

The Changing Face of Canada's Parliament Buildings:
An Analysis of the Visual Representations Produced
Between 1859 and 1927

by

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Abstract

As we understand it today, Parliament Hill bears little resemblance to how it was seen or experienced in the past. Constructed between 1859 and 1927, the Parliamentary Precinct consists of a building grouping of singular architectural importance. The thesis examines the interplay between the original and added building components, and explores the change in function and situatedness of each building.

The visual representations examined within this thesis permit an analysis of the Parliamentary Precinct both within and outside of the context of the new Centre Block. Following the emergence of a new primary façade, the analysis of the visual material points to a break of the original symmetrical building plan. Four distinct building elevations present a building grouping that once extended beyond one principal façade, but gradually emerged into a monumental façade synonymous today with Ottawa, the Government of Canada, and Canada itself.

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Works of architecture do not stand motionless on the shore
of the stream of history, but are borne along by it.

Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 1975

Introduction

Parliament Hill, located along the banks of the Ottawa River and constructed between 1859 and 1927, is composed of a building grouping of highest architectural importance. Found on the Hill is the country's first wrought iron dome, covering the Library of Parliament's reading room, the East Block, a rare example of Ruskinian architecture in Canada, and the 92-metre tall Peace Tower, marking the central feature of one of the country's most recognized façades. And yet, for all of its relevance as the seat of government for Canada, and as a building grouping of singular importance, no study has been devoted to the changing face of Parliament Hill's distinct building elevations.¹

While much has been written about the architecture of the parliament buildings, the interplay and dynamics between the original and the added building components, as documented within the visual representations produced throughout the building period, remain unexplored. The purpose of this analysis is to understand the interaction of the various buildings within the

¹ The term 'elevation' refers to the four recognizable building faces of Parliament Hill: the east-facing elevation along the Rideau Canal, the north-facing elevation along the Ottawa River, the west-facing elevation high above Lebreton Flats, and the south-facing elevation along Wellington Street (herewith referred to as eastern elevation, river elevation, western elevation and Wellington Street elevation). Generally speaking, 'elevation' refers to an architectural drawing depicting a flat representation of a building façade. For the purpose of this thesis, however, the term is used more broadly and encompasses both the building face and site as depicted or observed through the visual representations which help to determine the overall relationship between the building grouping and its environs.

grouping, and to examine the effect on the grouping following the construction of today's Centre Block, after the fire of 1916 (herewith referred to as the "new Centre Block").

Matteo Burioni writes that a façade is the face of a building as it provides the edifice with a "recognizable and public appearance."² Specific to the parliament buildings, the façade as seen from Wellington Street is one its most recognized elements. However, this thesis argues that the monumentality of the building grouping extended beyond one single elevation.

Additionally, as the dimensions and proportions of the Parliamentary Precinct changed, the interdependent grouping was challenged and the appearance of the precinct was altered.

Furthermore, the thesis argues that the addition of the new Centre Block changed the relationship of the various buildings, broke the asymmetrical plan of the original building grouping, and created a dominant front façade.

Review of Literature

Some of the key texts on Canadian architecture – including those by Alan Gowans (*Building Canada: An Architectural History of Canadian Life*, 1966), Mathilde Brosseau (*Gothic Revival in*

² Matteo Burioni, "Naming Things. Terminology, Language Theory and Metaphorology from Alberti to Vignola," in *Metaphors in Architecture and Urbanism*, ed. Andri Gerber and Brent Patterson (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2013), 83.

Canadian Architecture, 1980), and Harold Kalman (*A History of Canadian Architecture*, 1994) – provide an important discussion on the parliament buildings.

Carolyn Young's 1988 thesis ("*Odahwah': The Competition of 1859 for the Canadian Parliament Buildings*") and subsequent 1995 publication, *The Glory of Ottawa: Canada's First Parliament Buildings*, provide the most comprehensive analysis on the 1859 architectural competition and the construction of the original parliament buildings.

In addition to these texts, a number of smaller publications also deserve attention as they, along with government reports and studies, add to the discourse on these important structures.

Government Reports and Studies

Important are the many studies and reports produced by the various government agencies and departments. Named here are those that pertain directly to the history and architectural study of the parliament buildings. They include: "Reconstruction of Parliament" (Public Information Office, House of Commons, June 1989) by Audrey Dubé; "Historical Chronology of the Parliament Buildings" (Library of Parliament, 1985) by Audrey Dubé; and, "Chronology of a Building: The Library of Parliament" (House of Commons & Library of Parliament, 1995) by Audrey Dubé and Mike Graham. These texts provide a concise and chronological account on the construction and reconstruction of the parliament buildings based on government records, letters, and published reports.

Supporting documents produced for the Federal Heritage Building Review Office include studies on: “Centre Block” (by Robert Hunter); the “Library of Parliament” (by Jacqueline Adell); “East Block” (by Leslie Maitland); “West Block” (by Jacqueline Adell); and the “Parliament Hill Grounds” (by Sally Coutts). These documents, generally referred to as ‘Heritage Reports,’ were produced to help determine the heritage value and national significance of the Parliamentary Precinct; they were used to designate the edifices in 1987 as Classified Federal Heritage Buildings.³

Gowans, Brosseau and Kalman

In *Building Canada: An Architectural History of Canadian Life*, Alan Gowans builds on his earlier publication, *Looking at Architecture in Canada* (1958), by including architecture from between the 1940s and the 1960s. Both publications include a substantial section on the original parliament buildings identifying them as Picturesque Eclecticism – Gowans writes that these buildings are no longer “unimaginative copyings of earlier historical styles.”⁴ The author adds that the parliament buildings represent Canada’s first national style.⁵ He states that Canada, as

³ In 1976, the parliament buildings and grounds were designated a National Historic Site of Canada. See, “Public Grounds of the Parliament Buildings National Historic Site of Canada,” Canada’s Historic Places, accessed December 6, 2015, <http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=17422>.

⁴ Alan Gowans, *Building Canada: An Architectural History of Canadian Life* (Oxford University Press, 1966), 118.

⁵ Gowans generally refers to the architects of the parliament buildings as Fuller and Stent (thus not differentiating between the set of architects responsible for the original Centre Block (including the Library of Parliament) and the two architects responsible for the Departmental Buildings). In a separate section on East Block, Gowans refers to the architect as Frederick Warburton Stent (instead of Thomas Stent).

a young nation, had “acquired a new and appropriately matured architectural style” presenting a “fully-developed visual unity of Picturesque Eclecticism.”⁶ However, without giving any convincing examples, Gowans writes that the Picturesque Eclecticism dominated Canadian architecture following the completion of the parliament buildings. Perhaps even less convincing is his analysis of the new Centre Block. While acknowledging the steel and concrete frame and referring to the “exaggerated scale” of the Peace Tower as “ostentatious,”⁷ Gowans (somewhat curiously) refers to the new Centre Block as more Gothic⁸ than its predecessor.

Mathilde Brosseau’s *Gothic Revival in Canadian Architecture*, published in 1980 by Parks Canada, provides one of the seminal texts of Gothic Revival architecture constructed within Canada during the greater part of the 19th century and into the first three decades of the 20th century.

Brosseau identifies four periods, or what she calls “mutations”: Roman Gothic Revival, Rationalist and Ecclesiological Gothic Revival, High Victorian Gothic, and Gothic Revival in the Beaux-Arts Manner. The author labels the original parliament buildings as High Victorian,

⁶ Gowans, *Building Canada*, 120.

⁷ Gowans writes that “no Gothic spire in Europe ever soared so ostentatiously as the Peace Tower,” in Gowans, *Building Canada*, plate caption 191. However, his earlier text from 1958 is more complimentary; it reads as follows: “few buildings, surely, exemplify the spirit of Gothic architecture as impressively as this soaring Peace Tower,” in Alan Gowans, *Looking at Architecture in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1958), 184.

⁸ Gowans compares the new Centre Block and Hart House with the 1859 Centre Block and University College. “To all appearances (forgetting for the moment their hidden steel-and-concrete frames),” writes Gowans, these former buildings “are Gothic buildings. And that was emphatically not true for the [latter] ones,” in Gowans, *Building Canada*, 142.

stating that it was John Ruskin who “broadened the horizons of the Gothic Revival ... and opened the way for the eclecticism that is so evident in the Ottawa Parliament Building.”⁹ Distinguishing between the southern and the northern elevation of the original Centre Block, Brosseau writes that the quadrangle plan, typical of the Neo-Gothic style, “is replaced by an open rectangle arrangement drawn from Baroque sources.”¹⁰ She adds that the three buildings are of a remarkably cohesive style and work harmoniously into their topography.¹¹

Brosseau places the new Centre Block within the Gothic Revival in the Beaux-Arts Manner. However, she points out that the Ottawa example is an exception given that most Canadian buildings within this category were associated with the educational rather than the government sector. She writes that the overall impression of the new Centre Block was “much more intellectual than sensual,”¹² given the corresponding axes found within the interior plan and the rigid character of the exterior composition. Brosseau adds that “Gothic motifs were used much more for their symbolic effect than their picturesque potential.”¹³

Harold Kalman’s chapter, “Building the Young Dominion,” printed within his two-volume *A History of Canadian Architecture*, includes a detailed analysis of the circumstances leading to the High Victorian Style. Kalman places the architectural competition within the context of the

⁹ Mathilde Brosseau, *Gothic Revival in Canadian Architecture (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1980)*, 21.

¹⁰ Brosseau, *Gothic Revival*, 21.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹² Robert Hunter makes use of the same characterization when describing the new Centre Block. See, Robert Hunter, “Centre Block,” Heritage Report 1986-52 (F), Canadian Register of Historic Places, Parks Canada (1985), 185.

¹³ Brosseau, *Gothic Revival*, 28.

Durham Report of 1841 and under the leadership of Edmund Walker Head. Not unlike Brosseau, the discussion of the parliament buildings is focused on the original Centre Block, the library and East Block. Kalman attributes the interconnectivity of the buildings to their arrangement on Barrack Hill and writes that the “success of the three buildings depends to a large extent on their sitting around the large central court, and on the effective landscaping of the courtyard.”¹⁴

The new Centre Block is discussed only briefly in the “Architecture Between the Wars” chapter. While providing little stylistic analysis, Kalman writes that Pearson and Marchand’s reconstruction is “the most familiar landmark of the Late Gothic Revival” period. He adds that the building is “consistently Gothic, particularly in the magnificent public interior spaces.”¹⁵

Young and the Architectural Competition

Carolyn Young’s rigorously researched thesis from 1989 provides the most up-to-date examination of the architectural competition of the parliament buildings and becomes the basis for her important 1995 publication *The Glory of Ottawa: Canada’s First Parliament Buildings*. Both texts, discussing the Ottawa buildings within the context of British influences and the architectural profession in Canada, make extensive use of early government records, periodical, and visual representations. Young’s analysis includes the broader visual material as it relates to

¹⁴ See, Harold Kalman, *A History of Canadian Architecture*, Vol. 2. 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 539.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 712.

the architectural competition and reproduced a significant number of photographs and architectural drawings. While limited to the 1859 competition and subsequent construction of the original parliament buildings, Young does not include a discussion of the various additions and the reconstruction of the Centre Block. As for the latter, she only states that the Pearson and Marchand structure “gave new life to Fuller & Jones’ idea.”¹⁶ This thesis builds upon Young’s research and examines the broader visual representations including the material as it relates to the loss of the original Centre Block and the completion of the new edifice.

Young attributes the success of the original parliament buildings to the “highly successful marriage” of the architectural design of the various buildings with that of the Barrack Hill site.¹⁷ Her description of a 1910 postcard¹⁸ showing the eastern elevation of the Parliamentary Precinct, includes a quote from Henry-Russell Hitchcock’s *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, stating that the parliament buildings form “a major monumental group unrivalled for extent and complexity or organization in England.”¹⁹ Young develops the idea of a building grouping further by suggesting that the precinct itself functioned as a “giant pedestal” meant to be seen “in the round.” Chapter 1 of this thesis adds to Young and Hitchcock’s observations as the analogy of the pedestal and the description of a monumental group deserve further attention.

¹⁶ See, Carolyn A Young, *The Glory of Ottawa: Canada’s First Parliament Buildings* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995), 110.

¹⁷ Young, *The Glory of Ottawa*, 113.

¹⁸ “Parliament Buildings, Ottawa,” 5.5 inches x 3.5 inches postcard, published in 1910 by Valentine & Sons’ Publishing Co. Ltd., Montreal and Toronto (Toronto Public Library, Baldwin Collection of Canadiana, PC-ON 1460)

¹⁹ As quoted in Young, *The Glory of Ottawa*, 113.

David de Witt's "The 1859 Competition for Canada's Parliament Buildings, *The Builder*, and Periodical Publicity" builds on Young's two texts and highlights the attention the Ottawa project received in London. In addition to focusing on the influence of the printed medium during the second half of the 19th century, De Witt's article compares the Ottawa architectural competition with that of the Palace of Westminster.²⁰

Alan H. Armstrong's "Profile of Parliament Hill" provides another account on the architectural competition and the circumstances leading to the changes made to curb expenses. Edmund Walker Head, referred to by Armstrong as "the most knowledgeable patron of architecture in Canada,"²¹ is credited for choosing the winning designs and proposing many of the improvements made to the original submissions. This article, like the texts by Young and Richardson, refers to the precinct as a group of buildings creating "a single architectural composition."²²

Additional Texts

Percy E. Nobbs' widely published and highly influential lecture "Architecture in Canada," presented in 1924 to the Royal Institute of British Architects, London, includes a brief paragraph

²⁰ David de Witt, "The 1859 Competition for Canada's Parliament Buildings, *The Builder*, and Periodical Publicity," *Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada Bulletin*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (December 1996): 108.

²¹ Alan H. Armstrong, "Profile of Parliament Hill," *The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal* 34, No. 9 (September 1957): 331.

²² *Ibid.*

on both the original and the new Centre Block.²³ For the Fuller and Jones building,²⁴ Nobbs cites the influence of the “Ruskin, Street, Butterfield and Nesfield School.”²⁵ As for Pearson and Marchand’s reconstruction, he writes that both architects were engaged in the design of the building plan.²⁶ Nobbs does not credit the Beaux-Arts influence on the building plan. Instead, he concludes that the new Centre Block retained its “neo-mediævalism.”²⁷

John M. Lyle focuses his discussion of the parliament buildings on the reconstructed Centre Block. Lyle’s text, “Canadian Architecture,” is highly critical of the new Centre Block calling the decision to rebuild in the Gothic style (which he calls a “debased style of architecture”) a mistake.²⁸

R. H. Hubbard writes that the Modern Gothic (referred to by Mathilde Brosseau as Gothic Revival in the Beaux-Arts Manner), was “dismissed as yet another evidence of Anglo-Canadian unwillingness to admit the passing of the Victorian age.”²⁹ While acknowledging Lyle’s criticism,

²³ Within his short account, Nobbs incorrectly states that the buildings were erected as a result of Confederation in 1867; the buildings were in fact conceived to serve the needs of the government of the united provinces of Upper and Lower Canada. Nobbs also states that the main building burned down in 1917 (the fire happened in early 1916).

²⁴ Nobbs does not actually name Chilion Jones in his text; he only credits Thomas Fuller.

²⁵ Percy E. Nobbs, “Architecture in Canada,” *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal* July to September (1924): 92.

²⁶ Nobbs writes that Pearson had “a sentimental attachment for the ‘middle flowing,’” while Marchand had a “flair for a fine plan.” See, Nobbs, “Architecture in Canada,” 92.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ John M. Lyle, “Canadian Architecture,” *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal* Serial No. 18, Vol. IV. No. 2 (February 1927): 62.

²⁹ R. H. Hubbard, “Modern Gothic in Canada,” *National Gallery of Canada Bulletin & Annual Bulletin 1963-1985* Bulletin 25 (1975), accessed January 28, 2015, <http://www.gallery.ca/bulletin/num25/hubbard1.html>.

Hubbard defends the style chosen for the new Centre Block. In “Modern Gothic in Canada,” he writes that the building “presents a most striking silhouette on its commanding site” forming, along with the circular Library of Parliament, a “most famous silhouette.”³⁰

Douglas Richardson’s primary focus is on the original parliament buildings and he praises the architects for their response to the site adding that they “created an effective symbol ... for the new Canadian Nation.”³¹ In “The Spirit of the Place,” Richardson writes that the architects, while producing a distinct design for their respective edifices, created an architectural plan that responded to the site by acknowledging the demands of both the river and the Wellington Street landscape. Richardson’s analysis is of the entire building grouping and refers to three separate visuals – each showing a different elevation – to help illustrate his point.

