefully to fit the site, using natural materials, and specifically to meet the needs of his family. With his own house Townend was free to experiment and try out new ideas. "It was rather fun as it was the first flat-roofed house in Sudbury and the first house to have those large pieces of glass in it. People would walk up to the windows (and of course they reflect on the bright side) and we would be inside sitting at dinner, and they'd put their head up to the glass and cup their hands and peer at us through the window because they had never seen anything like that before."¹⁶⁵

Evelyn told the story of how she took her two eldest boys to see Santa Claus, played convincingly by Wilf Salo, the manager of Silverman's store. The younger of the two boys,

Arthur, was having doubts about the existence of Santa Claus. However, these were soon swept away after Santa asked him his name. On hearing the reply, "Arthur Townend," Santa said smartly, "Ah, you live in the house with the flat roof that Santa and his Reindeer just love to land on."¹⁶⁶

Townend explained his use of the flat roof in the house design by saying that most institutional and commercial buildings had flat roofs and "if you get a little snow on them they are very well insulated." Furthermore, at that period they were relatively cheap to build and allowed much greater flexibility in the design of the building.¹⁶⁷

This house was innovative, not only because of the flat roof and the large areas of glass in the walls. It was considered an oddity in other ways, too; for instance, the living room did not face the street in the accepted manner, but had a southern exposure on the opposite side of the building. On the street side, facing north (unlike the design for *The Queenshaven*) there was a blank brick wall, giving privacy from the street and protection from the north wind. Alongside the house, there was no garage, but an open carport. Townend had anticipated a trend, that would only become widespread twenty years later, when the automobile forced the reorientation of the house. No longer was the porch, verandah or "front yard of the urban dwelling a zone of potential sociability, a place where families might share a sense of community with friends and neighbours," observed Peter Ward. "The front of the house has migrated to the back. . . . Here the life of the household is directed away from public space, the street, toward the ever greater privacy of the garden."¹⁶⁸

Once he had proved that elements of his design worked well in his own house, Townend would retain them and use them in future houses. In this way, bit by bit, he developed his own unique style.

Planning for Sudbury's Future

In 1955, five years after the recommendation of John Bland and Harold Spence-Sales, the city finally appointed Arnold Faintuck as a planner for the new Sudbury Area Planning Committee. Faintuck and Oryst Sawchuk, a local architect and planner, promoted the orderly planning of the city.¹⁶⁹ But Faintuck resigned in 1957. In the same year, the City made two decisions, both of which had far-reaching importance for the future of Sudbury. First, they sanctioned the building of the New Sudbury Shopping Centre, which, in retrospect was the beginning of the end of the downtown as the main shopping and commercial centre of the city. Secondly, the City made an appointment of a new city planner whose influence would affect Townend and his partners twenty years later. "Pick Polish-Born Planner for Sudbury Area Post" trumpeted *The Sudbury Daily Star*. "Polish-born Klemens Dembek, newly appointed planner, does not find Sudbury as rugged as he expected. He was led to believe it was "rough and rugged, stone on stone" but found on his arrival here two weeks ago that it is 'not so bad'."¹⁷⁰

Dembek wasted no time studying the needs of the growing city. In the downtown, overcrowding, substandard housing and poor sanitation were still cause for concern. By February 1958 he advised the city to undertake an urban renewal study. It was estimated it would take nine months to a year to make such a study which "would let each municipality know where its sorespots are located and would indicate corrective measures to be taken. . .

. The data obtained from it would go a long way in completing an official plan for Sudbury."¹⁷¹

In 1963 Dembek presented *A Study for Urban Renewal in Sudbury Ontario Prepared for the City Council by the Sudbury Planning Board and Project Planning Associates* in which was outlined the "varying degrees of housing conditions and neighbourhood quality" in existing areas, and the "extent and type of new housing required."¹⁷² The study, carried out by the Sudbury Planning Board, under the supervision of Dembek, gave a "Central Business District Proposed Development Plan" for the downtown area outlining the extension of Notre Dame and Paris on the east, Elgin on the west, joined by Ste Anne's Road on the north, to provide the "ring road" recommended by Bland and Spence-Sales. In this plan, Dembek also recommended "the total clearance and redevelopment of the Borgia area," the creation of a downtown park, a shopping centre at Elm and Notre Dame, and the anchoring element, a "Civic Centre Complex" fronting on Paris and Brady streets.¹⁷³ The latter would be a major project for Townend and his partners in the mid-1970s.

At first none of the city politicians or senior officials agreed to Dembek's sweeping changes, and, later, during the difficult building stage, they were not supportive of the architects. But afterwards, when the plans were successfully put into effect, the politicians and senior officials took all the credit giving no recognition to Dembek or to the architects.¹⁷⁴ In 1975 Narasim Katary came to work with Dembek as a city planner. According to Katary, "Klemens Dembek, Planning Director from 1957 to 1985, literally changed the face of this city: Paris Street, the By-Pass and the entire downtown were his

concept."¹⁷⁵ Dembek, in turn, had developed many of his ideas from the work of his predecessor, Arnold Faintuck, and from the seminal report of Townend's former professor, John Bland, and Harold Spence-Sales.

Many other people made contributions to the planning of the greater Sudbury region. In 1966 O. W. Saarinen, later a professor of Geography at Laurentian University, wrote his Master's thesis, *A Geographical Basis for Regional Planning in the Sudbury Area*. A year later Sawchuk and Peach presented their *Nickel Basin Planning Study*¹⁷⁶ which took into consideration a far wider area than the recently enlarged City of Sudbury.

Junior partner

In 1955 Townend became a partner in the firm, *Fabbro and Townend*. Fabbro was fairly well-known and the firm had developed quite a good reputation, partially because of Fabbro's own work, but also due to Townend's contributions to that partnership that were not really recognised.¹⁷⁷ Townend designed several Mine Mill union halls in Sudbury, Coniston, Creighton, Garson, as well as a Summer Camp on Richard Lake. These buildings were "imaginative and innovative, not the usual box."¹⁷⁸ As his architectural imagination and experience developed, more and more Townend created the designs that gave the firm its good reputation.

Fabbro considered the important part of architectural practice to be the obtaining of the contract, and on the golf course he made contacts that he hoped would do that. There was some foundation for his view. As previously observed, in the 1950s there was still a tendency to give architectural contracts to firms from Montreal and Toronto. "Many public bodies had no faith in local architects. Major projects were designed by Toronto and

Montreal firms, for example, Prince Charles Public School (later Ecole Jeanne Sauve), Ecole Secondaire l'Heritage (Second Avenue), Sudbury Public Library (original building), St Elizabeth School of Nursing at the original St Joseph's Hospital, St Stanislaus Church (Copper Cliff), Pioneer Manor, Memorial Hospital, Sudbury Star Building, the City Centre."¹⁷⁹

Inco especially was guilty of almost never using Sudbury professionals. When the new Laurentian University was built in the early 1960s, with the Vice-President of Inco, Ralph D. Parker, as Chairman of the Board of the new University, all the architects were from either Montreal or Toronto. It was exceedingly difficult for an architect practising in Sudbury to break through.

Public buildings

In 1956 Townend and Carl Pfister, who was also in Fabbro's office, designed the first building in Sudbury and one of the earliest in Canada, enclosed with what became very common later on, the "curtain wall". Townend recalled:

When we did the Hydro Building there wasn't any commercially available curtain wall material that we thought might handle the weather in Northern Ontario. There was a window manufacturer that worked with us who was prepared to try to do what we wanted. . . . We used a mill finish with no anodizing, no protective finish on the outside of the aluminum, because the Aluminum Company thought that an anodized finish might not last quite as long as a mill finish on aluminum because of the traumatic conditions around Sudbury at that time. It is true that it has lasted very well. The aluminum goes grey, it almost looks like an old weathered farm as it gets old. . . . That Hydro Building was designed to carry two more floors on top if it had been necessary.¹⁸⁰

(Figure 11)

This building was a wonderful opportunity for Townend and Pfister to try their own composition in the Modernist vocabulary. Townend and Pfister took elements of the so-called "International" style, the non-weight-bearing Miesian curtain wall, for example, and incorporated it in a design that was functional, site-specific and innovative. Because of the unstable ground in that area of the downtown, Townend and Pfister used an imaginative and practical system of floating the whole building on a concrete raft. This was the first use of the system in Sudbury.¹⁸¹

The new Sudbury Hydro building on the corner of Larch and Young opened with great fanfare on Wednesday, 3 April 1957. Two pages of photographs and articles in *The Sudbury Daily Star* enthusiastically acclaimed the \$250,000 building, as usual with no mention of the architects: "While a strong emphasis was placed on the utilitarian in planning the many features of the new two-storey hydro headquarters in Sudbury, the



Figure 11 - Hydro building in downtown Sudbury (as in 1967) showing the curtain wall.

building also reflects pleasing contemporary architecture. . . in a manner which will keep abreast of progress."¹⁸²

(The building has been much altered in appearance and is now used by the Rainbow District School Board.)

Townend also undertook smaller projects. An enthusiastic sailor, he was one of the founders of the Sudbury Yacht Club. He designed the A-frame Club House, opened in 1960, which Townend said was an adaptation of the design for a camp that he

was going to build by Moonlight Beach; but he decided not build there and sold the property to André Lacroix. Townend

remembered designing the little shed for the dry sail area during one weekend. The Shed was one of his favourite “tiny projects” because of its “purity,” where the cedar sides and roof were composed of a square with the ridge of the roof on the diagonal.¹⁸³ The triangular design of the



Figure 12 - Sudbury Yacht Club, on Ramsey Lake

club house A-frame was an allusion to the sails of the yachts and dinghies of the members of the club (Figure 12). Later an extension was added on the north and east sides of the building where Townend had originally designed a deck. He was sorry that he was not consulted about the design of this addition which he thought spoiled the clear lines of the A-frame.

In 1955 the firm of *Fabbro and Townend* was awarded the contract for the new Federal Building on Lisgar Street which took up the whole block between Elm and Cedar. Described as a “good regional adaptation of the International style”¹⁸⁴ (Figure 13),

Townend describes,

the building is only two storeys high with a basement. It is all supported on a concrete raft . . . Basically some of those buildings weigh a little less than the earth that’s excavated to put the basement in. One of the thoughts is that if the ground would support the earth that was there in the first place, it’ll support the building that weighs less than the earth that has been removed.¹⁸⁵

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This building was a further development of some of the ideas used in the Hydro Building. Townend's McGill training in engineering again proved important in the structural design of this building. Townend used polished pink granite panels along the base, giving not only colour, but also a sense of solidity and connection to the Precambrian Shield environment. (Recently the building has been "renovated" which, though keeping the mix of glass and granite curtain wall, has changed the proportions.) The granite provides a warm contrast

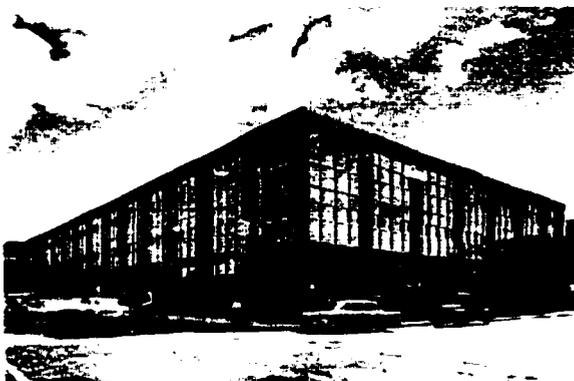


Figure 13 - Federal building, (as in 1958), a "good regional adaptation of the International Style"

with the cold metal and glass above on the outside curtain wall. Overall the Federal Building is a stronger looking building than the Hydro Building, which is paler and more frail-looking. Both the Hydro and the Federal buildings brought to Sudbury a note of new, modern,

sophisticated cosmopolitanism. They were certainly not like any other buildings that already existed in the downtown.

The Honourable C. D. Howe laid the corner stone for the Federal Building on April 13, 1957. The move to the new building in February 1958 was covered by *The Sudbury Daily Star*, but, as usual, there was no mention of the architects.¹⁸

Towards independence

In the early sixties Townend began to design houses for private clients. These will be studied in more depth in Chapter V. They are mentioned here as their appearance showed that his architectural imagination was expanding in different directions as he experimented

with materials and styles on different projects. With each project he gained in experience, confidence and ideas.

By 1962 the house on Boland Avenue was becoming too small for the boisterous young Townend family, especially as the seventh child was due in the Fall. They debated whether they should add to the house, but for various reasons Townend decided it would be better to build another house. So, he designed and built his second family home, high up on the cliff above the west end of Lake Ramsey, with a splendid view looking east down the lake. With the help of many friends, the Townends moved in to their new house in June 1962, and Jane was born in October.

