

FAÇADES OF CIVILITY AND JURISPRUDENCE: Mapping Classical Tradition and Chimera

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The force of deconstructionist critique has left the modern legacy of the classical architectural tradition relatively unscathed, despite classicism's long association with both humanist thought and European imperialism.¹ Classicism's intrinsic aesthetic appeal and cultural prestige have limited consideration of the conditions of its appropriations. Moreover, the investigation of such appropriation necessarily involves an associative, even speculative, relation of design process to the social processes linked with or operated through the built architecture; even if the reliability of official or personal documentation and the objectivity of historical inquiry can be assumed, there is inevitably an appreciable level of reading into and writing out of archival material on specific architectural commissions. Yet architecture is the most readily appreciated articulation of socio-economic interests and their legitimating ideologies, particularly during the temporally and geographically extensive spheres of the modern era. The elite residential and institutional buildings of expansionist—colonial into imperial—Britain exemplify such articulation through the appropriation of classical iconographical tradition and aesthetic to assert superior status, authority, and regime. Three commissions, linked by the presumed manifestation of civility and jurisprudence but from different chrono-geographical sites, have been selected in order to explore the complex and conflicted relationship between design intention and architectural performance—a hybrid arena of cultural formation nicely figured in the ancient mythic Chimera. Consequently, the analysis draws upon deconstructionist

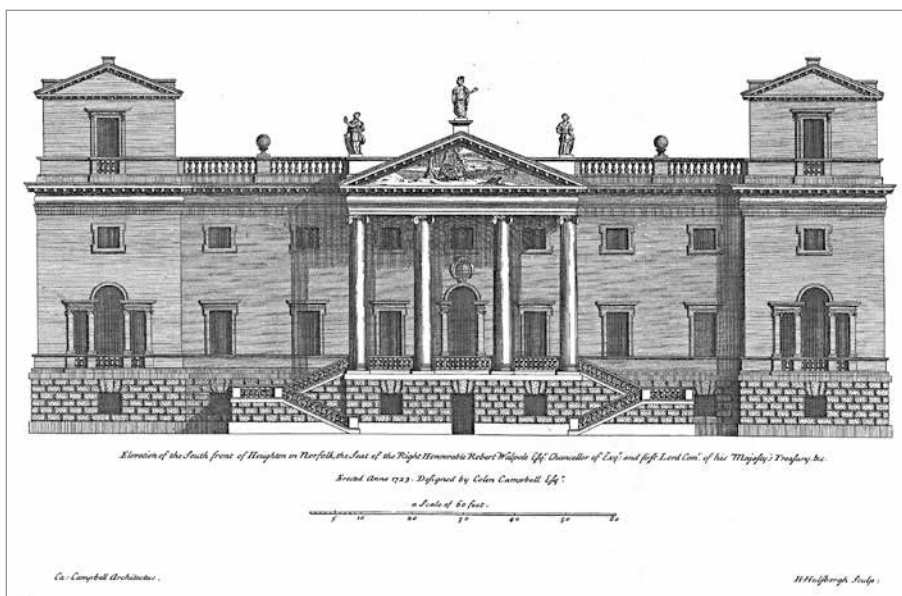


FIG. 1. DESIGN FOR THE MAIN FRONT OF HOUGHTON HALL, NORFOLK, VA, BY COLEN CAMPBELL, C. 1722. | ENGRAVING FROM *NEW VITRUVIUS BRITANNICUS*.

and affective critical strategies with the objective of clarifying the circumstances and societal impact of design aesthetic.²

The contradictory tasks and values assigned to the classical architectural tradition have been less closely interrogated than its historical and modern ideologies. Notable exceptions are Roger Kennedy's exploration of the harsh economic underpinnings of Italian and Anglo-American Palladian classical architecture in *Architecture, Men, Women and Money in America 1600-1860* and Alan Colquhoun's brief essay on "Classicism and Ideology" in his *Modernity and the Classical Tradition*.³ An indication of the discrepancies between function and claim, and between ethic and aesthetic, are evident in two celebrated commissions that allied neo-classical design and legal profession: Kenwood House by the Adam Brothers for the celebrated judicial reformer Lord Mansfield, 1761-1768, and the Supreme Court in Washington, DC, designed by Cass Gilbert, 1932-1935. If Mansfield's decision in the 1772 James Somerset case heralded a halting turn against slavery among the British ruling order culminating in the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and system in 1834, it did not mark the eradication of racism. Similarly, the monumental portico of the Supreme Court despite the inscription in the entablature, "Equal Justice Under Law," recalled the slavery accepted in ancient Greece and racial segregation largely tolerated in American jurisprudence until the 1960s. To that divergence between cultural constitution and constitutional conduct may be added the fascist, totalitarian, and more recent neo-liberal embrace of classical architectural models that has further trammelled classicism's humanist legitimacy.⁴ This chimerical aspect of architectural classicism is further signified by the titles of two studies of its modern legacy in modern Germany:

David Watkin's *German Architecture and the Classical Ideal* and Alexander Scobie's *Hitler's State Architecture and the Impact of Classical Antiquity*.⁵

SITUATING THE INQUIRY

In seeking to extend investigation of the divergent tasks assigned to classical architectural iconography, the focus will be on episodes associated with the expansion of British jurisprudence both internally and overseas. The episodes deliberately ally individual with collective enterprise especially linked to the enforcement of property and racial policy. Each represents an instance where architectural articulation discloses larger conflicts between aesthetic and ethic—somewhat akin to the ongoing tension between justice and legality.⁶ Consequently this essay will interrogate the appropriation of the classical ideal at three chrono-geographical sites. The first reconsiders a commission prominent in the consolidation of neo-Palladian paradigms in monumental British residential architecture that would influence colonial design conventions. The second re-examines the completion of a series of Palladian-inspired and classically styled courthouses (and government facilities) across South Carolina during the cotton boom and the heightened apologia for slavery; and the third, the place of the Edwardian classical [third] courthouse at Vancouver in the expropriation of indigenous land title and promulgation of racial policy in British Columbia.⁷

Before examining those three episodes, some further introductory remarks are in order. The figure of the Chimera was chosen as one ancient expression of uncertain or deceptive conditions; it also parallels the blurring of causation and association in the analysis of specific commissions within much broader, and not necessarily consistent, societal conditions.

The usual meaning of chimera derives from the form of the fabulous monster of Greek mythology described by Homer as having a goat's body with a lion's head and dragon's tail. Thus, in the Concise and Current versions of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, it bespeaks hybridity and illusion, or an unrealistic idea or hope. E. Cobham Brewer's *Dictionary* termed it an "illusory fancy, a wild incongruous scheme."⁸ Here it specifies the sense of dichotomy between the architectural aesthetic and the societal functions of buildings serving, or associated with cultural-cum-political agenda.

The contradiction, or chimera, is especially obvious, albeit by default, in the preface to the poem *Hellas* penned by Percy Shelley: "We are all Greeks, Our laws, Our literature, Our religion . . . [have] their roots in Greece."⁹ His subconscious wording of class, cultural, economic, and privilege—the We—would be challenged in the socially conscious poetry of William Blake, who also railed against the academic system and its connoisseurship of the classical tradition.¹⁰ Shelley was practicing a form of literary *noblesse oblige* assuming that his privilege entitled him to speak for his similarly advantaged audience. And here it might be noted that such presumption of authorial power was a feature of the hegemonic cultural activity critiqued by, among others, Edward Said and Homi Bhabha.¹¹ But insufficiently recognized is the condescending inclusion built into the exclusionary process of "Othering." Shelley's preface is quoted by Richard Jenkyns in the Introduction to *The Legacy of Rome*.¹² Jenkyns presents a nuanced summation, including the oppressive and vicious elements of its republican and dictatorial eras; and he nicely accounts for the authoritarian yet also revolutionary potentiality of both its ideological and aesthetic patrimony. Of particular

significance is his acknowledgement of the instrumental and legitimating components of the Roman classical legacy: the high language of its arts operating as a “political tool, used to smooth away the harsh edges of cruelty and deceit.”¹³