An aerial photograph of the newly constructed Centre Block headlines the article “The New Parliament Buildings, Ottawa” printed in the January to March 1924 edition of the *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada*. The clean Nepean sandstone of the completed façade stands in stark contrast to the soot covered walls of the departmental buildings. The 1924 image shows a Peace Tower under construction, permitting a view of the stunning Library of Parliament – an edifice that ended up awkwardly tucked away at the rear of the large rectangular Centre Block.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Douglas Richardson, “Canadian Architecture in the Victorian Era; The Spirit of the Place,” *Canadian Collector* Vol. 10, No. 5 (September-October 1975): 27.

The article focuses on the modern amenities of the new Centre Block (providing natural light into the chambers of the House of Commons and the Senate, private offices for parliamentarians, the large dining hall in the Renaissance style, etc.) and highlights some of Pearson and Marchand's grand Gothic public spaces.

The article is accompanied by a number of diagrams, drawings, and photographs of both the interior and exterior of the new Centre Block. However, as is stated in the conclusion of the article, the short text only permits a brief description.³²

In the 1982 article, "The House that History Built," R. A. J. Phillips refers to the original Parliamentary Precinct as "the most grandiose cathedral to parliamentary democracy ever built outside Westminster."³³ Phillips' analysis points to the political and social history of the East Block as it housed the executive branch of government until many of its famous occupants vacated the edifice for larger and more modern accommodations in the 1970s.

The list of texts reviewed here attest to the scholarly attention the architecture of the parliament buildings has received. However, the relative absence of a comparative study – that is the study of the building elevations both within and outside of the context of the new Centre

³² The text states that the walls of the new Centre Block were "of solid masonry and not steel skeleton construction" (the Centre Block is in fact a steel frame construction; see figure 4.6). The statement that the original building was "completely destroyed" by a fire in 1916 may then also be simplified as many of the load-bearing walls, including the clock tower and 1906-1909 addition, survived the fire (see "The fire of 1916" in Chapter 4).

³³ R. A. J. Phillips, "The house that history built," *Canadian Parliamentary Review* Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring 1982): 2.

Block – points to a gap in the existing architectural analyses. Additionally, much of the literature is focused on the original Centre Block with some attention given to the Library of Parliament and East Block. This thesis aims to fill the gap by building on the existing discourse, and by broadening the scope to include the West Block and the various additions.

Visual Material and Methodology

In *Photography and the Choice of Canada's Capital*, Richard J. Huyda confirms that visual representations were included as part of the material submitted to the British Colonial Office to select the location for the permanent capital of Canada. However, “only the City of Toronto chose to take advantage of the persuasive power of the photographic image to support its case”³⁴ and included thirteen albumen prints forming a nearly 360 degree panorama of the city. These visual representations of Toronto, writes Huyda, “are among the first Canadian photographs to be civic public records and instruments of government.”³⁵ Conversely, the Ottawa submission did not include photographic material. Instead, Ottawa appended a map by W. A. Austin and two lithographs by Edwin Whitefield.³⁶

The construction process of the building program is well documented as a number of photographers moved to Ottawa during the 1860s and 1870s – with many of their studios

³⁴ Richard J. Huyda, “Photography and the choice of Canada's Capital,” *History of Photography* Vol. 20, Issue 2 (1996): 104.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

located on or near Sparks Street providing easy access to the Parliamentary Precinct. Once the selection had been made, artists and photographers started to document the various elements of the building programs. The visual representations produced add to the evidentiary material found within the literature as it presents a record, or a lost memory of sorts, of what can no longer be experienced today.

In her introduction to *Photography and Architecture: 1830 – 1939*, Phyllis Lambert writes that “photographs, like all other graphic arts, must be examined thoroughly as sources in themselves.”³⁷ In order to evaluate photographs as historical documents, “individual images and groups of images must be brought together as one body of work.”³⁸ This thesis builds upon Lambert’s argument and brings together a group of visual representations of the Parliamentary Precinct. Produced between 1859 and 1927, the images selected are representative of the broader body of visuals produced.

To help with the analysis of the four distinct elevations, the thesis will discuss four to five visual representations in each chapter; a number of maps and floor plans are appended intermittently to provide further context. The images selected speak to the formal structure of the building façades, the interplay between the various building components, and the situatedness of the buildings themselves. For the purpose of this thesis, the term situatedness refers to the notion that the understanding of a building is dependent on its spatial context.

³⁷ Phyllis Lambert, introduction to *Photography and Architecture, 1839-1939*, by Richard Pare (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1982), 10.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

Thus, as relational elements are modified – be it a change within the building grouping or the larger environment – one’s understanding or interpretation of a building may correspondingly change.³⁹

In the wake of a building suspension, photographer Samuel McLaughlin was hired in 1861 to document the construction progress. His photographs provided a visual report on how the budget, allocated for Ottawa, had been spent. Significant cost overruns had become the subject of some contention in the Legislative Assembly which, at the time, was sitting in Quebec. The following reflects the exasperation of one member of the opposition party:

And where was this national place – this work of art and beauty, of which Hon. members spoke so highly, to be placed? On some site where it might be seen and admired by strangers? No, it is being built away in the rear of Montreal, amid the forest of Ottawa, near the north pole...a Tower of Babel. How could Ottawa be enjoyed as the capital of British North America?

Jean Charles Chapais addressing the Legislative Assembly in 1862⁴⁰

The images produced by McLaughlin were presented as evidentiary material designed to convince parliamentarians that the monies allocated for Ottawa had indeed been spent on the construction of Parliament Hill. “From far away [Quebec], it was easy to claim that the whole

³⁹ See Leach’s discussion on Heidegger: Neil Leach, *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 2004), 94-95.

⁴⁰ As quoted in Young, *The Glory of Ottawa*, 83.

building project was a scam, but the government could counter this with a dazzling and persuasive new tool: the camera.”⁴¹

Thus, from the onset, out of necessity or out of curiosity, the parliament buildings were well documented. Photographers visiting the capital produced a collection of visuals documenting both the construction phase and the completed parliament buildings. These images, largely produced for commercial purposes, were used for postcards and stereoscopic cards; they also provided a reference for drawings and engravings produced for the print market. Painters living in or travelling through Ottawa left behind a small but important body of work depicting the precinct within its environs. Likewise, resident or travelling amateur artists produced sketches and photographs for their own consumption.

The many paintings, drawings, photographs and engravings, augmented by the visual account produced for the government, create a large public record depicting the parliament buildings. The visuals discussed here were selected from this large repository – a collection of visual representations deposited today within museum and archival collections in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

Pearson and Marchand’s new Centre Block, often referred to as a visual symbol of Canada (a term frequently used but seldom defined), is the regular backdrop for Canada’s annual

⁴¹ Peter Coffman, “Samuel McLaughlin and the Department of Public Works,” (paper presented at the annual meeting for the Universities Art Association of Canada, Waterloo, Ontario, November 1-3, 2007).

birthday celebrations on July 1. Moreover, the Wellington Street façade is (to this day) a widely reproduced image within publications, news clippings, tourism brochures and the broader media (see Appendix 2). Arguably, the building – not merely a structure or an office space reserved for parliamentarians – is an “architectural icon”⁴² and has become synonymous with Ottawa, the Government of Canada, and Canada itself.

As we understand it today, however, Parliament Hill bears little resemblance to how it was seen in the past. Today’s view of the precinct differs from how the area was experienced in 1857 (when Ottawa was chosen as the new capital), in 1865 (when the original parliament buildings were completed), in 1878 (when the West Block extension was completed), in February of 1916 (when a devastating fire swept through the original Centre Block), and in the summer of the same year (when the site was cleared to construct the new Centre Block).

The visual representations, introduced in chapters 1 to 4, enable one to bridge these historical distances⁴³ as they permit a discussion that moves beyond the buildings’ styles and architectural influences as presented within the literature.⁴⁴ The images selected illustrate the

⁴² The term was used by Mark Kingwell in reference to the Empire State Building. According to Kingwell, the New York landmark is more than a building, it is an icon or a building taking on the function of a monument. See, Mark Kingwell, *Nearest Thing to Heaven: The Empire State Building and American Dreams* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 26-30.

⁴³ Mark Phillips refers to historical distance, not merely as temporal distance, but as “a position of detached observation made possible by the passage of time.” See, Mark Salber Phillips, *On Historical Distance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 13-14.

⁴⁴ The structure for discussing the visual representations is loosely based on Mark Phillips’ framework for analyzing historical distance. In the 2013 monograph, *On Historical Distance*, Phillips argues that visual representations, regardless of historical period or genre, incorporate a series of elements that mediate one’s experience of the past. Phillips identifies fundamental

changes in function and situatedness as it pertains to the various building components. The study not only attests to the documentary strength of the visual material but also leads to a more complete understanding of the changing dynamics between the building components and between the building grouping and its environs.

To help with the analysis of the visual representations, more specifically, to further the discussion on the relational element of the building components, Martin Heidegger's concept of *dasein* is of great use. Neil Leach writes that central to Heidegger's treatment of architecture is the situatedness of buildings – their *dasein*.⁴⁵ The word '*dasein*' is German for "being there" or "being within" a specific space and how each element — environment, person, or building — affects the other. Thus, Heidegger underlines the link between human existence, the environment, and architecture.

A German philosopher educated in the phenomenological tradition, Heidegger asks his reader to look beyond aesthetics, or a single reference point of a building façade as buildings should not be understood as mere objects of admiration or the product of a construction process.⁴⁶ Instead, he invites an examination of how architecture and space inhabit the same environment. Hans-Georg Gadamer, a student of Heidegger, furthers this point by arguing

markers of distance: form, affect, summoning, and understanding. His method, specifically an image's affective impact (i.e., affect) and its moral or ideological interpellation (i.e. summoning), provide a useful heuristic for analyzing the visual material discussed within this analysis. See, Phillips, *On Historical Distance*, 6.

⁴⁵ Leach, *Rethinking Architecture*, 94.

⁴⁶ Adam Sharr, *Heidegger for Architects* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 49.

that architecture becomes a carrier of cultural meaning as it connects the past with the present.⁴⁷

Scope and Limitations

The Parliamentary Precinct as experienced today extends far beyond the area originally set aside on Barrack Hill. In addition to the new Centre Block, the library and the two departmental buildings, the precinct now includes the Justice Building and the Confederation Building (situated along Wellington Street), and the Rideau Committee Rooms and the Government Conference Centre (positioned along the Rideau Canal). Most buildings on both Wellington Street and Sparks Street (located between Elgin Street and Bank Street) are also considered part of the precinct as they house the offices and support services of the House of Commons, the Senate, and the Library of Parliament (see appendix 1 for a complete list of buildings).

For the purpose of this thesis, however, the Parliamentary Precinct is limited to the area between Wellington Street and the Ottawa River (marking the precinct's southern and northern edges), and between the Rideau Canal and Bank Street (marking the eastern and western edges). Thus, the analysis is reduced to those buildings grouped within the original boundaries of the precinct. By 1873, the area was enclosed by a wall with an ironwork railing along

⁴⁷ Paul Kidder, *Gadamer for Architects* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 2.

Wellington Street;⁴⁸ the northern and eastern edges were encircled by the Lover's Walk.⁴⁹ The precinct jumped the allocated area with the construction of the Langevin Block in the mid-1880s, which housed the Department of Agriculture and Department of Indian Affairs.⁵⁰ The Bennett plan of 1915, discussed in Chapter 3, was one of the first of several studies to manage the precinct's growth.

The Military Hospital and the old Supreme Court building – two buildings located within the parameters specified above – are only referred to briefly. The former was constructed in 1827 when Parliament Hill (then Barrack Hill) was still the site of the military quarters of the British Royal Engineers.⁵¹ Demolished by the 1870s, the Military Hospital can be seen in some of the early photographs depicting the construction of West Block. The old Supreme Court building, erected in 1873 and demolished in 1956, housed the Supreme Court (from 1881 to 1945) and the National Gallery of Canada (from 1882 to 1888); the building was originally erected to accommodate the government workshops.⁵² Given its prominent location at the corner of

⁴⁸ The boundary wall from Dufferin Bridge to Bank Street was completed in November of 1873. See, Audrey Dubé, "Historical Chronology of the Parliament Buildings," Library of Parliament Information and Reference Branch. No. 171. 1985, 11.

⁴⁹ Described in 1879 as a "charming promenade hidden on the side of the rock on which the Parliament Buildings stand" (from *Illustrated Guide to the House of Commons and Senate of Canada*, as quoted by Nixon, page 95), the Lovers' Walk, sometimes referred to as Lovers' Lane, was closed to the public in 1940 because it had fallen into disrepair. See, Don Nixon, *The Other Side of the Hill: Behind the Scenes Stories of Parliament Hill* (Ottawa: Don Nixon Consulting Inc., 2012), 97.

⁵⁰ Dubé, "Historical Chronology," 13.

⁵¹ Robert Haig, *Ottawa: City of the Big Ears* (Ottawa, Haig and Haig, 1975), 72.

⁵² As per plaque located on Bank Street near the corner of Wellington Street; as reproduced by Robert Smythe, "Workshops, The Old Supreme Court," Urbsite, posted on June 24, 2013, <http://urbsite.blogspot.ca/2013/06/workshops-old-supreme-court.html>. See also, "Our History:

Wellington Street and Bank Street, the building appears in many of the photographs depicting the western elevation of the Parliamentary Precinct.

The 1859 to 1927 timeframe permits the study of the visual material produced between the year the architectural competition of the Parliamentary Precinct was called and the year of the completion of the Peace Tower. The period thus allows for the study of visual representations depicting the Parliamentary Precinct both within and outside the context of the new Centre Block.

Chapter Overview

The first chapter, “The Creation of an English Façade,” examines the eastern elevation of Parliament Hill and argues that the strength of the original building grouping lies beyond its architectural achievement. The chapter includes a discussion on the broader aesthetic theories that influenced the High Victorian Gothic style in Canada. A brief analysis on the selection process for the permanent seat of government opens the chapter.

Chapter 2, “River Elevation and the Picturesque,” focuses on the north-facing river elevation of the parliament buildings. The chapter examines how the manner of the Picturesque touched on

Pre 1900,” National Gallery of Canada, accessed December 6, 2015, <https://www.gallery.ca/en/about/pre-1900.php>.

many of the aspects of the architecture including the building silhouette, irregular form and link to the dramatic site along the Ottawa River.

Chapter 3, “Western Expansion,” examines the various additions made to Parliament Hill from 1874 to 1913. The chapter’s focus is on the West Block extension by Thomas Seaton Scott. An analysis of Edward Bennett’s 1915 plan, *Report of the Federal Plan Commission on a General Plan for the Cities of Ottawa and Hull*, frames the discussion of the western elevation (and proposed expansion) of the precinct.

The final chapter, “A New Dominant Façade,” argues that the construction of the new Centre Block changed the relationship of the various buildings, broke an asymmetrical plan, and created (intentionally or not) a more dominant façade. The chapter includes a discussion on the Late Victorian Gothic style and the influence of the Beaux-Arts Manner on the building plan.

Chapter 1: The Creation of an English Façade

After a bitterly fought battle between Kingston, Montreal, Toronto, and Quebec – four cities that temporarily functioned as Canada’s capital, with the latter two rotating between 1849 and 1865 – Ottawa was selected as the permanent seat of government of the Province of Canada.⁵³ In a private memorandum to Queen Victoria, Governor General Sir Edmund Walker Head wrote that Ottawa was accepted as a fair compromise by the majority of Upper and Lower Canada. “With the exception of Ottawa,” Head states, “every one of the cities proposed is an object of jealousy to each of the others.”⁵⁴ Ottawa’s strategic location, the potential for growth, and accessibility by both rail and water were additional factors leading to its selection. The choice of Ottawa was “clearly representing a compromise,” writes Carolyn Young. “The small, bustling lumber town was an unlikely and controversial selection. Indeed, until appropriate buildings were erected, Ottawa could be the capital only in name; the design and construction of the parliamentary complex was therefore a matter of prime importance.”⁵⁵

A competition for the building project was held in 1859. The winning design of the main parliament building, called Centre Block, and the library, was submitted by Thomas Fuller and Chilion Jones. Thomas Stent and Augustus Laver entered the winning design for the two

⁵³ David B. Knight, *Choosing Canada’s Capital: Conflict Resolution in a Parliamentary System* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991), 1.

⁵⁴ Edmund Walker Head in 1857 memorandum to Queen Victoria as quoted in Wilfrid Eggleston, *The Queen’s Choice: A Story of Canada’s Capital* (Ottawa: [Queen’s Printer], 1961), 102.