The same year Townend designed another house close to his own, a long elegant three-storey structure facing due south, tucked in under the brow of the cliff. In 1964, to the east of this house and south of his own, Townend designed another residence, cantilevered out over the rock, taking advantage of the spectacular views east down Lake Ramsey and south across Lily Creek. (These houses will be considered in greater detail in Chapter V.)

Early that same year, 1964, Townend had mentioned to John Stefura, a partner since 1955 in the firm *Barbeau and Stefura*, that he was thinking of setting up his own practice. What made that moment the right moment for him to start out on his own is probably a combination of many complex factors. By this date he had been a junior partner in the firm of *Fabbro and Townend* for almost nine years and in that time had accumulated considerable experience in the practice of his profession. The same adventurous and independent spirit that had encouraged him to leave Jamaica “to do something on his own” was still there. But more than anything, growing confidence in his abilities, a deepening

appreciation of the environment, and a maturing architectural imagination gave him the courage to start his own firm.

Stefura had told Townend that, if he did set up his own practice, he would be interested in joining him. Stefura recalls what led to this decision, explaining that Townend's partner "was the type that felt the most important thing was getting the job. Of course, he belonged to the golf club and socialized extensively. Well, I had a similar sort of partnership. My partner was another one who was a golfer and a very good golfer too, probably four over par. But during the summer, I barely ever saw the guy: he was either golfing, or supervising construction of schools throughout the northeastern part of the province. After a few years of this sort of diet, I thought, well, what's the point?"¹⁸⁷

In June 1964 Townend started on his own, working from the office he had included in the new house on Crown Street, where "a brave Nello Mozzon" joined his one-man office as draftsman.¹⁸⁸ The following month, Townend went to see John Stefura and discussed the possibility of going into partnership. Stefura remembered, "we got into partnership in November of that year and that lasted till '88 when he retired. It worked very well. We both had similar ideas and we got along very well. I don't think we had an argument in all the years we were together."¹⁸⁹

Chapter IV - The Buildings: “Publick Edifices”

The next two chapters will examine how Townend employed the concepts that were important to him in the design of complex projects, like large public buildings, and in more simple undertakings, like private houses, that were to meet the needs of people in Northern Ontario.

Experiencing Buildings

Bernard Berenson wrote, “Art history is the history of art as an experience.”¹⁹⁰ In order to write about the architectural imagination in the case of Townend it is best to experience his designs directly by examining his buildings. But, as Rasmussen pointed out,

even the most precise description, enumerating all visible characteristics, will not give an inkling of what we feel is the essence of the thing itself. Details tell nothing essential about architecture, simply because the object of all good architecture is to create integrated wholes. Understanding architecture, therefore, is not the same as being able to determine the style of a building by certain external features. It is not enough to *see* architecture; you must experience it.¹⁹¹

In experiencing Townend’s buildings, therefore, what must we be aware of to see the architectural imagination at work? If, as was said in Chapter I, the architect is not quite like a writer or a painter, then writing about architecture is also not the same as writing about literature or paintings. Even two thousand years ago Vitruvius emphasised the importance of observation in understanding buildings. “Writing on architecture is not like history or poetry,”¹⁹² said Vitruvius, who wrote on architecture in the time of the Emperor Augustus. Vitruvius did believe, however, that with the publication of his ten books on architecture he

would become known to posterity. He insisted that buildings "must be built with due reference to durability, convenience, and beauty." We are concerned with all three.

Durability and convenience may be easier to assess, but beauty is more difficult. After 1500 years of near oblivion in the scriptoria of secluded monasteries, Vitruvius' work was printed in the late fourteenth century to the excitement and joy of Renaissance architects, including Andrea Palladio, who wrote his own treatise on architecture in 1570, where he took up many of Vitruvius' ideas.

As discussed in Chapter I, Rasmussen, like Lincourt, suggested different ways of experiencing architecture by considering aspects of buildings: "solids and cavities," "color planes," "scale and proportion," "rhythm," "textural effects," "daylight," and, more interestingly, "hearing architecture." But, Rasmussen cautions,

It is absolutely impossible to set up absolute rules and criteria for evaluating architecture because every worthwhile building - like all works of art - has its own standard. If we contemplate it in a carping spirit, with a know-it-all attitude, it will shut itself up and have nothing to say to us. But if we ourselves are open to impressions and sympathetically inclined, it will open up and reveal its true essence.¹⁹³

Rasmussen was not intending to make judgements about buildings, but rather "to endeavour to explain the instrument the architect plays on, to show what a great range it has and thereby awaken the senses to its music."¹⁹⁴

Edmund Burke Feldman advocated a similar method: "We wish to arrive at a simple account of "what is there" Although our perceptions appear to lead toward certain

interpretations and evaluations, we defer or postpone them - they will not be forgotten - until we complete our inventory.”¹⁹⁵

For the inventory Lincourt considered several different aspects, or “veils,” of the architectural phenomenon including the people who inhabit it, functional purpose, surroundings, materials and the structure, form and space, and character, that is, the architectural appearance that exists beyond geometric and material features: and finally, behind character, the projection of human “thoughts and feelings towards their built environment.”¹⁹⁶

With the encouragement of Rasmussen, Lincourt, and Feldman, it is possible to begin experiencing some of Townend’s buildings to find “what’s there.” In this process, it is hoped to obtain a better understanding of how Townend has solved problems of design in Northeastern Ontario to produce buildings that are durable, convenient and beautiful.

Public Buildings

Laurentian Hospital

In 1964 Townend decided to leave the partnership of *Fabbro and Townend* and start his own firm. As was seen in Chapter III, since first working as a draftsman on the designs of the Sudbury General Hospital in 1948, Townend had accumulated extensive experience in hospital design as the Sisters of Saint Joseph and the Grey Nuns had employed him for renovations to their hospitals in Thunder Bay, Sault Ste Marie, North Bay and Sudbury.

Eventually, in the summer of 1964, this experience led “to the job finding the man,”¹⁹⁷ as Frank Lloyd Wright would have said, when he obtained the contract from the

Grey Sisters of the Cross to design their new Laurentian Hospital in Sudbury. This new hospital was to replace the old St Joseph's Hospital which was originally opened in 1898. St Joseph's Hospital had served Sudbury well for over half a century until the building boom of the 1950s when three new hospitals, the General (belonging to the Sisters of Saint Joseph in North Bay), Memorial and the Sudbury-Algoma Sanatorium, provided new and up-to-date services.

After obtaining the contract for Laurentian Hospital in 1964, Townend spent most of the next ten years on the design of that building, developing the plans, and looking after the field work, until the hospital was opened in 1974. After that, Townend was connected with projects at Laurentian Hospital for the rest of his professional life.

John Stefura joined him as a partner in November 1964 and Townend considered the Laurentian Hospital project "a very formative basis for the new office of *Townend and Stefura*."¹⁹⁸ It was not only the first project in his newly independent firm, but it was also his last before he retired in 1988 when he signed the plans and specifications for the Northeastern Ontario Regional Cancer Centre. (Townend himself even benefitted from care at "his" hospital. Eight years after he had retired, he suffered a stroke and a heart attack, and was flown back from Florida for successful treatment in the Rehabilitation Department of Laurentian Hospital.)

Townend was delighted that Laurentian Hospital was chosen in 1997 as the site for the new Sudbury Regional Hospital, adding on to the buildings that he had designed thirty years earlier. Furthermore, the contract for the expansion was given to Townend's

successor firm of *Nicholls Yallowega Bélanger, Architects/Architectes*, as a joint venture with Klaus Duda, another Sudbury architect, who had done work on the Sudbury Memorial Hospital. The Laurentian Hospital building, then, for all these reasons, is the building that will be considered in more detail.

The original hospital, opened in 1974 in its present form (as opposed to the additions and accretions that are now in the process of happening around it), is a soaring grey concrete, stream-lined, rectangular building, ten storeys high, with the long sides

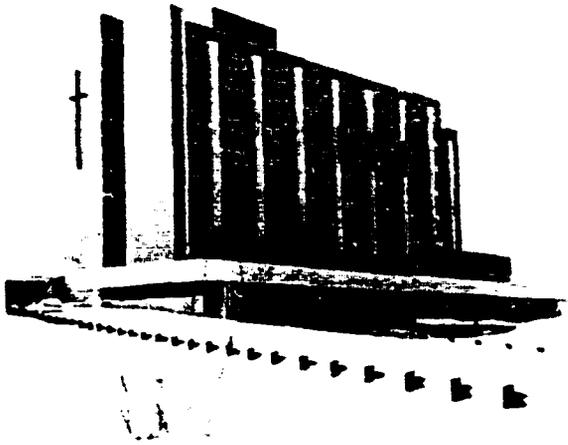


Figure 14 - Laurentian Hospital

facing north and south, and the narrow ends facing east and west. The tower appears to be made up of the two façades sandwiched together in the middle by the elevator tower (Figure 14). The north and south elevations are divided vertically into eight bays by prominent narrow concrete pilasters that

emphasize the height of the building while enlivening what might have been long boring horizontal façades.

In the centre of the north façade there are two large box-like bulges in the sixth and seventh bays which disrupt the appearance of the building. They seem an anomaly, or strange appendages, which indeed they were. It is an example of the many unforeseen demands on an architect, and of how experience, intimate understanding of the construction

method and the requirements of the client, and imagination can solve the problem.

Townend explained how this came about:

The decision to put in an Intensive Care Unit was made by the Board long after the second set of plans was finalized. We had to get some extra space somewhere. They didn't want to reduce the beds and they wanted more space for the Intensive Care Unit. The only way I could see how to do it was to stick a piece of the floor out - so that's what we ended up doing.¹⁹⁹

This was a practical solution carried out in the most frugal way.

The east façade is raised one storey above the west, as the ground is elevated at that point, and the approach to the entrance climbs up this contour from Ramsey Lake Road. A large steel cross is fixed high up on the windowless east façade, a reminder of the founders, the Grey Nuns of the Cross (Figure 15). In the inaccessible right angle of the right branch of the cross, several storeys above the porte-cochere, ravens have built their nest making an unexpected link with the natural world.

The grey concrete is not flat but has a vertical ribbed texture which, depending on the light, produces sometimes interesting shadows, and sometimes the striped effect of moire wallpaper. Above the first floor a horizontal band of smooth concrete wraps around the building, contrasting with and containing the vertical stripes. It is unfortunate that the grey colour of the concrete has a rather drab appearance which is accentuated when it is wet. When the sky is overcast and the building is streaked with rain the overall effect is depressing. In the original design only the base of the building was to be in the grey concrete. The rest of the building was to be of white cement and dolomite aggregate, but

the extra cost was not acceptable to the Ministry and the Board.²⁰⁰ In later buildings

Townend did not use grey coloured concrete again.

Before doing anything else Townend had examined the site, which was very rocky.

The first thing we did was have a survey done of the site. I tried to locate the building on it to minimise blasting I got a little head start on it that way before we finalized the

drawings and had the structural engineers develop the foundation.²⁰¹

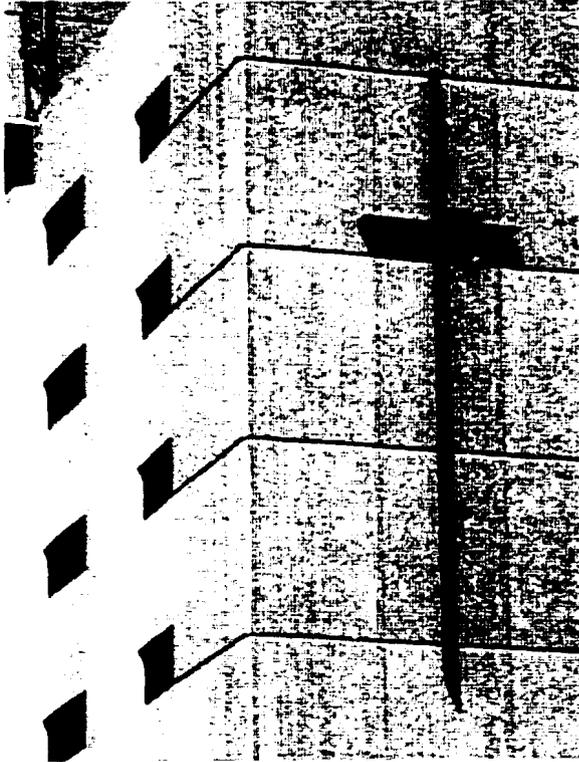


Figure 15 - Laurentian Hospital cross, with ravens' nest. Note moiré pattern of concrete.