One anecdotal recognition of such disparity of aesthetic and ethic within the visual language of classical architecture was articulated by the British Graecophile architect, William Wilkins—interestingly playing out the theme of blackness/darkness invoked by the three sites under study. When at Athens in 1802, Wilkins was perturbed by evident traces of polychromatic decoration on the Propylaea and Erechtheion because, as he intimated in his later antiquarian tract *Atheniensi* (1816), these confounded his formal and aesthetic conception of ancient classical architectural ideal.¹⁴ A genealogy of pure or “white” classicism was built into the humanist tradition upon which mid and later modern Euro-American culture was fabricated from a positivist reading of ancient practice.¹⁵ As noted, this concept is a factor in, and component of, the political conventions and aesthetic idioms at work in each of the sites under scrutiny. The English language and Anglo-Saxon literary and artistic tradition from before the Elizabethan Renaissance equated ancient ideal with Caucasian (British) rule.¹⁶ However poorly comprehended and partially appropriated, the classical armature increasingly present in British culture became a factor in the justification and encouragement of colonization, and thereby the “Peculiar Institution [of slavery]” and alienation of indigenous land title.¹⁷ British and European colonial architecture relatively quickly embodied Renaissance-filtered classical repertory and latterly monumental Roman pedigree, reaching a short-lived apogee in the massive imperial seat of power at New Dehli (which Edwin Lutyens had wished

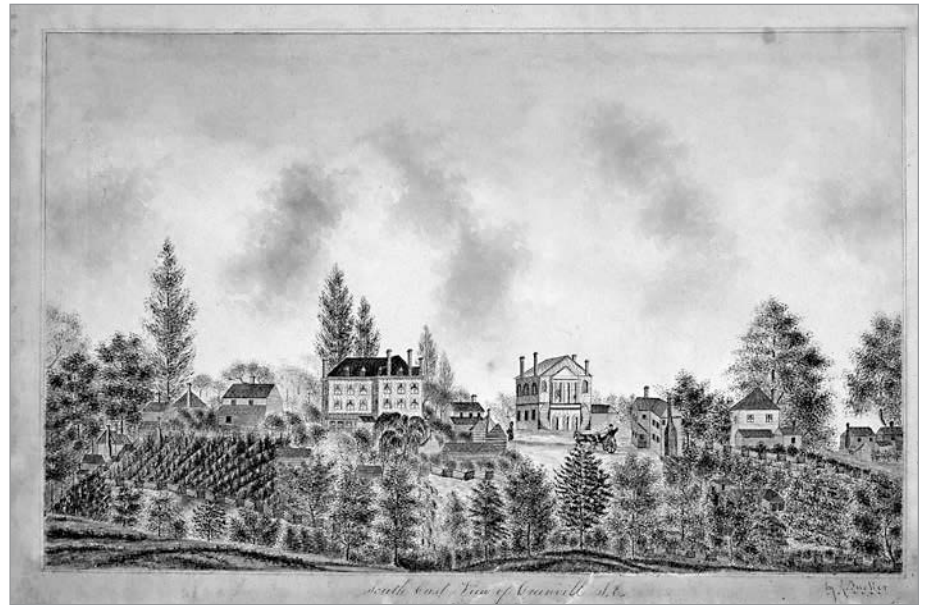


FIG. 2. “SOUTH EAST VIEW OF GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA,” BY JOSHUA TUCKER, 1825. THE COURTHOUSE WAS DESIGNED BY ROBERT MILLS, C. 1821. | THE ABBY ALDRICH ROCKEFELLER FOLK ART CENTER, WILLIAMSBURG, VA.

to be frankly classical and bereft of native idiom).¹⁸

A closer reading of the ethical dimensions of architectural aesthetic—allowing for consideration of the policy accompanying the choice of formal stylistic features—can emerge from modification of both the complicit and the detached interpretations of cultural expression argued from different perspectives by Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* and Richard Etlin in *In Defense of Humanism*, or, with closer respect to the classical tradition, by George Hersey in *The Lost Meaning of Classical Architecture*, and Indra McEwan in *Vitruvius: Writing the Body of Architecture*.¹⁹ Reflecting lines of inquiry by Anthony Vidler’s aptly titled *The Writing of the Walls: Architectural Theory in the Late Enlightenment*, these authors accept the potency of literary and visual articulations in the imposition of regime, even if acknowledging that aesthetic qualities can exist in varying degrees independently of the ephemeral instrumental purposes assigned to their

formal bearers.²⁰ Interestingly, an earlier, less critical discourse of associative legitimation was especially evident among those British antiquaries and scholars who cemented the Anglo bond with classicism; and it continued into the more academic and transatlantic iteration during the final period examined in this essay.