⁵⁵ Young, *The Glory of Ottawa*, 14-15.

departmental buildings, known today as East and West Block. Centre Block and the two departmental buildings were completed by 1865.⁵⁶ To accommodate new members of both houses following the expansion of Canada, extensions were subsequently made to all three buildings. Thomas Seaton Scott was the architect for the first West Block extension (1874 to 1878), which included the construction of the monumental Mackenzie Tower. A further extension connected this new wing to the eastern façade of the building. A 1910 to 1913 extension enclosed the courtyard of the East Block. These latter two projects, in addition to a northwest wing of the Centre Block, were designed and constructed by the Department of Public Works under the direction of David Ewart (see figure 1.1).⁵⁷

A Substantial Style of Architecture

The 1859 competition requirements did not specify one particular style over another. Rather, the *Notice to Architects* stated only that the buildings be constructed “in a plain substantial style of Architecture.”⁵⁸ By the late nineteenth century, however, the Gothic Revival style had become the norm for church and public building architecture within the British Empire.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ The clock tower was completed by 1873; the library was completed by 1876.

⁵⁷ Jacqueline Adell, “West Block,” Heritage Report 1986-52 (F), Canadian Register of Historic Places, Parks Canada (1985): 148.

⁵⁸ Young, *The Glory of Ottawa*, 127. Most of the designs submitted for the original Centre Block were Gothic in inspiration: Civil Gothic (3), Elizabethan or Tudor (1), Norman (1), and Lombard Venetian (1). The remaining ten designs were Classic (4), Italian (5), and Plain Modern (1). In contrast, only six designs were submitted for the departmental buildings: Civil Gothic (2), Norman (1), Classic (1), Italian (1), and Plain Modern (1); as reprinted in Young, *The Glory of Ottawa*, 60-61.

⁵⁹ Peter Richardson and Douglas Richardson. *Canadian Churches: An Architectural History* (Richmond Hill: Firefly Books, 2007), 19.

“Most importantly, Gothic was thought to be a peculiarly national style,” shaping the cultural and political identity of Western countries.⁶⁰ These architectural principles, derived in part from artists and theorists such as A. W. N. Pugin and John Ruskin, certainly influenced the Ottawa example.

Pugin regarded the Gothic style “as an embodiment of proper moral and religious values from the past” – values he felt were all but absent in his time.⁶¹ To him, a medieval town composed of Gothic church towers and public edifices projected value and harmony. Considering the Gothic style as the “only correct expression of the faith, wants, and climate,” Pugin advocated its use for “all buildings, including modern secular ones.”⁶²

John Ruskin campaigned for a return of the handicrafts and was concerned about the decline in standards. He argued for the rejection of new styles and favored the Italian Romanesque style of Pisa and the Gothic style of northwestern Italy.⁶³ Douglas Richardson writes that the parliamentary precinct “illustrates many of Ruskin’s ideas better than most structures in the United Kingdom.”⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Roger Dixon and Stefan Muthesius, *Victorian Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 21.

⁶¹ Michael Fazio, Marian Moffett, and Lawrence Wodehouse, *A World History of Architecture* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2013), 420.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 421.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 422.

⁶⁴ Richardson, “Canadian Architecture in the Victorian Era,” 29.

“It was fortunate that the 1860s marked the peak of the High Victorian period,” writes Harold Kalman, “a time when architects excelled at designing grand public building complexes.”⁶⁵ Thus, the architects for the Ottawa example were no longer bound by the historical sources that a group like the Ecclesiologists would have demanded in the past. A looser interpretation of Pugin and Ruskin’s instructions was also possible. The Westminster model then, referred to as the “Mother of Parliaments,” became more of a reference than a binding model for copying. Rather than emphasizing one single historical source, the architects were inspired by a variety of styles combining “a dynamic ‘synthetic’ or ‘creative’ eclecticism.”⁶⁶

The Anglicization of Space: The Eastern Elevation

Walter Chesterton’s watercolour entitled *Old Dufferin and Sapper’s Bridges, Ottawa* (figure 1.2) depicts the eastern elevation of the completed precinct. The picturesque roofline along with the old post office (now destroyed), towers over the bridges and the Commissariat building. At first glance, the entire precinct appears to be one massive building. In the distance, the Mackenzie Tower (the tallest point of the precinct) looms high above West Block. The intricate

⁶⁵ Kalman, *History of Canadian Architecture*, 533.

⁶⁶ Ibid. Christopher Thomas adds that, despite being “Ruskinian, Puginian, or Streetian in detail,” the parliament buildings were a product of modernity “imbricated in the transoceanic and transborder development of large, novel, rational building types intended to serve and represent new, international “Victorian” publics constituted by new social, cultural, and political relations.” See Christopher Thomas, “Shifting Soil. Agency and Building Type in Narratives of Canada’s “First” Parliament,” in *Architecture and the Canadian Fabric*, ed. Rhodri Windsor Liscombe (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011). 190; also see Christopher Thomas, “‘Canadian Castles’? The Question of National Styles in Architecture Revisited,” *Journal of the Canadian Studies* Vol. 31:1 (Spring 1997): 5-22.

towers of the East Block create an elegant façade facing Wellington Street and the Rideau Canal. The clock tower, later replaced by the Peace Tower following the fire of 1916, is almost hidden between the play of height and colour of the rooflines. The library, seen as the last building element to the right of the precinct, is distinguished from the rest of the building grouping with its circular shape and pointed roof.

The Ottawa buildings are undoubtedly a product of the 19th century and, while deviating from Early Victorian Gothic models or the Palace of Westminster model, the Ottawa skyline of the 1870s started to look decidedly English. The wrought iron roof cresting, the multi-coloured slate, and the various towers led to an asymmetrical building grouping typical of High Victorian architecture – a patriotic expression found within a colonial territory.⁶⁷ This anglicization⁶⁸ of the Ottawa environment, as seen in many of the visual representations discussed in this paper, is perhaps most prominent in Chesterton’s work. The image attests to the power of the building grouping. No one façade dominates over the others as the strength of the design resides in the placement of the three buildings, their relationship to one another, and the broader environment within which they are placed. Taken on their own, each structure could pass for a

⁶⁷ See, J.M. Frew, “Gothic is English: John Carter and the Revival of the Gothic as England's National Style” *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (Jun., 1982): 315-319; and, Peter Coffman, “Crisis in the Colonial Church,” *Newfoundland Gothic* (Quebec, Éditions MultiMondes, 2008), 29-49.

⁶⁸ Benedict Anderson writes that “Anglicization naturally [...] offered rosy opportunities to armies of middle-class metropolitans (not least Scotsmen!) – functionaries, schoolmates, merchants, and planters – who quickly fanned out over the vast” territories. See, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2006), 91-92. Anderson does not directly address the Canada example; however, his argument may also apply as many Scotsmen (along with the English) benefited first from the construction of the Rideau Canal and later from the construction of the parliament buildings.

handsome town hall of an English city. However, as the Chesterton image attests, each building benefits from the presence of the other, generating a sense of permanence and strength – a monumentality that lies within the building grouping rather than with one architectural element such as a single façade, a roofline or a specific tower. While deliberate, the vantage point chosen by Chesterton was a common one. With the exception of a few drawings and engravings (see figure 4.3 for example), the view from Wellington Street – the only view to properly capture all three of the buildings – was rarely depicted until the panoramic camera permitted a photographer to capture the entire southern span measuring some 320 meters.

A visual representation from further afield also attests to the strength of the building composition. The second watercolour analysed here is *Ottawa from the Rideau*, by Lucius R. O'Brien (figure 1.3), the first president of the Royal Canadian Academy. The medium of this work is similar to the image already discussed. This small watercolour on wove paper predates the Chesterton piece by only a few years. Indicative of this is the absence of the Mackenzie Tower which would have stood to the left of the clock tower; the tower was not yet constructed when this work was produced.

The affect⁶⁹ differs as the scene itself varies significantly. This image is more complex; the precinct is depicted within the Ottawa landscape rather than its immediate environs as seen in the Chesterton piece. The viewer is drawn into a pastoral landscape by the two boats docked at

⁶⁹ One of the four markers of distance as identified by Phillips. See footnote 44 and, Phillips, *On Historical Distance*, 14.

the eastern shore of the Rideau River along the edge of New Edinburgh. The scene leads to the raftsmen guiding their logs to the nearest mill. Further afield is the working class neighbourhood of Lowertown where smoke stacks dot the residential area. The central portion of the watercolour is reserved for the precinct.

Notre-Dame Cathedral, prominently placed next to the precinct, is the only edifice to visually (and symbolically) compete with the parliament buildings. Its two spires are a distinct marker on the Ottawa skyline – a Catholic marker rather than an Anglican one.⁷⁰ Yet, the precinct itself, identifiable by the library (a place of study), the clock tower (a symbol of the sovereign), and the East Block (the location of the office of both the Governor General and the Prime Minister), dominates the watercolour.

The summoning effect⁷¹ could be read as the following: under one crown, the British colonies become a united dominion. Seen here (under one roof) is the new seat of government representing the four provinces: Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.

⁷⁰ The view of the two spires may have been a surprising sight for some Anglican parishioners, especially those who had more recently immigrated to Canada. Until 1929, English law had restricted the Roman Catholic Church from using steeples, towers and bells. “For many years the development of church-building traditions had been stunted by these restrictions which denied any architectural expression of power, strength or lofty aspiration.” See, Victoria Bennett, “Early Catholic Church Architecture in the Ottawa Valley: An Initial Investigation of Nineteenth Century Parish Churches,” *The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, Historical Studies* 60 (1993): 22.

⁷¹ Process by which morality and/or ideology are embodied; one of the four markers of distance as identified by Phillips. See footnote 44 and, Phillips, *On Historical Distance*, 14.

In the case of the precinct, the buildings themselves were meant to transcend historical distances. The architecture, using Ruskinian language from *The Lamp of Memory*, was meant to become a monument honouring previous generations. At the same time, the structures were to stand as a temple projecting “value” and “harmony” while remaining enduring edifices for future generations. Ruskin warns of temporary buildings and urges the construction of permanent ones. “Therefore, when we build,” writes Ruskin “let us think that we build for ever. Let it not be for the present delight, nor for the present use alone; let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for.”⁷²

The ornate façades of the parliament buildings stood in stark contrast to the rest of Ottawa, specifically vis-à-vis the temporary wooden shacks and dwellings that filled the area east of the Rideau Canal. “The group of buildings,” writes Armstrong, “made a single architectural composition as extensive as the whole depth of the City of taverns, shops, and houses which they faced.”⁷³ This contrast, visible in O'Brien’s watercolour but hidden in Chesterton’s work, is prominent in some of the photographs that present the precinct within its broader environs. Samuel McLaughlin’s photograph from c. 1865 depicts an incomplete precinct (figure 1.4). Only the first floor of the library is constructed⁷⁴ and the Mackenzie Tower has yet to be started. Yet, the buildings’ presence, their *dasein*, is clearly visible as the monumental grouping towers over Rideau Street and the neighbourhood of Lowertown. The precinct’s permanence (or at least the perception of permanence) is unavoidable when the stone and brick buildings are placed

⁷² John Ruskin. *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1969), 190.

⁷³ Armstrong, “Profile of Parliament Hill,” 331.

⁷⁴ The base of library can be seen to the right of the building grouping.

against the spare dwellings seen in the foreground. The picturesque setting, as seen in the two watercolours discussed earlier, is replaced by the reality of a working class neighbourhood reflective of any Canadian town.

One last watercolour (figure 1.5), *Ottawa from the Government House drawing-room window*, painted by Sir Francis Clare Ford, the *aide-de-camp* to the Governor General and an artist in his own right, deserves an analysis. This work differs from the ones discussed above. The precinct, while prominently displayed in the background is not the sole focus of the work. In fact, the building grouping, framed by trees on either side and a racket court, may not even be recognized as an Ottawa landscape. If it wasn't for the descriptive text below the watercolour, the image could represent a number of cities, each having a town square, complete with a Gothic cathedral and chapter house dominating its highest point.

While the medium is similar to the Chesterton piece and the O'Brien work, the affect differs as the environment within which the precinct is presented has changed. Here, the working class neighbourhood of Lowertown is hidden from view and replaced by the stately row houses of New Edinburgh; the lawn is cut neatly. The livestock and carriages (as seen in the Chesterton work) are replaced with a tennis (or badminton?) court. The grounds are lush and colourful – a stark contrast to the austere industrial landscape depicted in Daniel Alexander McLaughlin's photograph (figure 3.4) discussed later in the text. Notre-Dame Cathedral, prominently visible in O'Brien's work, is almost hidden from view – the twin towers are overpowered by the eastern façade of the parliament buildings. The summoning effect then too has shifted as the

focus is no longer on the authority of the precinct. Rather, the focus here is on how the English have tamed the landscape and brought “values” and “harmony” to a conquered territory.

The Analogy of the Pedestal

Samuel McLaughlin presented a total of 22 photographs as part of his 1861 series documenting the construction of the Parliamentary Precinct. In addition to this group of images, the photographer produced an unusual ground plan (see figure 1.6) marking the location of the original Centre Block, the two departmental buildings and, most importantly, the position from which each photograph was taken (identified as numbers 1 to 22). The plan, indicating the section of the building area captured within each photograph, is one of the earliest known plans of the precinct to have survived.

The loose star-shaped patterns formed around each edifice attest to the scale of the precinct and recreate, in some sense, McLaughlin’s own footsteps as he walked around the buildings in an attempt to capture the various building façades.⁷⁵ Only two photographs, number 12 (depicting the elaborate window frames near the main tower) and number 19 (detail of East Block’s *porte cochère*) are captured at a right angle. The remainder, including the principal façades of Centre Block and the two departmental blocks, are photographed from an angle. The image thus reflects the asymmetrical plan of the original configuration, highlighting the

⁷⁵ The documentation of the library is omitted from McLaughlin’s study as its construction had moved more slowly; it had stalled reaching only the upper walls of the library’s ground level at the time these photographs were taken.

irregular shape of the three buildings and attesting to the complex relationship between the various façades, the building components, and the site.

McLaughlin's photographic approach builds upon the idea introduced by Young that the original precinct – rather than only viewed from one specific or several designated vantage points – was meant to be seen and experienced in the round. “The Barrack Hill plateau,” writes Young, “became a giant pedestal for buildings which, like High Renaissance sculptures, were meant to be seen in the round.”⁷⁶

Architecture, like sculpture, is often bound by the environment within which it is placed and thus cannot be, or is not always meant to be, viewed from all sides. However, in the case of the parliamentary precinct, like that of a Baroque sculpture, the buildings must be seen in the round. In a discussion on the East Block, Leslie Maitland writes that the building, given the difference in composition for each façade, “was meant to be appreciated from all angles.”⁷⁷ Although Maitland's reference is specific to East Block, a study of Parliament Hill – it can be further argued – must then include an analysis of all four elevations. The examination of the northern elevation, the second of four elevations and referred to as the river elevation, will strengthen this argument.

⁷⁶ Young, *The Glory of Ottawa*, 90.

⁷⁷ Maitland, “East Block,” 122.

Chapter 2: River Elevation and the Picturesque

Many of Ottawa's 19th-century landmarks, as seen from the Alexandra Bridge and the shores of what is now Gatineau, Quebec, can still be identified today. The entrance valley, located between Major's Hill Park and Parliament Hill, is the site of the large navigable stairway⁷⁸ connecting the Rideau Canal to the Ottawa River. The Commissariat Building, now the Bytown Museum, marks the eastern edge of the cliff on which the Parliamentary Precinct was constructed. Recognizable then too is the distinct silhouette of the East Block, the octagonal Library of Parliament facing the Ottawa River, and the large Mackenzie Tower marking the western façade of the precinct.

As for the rest of the environment, much has changed. The original Centre Block was replaced by a larger edifice; the Peace Tower now marks the spot where the original (and much shorter) clock tower once stood. A modern city has grown around Parliament Hill replacing a pastoral landscape with a cityscape complete with highrise towers, a street grid, and urban parks. While the river remains largely unchanged, the manicured shores and dammed falls have softened its once wild appearance.

⁷⁸ The term is borrowed from poet Katherine Hale who refers to the locks at the foot of Parliament Hill as a "giant stairway." See, Katherine Hale [Amelia Beers Warnock], *Canadian Cities of Romance* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1922) 98.

The Picturesque: An Aesthetic Theory

The manner of the Picturesque, which this thesis argues influenced the original design of Parliament Hill, had its origins in the 18th-century writings of Joseph Addison, Alexander Pope, and the Earl of Shaftesbury. Their texts expressed an alternative to the prevailing classical system by favouring a return of the “genuine order of nature.”⁷⁹ Furthermore, their writings influenced a number of theorists preoccupied with aesthetic ideals as they relate to landscape painting, garden design, and architecture.

By the mid-19th century, the Picturesque had gained momentum, and Neo-Classical buildings – once dominating the architectural discourse – were being labelled as stiff and monotonous.⁸⁰ British architectural theory thus diverted from artistic developments in France and started to oppose “the aesthetic norms of classicism.”⁸¹ These philosophical distinctions, first translated into architectural theory through garden design, had much broader aesthetic implications⁸² and became a common heuristic for describing both site and building when discussing architecture within, or in union with, its natural or created environment.⁸³

⁷⁹ Janet Wright, *Architecture of the Picturesque in Canada* (Ottawa: Parks Canada Agency, 2011), accessed September 20, 2014, <http://www.historicplaces.ca/media/24635/picturesquecanada.pdf>, 10-11.