Townend constantly tried to imagine how people would use the building, visualising how it would appear to patients, staff and visitors. The porte-cochère shelters people from the weather as they alight from vehicles in front of the recessed doors.

This is especially important in winter when there is ice and snow. Inside there is a large, well lit, double-storey square entrance hall with space for people to sit.

Elevators are in the centre of the main

tower, forming the cross bar of an H, with corridors of the north and south sections on either side, off which are the patients' rooms.

Pastel colours are used on the walls and the floors. At both ends of each corridor there is a large window the width of the corridor. The bright, light interiors have a positive psychological effect on patients, visitors, and those who work there. Townend had carefully consulted research on the beneficial effect of colour on the sick, and he had incorporated these findings in the design.²⁰²

Windows in the patients' rooms are also large and low. Townend, who had had more than his fair share of hospital stays, said, “I think I took a fair amount of effort in trying to make sure that the patients in the hospital beds could see out of the window.”²⁰³ On the north side the patients had a view towards Lake Ramsey, with later, in 1984, Science North. To the south and east there was a view of the golf course, later spoiled by enlarged parking areas.

On the corridor side of the patients' rooms were cupboards containing supplies and charts that could also be opened in the room. This was the Freizen concept of “nurse servers” that Townend introduced in the design, which initially met with resistance, but which seems to be in use today and has been included in the design of the more recent sections.

Another, more controversial, innovation that Townend introduced was the nurses' call system. The nurses' call system was answered by one person in the main lobby. When the patient rang the bell, his request for help would be signalled by a light on a graphic plan of the hospital in the front lobby. The person answering the call would speak to the patient by intercom and, by means of another button, locate all the various nurses on the floor. The

system allowed immediate contact with the nurse closest to the patient.”²⁰⁴ In theory this system should have worked better than it has: cutbacks in staff mean that there are few nurses available at any one time to attend to the needs of patients.

On the first floor just west of the elevators is a small chapel with brick walls, with glowing gold-coloured glass bricks placed apparently randomly, which reflect light from the interior dim artificial lights, and also allow some light from the corridor outside to penetrate the chapel. The placement of these glass bricks may have been inspired by Gordon Webber’s “dots on cardboard” exercise at McGill. There is lots of natural wood and overall the atmosphere is one of calm and peace in the otherwise bustling and busy hospital.

At the western end of the main building on the first floor is the Rehabilitation Centre, and accessible to the north, on the same level, and below, is the Northeastern Ontario Regional Cancer Centre, the last major part of the Laurentian Hospital that Townend designed. (The brick building, “Daffodil Terrace,” added later to the left of the Cancer Centre was not designed by Townend.) Because of the slope of the land, the Cancer Centre is tucked in neatly at the foot of the high tower. It has a quite different appearance than the concrete tower above it. This area is almost like a series of small domestic houses built in earth coloured brick. The pitched roofs are in fact a series of ridges of glass skylights allowing daylight into the building from above. The building conveys a sense of respect for the patient who will use these facilities. There is a feeling of quiet intimacy, but also of life and hope, produced by the abundant light, the spacious lobby, and human scale

detailing. Townend received the contract in 1986 and signed the drawings and specifications in September 1988 immediately before he retired. The building was officially opened by Princess Diana in 1991.

Not only does the architect have to think how to accommodate all the immediate needs in a building's design, but he also has to imagine what might change with different circumstances. Townend said that when designing Laurentian Hospital he had seen ways that would allow it to expand in the future.

I would try to do that so that the building could grow without major trauma. With Laurentian Hospital that meant going down with a little bit of extra blasting in the elevator section so that we could go sideways for the Cancer Treatment Centre in the future. It worked out well because patients can come from the hospital, which opened in 1974, and go to the treatment areas, that opened in 1991, without feeling that they are disjointed.²⁰⁵

Other areas that were planned to allow for expansion included services such as the laboratory, pharmacy and central supplies, which were placed in a separate service building that could be expanded independently. Essential services, like X-Ray and the Operating Suite, were located on the periphery of the main building so that they could be extended without creating problems for the patient bedrooms.²⁰⁶

In the building of Laurentian Hospital Townend drew on his extensive experience in hospital design, as well as interviews with potential users. He travelled all over North America to look at conveyor systems. He and one of the Sisters visited many other hospitals and he took pictures and made notes into a dictaphone. But his architectural

imagination had to make sense of all this complex information creating a building that was an integrated whole.

In 1997 Townend’s successor firm, *Nicholls Yallowega Belanger Architects*, in a joint partnership with Klaus Duda, Architect, were given the contract for the extensions and modifications that will turn the Laurentian Hospital complex into the new Sudbury Regional Hospital. Though Townend’s original plans had allowed for expansion, the scale and extent of the new additions may well provide a “disjointing” experience. This is a problem that the present architects are acutely aware of. Much thought and effort have gone into the planning of the additions to mitigate any sense of alienation that patients and others might find on trying to find their way through a maze of interconnected buildings. (It is to be remembered that the Sudbury Regional Hospital serves not only people from the City of Sudbury, but also many people from much smaller communities throughout Northeastern Ontario, who may well find such a large facility confusing and intimidating)

Blaine Nicholls, the senior partner of the successor firm, spent much time with the other members of his firm discussing the concepts of the new additions. All their ideas were summarised on a board in the lunch room where everyone would see it every day. Amongst the concepts to be incorporated were “northernness” of the location (rocky terrain, timber, weather and seasons); “patient focused” which included predominantly “way finding,” but also comfort, colour and warmth; the “community” that the hospital

will serve; and finally, “architecture” which included the idea of “fit” with the site, function, and the existing buildings.²⁰⁷

Townend was pleased that Laurentian Hospital had been chosen, but was curious to see how his successors would design the additions. “It is gratifying that the hospital restructuring committee decided that Laurentian would be retained. . . and it will be interesting to see what finally takes shape.”²⁰⁸

Northern Ontario Health Sciences School (NOHSS)

Today the warm coloured brick residence building seems to dance along the brow of the cliff above Lily Creek (Figure 16). It is a very lively design with enormous movement created by three triangular six-storey sections that project southwards. The sides of each triangle are broken up by set-backs that create a distinctive vertical folding screen.

The set-backs maximise the view over Lily Creek to the south. To the north of the residence, closest to Memorial Hospital, is the two-storey teaching area.



Figure 16 - School of Nursing

In 1966 the NOHSS (later the Cambrian College Health Sciences Training School) was to be built next to the Sudbury Memorial Hospital. Townend was the leader of the design team and he wanted to place the building at the top of the cliff, facing south, overlooking Lily Creek. To maximise the view

through the south-facing windows, he designed a four foot off-set for each room (Figure 17). As each brick wall was a bearing wall,

the off-sets helped to keep the building rigid. Dr John Sturtridge, Chairman of the NOHSS, and his fellow board members agreed to this design. But the Ministry said the design would cost too much and would exceed the budgeted \$25 per square foot.

The Ministry wanted to use the habitual “shoe box” rectangular design.²⁰⁹

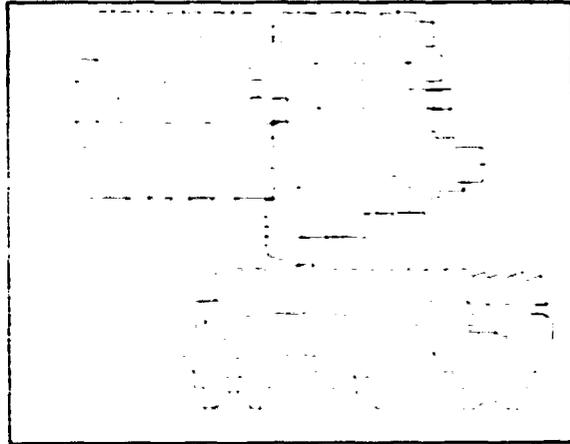


Figure 17 - Plan of School of Nursing showing residence “pods”

The Health Sciences School is only partially used for its original purpose. It is no longer a school of nursing. The residence is used for students attending Cambrian College and Collège Boréal, but the classrooms are not used at all. The Library is used by the Northern Centre for Advanced Technology (NORCAT).

Students, who now occupy this building, love living in the residence which has a family atmosphere. Each student has a private room, with a good view. There is a common room, kitchen and bathroom on each floor, which makes the accommodation less institutional and more intimate. The opposite of a box, Townend’s design gave a feeling of freedom and expansiveness to the building that dances along the ridge reflecting the youthful energy of its inhabitants.

“We all worked very hard,” said John Stefura, “and we made it come out at \$23 per square foot and nothing else was said. The firm received a Design Canada Award of Excellence in 1972 for the design of the building.”²¹⁰

Three Different Churches

Thorneloe Chapel

In 1967 Townend designed a small chapel for Thorneloe University, one of the three Federated religious colleges on the Laurentian University campus. Completed in 1969 and



Figure 18 - Thorneloe Chapel, Laurentian University campus

dedicated to St Mark, it was donated by the Fielding family in memory of their parents, George Parker Fielding and Agnes Fielding.

The chapel walls consist of six triangular wedges and one rectangular wedge of concrete that are placed in a circle but which do not touch in the centre.

The apexes of the triangles, each at different angle and level, reach for the sky. (Figure 18).

The space in the centre between all the concrete wedges is the floor area of the chapel.

Interior walls are created by that part of the concrete wedges that reaches towards the centre, each at a different angle, creating extraordinary effects of light and shade from the stained-glass windows in the intervening spaces. The interior is calm, comforting and serene, and cool with the brilliant blue of the stained glass windows

Outside the chapel is covered with metal roofing, painted lavender, which tucks down between the seven concrete triangular wedges. The original design was for a copper roof which, unfortunately, the sponsors considered too expensive; instead, they opted for a synthetic rubber which did not wear well.²¹¹

The largest and tallest concrete wedge, with a slender metal cross on its apex, reaches for the sky on the eastern side of the chapel like a spire. In the space between it and the next concrete division there is a long rectangular stained glass window, with four crossbars dividing it into five horizontal sections, and two dividing it longitudinally. The two outside sections are filled with purple stained glass, while the centre section is pale blue. In each of the next three spaces between the concrete wedges there is another stained glass window, each one smaller than the last. The ground is heaped up forming a mound around the foundations of the chapel. To enter one descends a flight of twelve steps to a wooden door to the right of a glass wall. The glassed-in entrance way is a small triangle, formed by two concrete wedges making two sides and the glass wall the third.

On certain parts of the outside the poured concrete seems to have weathered poorly with "pock marks" on the sections facing northwest. For many years poured concrete seems to have been an unpredictable material to build with, as witnessed by Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple (1906) in Oak Park, Chicago, where the concrete has been crumbling seriously for several decades on the exterior walls. Later developments in pre-cast concrete seem to have eliminated some of the earlier problems of poured concrete.

Space, form and light are all present in this building in an unusual combination. A low ceiling at the entrance opens up to a soaring ceiling in the chapel. The concrete wedges produce angled walls on the inside with different planes that allow the light from the angled windows to penetrate the interior. Purplish-blue stained glass windows make spots of colour reminiscent of the ancient costly Tyrian dye, made from molluscs, reserved for garments of emperors and kings.

Other jogs of the collective memory are present in the triangular shape of the concrete walls representing the Holy Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, constituting One God in Christian belief. Further symbolism is present in the mythical and Biblical number seven in the seven concrete walls, conjuring associations of seven deadly sins, seven lean years and seven fat years, seventh heaven- -the abode of extreme bliss, the seven Sages of Greece, the Seven Sisters- -the Pleiades, seven-league boots, seven Wonders of the World- -the most remarkable monuments of antiquity.

This building, sitting on the grass, is an imaginative, poetic, artistic creation. It is totally different from anything that Townend had designed before, demonstrating flights of imagination not seen in preceding buildings. It is not just a modern sculpture gracing the lawn. It has a further reason for existing. It is a building that the Thorneloe University community can use for specific purposes and enjoy as an artistic experience.

The firm received a Design Council award for the building.²¹²

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

A quite different church, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, designed by Carl Pfister and Arthur Townend in 1969, was “built in the shape of a great ark.”²¹³ Situated in Gatchell to the north of Lorne Street, the main artery from the west into the city, the church’s ark-like contours can be seen distinctly from the street below. The high prow of the great ship is directed towards the southeast, while the beam amidships is



Figure 19 - Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Gatchell area of Sudbury

broad and low, rising again to a slightly elevated stern (Figure 19.) Inside the sanctuary the great laminated arches that support the roof, like the ribs of a mighty ship, converge at the prow. Walking from the dimly lit, low-ceilinged entrance towards the altar one sees that these great arches are a dramatic pointer to the chancel which is situated in the brightly lit, high ceilinged prow. Windows are high up forming a clerestory under the roof.