The association had attained clear if contested national political potency by the time of the Elgin Marbles Parliamentary Select Committee of 1816: “no country can be better adapted than our own to afford an honourable asylum to these monuments of the Schools of *Phidias*, and the administration of *Pericles*.”²¹

The association of classical architectural tradition and British cultural polity persisted for many decades, as instanced by John Summerson’s *The Classical Language of Architecture*. Writing for a broad audience, Summerson defined classicism as comprising “rational procedure controlling—and initiating invention.”²² Upon that incipient paradox—classical design



FIG. 3. UNION COURTHOUSE, SOUTH CAROLINA, DESIGNED BY ROBERT MILLS IN C. 1821. | [HTTP://WWW.ROOTSANDRECALL.COM/UNION/BUILDINGS/UNION-COUNTY-COURT-HOUSE/](http://www.rootsandrecall.com/union-buildings/union-county-court-house/).

being immutable yet inspiring innovation—stands a good deal of more traditional (formal/aesthetic/biographic/descriptive) architectural history. The designed object remains isolated from the underlying conditions of its production (including ethos in the functional social sense) and is thus comprehended chiefly through its stylistic and iconographic attributes. The genre is represented by the title and contents of Giles Worsley's *Classical Architecture in Britain. The Heroic Age*.²³ Yet, even in such more traditional architectural history, the political—and thus matters of deeper social ethos—is implied. For example, in *Palladian Style*, Steven Parissien begins the main text by printing an illustration from Inigo Jones's copy of Sebastiano Serlio's

Tutte l'Opera d'architettura e prospetiva (1619).²⁴ Underneath that illustration are printed the celebrated lines from James Thomson's *Alfred* (1740) that became the quasi-British national anthem, *Rule, Britannia!* Nevertheless, Parissien's examination of the everyday environment fashioned by Palladian idiom only touches upon the contemporary political order.

CLASSICAL LORE AND CONSTRUCTIONS OF CIVILITY AND LEGALITY

The British Isles

"Britannia Romana" was the name given the large bas-relief adorning the monumental Stone Hall in Houghton Hall,

Norfolk, England, designed by the triumvirate of architects, amateur and professional, building a classical fabric for the burgeoning imperial edifice of Britain: Lord Burlington, Colen Campbell, author of *Vitruvius Britannicus* (published from 1715), and William Kent²⁵ (fig. 1). Their patron, and in Burlington's case, lesser peer, was Robert Walpole. As prime minister, Walpole helped develop both party politics and political oligarchy parading as democracy.²⁶ He bolstered his political ambition through cultural appropriation as, indeed, would those who came to oppose his political leadership, most notably Viscount Cobham.²⁷ During the three years after becoming prime minister in 1720, Walpole commissioned Campbell to commence building his country seat (1722) and oversaw the rapid passage of the most draconian legislation in British parliamentary history. This was the *Waltham Black Act* that received royal assent on May 27, 1723, and created fifty new capital offences. It was prompted by concerted action by powerful secular and religious landowners against increased poaching in traditionally accessible parks and forests. In the words of Edward P. Thompson, the Act coincided with Walpole's political ascendancy and released a "flood-tide of eighteenth-century retributive justice suggestive of some complicity between the ascendancy of the Hanoverian Whigs and the ascending of the Gallows."²⁸

The core purpose, anticipating British strategic colonial and capital-commercial expansion, was the acquisition and protection of property. Houghton, dressed in the garb of ancient monumentality and glamour, signalled Walpole's endeavour to elevate his social status into the landed aristocracy via construction of its major cultural artifact, the country house.²⁹ In Walpole's upper-class Britain, private property constituted the anchoring of

social authority and societal order. Its outcome included the *Enclosure Acts* and, in North America, the erasure of indigenous land title.³⁰ The *Waltham Black Act*, moreover, reflected, *pace* neo-Roman British virtue, the interests of a complacent and corrupt legislature whose members Thompson classed as “men who formed habits of mental distance and moral laxity towards human life.”³¹