⁸⁰ Dixon and Muthesius, *Victorian Architecture*, 20.

⁸¹ “Sources of the Picturesque,” in *Architectural Theory, Volume I: An Anthology from Vitruvius to 1870*, ed. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2013), 224.

⁸² “Consolidation of Picturesque Theory,” in *Architectural Theory, Volume I: An Anthology from Vitruvius to 1870*, ed. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2013), 290-291.

⁸³ Wright, *Architecture of the Picturesque*, 16.

The Picturesque needs to be understood in relationship to the Beautiful and the Sublime.

Edmund Burke defined the latter as “vastness and obscurity which inspired sensations of fear and awe,” and the former as “characterized by smoothness, gradual variation and delicacy of form and colour,” evoking a sensation – a neurological cause – of tenderness and pleasure.⁸⁴ A *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of The Sublime and Beautiful*, first published in 1756 and enlarged in 1757, presents a remarkable contrast:

For sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small: beauty should be smooth and polished; the great, rugged and negligent; beauty should shun the right line, yet deviate from it insensibly; the great in many cases loves the right line, and when it deviates it often makes a strong deviation: beauty should not be obscure; the great ought to be dark and gloomy: beauty should be light and delicate; the great ought to be solid, and even massive.⁸⁵

In his comparison of the Beautiful and the Sublime – one being founded on pleasure, the other on pain – Burke states that, while opposite and contradictory, one must expect to find combinations where the qualities of the two unite.⁸⁶

William Gilpin, one of Burke’s contemporaries, frequently used the term Picturesque in his travel accounts of the English countryside to recall and describe “the pleasure gained from

⁸⁴ Wright, *Architecture of the Picturesque*, 10-11.

⁸⁵ Edmund Burke, *On the Sublime and Beautiful*. Vol. XXIV, Part 2, The Harvard Classics (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909–14), Accessed December 20, 2015. <http://www.bartleby.com/24/2/>.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

viewing natural scenery [...] which was neither vastly sublime nor smoothly beautiful.”⁸⁷ This aesthetic language, while subjective as it recalls the viewer’s response, branches into the field of architecture when the building itself becomes an “incident” of the entire composition.⁸⁸ Sir Richard Payne Knight instructed:

The traditional architect, who conceived of design as an abstract problem of proportion and detail worked out independently of its environment, was to be replaced by the “architettopittore,” an architect with the eye of a painter who, like Claude Lorraine, would treat architecture as part of an overall setting – an embellishment to the composition of trees, hills, water, colour and light.⁸⁹

“The Picturesque,” writes Rosemary Hill, “was England’s most significant contribution to aesthetic theory” influencing literature, the fine arts, and most enduringly, architecture and landscape design.⁹⁰ As for Canadian examples, many domestic dwellings were designed by “British architects who had been indoctrinated into Picturesque ideas of landscape and design and who were able to supply their clients with residential designs based on fashionable English models.”⁹¹ Janet Wright’s *Architecture of the Picturesque in Canada* excludes a discussion on

⁸⁷ Wright, *Architecture of the Picturesque*, 11.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁸⁹ As reproduced in Wright, *Architecture of the Picturesque*, 14.

⁹⁰ Rosemary Hill, *God’s Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain* (London: Penguin Group, 2008), 15.

⁹¹ Wright, *Architecture of the Picturesque*, 7.

the design of the Parliamentary Precinct as her study is rooted in domestic Canadian architecture.⁹²

The parliament buildings were, to some extent, an unusual example of Picturesque ideas as the precinct was neither a domestic dwelling, nor was the setting constructed (or reconstructed) by landscape architects and designers. Instead, the precinct was composed of several large public buildings which were situated within a natural environment – complete with large cliffs, an untamed river and a never-ending valley. “The scenery of some parts of the Ottawa is truly magnificent,” states an 1860 *Illustrated London News* article. “Taking a bird’s-eye of the valley of the Ottawa, we see spread out before us a country equal to ten times the extent of Massachusetts, with its great artery the Ottawa curving through it, resembling the Rhine in length of course, but greatly exceeding it in magnitude.”⁹³

Be it an aesthetic ideal or a 19th-century neurological response, the Picturesque must be taken into account as Fuller and Jones were surely aware of this aesthetic language. Included as part of their 1859 completion entry is a reflective account describing the proposed building within the actual site:

⁹² Janet Wright notes that “Only in this type of building [i.e. small residential building] and environment [i.e. rural or suburban setting], which in Picturesque language were mostly commonly referred to as the villa or the cottage, could the fusion of architecture and landscape into a Picturesque whole be achieved.” See, Wright, *Architecture of the Picturesque*, 14. Wright’s focus is on Canadian domestic buildings, residences and cottages constructed for affluent immigrants from Britain, and thus excludes Ottawa’s parliament buildings.

⁹³ “Ottawa,” *The Illustrated London News* September 29, 1860: 297.

In the present case, the Architects, after having inspected the truly magnificent site, selected for this building. [sic] Were fully convinced that a Gothic building only could be adapted to a site, at once so picturesque and so grand. In a building of this magnitude when accommodation is afforded for two houses of legislature with nearly equal requirements for offices &c a certain amount of uniformity in that portion was a necessity, and such being the case, the Architects in accordance with the true principles of Architectural Design, have not attempted to conceal it, but, by a judicious arrangement of chimney shafts, Dormers &c, have endeavoured, and, they trust, not unsatisfactory to produce a broken and picturesque sky line.⁹⁴

The River Elevation

City of Ottawa, Canada West from c. 1859 (figure 2.1) is one of the visual representations that perhaps best illustrates the environs within which the Parliamentary Precinct was constructed. This tint stone lithograph, depicting a bird's eye view of the city looking east along the Ottawa River, was printed for Stent & Laver Architects (the architects responsible for East and West Block) by Sarony, Major & Knapp, New York.⁹⁵

The foreground of the image is dominated by the “magnificent and splendid” Chaudière Falls which separated – until the construction of the Union Bridge in 1826 – what is today Ottawa

⁹⁴ As reproduced in Young, *The Glory of Ottawa*, 135.

⁹⁵ Rosemarie L. Tovell writes that Stent and Laver likely hired artists to render the many meticulous details of the lithograph. “The most likely artist they would have called upon to execute the view was Edwin Whitefield (1816-1892), who had his two views published as well as a portfolio full of drawings [...] of the city made during his visit in 1854.” See, Janet Carlile et al., *Hidden Treasures from the Bytown Museum*, 46.

and Gatineau.⁹⁶ The bottom of the print shows two massive tree trunks being carried down the river near the break of the falls. The powerful stream, cutting in between a number of islands, calms as the river widens at the base of Barrack Hill – the future site of the parliament buildings. High above the tranquil waters, forming the upper portion of the print and stretching along Wellington Street from west to east, is the newly established City of Ottawa, known as Bytown until 1855. The broad scenic vista, bathed in a warm atmospheric light, displays a stark contrast to the light and dark tones of the rough waters around the falls.

At first glance, the image reads like an 18th- or 19th-century landscape where a rough and untamed environment is unified with a calm pastoral landscape, save for the Ottawa street grid and the dammed walls around Chaudière Island. However, the environment itself, unlike many painted landscapes or the heavily landscaped surroundings of 19th-century English country estates, is natural and stretches from one end of the print to far beyond the horizon.

The large lithograph, measuring some 94 centimetres by 59 centimetres, is dedicated to Governor General Sir Edmund Walker Head who, as discussed in the previous chapter, was instrumental in selecting the design submissions and shaping the final details of the parliament buildings.⁹⁷ The image provided contemporaries with a fresh view of Ottawa and may have served as a further justification for the Queen's selection of Ottawa as the new capital for

⁹⁶ Haig, *Ottawa*, 65.

⁹⁷ Sir Edmund Walker Head's influence, while alluded to in some texts (Young, Kalman and Armstrong), deserves further study as he was also connected to two of the buildings that greatly influenced the Parliamentary Precinct, namely the Oxford University Museum and Toronto's University College.

Upper and Lower Canada. The lithograph attests to the city's strategic location along the Ottawa River – a proposed site for a capital far removed from the border with the United States and sitting at the crossroads of both Upper and Lower Canada. The large cultivatable lands surrounding the city, and the forested areas north of the river attest to the region's growth potential. Additionally, the arrival of a train seen entering the Ottawa station (then located near Sussex Drive, visible in the upper left corner), along with the multiple vessels at the mouth of the Rideau Canal attest to an accessible and potentially vibrant city.

A second edition of the same print, c. 1860, was re-issued with the parliament buildings replacing the military barracks, with an insert that shows the completed parliament buildings. At least two versions of this insert exist: a pen and ink drawing by Stent & Laver Architects (deposited in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada; no. 244) and a later engraving depicting the precinct from a slightly lower angle.⁹⁸ This latter image, entitled *General View of Ottawa, Canada West, Showing the new Parliament Buildings* (figure 2.2), was published in the May 30, 1863 edition of the *Illustrated Times (London)*. The emphasis within this print is on the relationship between the Parliamentary Precinct and the natural setting within which it is placed. The engraving gives visual substance to a Picturesque view, a convergence of the natural environment and the built architecture into a single image.

⁹⁸ Young confirms that the widely circulated image was based on Stent and Laver's revised lithograph. See, Young, *The Glory of Ottawa*, 4.

The image includes a close-up of the parliament buildings within their immediate environs. The engraving depicts (or predicts) what a completed precinct will look like following the many proposed changes by Public Works. The massive cliffs surrounding Barrack Hill and the fortress-like retaining wall high above the Ottawa River evoke a scene from Medieval Europe. The sublime landscape is further juxtaposed with a tightly manicured garden placed between the three parliamentary buildings, forming a quadrangle, the centre of which (as suggested by the engraver) will display a statue of Queen Victoria.⁹⁹

The text accompanying the engraving goes into great lengths praising the accomplishments of the architects and recounts the advancements made regarding the construction of the precinct. The author excludes any mention of cost-overruns and construction delays. Instead, the text states that the reproduced image aims to convey the “idea of the magnitude and importance of the Parliament buildings”¹⁰⁰ being constructed in Ottawa. To further underline the grandeur of both building and site, the text ends with an extract of Anthony Trollope’s account from his 1861 visit to Canada. According to the English author, Ottawa’s Parliament “stands nobly on a magnificent river, with high, overhanging rock, and a natural grandeur of position which has perhaps gone far in recommending it.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Changes to the grounds were numerous with elements of the original plans never realized; see, John J. Stewart, “Notes on Calvert Vaux’s 1873 Design for the Public Grounds of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa,” *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1976: 1-27.

¹⁰⁰ “General View of Ottawa, Canada West, Showing the new Parliament Buildings.” *The Illustrated London News* May 30, 1863: 378.

¹⁰¹ Anthony Trollope, “Upper Canada,” North America. Updated Tuesday, August 25, 2015, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/t/trollope/anthony/north/chapter5.html>.

Government Buildings, Ottawa, a photograph after a watercolour by Thomas Fuller (figure 2.3), further attests to the Picturesque qualities of the river façade on Parliament Hill. This image depicts the Centre Block as it was originally proposed by Fuller and Jones. Its sheer size and function – the accommodation of two legislative chambers, a circular library, several apartments, and the various offices to house the parliamentarians – could have resulted in a bulky or perhaps disproportionate building block.¹⁰² Instead, the proposed edifice feels light and almost playful as the various building components create a dynamic building composition marked by asymmetry. The Picturesque influenced a number of aspects of the parliament buildings, particularly those elements related to the effects of light and shadow, the building silhouette, its irregular forms, and the variety of planes and texture found within its building façade. “The north front is, though to a certain extent uniform,” wrote Fuller and Jones as part of their winning entry, “so broken in outline that it would present a general contour quite in unison with the grandeur of the scenery as viewed from the river.”¹⁰³ The secondary buildings, including the proposed residences for the two speakers, the coach houses, and the library, further enhance the Picturesque effect. Their placement along the back of the building breaks up the large river elevation and creates a more interesting silhouette. With the exception of the library, however, none of the additional buildings was realized and thus the final effect (as seen in figure 2.4) is certainly less dramatic.

¹⁰² One such example is the third-place proposal for the original Centre Block by Cumberland & Storm. Young writes that “the massive square block that houses the circular library dominates the river front and, indeed, the whole composition. Although it forms only part of the building, it lends the structure a sombre air” (Young, 1995, p. 52-53) resulting in a heavy and prison-like edifice.

¹⁰³ As reproduced in Young, *The Glory of Ottawa*, 135.

The original watercolour, like many of the drawings submitted as part of the competition entry, has been lost. Remaining here is a small albumen print measuring 12.2 centimetres by 19.5 centimetres from the Royal Collection Trust (another copy of the same print is deposited at Library and Archives Canada; no. C7236). The photograph, projecting the completed building, was likely presented to the Prince of Wales during his visit to Ottawa in 1860 when the future king laid the cornerstone of the original Centre Block.¹⁰⁴

One last image of the river elevation, *Parliament Hill from Nepean Point* (1913), shows the completed parliament buildings atop a shrouded pedestal (figure 2.4). The panoramic image,¹⁰⁵ taken from the Alexandra Bridge, shows the southern shore of the Ottawa River just below the precinct. The curved lines of the railway tracks lead the viewer along Major's Hill Park to the newly constructed Château Laurier Hotel looming over the Ottawa Locks and the Commissariat Building. The original Centre Block, framed by the Mackenzie Tower (to the right) and the asymmetrical roofline of the East Block (to the left), occupies the central portion of the photograph. Unlike the two previous images (figure 2.2 and figure 2.3) which depict the proposed buildings, this photograph shows a completed precinct as seen within its actual setting. When compared to the engraving published in the *Illustrated Times, London* (figure

¹⁰⁴ See: "Government Buildings, Ottawa," Royal Collection Trust, accessed October 14, 2015, <https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/search#/1/collection/2700754/government-buildings-ottawa>.

¹⁰⁵ The location of the full-sized panoramic image is not known. Discussed here is a small 50 by 245 mm print submitted to the British Library Museum (later transferred to the British Library) under the Colonial Copyright Law. See, Philip John Hatfield, "Colonial Copyright and the Photographic Image: Canada in the Frame" (PhD diss., Royal Holloway, University of London, 2011). 12.

2.2), the site itself is perhaps less impressive. The ominous landscape, formed in part by a dramatic rocky pedestal, is in reality much softer as a carpet of trees covers the sides of the pedestal – thus quieting the sublime effect. Additionally, the medieval-like retaining wall encircling the building grouping was never constructed. Instead, a promenade-like walkway, called the Lovers' Walk (not visible in figure 2.4), circled the parliament buildings. The various buildings seen near the precinct – the commercial buildings, residential dwellings, and church steeples – then too lessen the vastness of the scenery experienced or expressed within the engraving.

A closer look at the photograph confirms that the image was taken a few years prior to the fire of 1916. The Mackenzie Tower and the double towers marking the northern façade of the first West Block extension dramatically frame the western edge of the precinct; they were completed in 1878.¹⁰⁶ Most remarkable, perhaps, is the new northwest wing of the Centre Block seen to the immediate right of the library. The addition pushes the building's northern façade to the edge of the pedestal and erases much of the playfulness for which Fuller and Jones were responsible. When compared to the irregular northeast corner of Centre Block, the out-of-scale addition breaks the precinct's asymmetrical plan.

As demand for more office space increased, the Picturesque sensibilities and qualities as presented by the original architects began to erode. An examination of the western elevation,

¹⁰⁶ The additions enclosing the courtyards of both the East Block (1910-13) and the West Block (1906-09) are not visible here.

including a discussion of the West Block addition, will demonstrate that these new demands and a shift in style led to an important change in focus: a shift from east to west.

Chapter 3: Western Expansion

The Canada we know today did not yet exist when the decision was made to move the capital of the Province of Canada to Ottawa. Parliament, representing at the time Canada East (modern-day Quebec) and Canada West (modern-day Ontario), moved into the nearly completed buildings in Ottawa in 1866, in advance of Confederation.¹⁰⁷ Before being fully completed, Parliament Hill was already experiencing accommodation challenges as the original design was never intended to include the representatives of four provinces, or that of nine provinces and two territories following the entry of Manitoba (1870), the North West Territories (1870), British Columbia (1871), Prince Edward Island (1873), Yukon (1898), Alberta (1905) and Saskatchewan (1905).¹⁰⁸

The original Centre Block was constructed by the Province of Canada to house the Legislative Chamber (the upper house), the Legislative Assembly (the lower house), and the Library of Parliament. While the East Block was purposed to accommodate the offices of the Governor General and those of the Executive Council (as already discussed in Chapter 1), the West Block was reserved for the bureaucracy.¹⁰⁹ Jacqueline Adell writes that the latter building “functioned

¹⁰⁷ Parliament sat for only one session before the Dominion of Canada, which included the newly formed provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, was created at Confederation in 1867.