Amidships in the low area there are meeting rooms, the lobby and other facilities. Off the lobby, towards the north, is a small chapel where again above the chancel the roof soars, but not nearly so high as in the main sanctuary.

Townend said that in an early meeting with the priest, Father H. R. Brennan, and some others, there were suggestions made about what a church could do and be. It was

thought that a church should be a place for conversation and discussion, as well as worship, and that the form of the church should include a "fairly low ceiling area which would make it more conducive to discussion back and forth, rather than having the church all high ceilings."²¹⁴ The pews were designed so that they could be moved around making the space more flexible. On the wall in the lobby is a photograph of Father Brennan, "who, for 32 years, helped to build our parish and this church. September 1975."²¹⁵ Also in the lobby is a clipping from *Sudbury Life*, Thursday, 16 March 1972, with a photograph of the church by Karl Somerer entitled "Ship of God."

Certainly, in some measure the design flows from the need for flexible space for both meetings and worship, but why did Townend and Pfister create that particular exuberant and flowing form? It is an expressionist flourish that celebrates the many immigrants who worshiped there, who mostly came by ship to Canada. It is also the ark of the congregation saving them from the ravages of the flood.

Users wish that there were more natural light than that provided by the clerestory in the main sanctuary.²¹⁶ Is the lack of natural light there a failure of the architectural imagination? Or perhaps the dimly lit interior is the enclosing safe hold for the creatures to be saved from the tempest of life? The concentration of light over the altar, in contrast to the dimly lit main sanctuary, is the ray of hope in the dark world, a metaphor for the message of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

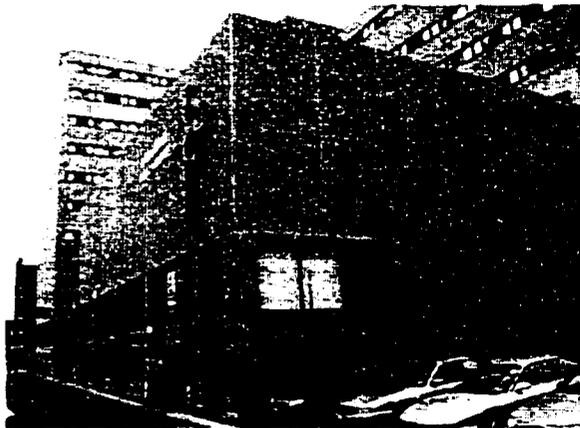
St Andrew's Place

Figure 20 - St. Andrew's Place, from Medina Street

St Andrew's Place on Larch Street was much more than a church. The precast concrete building on Larch Street is L-shaped, with the shorter nine-storey section on Larch Street, and the longer, higher eleven-storey section containing the seniors' apartments facing west and east.

The lower section, facing Larch Street to the north and Memorial Park to the south, contains meeting rooms, an activity hall and kitchens for functions, a Christian education centre and library, Church offices, board room and a lounge, and the sanctuary. The south side of the complex, containing the sanctuary, faces Memorial Park. A large Celtic Cross dominates the outside south wall of the Church, making links with Scotland's patron Saint and the Scottish origins of one branch of the United Church of Canada (Figure 20).

There are further potent symbols to remind the congregation of their heritage and their faith. Above the entrance door on Larch Street is a huge, round, seven-tongued flame sculpture cast in metal by Jordi Bonet of Mont St Hilaire, Québec. Leading into the sanctuary are three great doors, also cast in metal, with interesting deep relief sculptures

again by Jordi Bonet. The doors represent sayings of Jesus: “I am alpha and omega,” “I am the door,” “I am the light of the world,” “I am the resurrection and the life.”

The sanctuary is two storeys high with a dramatically angled cedar strip ceiling. There are no pews but chairs (as in a cathedral) and a raised platform serves as the chancel (Figure 21). It is easy to see that the space can be used for concerts as well as church services. The pulpit and lectern are like the chairs in simple modern design in light coloured wood. This is another sanctuary, like Our Lady of Perpetual Help, that is a flexible space that can be used for purposes other than worship. Unlike Our Lady of Perpetual Help, there are large windows all along the south and west walls letting in plenty of natural light and giving a view over the park to the south.

A small chapel is situated on the mezzanine. A touching memory of the demolished St Andrew’s Church, it is constructed in stone from the old church, and, again, has heavy metal carved doors designed by Jordi Bonet. In contrast to



Figure 21 - St. Andrew's United Church, Sanctuary

the bright light flooding the sanctuary downstairs, the chapel is dimly lit by stained glass windows facing north.

The original church, built of local stone in 1910, settled unevenly due to the unstable ground on which it was built, and, by 1968, became unsafe for occupancy. “The

congregation considered re-building but membership was dwindling and the cost was very high. Then the dynamic minister, Dr Charles Forsyth, took over and convinced the congregation of the social as well as the spiritual mission of the downtown church.”²¹⁷ Dr Forsyth “challenged St Andrew’s congregation to build a 20th-century cathedral . . . a statement, for our city and time, of the cross-road, community-generating, people-serving, God-celebrating place that a cathedral should be.”²¹⁸

Dr Forsyth was an interesting man; originally from Winnipeg, and for some time deputy minister of Housing in New Brunswick, he thought that churches should be more involved in the social and cultural needs of society. In addition to a place of worship, Forsyth wanted St Andrew’s to provide apartment accommodation for seniors, a daycare, the YWCA hostel, and, at street level, office and commercial space which would help to defray operating costs.

At a meeting scheduled for a Monday night in November 1970, the architectural contract for the building was about to be awarded, in the usual Sudbury way, to a firm from Toronto. Almost at the last minute, Townend and his partners, John Stefura and Carl Pfister, approached Dr Forsyth and the Chairman of the Building Committee, Joe Bischoff, and asked if they could submit a proposal. Townend, Stefura and Pfister worked all weekend, and by the Monday night they “presented a comprehensive multi-use design, illustrated by a number of sketches and by a model which dramatically showed maximum and efficient use of the church site.”²¹⁹ Dr Forsyth recalled the moment that the architectural imagination of the partners won the day: “By November thanks to Townend, Stefura,

Baleshta and Pfister, we not only had a sense of what we wanted to build. We knew what it looked like!”²²⁰ The Sudbury firm of Townend, Stefura, Baleshta and Pfister were retained that night and John Stefura became the partner in charge, with Carl Pfister’s input during design stages.

St Andrew’s Place is a good example of the collaboration of the three architects. Townend said, “I think our partnership allowed us to do work that one of us alone might not have been able to do. We were all a bit different and we complemented each other.”²²¹ It is impossible to know who did what during that intense weekend. The result of the co-operative brain-storming, however, produced an original and satisfying building, fitting in with the surrounding buildings, the first downtown Church in Canada to combine so many different uses and services for the benefit of its parishioners and the community.

Government Buildings

Tom Davies Square

Tom Davies Square, named after the late former Chairman of the Sudbury Region, is the realisation of the dream of planner Klemens Dembek, who, in his 1963 plans for urban renewal in the downtown core (Chapter III), had envisaged a “Civic Centre Complex” on Paris Street.



Figure 22 - Tom Davies Square Paris and Brady

The municipal government buildings are housed in a triangular building fronting on Paris and Brady Streets (Figure 22). On these two sides, facing east and south respectively,

three continuous, equal, horizontal bands of light white concrete separate two continuous bands of windows. At street level there are glass walls divided by narrow concrete pillars. The effect is as ordered and composed and carefully considered as the citizens hope their government will be.

On the south-east corner of the complex is the two-storey Council Chamber. Easily accessible by the public from the entrance or from the lobby, the Council Chamber is a comfortable, almost intimate, space. Behind the podium is a dramatic screen of polished nickel-copper ore reminding citizens and politicians of the source of much of the region's prosperity.

On the third side of the triangle, facing north-west, is a full glass curtain, anchored and contrasted at either end by textured concrete massing. On entering the building from this side it can be seen that the government building is really L-shaped, formed by the two sides of the triangle on Paris and Brady. Inside the glass curtain is a four-storey open space, with the two tiers of open floors housing visible and accessible government offices (Figure 23).

On the outside of the glass curtain the landscaped forecourt looks west to Memorial Park. Two arms embrace the square, reminiscent of the classic piazza: the south section of the Civic-Regional building ending in a small square tower, angled so that it fits parallel to the base of the triangle to the southwest, and the Bell Canada building, with its colonnade in the northwest. (The small square tower in the south-west was designed for vertical expansion to twelve storeys which never occurred.) The twelve-storey Government of

Ontario building, another square tower, mirroring the shorter one at the opposite side, anchors the whole complex at the northeastern corner.

The ground on which Civic Square was built was the same unstable quagmire on which the old St Andrew’s Church foundered. There were, therefore, considerable practical problems to be solved in the design of the complex. Junction Creek, which used to flow through the centre of Sudbury, flooding the city every spring, was finally contained in a concrete culvert, but the surrounding ground was really a swamp. Knowledge, ingenuity and imagination were required to find a way to build successfully on that site. John Stefura described exciting times when trying to find “refusal” for the reinforced concrete piles that had to be driven down through sloppy mud to “seat” into bedrock almost 200 feet below the surface. These reinforced concrete

pilings were to carry the building on top.

Underneath the building was a parking area for cars which “floats” on “rigid polystyrene insulation, to prevent it from heaving from frost,²²² but which was much cheaper than piles to support a car park.

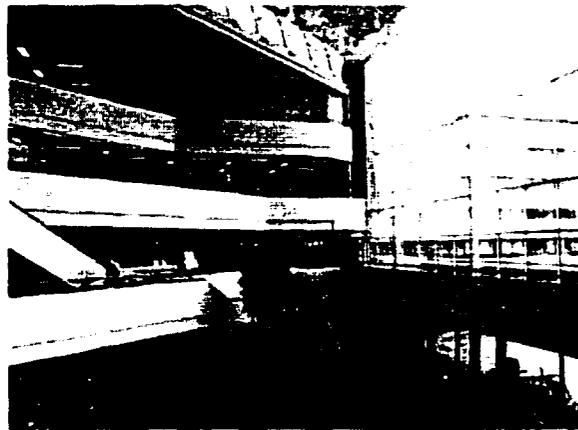


Figure 23 - Tom Davies Square from atrium

About the same time, 1973, it was the fashion all over Canada to build atria. Eberhard Zeidler was in the midst of designing the Eaton Centre in Toronto with its long central atrium which reversed “conventional ideas of interior and exterior space: trees, awnings, abundant natural light, even a flock of Canada

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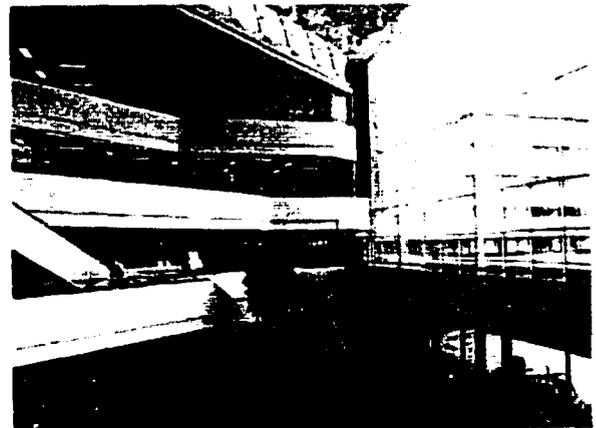


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geese. . . .”²²³ *Moriyama & Teshima* had just completed the Scarborough Civic Centre which they considered “an opportunity to explore the meaning of democracy at the municipal level and to celebrate its virtues with architectural form.”²²⁴ Moriyama used a circular atrium as the core of this building. The tradition of the modern atrium goes back to



Figure 24 - Aerial View of Tom Davies Square, with St. Andrew's Place and downtown Sudbury in the background

the Greeks and the Romans. Vitruvius in his sixth book, and Palladio in his second book, both discussed and described an atrium as an open “porch” or court, usually situated in the middle of a building. Palladio makes a point of saying that the Atrio of the Greeks were of different proportions from those used by the Romans. The Greek Atrio was open to the sky, while some styles of the Roman Atrio were covered.²²⁵ In all cases the Atrio joined the different parts of a building, providing a space in the centre where people could come from all sides.