The *Waltham Black Act* has not been referenced by historians of British Palladian architecture, but it is a component of the privileged, classically inclined mentality of the day. The jurisprudence it constructed cannot be divorced from the ancient aesthetic logic and lineament of the 1722-1723 scheme for Houghton Hall, drawn chiefly by Campbell (fig. 1). The symmetrical arrangement of pedimented wings, Palladian [Serlian] windows, ascending staircases, and central Ionic-ordered temple-portico visually project the social ordering built into the *Act*: putative democratic iconography masking, beautifying, a harsher oligarchical regime. The appropriative claims to superior agency, across many dimensions of socio-economic-political activity, operated bodily and visually; for instance the visitor’s drive up to the Hall followed by the ascent up into the portico and the main floor, or the ground floor used by family and close friends but predominantly assigned to service functions and servant accommodation.³² The hierarchical organization continued into the layout of rooms defining public status and private significance. The accompanying visual messaging comprised the all-the-while manifest classical architectural language of structural scale and composition plus ornamented features. The point of transition from external mass to internal volume in the Hall is commanded, as noted, by a bas-relief in the ancient mode depicting *Britannia Romana*. The classically derived

visual logic and high-minded symbolism—embodying the essential design forms of triangle, rectangle, and circle later theorized by the aesthetically radical but politically conservative pre-Revolutionary French neo-classical architect Charles-Nicolas Ledoux—articulated a civility and social order that effected quite opposite values and regulations.

A non-architectural figure of this discrepancy between outward appearance and inward action exists in the contemporary Royal Navy, the chief instrument of British colonial capital and commercial expansion, as well as of its parallel antiquarian expedition and scientific enterprise.³³ Aboard its ships—frequently named for the heroes of the ancient mythology and narrative read by its officer class, such as, just among the first letter of the alphabet, *Achilles*, *Agamemnon*, or *Ajax*—arguably the most serviceable members of the crew were the “powder monkeys” (young boys) running between the magazine and gun decks, all but invisible in the visible ritual and regimen of British naval power.³⁴

The American South

The chimerical role of classical architectural models was even more pronounced in the history of the first United States Republic, terminated in 1861 by the Civil War. A particular locus of chimerical classical appropriation emerged in the short-lived South Carolina cotton boom of the early 1820s, specifically in the series of twenty-eight courthouses-cum-government offices and jails erected across the state to standard designs drawn up by Robert Mills when acting commissioner of Public Works (1821-1822), superintendent of Public Buildings (1822-1824), and then in private practice.³⁵ These carried forward the Palladian mode, codified in part by Houghton Hall, but with a

heightened classical emphasis. While republican American classicism can be regarded as a part of the political and cultural reform, the courthouses, quite literally, reveal the dark side of its social *praxis*. The Afro-Americans whose labour underpinned cotton production and Internal Improvements—the infrastructure of canals, roads and institutions built across South Carolina during the 1820s—were excluded from the common spaces of social activity and ceremony, in part through the visual and regulatory agency of such classical Palladian courthouses as Mills designed.

The paradigmatic models for Mills’s judicial architecture were the ancient temple, and most likely the *Maison Carrée*, or Roman temple at Nîmes, so admired by his patron and mentor, Thomas Jefferson, together with the regional neo-Palladian idiom typified by Drayton Hall, 1738, and the fine mansion the slave trader Miles Brewton built for himself at Charleston, 1765-1769.³⁶ The bulk of the sixteen courthouses proper erected to Mills’s standard designs repeated the Palladian composition of raised basement with central entrance archway penetrating a projected central portico rising almost to the full height of the pedimented building, and flanked by side staircases. This visual orchestration of ancient and modern classical conventions is exemplified by his courts at Greenville (fig. 2), Union (fig. 3), and York, begun in 1821, or at Orangeburg, commenced in c. 1825. The formula reached an aesthetic and functional zenith with his County Record, or as more usually named, Fireproof Building, in Charleston, 1822-1828. The internal arrangement of circulation and bureaucratic facilities echoed the proportional sequence of dimensioned space evident in the plans of villas Andrea Palladio published in his celebrated *Quattro Libri*³⁷, which Mills had studied avidly.