¹⁰⁸ Newfoundland joined confederation in 1949. Nunavut was created in 1999.

¹⁰⁹ The Statement of Accommodation, published by the Department of Public Works on May 14, 1859, lists the following office requirements for the departmental buildings (the number offices are listed in brackets): Governor General and Staff (6); Executive Council (15); Indian Department (4); Provincial Secretary (12); Crown Law Officers (9); Provincial Registrar (4); Adjutant General of Militia (12); Bureau of Agriculture (8); Public Works (15); Crown Lands and

exclusively as a civil service office building [and] contained the more purely administrative departments, such as Public Works, Customs and Audit, Agriculture and the Post Master General.”¹¹⁰ With the expansion of the country and the growth of the bureaucracy, the parliament buildings needed to accommodate a greater number of parliamentarians and their support staff. The buildings were pushed upwards and outwards. However, it was the footprint of the West Block that experienced the most significant changes during these first few decades of immense growth.

The West Block

Located across a large quadrangle from one another, the departmental buildings were originally constructed as two-and-a-half storey structures. Their façades were united as both buildings featured projecting pavilions and towers supporting a multi-coloured slate roof. While similar in style and use of textural qualities, the two buildings were never identical. The original façade of the West Block, with two square (and identical) towers framing its façade along Wellington Street, was more symmetrical than that of its counterpart.¹¹¹ This symmetry was broken with the 1874-78 extension and the addition of the Mackenzie Tower.

Wood and Forest (30); Finance Minister (10); Customs Branch (8); Audit Branch (6); Receiver General (11); Post-Master General (20); as reproduced in Young, *The Glory of Ottawa*, 129.

¹¹⁰ Adell, “West Block,” 141-142.

¹¹¹ Unlike the building plan of the East Block, the long arm of the ‘L’ shaped plan of the West Block is facing Wellington Street. The original design for both departmental buildings was a rectangular building with a hollow courtyard. To reduce costs and to speed up the construction process, both edifices were reduced to two-storied ‘L’ shaped buildings with the long arm facing Wellington Street. In an attempt to further reduce costs, the direction of the East Block

Its original occupants – administrative departments rather than offices related to the executive branch – dictated a less formal treatment of the principal entrances, stairways, and office spaces. Young writes that the East Block’s prominent southwest tower – perhaps the most impressively designed tower on the hill – was a “conspicuous symbol” of the building’s elevated status.¹¹² The *porte-cochère*, the Governor General’s personal entrance, adds an additional layer of formality not seen along the façade of the West Block. An 1868 visitor’s guide, while referring to both of the departmental buildings as “imposing” edifices, confirms the elevated status of the East Block by describing its counterpart as less “grand.”¹¹³

The government departments moved from Quebec to Ottawa in the fall of 1865 – a year prior to the completion of the original Centre Block. With Confederation in place, the federal government quickly outgrew its new facilities and plans were put into place to enlarge the precinct. The entry of Manitoba, the Northwest Territories, British Columbia, and Prince Edward Island into Confederation led to a major extension of the West Block to meet the space requirements for additional parliamentarians and their support staff; excavation for an addition began as early as 1874.¹¹⁴ Thomas Seaton Scott, chief architect to the Department of Public Works, added a large three-storey extension to the west pavilion of the original building. “Scott

was reversed with the long arm facing the parliamentary lawn (Maitland, p. 119). The dormers to both blocks were added at a later time.

¹¹² Young, *The Glory of Ottawa*, 76.

¹¹³ *Hand book to the parliamentary and departmental buildings, Canada [...] (Ottawa: G.E. Desbarats, 1867). 15.*

¹¹⁴ Dubé, “Historical Chronology,” 10-11.

carried on the Gothic Revival idiom introduced in the early wings but favoured the High Victorian manner of his predecessors' Ruskinian palette."¹¹⁵

The Mackenzie Tower, which exceeded the height of the clock tower of the original Centre Block, dominated the addition. Located in between two shorter polygonal towers, the rectangular structure featured a central entrance leading to a vestibule above which the new office of the Prime Minister was located.¹¹⁶ The northern façade, facing the Ottawa River, featured two slender-roofed towers, while a short records wing stretched eastward behind the tower.

The addition by Scott altered the West Block considerably as it turned a rather nondescript western façade into a much discussed landmark. John A. Macdonald, who had just recently lost the election to Alexander Mackenzie (a stonemason by trade), questioned the structural integrity of the building and referred to the spire as a "cowbell."¹¹⁷ Others questioned the immense scale of the tower. The *Canadian Illustrated News* wrote in 1878 that the new wing

¹¹⁵ ARCOP Group and Gersovitz Moss, "West Block Renovation, Parliament Hill, Ottawa: Historic Structure Report," PWGSC Project No. 706105. n.d., 10.

¹¹⁶ The office of the prime minister had indeed moved, albeit only briefly, from East Block into the new central tower of West Block: "For a few short months in 1878, between the completion of the addition and the fall of his government, Alexander Mackenzie had his office in the newly constructed west tower, which has always borne his name." See, Adell, "West Block," 144.

¹¹⁷ Nixon, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 125. The rectangular planned tower and mansard roofed spire may have been influenced by the St. Augustine and St. John Church in Dublin, Ireland. See, ARCOP and Moss, "West Block Renovation," 89. Described by Ruskin as a "poem in stone," the Thomas Street church was designed by Edward Welby Pugin (son of the famous A.W.N. Pugin) in 1862. The spire and roof, completed in 1874, was designed by William Hague. See; Peter Costello, *Dublin Churches* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1989). 48; and Matthew J. McDermott, *Dublin's Architectural Development 1800-1925* (Dublin: Tulcamac, 1988), 16.

destroyed the beauty of the original plan for Parliament Hill. The article called for the construction of a second tower along the East Block to even out the “lopsided” design.¹¹⁸

The addition to the West Block did indeed alter the western elevation of the precinct and resulted in more than added office space. The tower dominated the view from LeBreton Flats and became an important visual point of reference within the skyline of Ottawa.¹¹⁹ One report states that the imposing landmark “was meant to effect a grand re-orientation of Parliament Hill towards the west”¹²⁰ which led to the plan for the western expansion of the precinct.

By 1912, the federal government had acquired 25 acres of land located immediately to the west of the precinct intending to construct a court house and several departmental buildings “along an east/west axis with the Mackenzie Tower as a focal point of a long ceremonial avenue.”¹²¹

Edward Bennett, a leading City Beautiful architect, presented a bold plan for an expanded precinct for the area of land between Wellington Street and the Ottawa River (see figure 3.1). A second extension was planned for the western tip of Queen Street. The 1915 *Report of the Federal Plan Commission on a General Plan for the Cities of Ottawa and Hull* presented a grand architectural scheme, rendered in a Beaux-Arts style. Bennett listed Scotland’s historic Edinburgh as one example where a Gothic silhouette cohabitated rather successfully with the

¹¹⁸ As quoted in Young, *The Glory of Ottawa*, 109.

¹¹⁹ Adell, “West Block,” 149.

¹²⁰ ARCOP and Moss, “West Block Renovation,” 10.

¹²¹ Adell, “West Block,” 144.

Classical idiom. The plan was meant to transform Canada's "Westminster of the Wilderness" into a "Washington of the North."¹²²

However, Bennett's plan, which was derailed by the 1916 fire and a European war, was almost immediately shelved following its release. "The City Beautiful movement," writes David Gordon, "was extensively criticized by contemporary planners [arguing] that the 'aesthetic approach' ignored both technical and social issues."¹²³ Gordon adds that the poor implementation provisions of the plan, along with a general reaction against a City Beautiful design, further led to its demise. As noted by Charles Hill, the plan was tabled in the House of Commons five weeks after the Centre Block had burned down.¹²⁴ Bennett's scheme must have looked ambitious – or perhaps even audacious – at a time when Canada was at war and its parliament confined to the cramped and crowded corridors of the Victoria Memorial Museum (today's Canadian Museum of Nature). Others felt that the Beaux-Arts style did not harmonize with the Gothic Revival buildings of Parliament Hill.¹²⁵ The buildings that were eventually constructed along Wellington Street – Confederation and Justice buildings, the East and West Memorial Buildings, and the Supreme Court of Canada building – abandoned the Beaux-Arts style and bear the hallmarks (to some extent or another) of the Château style, thought to be more complimentary to their Gothic environs.

¹²² David L. A. Gordon, "A City Beautiful Plan for Canada's Capital: Edward Bennett and the 1915 Plan for Ottawa and Hull," *Planning Perspectives*. 13 (1998): 27.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 293.

¹²⁴ Charles C. Hill, "For the Integration of the Arts." *Artists, Architects and Artisans: Canadian Art 1890 - 1918* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2012), 205.

¹²⁵ Adell, "West Block," 144.

The Western Elevation: From Non-Descript to Landmark Façade

An early photograph from about 1870 (figure 3.2) shows the nearly completed parliament buildings. Photographed from Victoria Island,¹²⁶ the foreground is dominated by a timber raft framed by bushes and trees. The image shows a city in transition. The large raft – composed of numerous cribs supporting a cookery and wooden shelters for the workers transporting timber from the Ottawa Valley to Quebec City – stands in stark contrast to the elegant Centre Block being constructed high above the Ottawa River. Also visible is the first floor of the library and the hospital, dating from the time when the hill was used as military barracks. The short western façade of the West Block is visible on the far right. The only other recognizable landmark is Notre-Dame Cathedral seen on the far left of the photograph.

When compared to the McLaughlin photograph (figure 1.4), the building grouping, as discussed in Chapter 1, is somewhat disjointed. A large span, exaggerated here by the angle from which the photograph was taken and by the treetops heightening a visual division, separates the original Centre Block and West Block. The unity of the building grouping, as achieved with the eastern elevation, is perhaps less successful as the incomplete Centre Block monopolizes the photograph pushing the departmental block to the edge of the image.

¹²⁶ The image title, *Parliament Buildings from across the river, Ottawa, ON*, suggests that the photograph was taken from across the Ottawa River. This is incorrect as the image was taken closer to the Ottawa shore, likely from Victoria Island.

The 11.1 centimetres by 19.3 centimetres silver salts albumen print was taken by Alexander Henderson, a Scottish merchant and photographer from Montreal. Henderson, a personal friend and colleague of William Notman, produced “pastoral images showing the strong influence of the British landscape tradition.”¹²⁷ A Notman & Sandham photograph (figure 3.3), taken nearly a decade later from a similar vantage point, shows a vastly different scene. The focus here is on the completed parliament buildings, including the recently constructed addition to the West Block, the Mackenzie Tower, and the completed library. The spires of the various structures mark a redefined western elevation which, in this photograph, is reflected in the calm waters of the Ottawa River. The effect differs from the romantic image produced by Henderson as a more unified and powerful building grouping with an ever-expanding roofline now dominating the landscape.

The Mackenzie Tower added an imposing note to the roofline as its appearance, along with that of the entire new western façade, conveyed a commanding note to the Ottawa skyline. “Scott’s extension,” writes Adell, “is interesting because its imposing appearance conveys the authority invested in the new federal government.”¹²⁸ Following its completion, the massive Mackenzie Tower became an important point of reference as it dominated the west side of Parliament Hill.¹²⁹ When viewed from LeBreton Flats (figure 3.4), the contrast between city and precinct, as first described in Chapter 1, is further reinforced. The massive tower and completed addition to

¹²⁷ Stanley G. Triggs, “Henderson, Alexander (1831-1913),” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 14, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed December 20, 2015, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/henderson_alexander_1831_1913_14E.html.

¹²⁸ Adell, “West Block,” 148.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 149.

West Block, along with the finished library and clock tower, dominate the western elevation. The new tower soars over the industrial landscape photographed by Daniel Alexander McLaughlin (son of Samuel McLaughlin) and strengthens the overall building grouping.

The Langevin Block, constructed from 1883 to 1889 by Thomas Fuller during his tenure as Public Work's Chief Architect,¹³⁰ is visible to the immediate right of the West Block. The entire grouping is framed by two places of worship: the spires of the Notre-Dame Cathedral, located on Sussex Drive (visible on the far left of the photograph) and the tower of Christ Church Cathedral located on Sparks Street (seen on the far right). The background of this photograph thus captures the entire Ottawa skyline as it would have appeared around the turn of the century.

One last image of the western elevation, a photograph by William James Topley (figure 3.5), depicts a closer view of the original West Block and the Scott addition. The building is framed by the southwest tower of the East Block (seen on the right) and the old Supreme Court building (seen at the bottom left). The centre of the image by the Ottawa photographer shows the West Block as seen from the corner of Wellington Street and Bank Street. The two square towers form the uniform Wellington Street façade. A polygonal tower, located to the right of the Mackenzie Tower, marked the end of the original Stent and Laver building. As described earlier, the polygonal tower was duplicated within the new façade to frame the main tower.

¹³⁰ "Langevin Block National Historic Site of Canada," Canada's Historic Places, accessed December 6, 2015, <http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=14127>.

Two steep-roofed towers, referencing the identical square towers, frame the short northern façade. The 1874-1878 addition was never meant to copy the original structure. Instead, the extension was meant to compliment the original building¹³¹ with the Mackenzie Tower masking the transition between the Stent and Laver building and the Scott addition.¹³² One of the most distinguishable features (other than the towers) was the treatment of the third floor as the original sloped roof was shortened to allow for a long row of small windows permitting an extra storey to the new wing.

The height and width of the projecting tower, as seen in the Topley photograph, is impressive. The tower's presence is undeniable and, from this viewpoint, becomes the main focal point overshadowing most other architectural landmarks of the precinct. The long façade and heightened angle almost fully block the view of the original Centre Block. Left visible are only the crown of the clock tower (seen in between the Mackenzie Tower and the original polygonal tower) and the tip of the roof of the library (seen to the left of the second polygonal tower).

Responsibility for the re-orientation, or new secondary focus,¹³³ must be shared between Thomas Seaton Scott and Alexander Mackenzie. Both men had shown interest in the call for proposals for the original parliament buildings. "In 1859 Mackenzie, his brother Hope, contractor James Stewart, and Kingston plumber Neil McNeil submitted losing bids on the

¹³¹ Adell, "West Block," 146.

¹³² Janet Wright, *Crown Assets: the architecture of the Department of Public Works, 1867-1967* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 20.

¹³³ Wright states that the Scott addition created "a secondary focus to Parliament Hill" with the principal elevation still defined as the Wellington Street elevation; Ibid.

construction of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa.”¹³⁴ Thomas Scott had also requested information about the competition but, according to Young, did not submit a formal entry.¹³⁵ Thus, while neither of the two had contributed to the final design of the original parliament buildings, both Scott and Mackenzie were now (with the addition of West Block) in a position to significantly influence the architectural configuration of the Parliamentary Precinct.

Following the election win in 1873, Mackenzie appointed himself as the new head of the Department of Public Works, giving him control of major building projects across Canada including the addition of West Block. As the leader of the opposition, Mackenzie had been critical of Public Works. Under his new leadership, outside commissions and architectural competitions were limited to reduce waste and corruption.¹³⁶

If the addition to the West Block was meant to re-orient the parliament buildings, the new Centre Block firmly identified the Wellington Street façade as the principal elevation of the Parliamentary Precinct. The Beaux-Arts style, while rejected for the western expansion of the

¹³⁴ Forster, Ben. “Mackenzie, Alexander.” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Vol. 12, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–. Accessed December 20, 2015, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/mackenzie_alexander_12E.html. According to Young, only the entries of Fuller and Jones, Sent and Laver, Cumberland and Storm, Joseph Sheard, and Charles Baillairge are partially known. See, Young, “Competition of 1859,” 33. To conceal the identity of the architects from the judges, each entry was identified only by a motto. Thus, the names of the architects for some of the entries remain unknown to this day. See, Young, *The Glory of Ottawa*, 26.

¹³⁵ Carolyn A Young, “‘Odahwah’: The competition of 1859 for the Canadian Parliament Buildings” (Phil. M. thesis, University of Toronto, 1988). 30.

¹³⁶ Wright, *Crown Assets*, 15.

precinct, was embraced (to some extent) for the building plan of the new Pearson and Marchand edifice.

Chapter 4: A New Dominant Façade

From the study of the visual material presented thus far, it is clear that the original precinct was experienced from all sides presenting an asymmetrical plan that was reinforced by the building grouping. The thesis will argue further that the building plan – while strengthened by the completion of the clock tower, library and the Mackenzie Tower – was broken with the construction of the new Centre Block and the Peace Tower.