Townend Stefura and Baleshta adopted the idea of the public atrium with the office floors above. In order to safely open up the central space, consisting of the atrium and the floors above, yet satisfy the building code requirements, Townend and his partners retained fire safety engineers to design an adequate and acceptable fire safety system for the whole building. The atrium was, in the words of the architects,

an enclosed public area, four stories in height where civic activities take place during inclement weather. This open space reinforces and completes the geometric outdoor "civic" square. This forecourt to the building, with its flags, large pool and water fountains is the formal area for presentations, pageants, concerts and exhibitions. The remainder of the square has been landscaped with grassy berms and trees to provide a park-like setting, flowing downwards to the west to create a natural transition into Memorial Park. The extensive original landscaping designs envisaged by the architects were never implemented because of budgetary constraints, and, in recent years, the City has cut back further on the landscaping of the square.²²⁶

The office landscaping concept, which had originated in post-war Germany, was new to Sudbury. The idea was that the office areas were able to expand or reduce, easily and inexpensively, depending on the responsibilities of each department of government. There was considerable resistance to the open plan, much opposition to the movable screens, and objections to the lack of private space. Though a few offices were enclosed to allow confidential meetings, bureaucrats, planners and engineers, dealing with sensitive material, hated the open plan. In the Old City Hall, however, solid partitions between offices were rearranged quite frequently at considerable expense. In spite of some opposition to the open plan, Townend considered his solution in the new civic building worked quite well.

We used a very high sound absorbing ceiling (made of fibreglass at least one and a half inches thick), and carpeted floors to reduce the bother of sound. . . . Every time I go in there the departments are moved from one location to another and they seem to do that without too much bother, compared to a building that would have had permanent full-sized partitions around each office.²²⁷

After a very important intervention by Dr Forsyth (of St Andrew’s Church) with Premier John Robarts, the Government of Ontario finally decided to build the third component of the Civic Square complex: the twelve-storey tower at the northeastern corner. After being slow to support Dembek’s original concept of a Civic Square, the politicians then took credit for this successful expression of civic pride. In the habitual Sudbury manner, they gave no credit to the architects. Neither Townend, nor his partners, were invited to the opening on 24 September 1977.

Civic Square was intended by the architects to be used by the citizens of Sudbury. Outside, the landscaping, trees and flower beds, culminating in the reflecting pool with a fountain in the centre (recently removed by the city), were all



Figure 25 - Tom Davies Square, reflecting pool in park-like setting, overlooked by atrium

designed with the idea of people using the space. (Figure 25) There is a problem, however, in a city that is far-flung like Sudbury. Its scattered small residential centres, that grew historically from the old “ethnic” neighbourhoods, and then, with the blessing of the planners, where developers made sub-divisions, are not physically close to the downtown. As a result, motorised transport is needed to get to the centre of the city. More recently, citizens have had less need to come in person to municipal buildings to pay taxes and other bills as more and more people arrange to have these paid directly from their bank accounts.

Eleven years before the Civic Square in Sudbury was opened (or the Scarborough Civic Centre), Alan Gowans had seen the dangers: “Once a city passes a certain size, it inevitably begins to split apart, both physically and psychologically.”²²⁸ According to Gowans there were two approaches to solving the problem. The first was “to concentrate in one dramatic focal point the major activities of the city and funnel the city’s life into it by every means. . . . [The second was] to design small foci in each of the natural divisions into which the metropolis falls. It is thus no accident that the local shopping centre tends increasingly to function like the medieval market place,”²²⁹ as can be seen by the bustle of people at Southridge Mall or the New Sudbury Shopping Centre. Gowans continued, “if human beings defeat the planners, then gargantuan centre-city complexes and city halls will prove to be ghost towns.”²³⁰

Dembek, who apparently liked the idea of European city centres, friendly to pedestrians, fought to retain Sudbury’s downtown as the “heart of the city.” Constant pressure from politicians pushed commercial re-zoning along main arteries, and into the suburbs, which contributed to the demise of the downtown, and encouraged the decentralisation into “small foci.” The City Centre Shopping Mall, with its expensive parking, was intended to compete with the New Sudbury Shopping Centre, with its limitless free parking. Bit by bit, people found it easier to go to New Sudbury to shop, and bit by bit, the diversity, which is essential for a healthy downtown, was eroded. In recent years, again with pressure from outside, the politicians have supported the advent of large

"box stores" in the suburbs which has further exacerbated the problems of the downtown area.

Whether, at this new stage of amalgamation into one municipality, the politicians have the ability or the political will "to funnel the city's life" into the city centre remains to be seen. The architects, in designing the civic square complex, however, imagined it full of people, and designed it to be a friendly space for human beings. But if there is nothing to take them there, they won't go.

National Revenue Taxation Data Centre

Two major undertakings of Townend's firm were joint ventures with Toronto firms. The first of these was the Taxation Data Centre (1977) with *Page & Steele*, and the second was Science North (1981) with *Moriyama & Teshima*, opened by H.M. Queen Elizabeth II in September 1984.



Figure 26 - National Revenue Taxation Data Centre

Unlike the Civic Square complex, the Data Centre was not designed for the use of the general public. It was just the opposite, since high security prevents access because of the confidential nature of the work carried on inside. The building had to be designed to be a very flexible space to allow for a great fluctuation in the number of employees (from 1200 to 4000) depending on the volume of work available. The firm described "the apparent conflict between the requirement of efficient assembly line 'pipeline' procedure and the

need to provide an enjoyable work environment: the philosophical spring-board for the design. It has led to the concept of an L-shaped office area, with its arms enclosing a terraced ‘Galleria’ type space. . . which offers an expansive view in all directions and a visual link with the exterior.”²³¹ Approaching the building from Notre Dame in the southwest, the first impression is of a dazzling series of overlapping “hanging gardens,” cantilevered out, cascading from floor to floor (Figure 26). As the building was to cover a huge area, Townend, with Blaine Nicholls, who was to become a partner two years later (in 1979), came up with the concept of breaking up the horizontal mass into many layered projections. These planes of white concrete slabs, separated by the reflective glass walls, create interesting effects of light and shadow. As the rest of the building is subdued, linear and relatively uninteresting, this exuberance in the southwest corner is all the more astonishing.

A long horizontal band of windows surrounds the rest of building, breaking the rectilinear mass. On the south-east corner there is an interesting detail where the two planes of the horizontal lines come together. John

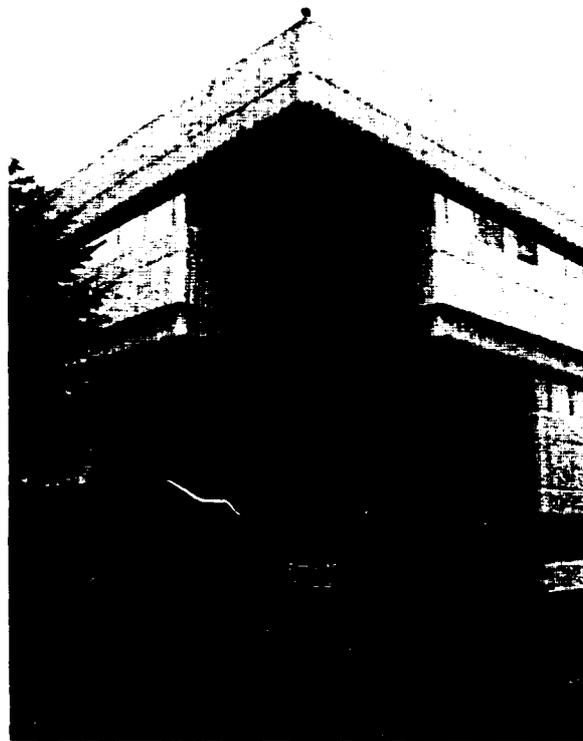


Figure 27 - South-East Corner of Data Centre

Stefura’s “contribution to the design of that building”²³² made triangular features, reflected in the shape of the conical evergreen in front of the corner, which provide contrasts in light and shade, solids and cavities and break up the rectilinear mass in the south-east (Figure 27). Mac McLean particularly noticed the precast concrete on the exterior of the building which he thought a development of Gordon Webber’s exercises at McGill. “If you really look at it [the texture of the precast concrete] there’s three verticals, then there’s two verticals, then there’s five²³³ (Figure 28).

Townend explained: “We did that building as a joint effort with *Page & Steele* in Toronto and Blaine Nicholls and myself from our office. Between the two of us, I developed the basic design and

Blaine developed a lot of the architectural features. *Page & Steele* did the construction drawings, and I personally moved my office out on to the site during the construction period. We looked after our end of the construction part of the Data Centre and that went on for about three years. That was a big building, totally different from health care.”²³⁴

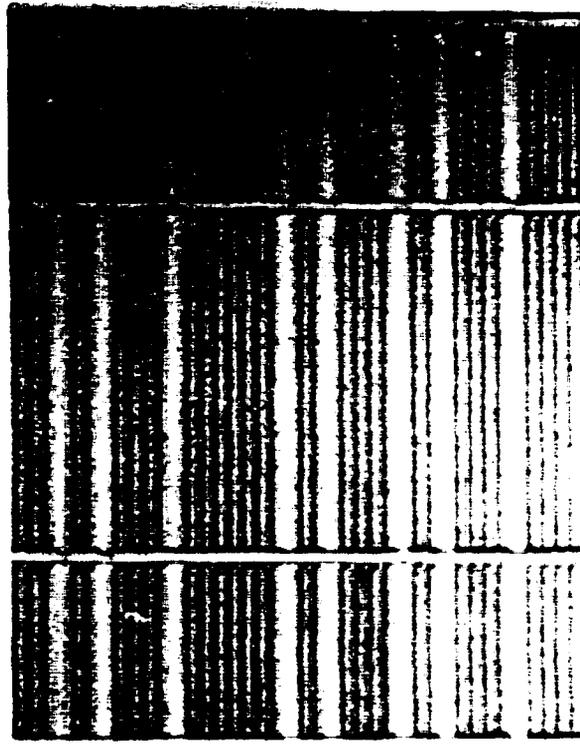


Figure 28 - Data Centre, detail of vertical patterns on concrete

It is indeed a big building, 415,000 square feet, one of the largest processing centres in Canada. It is really a factory, with assembly line processes, requiring highly specialized office space with extensive use of electronic technology. At the same time, it has to be a very flexible space, unencumbered by fixed elements to allow for the variation in the number of employees.

Because of the strict security, it is not possible to enter the building so the citizen has only the façade to judge it by. From the outside one does not get the impression of “galleries” which accommodate cafeteria and lounges inside. Instead, that interesting, staggered façade seems to represent the huge country, Canada, and the featured projections the many varied contours and regions that both contribute to and benefit from the shared wealth of the nation that is being processed within.

Discussion

Now that the buildings inventory of “what is there” has been completed, it is possible, as Feldman said, to make certain interpretations and evaluations. These are still a bit tentative because of the nature of the collaborative process of designing large projects. All the public buildings discussed in this chapter were ones marked by Townend’s own original partner, John Stefura, as being designed by him.

At the successor architectural firm, however, a staff member said that the partners “always brain-stormed on every project. It would be hard to say who was the ‘Principal Architect.’ I don’t know how the others would feel about identifying Townend as *the* designer of a building.”²³⁵ This attitude was corroborated by one of the partners who said,

“It would be difficult to identify what buildings were designed by Art, since everything is done on a collaborative basis. For instance, when Corky [Baleshta] died last week, everyone was asking, ‘What buildings did Corky design?’ Difficult to answer, as we all work on all the buildings.”²³⁶ However, another, senior partner, said, “What a great contribution Townend has made to architecture in this city. Art’s designs are very evident.”²³⁷

Townend himself was reluctant to discuss who designed what on large joint ventures like the Data Centre, though he said that he and Blaine Nicholls worked on the design of the building almost entirely by themselves, while *Page and Steele* did the construction drawings. As Townend said, someone has to have it “all in his head and be able to visualise the whole thing.” At this stage the architect is the artist/composer. But once the collaborative effort begins and many different people are involved, then the architect assumes the roles of conductor, as Townend did when he moved his office onto the site of the Data Centre during the construction years.

Brendan Gill states that “it was the custom for the name partners in an architectural firm to be credited with all of the work carried out by the firm; only in comparatively recent times have individual partners been given such credit, in whole or in part.”²³⁸ Frank Lloyd Wright, for instance, always took credit for all the designs produced by his studio, no matter how many architects worked on the designs.