Consideration of the aesthetic and functional qualities of those judicial-cum-bureaucratic buildings—their visibility—has predominated over consideration of the less civilized policy enabled and legitimated through their design form and referencing—their visuality. The main disjunction obviously applied to the racial, but also more generally socio-economic segregation within the Southern society. Mills struggled, even more perhaps than Jefferson, with the Peculiar Institution. In his *Internal Improvement of South Carolina* (1822) and *Statistics of South Carolina* (1826), he questioned the economic and moral legitimacy of slavery, anticipating how the slower rate of technical and industrial development in his native state would prove to be a major factor in the defeat of the Confederacy.³⁸ But he followed the American convention of regarding slavery as part of the British regime the Republic sought to reform; and he continued to depend upon domestic slave labour until his death in 1858. Nevertheless, and illustrative of the chimeras invoked herein, his South Carolina jails and courthouses effected improvements in the physical and legal treatment of those accused and convicted of criminal activity, and accompanied the adoption of less harsh punishment that included the classification of criminality and the possibility of rehabilitation. Similarly, and notwithstanding the continued suppression of Afro-American and indigenous peoples, Mills fabricated a remarkable range of monumental classical revival institutions of modernizing and democratizing government in Washington and at ports along the New England seaboard.

The chimerical nature of Mills's republican classicism was not unique. It had been manifest in the configuration of his mentor Jefferson's modern classical-Palladian villa at Charlottesville. Most obvious was Jefferson's placement of

his individuated and quasi-aristocratic accommodation atop the terrace fronting the main entrance and bounded at the lower level by slave quarters.³⁹ The arrangement reflected the deeper disparities between ideal and practice embedded in cultural tradition, and the temporal lag within policy reform. One example was the location of the Capitol Building in the District of Columbia which Mills repaired and hoped to enlarge. The chief material signification of American republican democracy stood atop Breed's Hill overlooking a slave market, only finally closed upon the introduction in April 1862 of President Abraham Lincoln's bill to outlaw slavery.⁴⁰ Further disparities would emerge in post-Civil War Reconstruction and, now, increasingly impinge upon indigenous Americans through the outcomes of the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny.⁴¹ Such deep discrepancy between political action and cultural pretension would not be restricted to the United States, but become a feature of European and British imperial regime in, usually, unreflexive reference to ancient Roman civilization. Moreover, a comparable procedure of idealization and disconnection operated across the gamut of revivalism. One British exemplar would be the romanticized, indeed exoticized historicism embraced by the Third Marquess of Bute and his architect William Burges in rebuilding Cardiff Castle (1868-1881), quite literally on the backs of underpaid miners working the unstable seams of anthracite coal in the not far distant valleys of South Wales.⁴²

The chimerical workings of historical iconography deserve further consideration with respect to Mills's classicized judicial architecture. By being constructed in smaller settlements connected with the dispersed plantation system or efforts to increase productive agricultural and

resource development, the buildings, in being non-denominational, likely realized a clearer formulation of local community identity than even churches. They were generally the most prominent structures in the central area through which all types of local population passed. To the educated and more mobile, they would recall elevated cultural tradition and its expression in the architecture of regional social privilege and its dominant economic centre at Charleston. In the quotidian scene, local inhabitants and visitors of all ranks would have registered themselves to some extent against their understanding of Mills's architectural articulation and iconography. At the simplest level of response, the scale and increased compositional complexity of the courthouse would have registered the importance of its function positively or negatively according to viewer status and experience. The symbolism of classical order was doubtless apparent in varying manner to everyone, social status notwithstanding, but the chimerical nature of that reality would not necessarily have been acknowledged, let alone challenged—demonstrating the remarkable sequential fixity yet also fluidity of the messaging of which architecture is capable. Indeed, the scenarios evoked by Mills's South Carolina courthouses would be writ large in the hyper-classicism mobilized in the twentieth century to celebrate Jefferson and Lincoln as icons of the superior political and cultural system. Each also incorporates a complex, and chimerical, architecture of constitution, construction, signification, and performance. The Lincoln Memorial was both a site of continued racial segregation and a locus of desegregation as well as radical protest. And, as Christopher Thomas has shown, its completion in 1922 owed considerably to the automobile and real-estate development lobbies intent upon profiting from construction of the Lincoln Memorial Highway linking Gettysburg and the Capital.⁴³

The Imperial West

The third instance of chimerical classicism lies at Terminal City. This is the soubriquet that was accorded to Vancouver in British Columbia on the western edge of Canada during the economic and cultural zenith of the British Empire.⁴⁴ Its development from the 1880s in conjunction with the completion of the transcontinental railway was an outcome of the *British North America Act* that had established the Dominion of Canada in 1867. The *Act*, through written text, architecture, and infrastructure construction, literally articulated contemporary British, and Canadian, imperial claims to authority over nature and indigenous peoples that were being implemented through colonial-imperial expansion.⁴⁵ The surveyor's traverse and technical projection of both topography and land title—whether national, corporate, or individual—ran parallel to architectural infrastructural embodiment of social ordering.