As per the *General Report of the Commissioner of Public Works* from 1859, the architectural plan of the original precinct was intended to produce "a combined effect of grandeur and harmony" not to be surpassed by any other public building in North America.¹³⁷ While the latter may have been impossible to guarantee, the former, that is the construction of a grand and harmonious building group had, according to many contemporary critics and modern architectural historians, been realized. The buildings that form the precinct vary in plan and elevation producing a picturesque grouping. Unity was achieved by combining distinct parts into one building grouping and thus, the situatedness of each part was determined – even strengthened – by the presence of the other.

¹³⁷ *General Report of the Commissioner of Public Works, for the Year Ending 31st December, 1859. Furnished in Compliance with the Provisions of the 28th Chapter of the Consolidated Statutes of Canada, Section 24. Printed by Order of the Legislative Assembly (Quebec: Thompson and Co., Printers, 1860), 54.*

As the dimensions and proportions of the precinct changed, our understanding of an inter-dependent building grouping as presented in Chapters 1 to 3 is challenged. What is seen within the visual representations by Chesterton (figure 1.2), Freeland (figure 2.4), and Notman & Sandham (figure 3.3) must then be revised as the new Centre Block significantly altered the appearance of the Parliamentary Precinct by altering the architectural function of the departmental buildings and the library – thus changing the situatedness of these important edifices.

The fire of 1916

A devastating fire broke out on the evening of February 3, 1916, claiming the lives of seven people and, with the exception of the northwest wing and the library, damaging much of the original Centre Block. Architects John A. Pearson and Jean Omer Marchand were hired to assess the damage and to submit a report. The initial account indicated that the external walls could be salvaged and reused as part of a reconstructed building – an edifice that was intended to provide larger and more suitable accommodations for parliament.¹³⁸

Architects Edgar Lewis Horwood, Pearson and Marchand, and David Ewart each prepared a set of drawings showing their proposed alterations and additions to the original Centre Block.

While varying significantly in how the interior rooms were reorganized, the three sets of plans kept the Wellington Street façade intact. The Horwood plan kept the House of Commons

¹³⁸ Dubé, “Reconstruction of Parliament,” 9-10.

Chamber in its original location and moved the Senate Chamber to a new northeast wing. Pearson and Marchand placed the chambers at extreme ends of the building (see figure 4.1). Ewart changed their orientation and placed the two chambers along the northern edge of the building with the two speakers facing (or opposing, depending on the design) one another. Also, each of the plans showed a grand entrance vestibule and a hall of honour extending from the main entrance to the library.¹³⁹

The joint committee responsible for the reconstruction of the Centre Block selected Pearson and Marchand's building proposal, describing it as "reasonably adequate for the meeting place for years to come of the nation's Parliament."¹⁴⁰ Following their formal appointments, Pearson and Marchand were asked to prepare another sketch showing one additional storey to allow for added office space – a demand that had dramatic consequences.

Many texts state that the destruction of the original Centre Block was the result of the fire. While correct, this over-simplification does not take into account the various decisions and demands made leading up to the eventual demolition of the original interior walls, the clock tower and the exterior façade. In a report to Parliament, following public fury regarding the loss of the original building, Pearson stated that the Fuller and Jones structure could not have been

¹³⁹ Copies of the three set of plans, 31 architectural drawings in total, are deposited at Library and Archives Canada (Plans for the reconstruction of the Centre Block of the Parliament Buildings [architectural drawing], R6113-1597-X-E; only the Ground Floor Plan is reproduced here (see plate 4.1).

¹⁴⁰ Joint Committee on Reconstruction of Parliament, v1, p. 49, as quoted in Dubé, "Reconstruction of Parliament," 20.

saved as the original foundation was unable to support the extra storey. “Damaged or not,” writes Audrey Dubé, the old walls were carted away and the “restoration became a reconstruction [project].”¹⁴¹ Kalman adds that the “hurried and secret demolition,” as one newspaper reported, was the result of the higher costs associated with restoring the original Centre Block.¹⁴²

The New Centre Block

The new Centre Block, while following the general footprint of the original building, is more symmetrical in appearance. Robert Hunter and Mathilde Brosseau write that the new building “resembles its predecessor in its use of a rhythmic arrangement of mansard-roofed towers” and comparable motifs and materials. However, the overall impression (or the structure itself) is a much more “intellectual rather than a sensual one.”¹⁴³ The picturesque structure of the High Victorian Gothic style was replaced with a more linear application. The contrasting textures, colours, and shapes, as presented with the original Centre Block, were replaced by the more rigid, less rhythmic façade following the Gothic Revival in the Beaux-Arts Manner.¹⁴⁴ “The Beaux-Arts school of thought was perfectly open to the idea of reviving styles from the past,” and thus, writes Brosseau, “it was a simple matter to combine the ideas of discipline, order and monumentalism with a Gothic Revival repertoire.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 30

¹⁴² Kalman, *History of Canadian Architecture*, 712.

¹⁴³ See, Hunter, “Centre Block,” 185, and Brosseau, *Gothic Revival*, 28.

¹⁴⁴ Brosseau, *Gothic Revival*, 26-28.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

The large spaces required for the House of Commons and the Senate Chamber were created by linking axes between the front and rear wings. This axial planning (see figure 4.2), similar to the first set of drawings initially submitted in 1916 (figure 4.1), created a logical progression of important public spaces: the main entrance located under the Peace Tower leads into Confederation Hall and then into the Hall of Honour. The function of the Centre Block is also reflected on its exterior in the central doorway (as its main entrance) lies flanked by doorways leading to the lobbies of both chambers.¹⁴⁶

While the design of the reconstruction was put in the hands of Pearson and Marchand, much of the responsibility fell on Pearson. The two architects “were not close working associates,” in fact, prior to being hired to report on the original Centre Block, the two had not met.¹⁴⁷ In an essay on the bureaucratization of art, Kenneth M. Desson adds that Pearson “was much more influential than [...] Marchand who, early in the process, was relegated to minor status, getting only a fraction of the architect’s commission and assuming only a fraction of the responsibility.”¹⁴⁸ However, Marchand was likely responsible for the building's Beaux-Arts plan.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Hunter, “Centre Block,” 185.

¹⁴⁷ Kenneth Montrose Desson, *The Canadian parliamentary stone carvers: a study in the bureaucratization of art* (Ottawa: Institute of Canadian Studies, Carleton University, 1980), 61.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁴⁹ Jean-Omer Marchand was described by Percy E. Nobbs as the architect with a flair for a fine building plan. See, Nobbs, “Architecture in Canada,” 92. David Monaghan, the past curator of the House of Commons, writes that it was Marchand who “was largely responsible for the new building's Beaux-Arts plan.” See, [David Monaghan,] “The House of Commons Heritage Collection: Heritage Spaces,” accessed January 21, 2013, http://www.parl.gc.ca/About/House/collections/heritage_spaces-e.htm. After eight years of study, Jean-Omer Marchand (a.k.a. Joseph-Omer) was the first Canadian architect to graduate

The Wellington Street Elevation

Parliament Square, Ottawa, Ont. (figure 4.3), a lithograph on wove paper, shows a distinct moment as it depicts the completed parliament buildings including the library (which is almost hidden from view behind the clock tower), the gazebo (seen to the west of Centre Block), the West Block extension, a central fountain framed by a large retaining wall, and a main gate as part of a stretched-out wall with an ironwork railing along Wellington Street. The lithograph depicts a brief moment in time as the fountain was removed in 1879, the crosswalks sodded over in 1885, the slate roofs are replaced around 1890, and the original Centre block destroyed by fire in 1916.¹⁵⁰

This panoramic view of Wellington Street, while published widely between 1879 to 1881 within the popular Belden & Co. atlases, captures an image that would have been rarely experienced as the view required a position high atop a building between Metcalfe and O'Connor Street. However, the image provides the viewer with an exceptional vantage point as it establishes a visual of the complete interplay between the three building blocks and attests to the

from the *École Nationale et Spéciale des Beaux-Arts de Paris* in 1902. See, Johanne Pérusse. "J.-O. Marchand, premier architecte canadien diplômé de l'École des Beaux-Arts de Paris, et sa contribution à l'architecture de Montréal au début du vingtième siècle" (Master's thesis, Concordia University, 1999), 2. Joseph-Omer Marchand was an important player within the architectural scene in Canada; see, Pérusse. "J.-O. Marchand," 193 and Julia Gersovitz, "Jean-Omer Marchand," *The Canadian Encyclopedia / Historica Canada*. Last edited December 16, 2012, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/jean-omer-marchand/>.

¹⁵⁰ The the roof of the library is changed from slate to copper in 1889; the roof of the original Centre Block is replaced by copper in 1890. See, Dubé, "Historical Chronology," 171.

interconnectivity of these three structures. The building grouping begins and ends with a square tower located at either end of the lithograph.

While Gothic in style, the parliament buildings “were laid out on a ground plan reminiscent of Baroque palaces, with [a] dominant centre block and [flanked by] separate side wings.”¹⁵¹ There is a shared rhythm of projecting pavilions, square towers, and interrupted rooflines found between the three buildings. The asymmetrical plan is balanced by the three distinct towers: the clock tower projecting south from the original Centre Block, the southwest tower marking the main entrance to East Block and the recently added Mackenzie Tower adding weight to the less formal façade of the West Block. While distinct in height and style, each tower permits a focal point for their respective edifices while strengthening the balance of the building grouping.

The lithograph, if studied in isolation, could suggest the reading of a fairly symmetrical building grouping as none of the building plans are visible from this view. The relative scarcity of this vantage point, and the fact that the actual approach to Parliament Hill was not from Metcalfe Street (as suggested here) but from Elgin or Rideau Street (see discussion of figure 1.2), further indicate, as do the various elevations discussed earlier, that the Wellington Street façade can not be considered the sole or principal façade of the Parliamentary Precinct.

¹⁵¹ See caption of plate 157 in Gowans, *Building Canada*, and Brosseau, *Gothic Revival*, 21.

A photograph taken from the window of West Block, *Parliament building, Ottawa* (figure. 4.4), depicts the original Centre Block as seen around 1890. This angle was widely photographed and gives the “impression of visual irregularity to a building that has the inherent balance and symmetry of the classical tradition.”¹⁵² The two-and-a-half storey façade, over a raised basement, was the largest and perhaps most uniform façade of the precinct. However, writes Kalman, “the tower, pavilions (which are repeated at the rear), and turret-like ventilation shafts gave the building a truly picturesque silhouette.”¹⁵³ The roof of the library and smokestack (both seen to the left of the clock tower) further break the symmetry.

The clock tower, formally referred to as the Victoria Tower, featured a bulbous conical roof that was capped by an open iron crown. The base of the 77-metre tower, featuring the main entrance to Centre Block, led to a central hall and open court dividing the two legislative chambers. “The composition was bold and effective,” writes Kalman and the architects intended for the building to present a “dignified, elegant, and also cheerful appearance, and [that] its character should tend more to the Palatial than the Castellated.”¹⁵⁴ Calvert Vaux’s large stone retaining wall, ramp and stairs of the grounds, elevate the Centre Block and add to the “palatial” effect.

¹⁵² Gowans, *Building Canada*, 121.

¹⁵³ Kalman, *History of Canadian Architecture*, 536.

¹⁵⁴ Fuller and Jones’ text submitted as part of their entry; as quoted in Kalman, *History of Canadian Architecture*, 536.

With the demolition of the original Centre Block, the situatedness of the remaining building elements was modified dramatically as their relationship to site and the broader environment changed. The library for example, seen in isolation from the building grouping following the demolition of the original Centre Block, lost its function as one of the precinct's distinct parts. Rather than contributing as an important architectural element of the grouping, the building was (temporarily) reduced to a freestanding mass. The departmental buildings then too gained a forced independence as the removal of the original Centre Block broke the interconnectivity of the building grouping. With the construction of the new Centre Block, including the massive Peace Tower, the relationship changed again.

An evocative visual representation (figure 4.5), a photograph taken by Public Works a mere six months after the fire, shows the last remaining stones of the original Centre Block being carted away. The image, taken on August 15, 1916, by an unidentified photographer, evokes the gravity of the loss of the original Centre Block. The prominent silhouette of the library stands in stark contrast to the bare field once occupied by Parliament. All that remains are a few remnants: piles of stone, two walls of the interior courtyard of the new northwest wing, and the concrete sidewalk that surrounded the building parameter. Visible too are the vestiges of the corridors that once connected the library to the original Centre Block.

A photograph of the same scene taken from further afield shows the library as seen from Metcalfe Street.¹⁵⁵ The edifice is framed by the buildings found on either side of the street. Both images present a fascinating view of the library – a view visible only for a few short months as the construction of the new Centre Block soon impeded this exact vista. With the construction of the new parliament building, the monumentality that once laid with the entire precinct shifted to the frontal view of Centre Block. Furthermore, the large symmetrical façade and imposing tower of this new edifice altered the overall design and, more significantly, permanently changed the situatedness of the library and the departmental buildings.

A Samuel J. Jarvis photograph (figure 4.6), taken from the roof of the East Block, shows the construction of the new Centre Block. The image varies immensely from those depicting the construction phase of the original Centre Block. For one, in this image, the roof of the library pokes out behind the new building and the retaining wall, ramp, and wide stairs frame the lower portion of the image; none of these elements would (of course) have been visible in McLaughlin's early photographs documenting the construction site. However, more important are those elements in the photograph that describe the building process and identify the new building materials used. The new Centre Block, unlike its load-bearing counterpart, is a steel-frame construction.

¹⁵⁵ The photograph in question (not reproduced here) is an image taken in the fall of 1916 entitled *Metcalfe Street looking North [with the Library of Parliament in the distance]* by Samuel J. Jarvis (Library and Archives Canada, 1953-045 NPC / PA-024998).

Pearson's design has been criticized by many architectural historians including Alan Gowans who writes that "cold, mausoleum-like archaeological accuracy [had] replaced the warmth, colour, spontaneity, and picturesqueness of the earlier design."¹⁵⁶ R. H. Hubbard added that Pearson "perpetuated the endless rows of lancet windows, the mansard roofs, and even the roof-crests of the old House of Parliament – all in a building considerably larger than its predecessor."¹⁵⁷ Even some of Pearson's contemporaries were critical. In a 1927 journal article published by the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, John M. Lyle, alluded to the fact that the Victorian Gothic style had long fallen out of favour: "I cannot help feeling that it was a great mistake on the part of the Government when it was decided to erect a new building in place of the one that was destroyed, that they did not make a departure from such a debased style of architecture as that of the Victorian era."¹⁵⁸

The building's distinct architectural elements impacted the silhouette of the precinct and produced an architectural expression that differed from the edifice originally designed by Fuller and Jones. Pearson's new Centre Block created a larger and more rigid façade. Given the urgency to rebuild a new parliament building during a time of war, the construction efforts proceeded "in a considerably chastened vein."¹⁵⁹ Much of the interior, specifically those rooms and corridors furthest removed from the ceremonial spaces, is relatively sparse and resembles

¹⁵⁶ See plate 192/193 in Gowans, *Looking at Architecture*.

¹⁵⁷ R. H. Hubbard, "Modern Gothic in Canada."

¹⁵⁸ John M. Lyle, "Canadian Architecture," 62.

¹⁵⁹ Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 277.

any office building constructed during the same decade. “The interior inevitably,” writes R. H. Hubbard, “gives the impression of a Gothic skin stretched over a steel frame.”¹⁶⁰

One last visual (figure 4.7), a second photograph by Jarvis, allows for some further considerations. The image shows a reconstructed Parliamentary Precinct following the completion of the Peace Tower or, as it was referred to at the time, the Tower of Peace and Victory.¹⁶¹ This visual representation differs from the ones discussed earlier. The image, vertical in orientation, is a night scene taken from a similar vantage point as the Chesterton work (figure 1.2). However, the pastoral scene of 1877 is replaced by a bustling winter scene filled with vehicular activity along Wellington Street. The illuminated street and grounds lead to a brightly lit Peace Tower dominating the background of the photograph. The silhouette of the East Block is clearly recognizable in the middle ground. And yet, the role of the edifice, along with that of West Block (no longer visible here), has changed. The Ruskinian rooflines, once a prominent feature of the overall building group, now serve as a framing device for the new Centre Block. Neither of the two departmental buildings is illuminated. Instead, their respective roofs are used to house the large searchlights illuminating the new frontal façade of Parliament Hill.

¹⁶⁰ R. H. Hubbard, “Modern Gothic in Canada,” *National Gallery of Canada Bulletin & Annual Bulletin 1963-1985* Bulletin 25 (1975), accessed January 28, 2015, <http://www.gallery.ca/bulletin/num25/hubbard1.html>.

¹⁶¹ “The New Parliament Buildings at Ottawa,” *Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal* Vol. 1, No. 1 (January to March, 1924): 7. Incidentally, the tower of the original Centre Block was referred to as the “Lantern Tower” in a Public Works report from 1873. See, Dubé, “Historical Chronology,” 11.