It has been assumed that the design of how the buildings in this chapter *look* to the passerby is largely the work of Townend. This does not mean that Townend’s designs are

limited to façades, but that it is there that the results of his artistic imagination are most easily experienced. In any case, many citizens never have the opportunity to visit the inside of a building, so their total experience of that building is from seeing its exterior. The impact of the exteriors of the buildings, therefore, on the city-scape is important. This is also where the idea of the architect as artist or composer/conductor has validity. Other members of the “orchestra” may have contributed other parts of the design of the buildings, such as the details of construction, or the detailed planning of interior functional space, but, as Townend emphasised repeatedly, the architect still has to “have the whole thing in his head.”

Townend has shown the importance of situating all the buildings with care on their sites, whether one considers Laurentian Hospital, the Northern Ontario Health Sciences School, or a small project like the Yacht Club. Some materials were less successful than others, for instance the poured concrete of the Thorneloe Chapel which developed “pock marks,” and the grey colour of the concrete of Laurentian Hospital; but the pre-cast concrete of St Andrew’s Place, Tom Davies Square and the Data Centre have all worn well. Considerable research and thought went into all the designs to make the buildings suitable for their purpose and to reflect human values. The exterior appearances of all the buildings are very different one from another, but each presents an integrated whole, satisfying to the eye.

Chapter V - The Buildings: Houses

This chapter examines some houses designed by Townend, using the same phenomenological approach of “experiencing” the buildings as was used for the public buildings in Chapter IV. Though Palladio’s (based on Vitruvius’) requirements of “firmness, commodity, and delight” still apply, the interpretation of “commodity,” purpose, usefulness, function, is different from that of public buildings. Houses play a different role in society than public buildings. Theirs is a private, family function rather than a broader societal one.

Professor Dell Upton, Professor of Architectural History at the University of California at Berkeley, refers to the American house as “an icon”: “Houses are . . . rich in meaning. They dignify families and help to structure their working lives. They claim a place for the individual and the family in time (history) and space (community) and in the timeless cosmos. Like families, houses are repositories of memories of the ways that families have organized and represented themselves through many generations.”²³⁹

A house offers more than shelter and refuge from the weather, or more than a functional building for specific purposes. There is, therefore, a slightly different interpretation of Palladio’s insistence on “commodity” for a house. When a house is a “home,” it is also, as Ennals and Holdsworth point out, “a place for rest, for sustenance, for reproduction, and for socializing.”²⁴⁰ It is a centre of comfort and memories, said Witold

Rybczynski. "Home" brought together the meanings of house and of household, of dwelling and of refuge, of ownership and of affection."²⁴¹ To better understand how Townend's architectural imagination designed houses that were "homes," owners have contributed their experiences of their houses.

After his first house, designed in 1952 shortly after his marriage (see Chapter III), Townend started designing houses for private clients in the 1960s when he was still in partnership with Louis Fabbro. His own second house was built in 1962, as was another nearby. A fourth was built in 1964, just as he was about to start his own firm. His very first project, when he started out on his own in the workshop that he had built beside his house, was also for a house. "It was a house designed using a triangular module as a basis . . . specifically designed for a lot on Ripple Road. We finished the working drawings for it, but unfortunately it was never built as the client was transferred. They were very interesting drawings by Nello Mozzon, a remarkable man and very clever person."²⁴² Nello Mozzon, who had worked with Townend in Fabbro's office, had joined him as draftsman when he started his own one-man firm.

Townend had thought that when he moved to the new house on Crown Street, where he had included a studio, he might specialize in designing houses. "But that was not to be. It's interesting that I only did seventeen houses in forty years. I kind of wish that I'd done more, but I didn't. In my next life."²⁴³

Townend admitted that he owed some inspiration to the buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright which he felt were truly North American. Mac McLean considered that Townend's houses were "definitely Frank Lloyd Wrightian . . . cantilevered out; flat roofs."²⁴⁴ This impression may be based on only one of Wright's houses, *Fallingwater*. Wright certainly used cantilevers in some of his work, but by no means all. Many of his numerous famous "Prairie" houses did not have cantilevers or flat roofs. However, *Fallingwater*, the most famous and most photographed of all his houses, had both; the image of that house is very powerfully lodged in the collective memory.

Townend did not replicate Frank Lloyd Wright's designs. He was, however, attracted to certain ideas that Wright espoused (but that Wright often blithely ignored in his own work),²⁴⁵ such as fitting a building carefully to its site, something that had already been stressed in Townend's McGill education. Townend's houses reflect a more characteristic Canadian simplicity, avoiding Wright's fussier decorations and features like "ingle-nook" fireplaces. Townend, however, used a similar architectural vocabulary, for instance, paying careful attention to the site and emphasising natural materials: pine or BC cedar, and local stone, quarried near Sudbury, for the construction of most of his houses. Steel beams were used for cantilevers which projected houses out over the rocky outcrops that abound in Sudbury.

Only one or two of Townend's houses still have their original clients living in them. For many reasons the other houses have changed hands, but not very often, since they were

first built for their original owners. Townend's houses are enjoyed and valued just as much by the present owners. In addition to the seventeen houses, Townend also designed a couple of summer cottages.

In order to protect the privacy of the owners of the houses, whose views were solicited, it was decided to design an anonymous questionnaire, approved by the Ethics Committee of Laurentian University, which the owners completed. The owners also signed a Consent Form. Copies of the forms are included in the Appendix.

House number 1

Evelyn Townend loved this house which had adapted successfully to the needs of their growing family for ten years. When their seventh child was expected, they discussed whether they should try to extend this one, or build another in a completely different place. They chose the latter. When Townend retired in 1988, and all their children had left home, Evelyn and Art even considered buying their first house back.

The house has changed hands many times since they sold it in 1962. Its present owner is a young man who is thrilled to be the owner of a "Townend House" which he has carefully renovated. Fresh from McGill Townend tried out ideas that had interested him the

north side facing the street, the house has a brick screen that provides privacy from the street and protection from the north wind. There is a car port to the left of the walk that leads to the “front door,” which does not face the street but is tucked discreetly in the middle of the east façade. The flat roof (that Santa and his reindeer liked to land on) has a deep overhang which acts as a permanent sunshade. Livingroom and diningroom are situated towards the back, furthest away from the street, on top of the rock with a view down the lake to the east and to the south across the garden.



Figure 29 - House no. 1, showing large pieces of glass that people peered through.

Once he had proved that certain features worked in a house, Townend would re-use them again and again in further buildings. These successful features gradually provided a “Townend signature” to his houses. “The large pieces of glass” that the curious peered through seem quite small to us today (Figure 29). It’s hard to see why they were thought so revolutionary in 1952.

The present owner has lived here since December 1999. He bought the house because of its convenient location and its design. He liked the open plan which was simple and practical. In addition to having an interesting design, he finds that the house is “very solidly built.” There is a “great view of Lake Ramsey and Laurentian University from the

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back yard.” Like several other owners he thinks, the “spare bedrooms are small,” as is the 1952 driveway.²⁴⁶

House number 2

Townend’s second house for his growing family was larger and quite different from the first house, primarily because it was about twice the size. Also different was its situation on the top of a hill,

surrounded by spacious grounds, with a long view to the east down Lake Ramsey.



Figure 30 - House no. 2, Townend’s second family house.

The house, screened by a brick wall for privacy, like his first house, is private and unrevealing on the west side facing the driveway. Behind the brick screen is a one-storey bedroom section, this feature again like his first house. Beyond it rises the two-storey living section, with west-facing windows, lighting the entrance hall down below and the west end of the livingroom above. Townend’s small study, the livingroom, diningroom, and kitchen, with its attached sitting room, are all on the second floor. Flat roofs cover both sections of the building (Figure 30).

Even less obvious than on house number 1, a covered walk leading to the front door is tucked in unobtrusively on the north side of the building. The east and south elevations

are very open with lots of glass. Steps at the south east corner lead up to a deck outside the diningroom.

The living room is a long room facing east with an open brick fireplace on the north wall and a glass wall across the east end extending into the dining room in the L beyond. "This house uses the supports that hold up the roof to also hold the window in place," said Townend. "Looking around at the houses I built towards the end we didn't use windows: we used pieces of glass. Where we used a window was where we could put air into the house rather than to hold a piece of glass in place. The development of the system to hold glass in place against the structural pieces was something that gradually evolved."²⁴⁷

Ever since he was impressed with the idea of the tatami mat which was the module that dictated the size of a Japanese house, Townend had retained the concept of designing in a modular fashion. His house is built on a 2-foot module. Townend thought houses looked so much nicer when the structure was visible, before the plaster or gypsum board was applied, "so, the thought was to get rid of that and just have the open members. . . . In this house I tried to leave the joists exposed as much as possible, and in the bedrooms the same thing. I used the same-sized joists, although they look like beams because they're not closed."²⁴⁸

This house, that was home to seven boisterous children for about 20 years, is still very comfortable for the two Townends alone in retirement. Townend boarded over the once much-used indoor swimming pool on the ground floor and turned the space into a

studio. Admittedly they don't use all the bedrooms all the time, but there is ample space for grandchildren to come and sleep over. The very human proportions of the main rooms are as comfortable for two as for nine.

House number 3

This house was designed in the same year as his own and has some of the same characteristics and some obvious differences. The first major difference is the site which is a precipitous south-facing rocky hillside. The house is built with its back into the rocky hillside so that almost all the rooms face due south. As in Townend's own two houses, the elevation seen from the street is unassuming. The modest entrance on the top floor, level with the driveway near the top of the hill, gives no indication of the further two storeys below, cascading down the hillside.

Originally there was a car port to the north of the building, with, next to it, a one-car enclosed garage, and finally the front door. In 1988, just as Townend was about to retire, the present owners asked him to design a new entrance allowing for an elevator suitable for a wheel chair to be installed in the building. This he was able to accomplish with the least disruption to the rest of the house by transforming the one-car garage into a new, more spacious entrance hall, and by placing the elevator shaft through what had been a small workshop at the back of the garage. On the second floor one small bedroom was sacrificed, leaving space for the elevator shaft and a large walk-in closet. On the bottom floor the original oil-fired furnace, which was due for replacement, was taken out, and a natural gas

furnace was installed in half the space needed for the original oil-fired furnace. The remaining space from the old furnace room completed the elevator shaft to the bottom level. The open car port was closed in to form a two-car garage.

The original owner, who was from England, did not like the idea of having the structural elements showing, and wanted to have the whole interior plastered. He also wanted a coal fireplace, similar to what

he was familiar with in England. But soon he realized that wood was plentiful and cheap in Canada, while coal was dirty and more complicated to obtain.

“So, finally we built a wood-burning fireplace for him. He also had the idea

that he wanted to go upstairs to go to bed, *Figure 31 - House no. 3. southern elevation.*

so that was done.”²⁴⁹ Since the livingroom, diningroom and kitchen, as well as some other bedrooms, are all situated on the second floor, the master bedroom is “upstairs” on the third floor, the same as the entrance.

The whole house is built of cedar, stained brown. As the interior walls were all plastered, the warmth of ribbon mahogany veneer for the doors and for the wall separating the diningroom from the kitchen was a welcome touch. There are french doors that lead from the livingroom directly onto a verandah (memories of Jamaica) that runs along the



Figure 31 - House no. 3. southern elevation.

south side of the house with splendid views of Lake Ramsey to the east and overlooking Lily Creek and the city to the south. This verandah opens onto a spacious patio at the west end of the second storey. Another door from the kitchen also leads out on to this patio. An outside staircase descends from the entrance level, near the front door, to the patio and then continues to the garden on the bottom level (Figure 31).

The flat roof overhangs the south-facing livingroom, diningroom and kitchen, so that in winter the sun can penetrate the interior and warm it, providing passive solar heat. In summer, when the sun is at a higher angle, the roof extension shades the rooms by preventing the sun from shining directly into the rooms. On the bottom floor there is a study and a bedroom at either end of a corridor running behind a large family room, "the garden room," with windows all along the south wall, and a door leading out onto the garden sloping down the hill below.

The present owners have been in this house since 1987. Within a year of moving in, an elderly aunt, who had had a couple of minor strokes, came to live with the family of four. The bottom, "garden room," floor was quickly transformed into her living quarters, giving her great privacy, while the elevator was added, as described above, to allow easy access by wheel chair to the main living areas and to the entrance floor above. The owners are most grateful that the easy lay-out of the house adapted itself so readily to this different use. This was an example, to be repeated again and again by owners of other houses, of

Townend being asked if he would design the changes which were then developed into working drawings by his old firm.