During the later Victorian and, more so, the Edwardian era, when the final building under scrutiny was erected, architecture played a particularly potent role in marking settlement and the institution of colonial then local regimes. The negotiations leading up to the enactment of the Canadian Confederation, for example, included the commissioning in May 1859 of a competition for a federal Parliament complex at Ottawa.⁴⁶ Architecture was tasked with the consolidation of the weak political structure of the Union of Canada concluded in 1841 through the construction of monumental buildings to house Parliament, government offices, and residence for the governor-general. Their scale and styling (neo-Gothic) were required to distinguish, materially and symbolically, Canadian nationhood in relation to Britain and French heritage, but in reaction to the United States



FIG. 4. COURTHOUSE, VANCOUVER, BC, DESIGNED BY FRANCIS M. RATTENBURY, 1906-1911. | PHOTOGRAPH C. 1912, FROM LISCOMBE AND BARRETT, 1983, FRANCIS RATTENBURY AND BRITISH COLUMBIA..., FIG. 6.2.

system. Larger residences and facilities of either governance, such as customs and post offices, or of community, such as churches and schools, celebrated settler legitimacy as well as reconfigured the landscape of the supposedly un-ordered and un-peopled territory being expropriated for the Canadian Confederation. These constructions became the visible infrastructure of the many processes that the Canadian economic historian Harold Innis investigated in 1950 in *Empire and Communications*; incidentally, that same year he published *Roman Law and the British Empire*.⁴⁷ The cultural epistemology of architectural iconography acted to emphasize the cultural ontology embedded in the architectural fabric.

The political authority exerted by significant colonial buildings is obvious in media illustration of important public ceremonies. One such was the visit to Vancouver in 1912 of Queen Victoria's son, the Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, when he was governor-general. He arrived not long after the completion of the third courthouse. This had been erected to designs,

still following a Palladian tripartite plan system, by Francis Mawson Rattenbury (fig. 4).⁴⁸ On that occasion, militia and officials were lined up in patent reflection of the columnar order regulating the main longitudinal façades. The regular cadence of the two orders of attached columns and their supporting ornamentation, together with the central dome raised on an octagonal drum for heightened elevation, clearly coalesced elite and popular allegiances. An economic migrant from the volatile late nineteenth-century textile economy of the English Midlands, Rattenbury selected fashionably grandiloquent classical vocabulary, as against his own Scots Baronial/Chateau, Arts and Crafts, or eclectic free Renaissance idioms. His contemporary correspondence indicates that he sought to validate the presence of both Anglo-Saxons and Canadians in British Columbia—veritable colonial outpost of both Empire and colonizing Confederation—and to participate in the province's increasing replication of the paraphernalia of cosmopolitan urban environment. The visibility of the courthouse and the visibility of its architecture

thus served to accommodate and legitimize the regulations of provincial and municipal governments.⁴⁹

The readily apprehended classical magnificence of the third courthouse legitimized less high-minded functions taking place within the fabric. The classical motifs articulating the façades thereby entailed a further chimera, for the architectural classicism was inevitably colluded with legal enforcement of preferential property and racial “rights” through the expropriation of aboriginal land title and elevation of Anglo-Saxon ethnicity. The building housed not only the courts, which regularly upheld the inferior classification of Chinese and Japanese immigrants whose cheap labour was essential to the provincial economy and the tacit exclusion of South Asian people, but it also housed the Land Registry that operated processes that implemented erasure of First Nations’ traditional land title and economy.⁵⁰ The grand allusion in the classical articulation of the courthouse furthermore embodied the attitudes and actions of the dominant settler society that outlawed the Potlatch ceremonies in 1918, denied citizenship (federally) to Aboriginal Canadians until 1961, and undermined their claims to title (and a legitimate history) until well after the British Columbia Supreme Court decision in the *Delgamuukw* case in 1997.⁵¹ Significantly, the decision to reject indigenous land title rested on the dubious assertion that the absence of written and illustrated history negated their socio-cultural legitimacy.