The year 1927 marked the completion of the reconstructed Parliamentary Precinct. The year also marked Canada's diamond jubilee. The monumental quality of the precinct shifted from the building grouping (as one loosely connected mass) to one principal façade. Furthermore, the old clock tower, capped by an elegant crown, was replaced by the 92-metre tall Peace Tower illuminated for the celebration. The summoning effect then, too, shifted as the precinct had taken on more of a commemorative role rather than an authoritative one.

Conclusion

The construction phase and early decades of Parliament Hill are well documented within the large repository of visual representations depicting Ottawa between 1859 and 1927. The analysis of this visual record – that is the paintings, photographs, lithographs and engravings, augmented by maps and architectural drawings – adds to the evidentiary material found within the literature produced. This visual account also presents an important record of what can no longer be experienced today.

Drawing on the broader aesthetic theories that influenced the original parliament buildings, it is clear that the precinct was originally intended to be seen in the round rather than only viewed or experienced from one particular vantage point. Following an examination of the grouping's four distinct elevations (the eastern elevation, river elevation, western elevation and Wellington Street elevation), an analysis of the first elevation demonstrates the Anglicization of space as the new parliament buildings, specifically their architectural style, were undoubtedly a product of 19th century England.

Continuing the circular journey around the precinct's elevations (counter clockwise from east to south), an emphasis on the influence of the Picturesque becomes evident in an investigation of the river and western elevations. Focusing on the relationship between the Parliamentary Precinct and the natural setting within which it is placed, the visuals presented give substance to a Picturesque view placing the parliament buildings within a sublime landscape. However,

soon after, a shift in style and practical demands for more office space began to erode these sensibilities and altered the aesthetic language used. Additionally, the construction of the West Block extension led to a temporary re-orientation of parliament with the large Mackenzie Tower becoming a focal point of a new east/west axis of the never realized Bennett plan.

Finally, an examination of the demolition of the original Centre Block, which led to the construction of a dominant façade, changes the relationship of the various building components once again. Pearson and Marchand's Centre Block introduced a more linear vocabulary and applied a Late Victorian Gothic style for a structure following a Beaux-Arts building plan. In effect, the prominent façade as experienced today from Wellington Street did not exist within the Fuller and Jones structure. Rather, the strength of the original Centre Block lied within an asymmetrical building grouping where the situatedness of each building component had been defined within the original 1859 plan – and perhaps even strengthened with the Scott addition.

Edmund Burke, in his discussion on structural mass writes that “[building] designs that are vast only by their dimensions, are always the sign of a common and low imagination.”¹⁶² As the size and shape of the new Centre Block was determined, the need for additional office space and the hasty reconstruction efforts arguably outweighed stylistic considerations. The architectural function of the original High Victoria architecture was eroded by the monumentality that lies with the new Centre Block.

¹⁶² Burke, *On the Sublime and Beautiful*.

Drawing on the rich visual representations, one gains a more complete understanding of the Parliamentary Precinct, as the representations presented here permit a study of the various building components both within and outside of the context of the new Centre Block. This analysis attests to the dominance of the new Centre Block façade as it repositioned the precinct, altered the relationship of an interdependent building grouping and broke an asymmetrical plan – marking a clear departure from earlier architectural intents.

Illustrations



Figure 1.2

Old Dufferin and Sapper's Bridges, Ottawa

August 1877

by Walter Chesterton (1845 – 1931)

Watercolour over pencil heightened with white gouache on wove paper

62.5 x 32.5 cm

Library and Archives Canada

No. 1969-1-1



Figure 1.3

Ottawa from the Rideau

1873

by Lucius R. O'Brien (1832 – 1899)

Watercolour over graphite on wove paper

37.5 x 72.5 cm

National Gallery of Canada

No. 30573



Figure 1.4

Looking West from Court House to Parliament Hill

c. 1867

by Samuel McLaughlin (1826 – 1914)

Albumen print

21.9 x 33.5 cm

Library and Archives Canada

No. 1936-272 NPC (C-001185)



Figure 1.5

Ottawa from the Government House drawing-room window

June 2, 1877

by Sir Francis Clare Ford (1828 – 1899)

Watercolour

17.5 x 12.7 cm

Library and Archives Canada

No. 1969-65-1

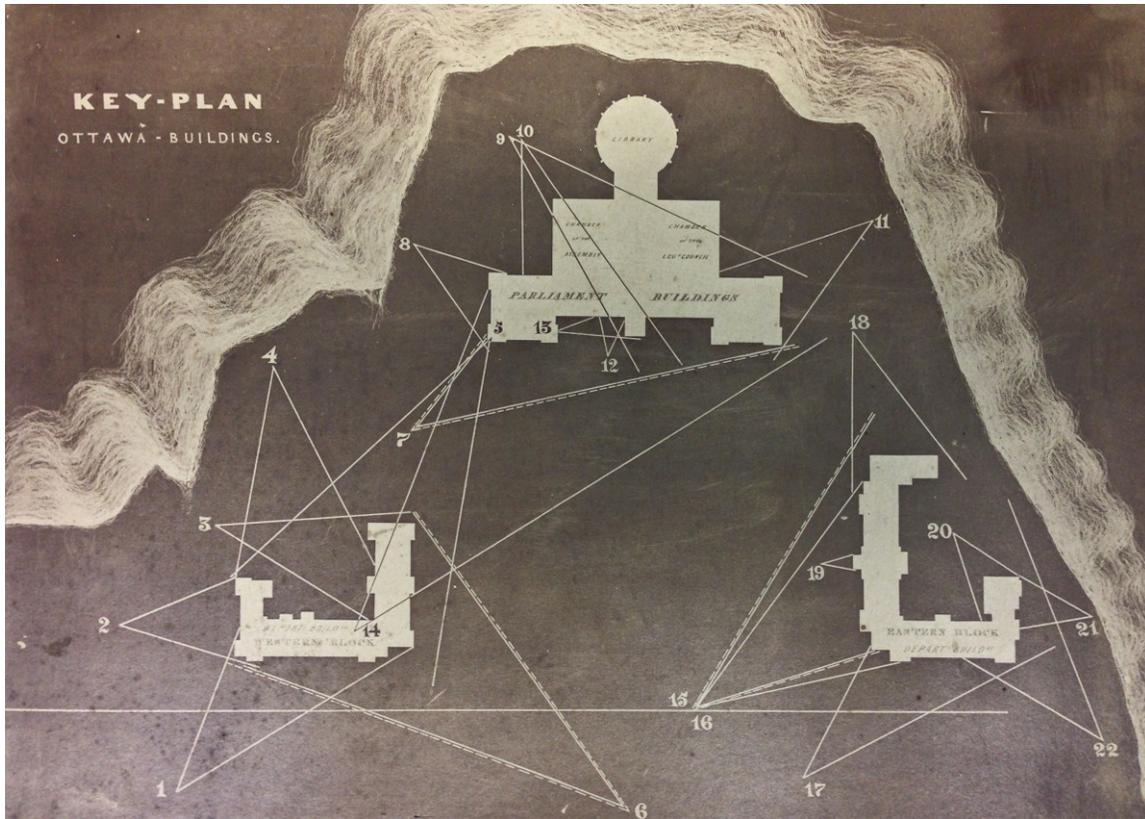


Figure 1.6

Key map of Parliament Buildings

1861

by Samuel McLaughlin

Print from wet collodion plate

24.8 x 35.1 cm

Library and Archives Canada

No. 1933-263 NPC

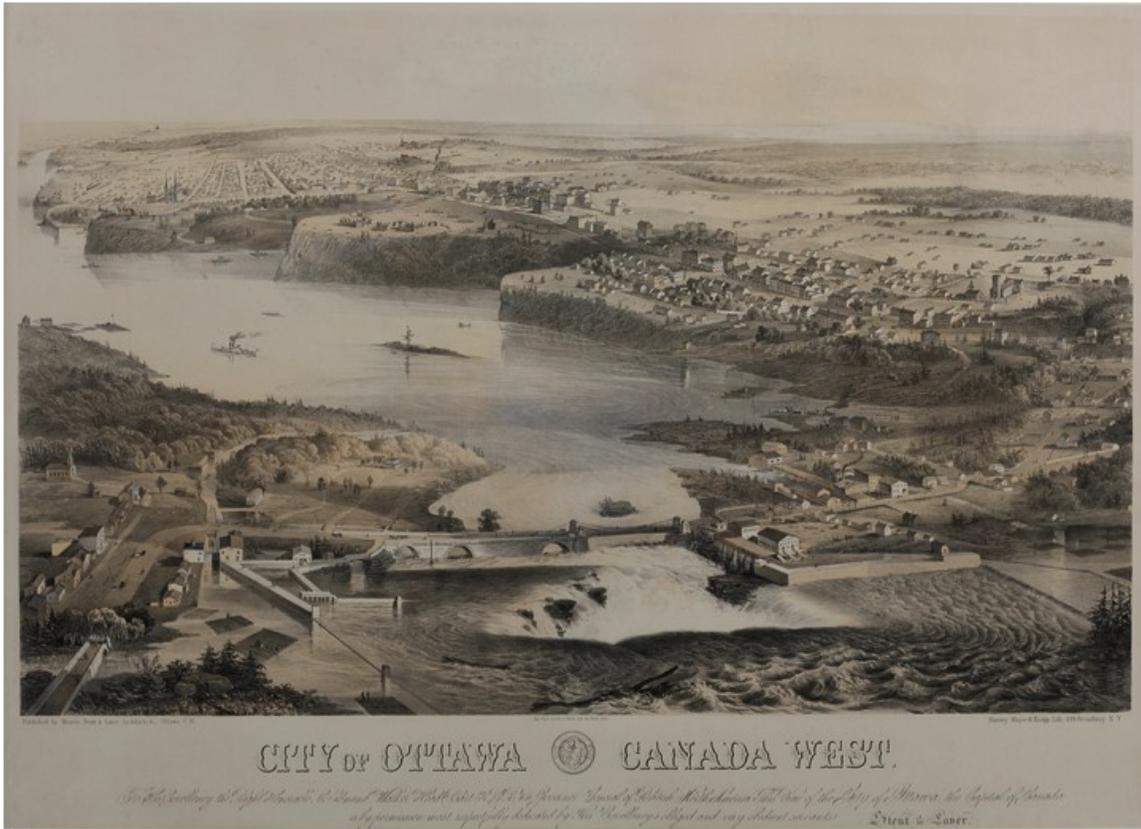


Figure 2.1

City of Ottawa, Canada West

c. 1859

by Stent & Laver Architects / Sarony, Major & Knapp Lith.

Hand-coloured tint stone lithograph

94.5 x 59.3 cm

Bytown Museum

No. P586



Figure 2.2

General View of Ottawa, Canada West, Showing the new Parliament Buildings
May 30, 1863
Illustrated Times (London) (publisher)

As reproduced in:

Charles Patrick De Volpi, *Ottawa: a pictorial record, historical prints and illustrations of the city of Ottawa, Province of Ontario, Canada, 1807-1882* (Montreal: Dev-Sco Publications, 1964), 56.



Figure 2.3

Government Buildings, Ottawa
1859-60
after Thomas Fuller (1823 – 1898)
Albumen print
12.2 x 19.5 cm
Royal Collection Trust
No. RCIN 2700754

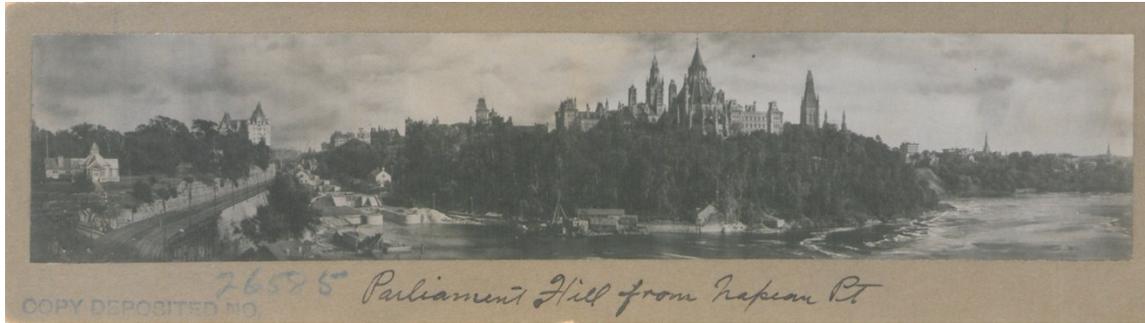


Figure 2.4

Parliament Hill from Nepean Point

1913

by William Thompson Freeland (1870 – 1945)

Photograph

5 x 2.45 cm

British Library

No. HS85/10/26585



Figure 2.4 (detail)



Figure 3.2

Parliament Buildings from across the river, Ottawa, ON

c. 1870

by Alexander Henderson (1831 – 1913)

Silver salts on paper mounted on card - Albumen process

11.1 x 19.3 cm

McCord Museum

No. MP-0000.1452.155

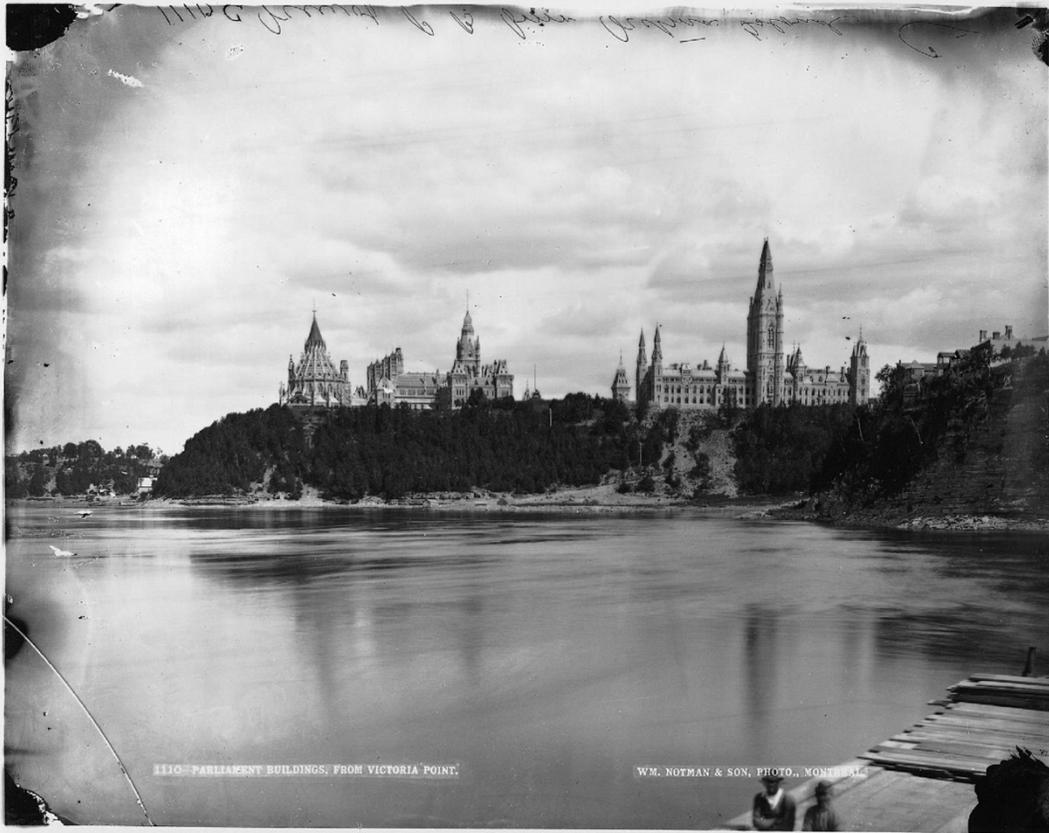


Figure 3.3

Parliament Buildings from Victoria Point, Ottawa, ON

1878-1880

by Notman & Sandham

Silver salts on glass - Wet collodion process

20 x 25 cm

McCord Museum

No. VIEW-1110



Figure 3.4

Parliament Buildings from the "Flats"

c. 1893

by Daniel Alexander McLaughlin

Silver gelatin print

48 x 40.7cm

Bytown Museum

No. P2186



Figure 3.5

(Parliament Buildings) West Block from the corner of Bank and Wellington Street
(n.d.)

by William James Topley (1845 – 1930)

Photograph from glass plate negative

8 x 10 inches

Library and Archives Canada

No. 1936-270 NPC (PA-013113)