More recently the "garden room" and adjoining study, with its walk-in cupboards fitted in against the rock, have provided space for a large research project requiring an immense amount of room for files, records and books. The garden room itself, with its bank of south-facing windows, makes a wonderful place to work. The young people left ten years ago, but the house remains a very beautiful and comfortable home for the two owners.

House number 4

This was the second house designed for these clients. The first design, made in the same year as Townend's first house, was never built. Twelve years later he designed this house for them, cantilevered out over a steep rocky cliff (Figure 32), taking advantage of splendid views down Lake Ramsey and south across the city. The owners have lived in this house since it was constructed in 1964.

From the driveway the entrance façade again is very private, with a car port to the left and the front door to the right. Stained glass lights the entrance hall to the right of the door. Irregularly shaped local stone paving leads to the door and carries on as the floor in the hall and the family room and kitchen beyond. Upstairs there are four small bedrooms and two bathrooms. The L-shaped livingroom has glass walls on the east and south which look immediately on to a deck outside. There is a fine fireplace surrounded by a stone wall at the north end of the livingroom, similar to the fireplaces in the previous houses.

This house conveys a sense of relaxation and comfort. The owners particularly enjoy the simplicity of the natural materials, wood and stone, which create a flow from room to room. The glass walls to the east and south allow an uninterrupted view of the surroundings from the steep hillside location. The overhang from the flat roof protects the house from the hot summer sun, but allows the low winter sun to penetrate the interior, providing passive solar heat. The relatively small house of 2000 square feet was designed for a family of four growing children and the space was planned to accommodate both adult and children's activities. The owners felt that the house served them well while raising a family, and it continues to serve them equally well as a retirement home.²⁵⁰



Figure 32 - House no. 4 cantilevered out over steep rocky cliff

The owners have always consulted Townend whenever they have considered making any changes or additions. Over the years he has designed many refinements to the house, including a handsome combined light and letter box at the end of the driveway

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Figure 32 - House no. 4 cantilevered out over steep rocky cliff

(Figure 33). Recently, the owners added a small patio at the back, off the family room, which they were thinking of paving in interlocking brick. They asked Townend's advice, and he immediately suggested the patio should be paved in the same local stone that was used for outside the entrance, and for the path surrounding the north end of the house, then carried on inside in the hall, family room and kitchen.



Figure 33 - House no. 4, mailbox and light

This house has great integrity. It reflects

Townend's clear vision which has enabled additions and developments over time, that have only reinforced the strength of the original design. The owners have valued his vision so much that they have continued to consult him over thirty seven years, respecting his every suggestion which has made their house a sheltering home of serenity and beauty, full of memories of family life.

House number 5

Townend designed this house in 1966 for the first owners and their family. It is beautifully situated on the south shore of Lake Ramsey, some rooms having a northern exposure towards the lake and others facing the garden to the south. Again, like his other houses, the appearance from the driveway on the south side is enigmatic, as if the house doesn't want to give up its secrets easily. Hardly visible through the trees, it is comfortably settled into

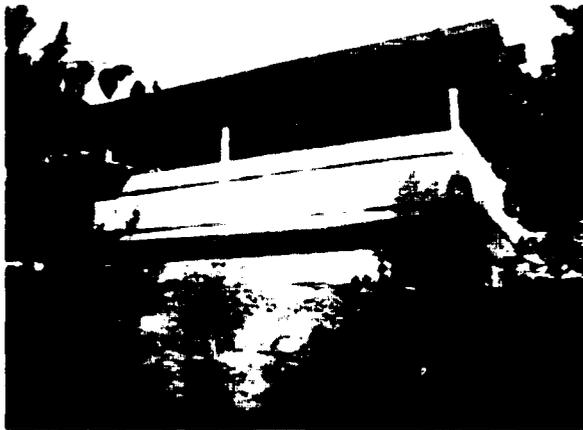


Figure 34 - House no. 5, southern exposure showing expanses of solids and voids.

the terrain (Figure 34). But on the lake side of the house there is a complete change of appearance. Here the house has the stark quality of a ship as the dramatic cantilevers jut out showily over the curving whaleback rocks. From the water it presents a most striking appearance in a more austere style similar to some of the

designs of the modern American architect, Richard Meier, of "white structures in which an interplay of solids, voids and transparent glass surfaces creates objects of stunning beauty"²⁵¹ (Figure 34, Figure 35).

The Finnish background of the present owners has certainly heightened their appreciation of the beauty of this house. They bought it in 1987 because it reminded them of beautiful contemporary homes they had known in Finland designed by architects such as Alvar



Figure 35 - House no. 5 northeast corner, showing cantilevers jutting out over whaleback rock.

Aalto and Eero Saarinen, and by Frank Lloyd Wright in the United States. The owners liked the quality of the materials used in the construction--the natural cedar and glass, and

stucco. The building is sympathetically sited, fitting in with the landscape, admitting lots of light and giving a feeling of living with nature, while taking advantage of the grand view of the lake to the north.

The owners have found that the entrance to the house is so secretive that visitors have difficulty finding it. By the 1990s attitudes to the amount of private space wanted in a house had changed since the 1960s. The bedrooms (designed for different clients in 1966) were found to be small, and the original master bedroom, next to the entrance, was not private enough and did not take advantage of the view to the lake. The owners are grateful that they have a sauna which, in the Finnish tradition, they use frequently, but they wish it had been placed closer to the lake side of the building. The owners really appreciate the large amount of living area in the house, and the screened porch off the dining room. They feel they “are privileged to own a house by Art Townend.”²⁵²

In 1992, twenty-six years after the house was built, and after much gentle persistence on the part of the new owners, Townend was persuaded to design an addition. “I had firmly said that I wouldn’t do any work at all; but she kept asking that I design an addition to it, because she wanted a bigger bedroom and a bigger office space. So, I did design some preliminary drawings to change that house, and that was the last one that I did.”²⁵³

Townend, with careful attention to the site, “clambered around on the rocks, seeing the actual bumps on the rocks. . . . There was a ledge, and that was how far I brought the

addition: to fit on the ledge where I measured the rock."²⁵⁴ In his architectural imagination, however, Townend had not imagined two small windows, which were included on the western wall when the addition was built. He was sufficiently bothered about this intrusion into his design that he mentioned it every time he discussed this house. "They're small windows up high in the bedroom and I don't know why they're there, because the rooms seem to have plenty of windows without those little windows. I don't think it helps the house, but they're there, and I can't do anything about it."²⁵⁵

The owner, however, admitted to adding these small windows to permit more natural light at the back of the addition because the windows in Townend's design were north-facing, looking out towards the lake.

House number 6

Townend designed this house in 1973 for a client who in the end never lived there. Another house on Lake Ramsey, this time with a southern exposure, looking across the lake to Laurentian Hospital and Science North, it is fitted



Figure 36 - House no. 6, southern exposure taken from Ramsey Lake

onto the top of a huge bare rock that curves steeply down to the water (Figure 36.)

Again, Townend measured the rock meticulously before starting to design. Once more, the site itself fueled his architectural imagination, challenging his knowledge and

experience and his skill as an architect. "The more that I lived around here," said Townend, "the less I wanted to have the site blasted and demolished before the house was started, and the more I wanted to try and fit the building as carefully to the rock as is possible."²⁵⁶

Like the previous houses, the main living area was on the second floor which, in this case, due to the slope of the underlying rock, was actually street level on the north side. There was only one master bedroom on the top floor with french windows leading onto a private deck built on the flat roof of the living room below. The flat roofs, as in previous houses, had overhangs that shaded the interiors from the summer sun. But in addition, the edge of the roofs were covered in a trim of cedar, three boards deep, which like the solid cedar fence protecting the deck in front of the living room, gave warmth to the stucco building.

A second owner bought the house and retained Townend in 1978 to make some alterations to accommodate his large family. A long narrow addition, allowing for three more bedrooms, was inserted close to the northwest lot line. A subsequent owner added a garage (not designed by Townend who always favoured car ports) along the northeast line, so that the entrance door is even more hidden and private than it was originally. The front door is now reached by walking down a rectangular patio formed by the bedroom wing on the west side and the garage on the east.

The present owner has lived here since 1987, having previously owned house number 3 which had made her "a fan of, and familiar with, many of the design features" in

this house. It was the situation on the lake that had influenced the decision to move to this house from number 3. Every main room of the house incorporates the view of the lake, while maintaining total privacy from the neighbours on either side. People often comment, when they are on the deck outside the main living areas, that they feel as if they are on a ship looking out to sea (Figure 37). Other design features that are appreciated are the spaciousness and flow of the common areas that lend beautifully



Figure 37 - House no. 6, view looking "out to sea"

to easy entertaining. The clean, uncluttered lines of the exterior design, with horizontal wrapping of the cedar deck and trim, and the walkway approach leading to the front door are also favourite details.

The owner wishes there were more space in the kitchen for guests "since, inevitably, everyone seems to congregate in the kitchen at some point." A garage was added which was not part of the original design: "With our extreme northern winters, a garage is a welcome, and to my mind necessary change."²⁵⁷

House number 7

This house was built in 1975 on a rolling site in the country to the west of Sudbury.

Townend walked over the property with the owners and he chose the elevated site, rising

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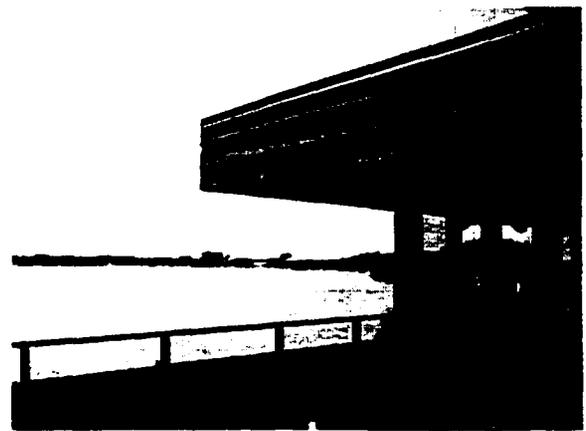


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House number 7

This house was built in 1975 on a rolling site in the country to the west of Sudbury.

Townend walked over the property with the owners and he chose the elevated site, rising

gently on a rocky outcrop above an open meadow to the south, and a low swampy area to the west. Most of the property was covered in tall red pines. The owners had felled red pine on their land, and milled it themselves to use in the building of the house.

The most outstanding feature of this house, compared to the others that have been discussed, is the steep pitched roof, and many gables. The house, though well anchored on its rocky base, seems to be soaring towards the tall pines above it (Figure 38). The owners consider they are “privileged to have an Art Townsend house.” They wanted to have a house design that would suit the site, and bring the outdoors in, and, at the same time, contain features that would meet the needs of the family. They love the way the many windows allow for lots of different views and bring the outdoors inside. Inside the house there is an efficient traffic pattern that suits their needs. Even though the design is twenty-eight years old, the house still has a very contemporary look and feel.



Figure 38 - House no. 7, showing pitched roof and many gables, soaring towards the pines.

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Figure 38 - House no. 7, showing pitched roof and many gables, soaring towards the pines.

The owners are least happy with the small size of the two downstairs bedrooms and the size and placement of their windows which do not admit enough light. Although the large eave overhang obstructs the sun in the summer for a cooling effect, it does cause a lessening of light in some rooms. Overall, however, the owners love living in their house which has a very restful, peaceful atmosphere inside, and they added that many other people have commented on how relaxing and comfortable it is to be inside the house, and how beautifully it complements its setting.

House number 8

This cottage, built in 1971, is a symbiosis of the inspiration of the owner, who loved the site, and Townend's architectural imagination, and the skill of the builder, who had to adjust the plans to accommodate the terrain. The site was a small level area near the top of



Figure 39 - House no. 8, view of cottage from rest area below, with wooden staircase continuing above to the left to the deck area

a 60 metre cliff. Above the narrow relatively flat area, the cliff soared up again (Figure 39).

There is a spectacular climb up a wooden staircase, braced against the cliff on the right, and offering wonderful glimpses of the lake beneath on the left.

Nearing the top, there is a landing with a small rest area. Above is a simple small cottage, built of pine and glass, which reflects the

tall pines growing beside the staircase. Cedar shakes cover a pitched roof tucked against the rock wall behind. At an angle to the rest area, the stairs continue to climb to the left of the cottage so that you see the whole building as you go up. A deck area, with seating overlooking the lake far below, just fits in to the level space between the rock cliffs. Off the deck to the right is the entrance to the cottage.

Once inside, the impressions of the cottage gained while walking up the long stairs are completely changed.



Figure 40 - House no. 8. spectacular cliff rising from lake. cottage is situated at top right, behind the pines

Because the exterior of the building gives no clue to the interior space, on entering the cottage the spectacular back wall is breathtaking. It is formed by the primeval rock cliff, with small mossy ledges, and natural bumps and variations in colour, completely natural and untamed. It is just one room. Light streams in through the sliding glass doors and the south-facing glass wall, which had been clearly visible from the staircase, but at that time acted as a mirror. Tops of the pine trees are on the same level, and far below are glimpses of the lake (Figure 40). Between the rock face wall and the windows is a small wood-burning stove. The rest of the building is in warm wood: pine for floor and counters, rough-sawn cedar for walls and cupboards. The interior smells of wood and damp rock. Still and calm and welcoming, it is quite magical.

The owners were totally enchanted with the site which they knew would be a great challenge to build on. They are most satisfied with Townend's design with the successful use of the Precambrian rock face (*in situ*) as the back wall of the cabin, and the careful placement of the building taking full advantage of the magnificent views, the protection from the north wind and the feeling of spaciousness inside and outside the cabin. The only negative comment that the owners made was with respect to the field mice who manage to find their way inside the cabin. Perhaps due to the difficulty of fitting the walls tightly to the uneven contours of the rock face the mice were able to find tiny gaps to squeeze through.

The owners particularly commented on the careful and personal interest of the architect which they found most rewarding. They are very happy with their dramatic, unique and peaceful retreat.²⁵⁸ This building is unlike anything that Townend designed elsewhere. He was responding to the *genius loci*, the special atmosphere of the place and site. Of course, certain elements, like his use of wood and glass, are common to many of his designs. But in incorporating the rock cliff into the building he combined the elements into a striking new whole. No-one is left unmoved by the first experience of climbing the stairs and seeing the view of the lake far below, then entering that special space.

Discussion

Several of the owners thought that the bedrooms and some bathrooms were too small. Many bathrooms were without natural light. (In houses 3, 5 and 6 owners added

windows to bathrooms to obtain natural light.) In both cases, Townend thought that, with a limited budget, it was better to cut down on them to allow the living areas to be larger. After all, he said, "You only use a bedroom to sleep in." This is true in the tropics where people spend most of their time outdoors, or on open verandahs. Townend grew up in Jamaica where a bedroom often just contained a bed and not much more. It is true also of boarding schools, like Monro College, Townend's school in Jamaica, where bedrooms were spartan dormitories with many beds and nothing much besides. Often boarders were not allowed even to enter the dormitory during the day, so it truly became a place only to sleep in. In a northern climate, however, like Canada, people spend an enormous amount of time indoors during the winter and bedrooms then play an additional role. They are no longer just a place to sleep in, but also function as a private space to work and live in.

Ward discusses in some detail the changing attitudes to the placement and use of bedrooms in Canadian dwellings: "In the recent past the middle-class bedroom has become an even more private place. . . . The bedroom has become every adolescent's private domain."²⁵⁹ That was why the owner of house number 5 asked Townend to make an addition. However, the owner of house number 6 said, "I know people often complain of the small bedrooms, but I don't, and I have not marked that as a deficiency in design on my questionnaire because I agree with Art that a bedroom is a place to sleep in. I would much rather have the space, as we do, in the living areas."²⁶⁰

Most of the owners are now most interested in design and architecture, even if they were not before. Many remarked that they felt “privileged” to live in an “Art Townend house.” One person, whose father had commissioned Townend to design their home on Lake Ramsey (not included here), said that her father considered that house his pride and joy.

Townend had been able to incorporate selectively and appropriately many elements into the designs. The houses were thus original, adaptable, comfortable and elegant. Each house provided an appropriate setting for the people who lived there. Those couples whose children have left home still find the accommodation as comfortable for two as it was for a whole family. All of the respondents remarked on the peaceful and relaxed atmosphere produced by the natural materials used in the construction, the careful orientation, passive solar heating and practical layout, form, light and space.

It is interesting that all the houses are described as “comfortable.” Rybczynski, another graduate of the McGill School of Architecture, told how the subject of comfort was barely mentioned during the six years of his architectural education. Only on one occasion was the word mentioned by an engineer, who was discussing air conditioning and heating, when he described something called the “comfort zone”: “This was apparently all that we needed to know about the subject. It was a curious omission from an otherwise rigorous curriculum.”²⁶¹

Townend, who had experienced the same rigorous McGill curriculum, presumably with the same omission of the subject of comfort, had intuitively understood how to make houses comfortable. It was probably to everyone's advantage that Townend's first house was for himself and his family. This was his laboratory for experimenting with design ideas. Once he had satisfied himself that a certain element was successful he would retain it and use it in future designs. The careful attention to the site, and the exposure, the open design of staircases, the prominent fireplace walls in brick or local stone, the open structure of the ceilings showing the joists, the use of natural materials, were all examples of elements that together came to form his "style." He used his architectural imagination to visualise how a family would use the space, then would combine appropriate elements of his "style" to make an original and beautiful home. All the houses offered great privacy for their occupants, and were universally described as peaceful, comfortable, and beautiful.

Townend heeded Palladio's advice having "a regard to those who are inclined to build; and not so much to mind what they can afford to lay out as the quality of the building."²⁶² In spite of limited budgets, Townend tried to ensure that the quality of the buildings would be high, even if that meant making some bedrooms small but functional, in order to maximise the common living space. All the owners mentioned Townend's careful and personal interest in the design of their houses which they all found most rewarding. Townend, in turn, was fortunate to have found clients who encouraged him to design houses of grace and beauty, and he, like Palladio in the mid-1500s, put into practice many

of those things, which he learned from his "very great fatigues and voyages, and by great study."²⁶³

Conclusion

In the 1960s, 70s and 80s, the architecture of S. Arthur Townend made a significant impact on the human environment of Sudbury, a city that was in the process of transforming itself from a rough mining town to a sophisticated regional capital. Townend remained true to the concepts that were important to his work as an architect: landscape, light and space; building "as well as you can"; visualising the "whole thing"; images, memory and imagination; and above all, to be an artist. He was an artist who used his artistic architectural imagination to produce integrated buildings of style and elegance.

His architectural imagination had its genesis in his upbringing and early education in Jamaica where he was surrounded by the bustle and variety of the plantation, and the brilliant light and colour and freedom of the tropics. At school Townend was lucky to have an art master who encouraged his talent for drawing and his developing artistic appreciation. There, too, he first saw architectural plans which so impressed him as he realised they represented the organisation, "the ordered achievement of meaning," which underlies the art of architecture.

At McGill he learned the skills of this organisation. All of Townend's designs had many features which would have pleased Townend's mentors at McGill. In developing his architectural imagination, the importance to Townend of his education at the School of Architecture at McGill cannot be over-emphasised. Raymond Affleck (another McGill graduate, who had first suggested to Townend that Sudbury was a good place to work in the

summer of 1945) said that the school played a unique role in the development of modern architecture in Canada, consistently turning out graduates of high calibre.²⁶⁴ Percy Nobbs, Ramsay Traquair and John Bland would have approved of Townend's designs for buildings with their well-defined use, reflecting the needs and aspirations of their users: carefully sited in tune with the terrain and the climate, providing abundant light and space; with solid construction and predominance of natural materials.

Sudbury offered Townend the opportunity to put into practice what he had learned at McGill. Inspired by the topography, light and space of Northeastern Ontario, Townend introduced the latest styles and techniques to a city on the verge of change and expansion. People were very accepting of Townend's cosmopolitan vision which brought "pleasing contemporary architecture" to Sudbury which was synonymous with "progress." He was fortunate to have early and continued experience in hospital design in which he later specialised. His artistic architectural imagination developed with each new experience in the practice of his art.

In spite of numerous different theories of architecture, especially since the mid-1960s, Vitruvius' (and Palladio's) triad of firmness, commodity and delight "has proven difficult to supersede or displace,"²⁶⁵ as Nesbitt said in her anthology of architectural theory. All the buildings discussed are structurally sound, and solidly built, demonstrating "firmness," or, as John Bland might have said, demonstrating the "art of building, rooted in technology of construction."

Clearly most of the buildings reflect enormous care in their design to fulfill specific functions. Also many features show a deep concern for the requirements and values of the users. How “commodious” certain aspects are is more difficult to assess. Are the “bulges” (the Intensive Care Unit) on Laurentian Hospital a practical solution to the flow of the activities within the building and the exigencies of space and budget? Is the lack of natural light in Our Lady of Perpetual Help an inappropriate interpretation of the purpose of the building? Or does it add to the sense of protection for the congregation saved from the flood of life in the hold of the “Ship of God”? Does the open office plan make Tom Davies Square more, or less, functional? Are the small bedrooms in the houses a fault? Are all these shortcomings due to a deficiency in the architectural imagination? Or are they merely a pragmatic response to the exigencies of budgets and demanding patrons?

It may be impossible to answer these questions. It can be said, however, that Townend was concerned with respecting the values he had been taught at McGill. He was concerned with designing buildings for particular uses, with a special concern for human values, responding “specifically and appropriately to local conditions, and local people,” using solid construction methods and good materials, building carefully on a site, respecting the setting and the climate. In this sense the buildings can be seen as indigenous. (Whether the architecture will be considered eventually to be part of a Canadian or Sudbury “vernacular” will only be known when it is considered in the context of a longer history.) Certainly the designs were inspired by a rich diversity of images and cultural memories. John C. Parkin considered that Canadian architecture, “although traditionally eclectic . .

reflected a consensus; a delineation of and adherence to the current mainstream of architectural thought, values, and concepts.”²⁶⁶ Raymond Moriyama said, “I tell my team we are the moon not the sun. We take light from others and throw it back.”²⁶⁷

The third of Vitruvius’ (and Palladio’s) qualities, “delight,” is where Townend’s artistic architectural imagination came into its own: images, memory and imagination inspired designs that give pleasure: the rhythm and integrity of the original Laurentian Hospital; the ordered and composed lines of Tom Davies Square with its open interior, encouraging visible and responsible government; the people-place “piazza”; the Data Centre’s dazzling overlapping “hanging gardens” representing Canada’s varied regions; the extraordinary play of solids and voids in the Thorneloe Chapel and the light from the stained glass windows; the dramatic laminated arches of the “Ship of God,” focusing, like the daylight from the skylight, on the chancel; the triangular sail-shape of the Yacht Club; the appropriate design of St Andrew’s Place, with its allusions to the history of the congregation and the denomination; the youthful “dancing” triangular projections, with their imaginative set-backs, of the NOHSS (Cambrian College Regent Campus); the texture of the concrete at Laurentian Hospital and the Data Centre. Collaboration with his partners on large projects was fruitful and important, as they all brought different strengths to a project, allowing them to produce what one person alone might not have been able to achieve. But because of the importance of one person “having it all in his head and visualising the whole thing” the buildings achieved integrity. By means of their combined

architectural imagination. Townend and his partners transformed Sudbury's city-scape with modern designs for public buildings of poise and elegance.

The gems of Townend's artistic architectural output were his houses. Much beloved and appreciated by their owners, and by all who were exposed to them, the houses clearly demonstrated his sensitive, artistic vision of the home. "rich as it is with associations of family and belonging."²⁶⁸ In all the houses there is a sense that Townend truly loved what he was doing. Combining both Koestler's emotive and intellectual aspects, he demonstrated a similar "disinterested desire for beauty" in his architectural designs as he would have shown in painting a watercolour.

By means of his architectural imagination, Townend constructed human worlds for the enjoyment, use and benefit of citizens of Sudbury and Northeastern Ontario, designing buildings of "firmness, commodity and delight."

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Appendix

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Interdisciplinary M.A. in Humanities
Interpretation and Values
Maîtrise interdisciplinaire en arts-
humanités (Interprétation et valeurs)

THE ARCHITECTURAL IMAGINATION:**S. ARTHUR TOWNEND, Architect**

Anonymous questionnaire re Houses designed by S. Arthur Townend for the study by Janna Ramsay Best in support of a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in the Humanities, Laurentian University, Sudbury, August 2000.

HOUSE NUMBER:.....

1. How long have you lived here?
2. Why did you choose to live in this house?
3. Please give the three most important reasons why you are satisfied with the design of the house.
 - 1st reason:
 - 2nd reason:
 - 3rd reason:
4. Please give the three most important reasons why you are dissatisfied with the design of the house.
 - 1st reason:
 - 2nd reason:
 - 3rd reason:
5. Other comments (please do not give your name):