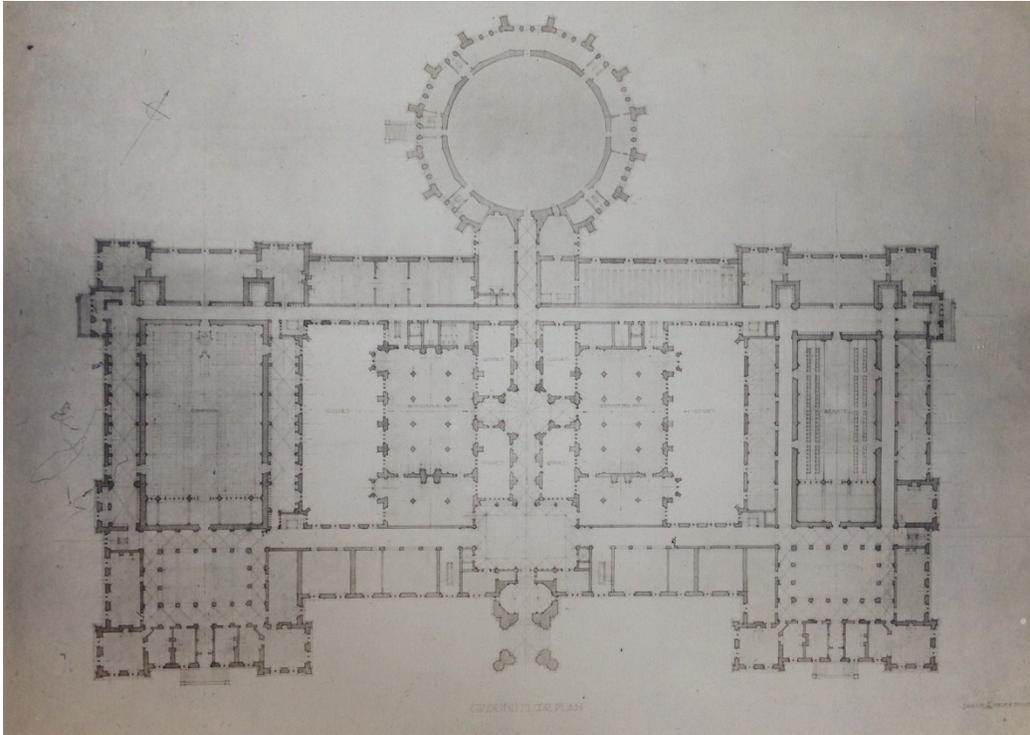


Figure 4.1

Preliminary sketches reconstruction of Parliament buildings: Ground Floor Plan
[1916]

[John Omer Marchand and John Andrew Pearson]

Library and Archives Canada

No. NMC123736; Sir Robert Borden fonds (R6113-0-X-E)

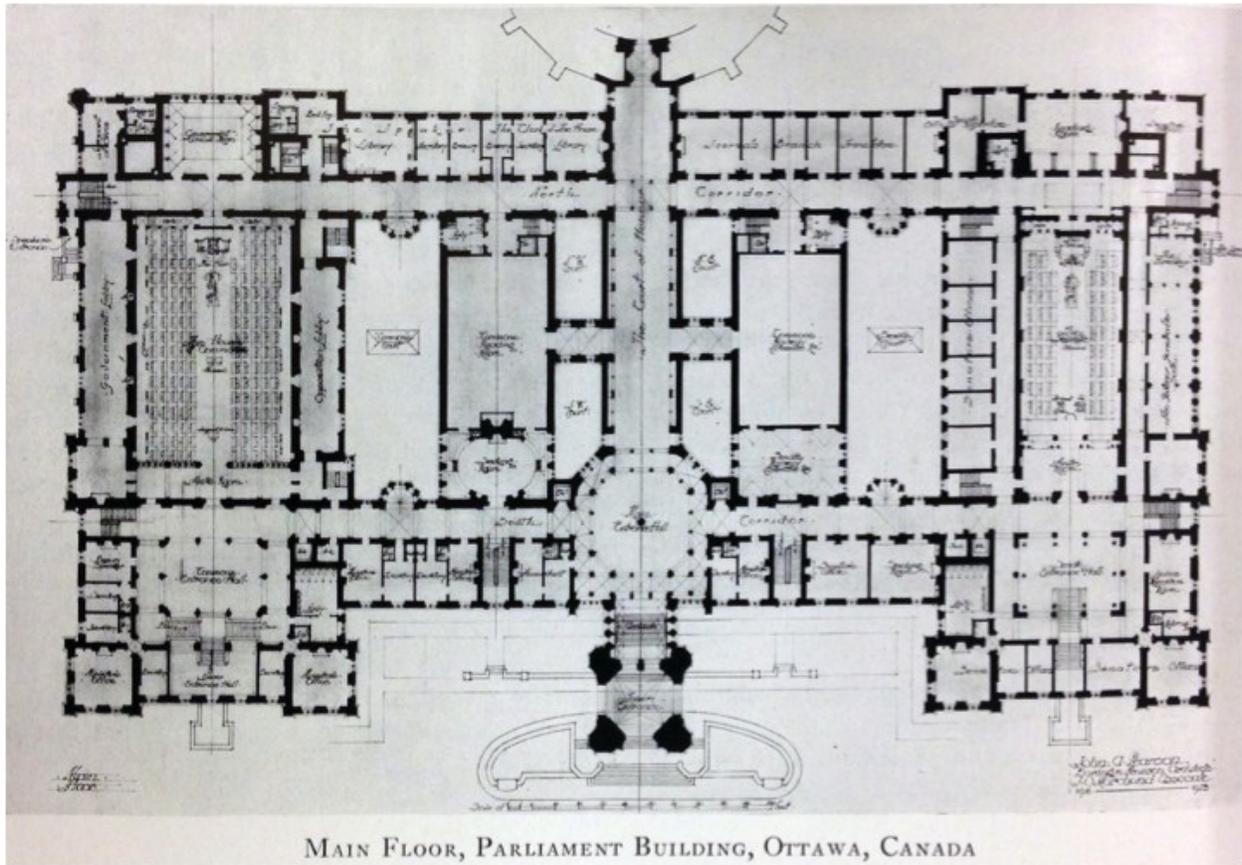


Figure 4.2

Main Floor, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, Canada

1916

John A. Pearson, Darling & Pearson, Architects; J. O. Marchand, Associate

As reproduced in:

"The New Parliament Buildings at Ottawa," *The Journal, Royal Architectural Institute of Canada* (Toronto: Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, January to March, 1924) 6.



Figure 4.3

Parliament Square, Ottawa, Ont.

1879

by John W. Winham / Wilson Reed Berry / Toronto Lithographing
Company / Belden, H., and Company, Toronto (publisher)

Lithograph with greyish yellow green tint-stone on wove paper

Toronto Public Library, Baldwin Collection of Canadiana

No. JRR 4026



Figure 4.4

Parliament building, Ottawa

(Between 1890 and 1901)

by Detroit Publishing Co. (publisher)

Photograph from glass plate negative

8 x 10 in.

Library of Congress

No. LC-D4-12745



Figure 4.5

Reconstruction of Centre Block, Parliament Buildings
August 15, 1916
by Department of Public Works
Photograph
Library and Archives Canada
No. 1979-140 NPC (PA-130624)



Figure 4.6

Parliament buildings - construction. Rebuilding of the Centre Block

1917 – 1918

by Samuel J. Jarvis

Photograph

Library and Archives Canada

No. 1951-019 NPC (PA-022408)



Figure 4.7

[...] Parliament Buildings Illuminated, Ottawa, Ont.
[1927]

by Samuel J. Jarvis

Photograph

Library and Archives Canada

No. 1953-045 NPC (PA-025110)

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Buildings of Parliamentary Precinct

Buildings located on Wellington Street (East to West)

- Rideau Committee Rooms (former Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography) – 1 Wellington Street (formerly 1 Rideau Canal)
- East Block – Wellington Street
- Langevin Block – 80 Wellington Street
- Centre Block – Wellington Street
- Library of Parliament – Wellington Street
- Former U.S. Embassy Building – 100 Wellington Street
- West Block – Wellington Street
- Union Bank Building – 128 Wellington Street
- Victoria Buildings – 140 Wellington Street
- Sir John A. Macdonald Building (former Bank of Montreal) – 144 Wellington Street
- National Press Building – 150 Wellington Street
- Wellington Buildings – 180 Wellington Street
- Confederation Building – Wellington Street
- Justice Building – Wellington Street

Buildings located on Sparks Street (East to West)

- Postal Station B – 59 Sparks Street
- Hope Chambers Building – 63 Sparks Street
- O'Brien Building – 65 Sparks Street
- Nelms Building – 67 Sparks Street
- House of Norcano – 69 Sparks Street
- Saxe Building – 75 Sparks Street
- Blackburn Building – 85 Sparks Street
- Canada Four Corners Building – 93 Sparks Street
- Birks Building – 107 Sparks Street
- Bates Building – 109 Sparks Street
- Fisher Building – 115 Sparks Street
- Bank of Commerce Building – 119 Sparks Street
- Bank of Nova Scotia Building – 125 Sparks Street
- Valour Building (formerly “La Promenade”) – 151 Sparks Street
- Booth Building – 165 Sparks Street
- Slater Building – 177 Sparks Street
- Brouse Building – 181 Sparks Street
- Dover Building – 185 Sparks Street

Other

- Government of Canada Conference Centre – 2 Rideau Street (former Union Station)
- Marshall Building – 14 Metcalfe Street

See, “Discover the Parliamentary Precinct,” Public Works and Government Services Canada, accessed June 2, 2015, <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/collineduparlement-parliamenthill/batir-buil-eng.html>.

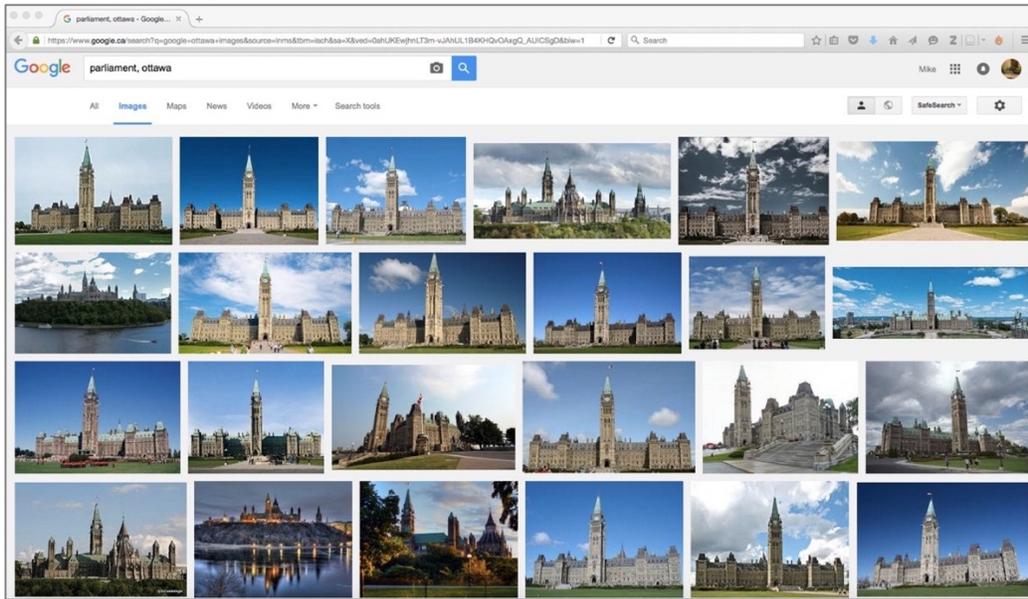
Appendix 2: The Wellington Street Façade as Architectural Icon

Appendix 2.1 Sample publications using the Wellington Street façade as a principal image:



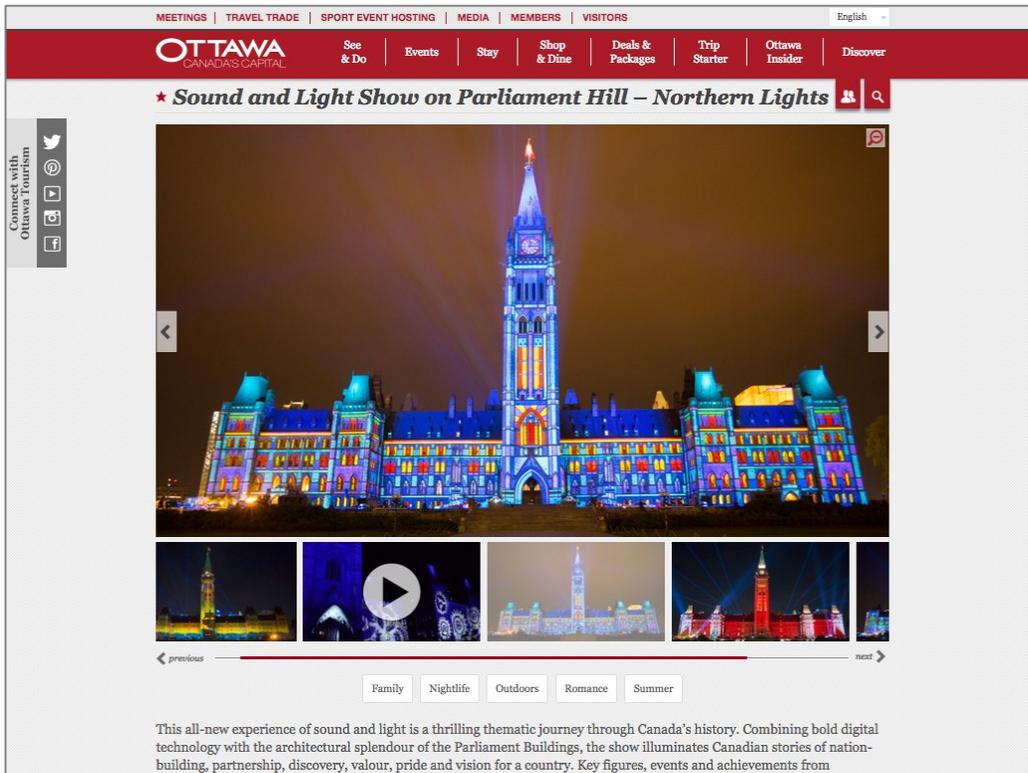
- (1) Hutchison, Bruce. "Exploring Ottawa." *The National Geographic Magazine* 92 (1947): 571. (2) "Prime Ministers Portraits des premiers ministres." Ottawa: House of Commons, Parliament of Canada, 2010. (3) *Educational tours to Ottawa: Canada's National Capital*. Ottawa: Ottawa Tourist and Convention Bureau, [196-?]. (4) *Ottawa: Canada's Capital*. Ottawa: The Industrial and Publicity Commission, n.d. (5) Ferguson, Ian. *Canada's Capital: Behind the Scenes*. Film. Ottawa: National Film Board of Canada, 1989. (6) Beauchesne, Arthur, *Canada's Parliament Building: The Senate and House of Commons Ottawa*. Toronto: Photogelatine Engraving Co., Limited, 1949. (7) *The Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, Canada, Les édifices du Parlement*. Canada: Lawson Graphics Pacific Limited, [1980?]. (8) *View Book of Ottawa Ontario Canada: The Capital of the Dominion*. Ottawa: Photogelatine Engraving Co., Limited, [192-?]. (9) *Canadian Houses of Parliament Ottawa, Canada: A Dominion Series View Book*. Toronto: Photogelatine Engraving Co., Limited, [192-?]. (10) "Discover the Hill: Outdoor Self-Guiding Booklet." Ottawa: National Capital Commission, 2000. (11) *Official Tourist Guide of Ottawa District Canada*. Ottawa: The Industrial and Publicity Bureau, 1938-1939. (12) *Le Capitali del Mondo Canada: Ottawa* n. 48. Milan: Stabilimento di Arti Grafiche, [1925?], 3. (13) McElligott, William, *Ottawa Canada*. Ottawa: William P. McElligott Photography Limited, 2011. The book was also published with a dust jacket featuring the new Ottawa Convention Centre (now Shaw Centre) located on Colonel By Drive. (14) Lewis, Michael, *The Gothic Revival*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2002, 120-121. Lewis only discusses Fuller and Jones' original Centre Block; the book erroneously reproduced an image of the new Centre Block. (15) *Canada's Parliament*. Ottawa: Lawson Graphics Pacific Limited, 1981. (16) Rombout, Melissa. *Ottawa: On Display - Ottawa : Mise en scène*, exhibition catalogue, June 1 - August 27, 2000, Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa. (Photo by author)

Appendix 2.2 Image search results for 'Parliament, Ottawa':



See, "Screenshot of 'Parliament, Ottawa' search," Google Images, accessed December, 20, 2015, https://www.google.ca/search?q=parliament,+ottawa&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewilmd3gvfHJA hULrIMKHdzYAcAQ_AUIBygB&biw=1339&bih=815.

Appendix 2.3 Screenshot from Ottawa Tourism website featuring Sound and Light Show:



See, "Screenshot of Sound and Light Show Page," Ottawa Tourism website, accessed December, 20, 2015, <https://www.ottawatourism.ca/member/sound-and-light-show-on-parliament-hill-northern-lights/#>.

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