Nevertheless, the design of the Vancouver Courthouse manifests a greater level of material architectonic contradiction, or obvious chimera, than the previous two commissions (fig. 4). The contradiction is apparent in Rattenbury’s misuse of

ancient classical convention with respect to the order of columns spanning its major, northern frontage. Their capital is a hybrid of the Roman Ionic and their shaft is repeated at two different scales between main projected, entrance portico, and flanking bays. In particular, this repetition of differently scaled Ionic columns between the portico and wings inadvertently discloses the inter/disruptions between application and appropriation of classical exemplar at Edwardian Vancouver. The incorrect columniation can also be regarded as inadvertently corresponding with the inequities of the colonial regime. Moreover, Rattenbury’s superficially resplendent classicism materially represented the type of British Imperial *hubris* given popular cultural expansion in [William] Gilbert and [Arthur] Sullivan’s operettas, the verse of Sir Henry Newbolt, or the narrative of Rudyard Kipling—one of the many to invest in the real-estate boom that accompanied rapid, largely British, immigration into Vancouver (1906-1911).⁵² Like the imperial project, the classical ambition of the Vancouver Courthouse was flawed: a slipshod attempt at such grander assertions of Edwardian superiority as Lanchester, Stewart and Rickard’s Civic Centre at Cardiff (1898-1910), which fronted the crude, even cruel, social economy of the coal trade contributing to underpin British global, naval, and commercial enterprises.⁵³

CONCLUSION

This selective analysis has mapped the appropriation of ancient classical design iconography to reveal the agency of architecture in social regulation during the mid-modern era. It has underscored the prestige accorded to the classical tradition during the consolidation of British, and North American, colonial authority. The widespread appropriation of its

architectural patrimony, both ancient and modern, has been shown to involve a divergence between aesthetic and ethic, here likened to the deceptive hybridity of the ancient Chimera. Further, the inquiry reveals that the aesthetic distinction of ancient and modern Palladian classical architecture has generally limited attention to its work in protecting elite interests or projecting exclusionary regime. Additionally it has been shown that those aesthetic qualities helped validate and even palliate the often-repressive functions performed within the building: the visible formal attributes and visual rhetoric not infrequently diverging from the attitudes and practices enacted within the building. The analysis demonstrated that such contradictions, or chimeras, were particularly evident in the compounding legal and institutional regulation anchored in social privilege, property ownership, and the projection of authority. Lastly, the foregoing analysis of commissions associated with the assertion of civility and jurisprudence through architecture indicated the value of further interrogating two aspects of the mobilization of classic (and more broadly historical) design tradition. The first is the sectionalist, counter idealist nature of historicism at work in the constitution of modernity. The second is the complex interplay of assumption and presumption, mentality and materiality, operating in the appropriation of historical cultural iconography.

NOTES

1. The best anthology of deconstructionist critique in relation to architecture remains Leach, Neil, 1996 [and later reprints], *Rethinking Architecture*, New York, NY, Routledge. The broader reconsideration of classical values in terms of social ethos perhaps commenced notably with Rosenau, Helen, 1970, *Social Purpose in Architecture: Paris and London Compared, 1760-1800*, London, Studio Vista,

- and was carried forward by, among others, Potts Alexander, 1994, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press; and Levine, M. Joseph, 2008, "Why Neoclassicism? Politics and Culture in Eighteenth-century England," *Journal for Eighteenth-century Studies*, vol. 25, p. 1-27.
2. Particular reference is intended to Louis Althusser's 1971 essays in "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Toward and Investigation," *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*, New York, NY, Monthly Review Press; and to Jacques Derrida's book *Of Grammatology* [trans. Gayatri Spivak], 1976, Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins University Press. Other important strategies derive from the work of Michel Foucault, Walter Benjamin, and Nigel Thrift. Foucault's major contributions include *The Order of Things. An Archeology of the Human Sciences* ([trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith], New York, NY, Routledge, 1970); and *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* ([ed. Colin Graham], New York, NY, Pantheon Books, 1980); see also Rabinow, Paul (ed.), 1984, *The Foucault Reader*, New York, Pantheon Books. Benjamin, in *The Origins of German Tragic Drama* ([trans. J. Osborne], London, UK, Verso, 1985 [1973]), makes a useful distinction between the allegorical—that which eludes exact representation or articulation—and the symbolic—that which is sufficiently articulated to become represented knowledge. There is also relation to the interpretation of ideology as a sense of contradiction between present, deficient, and future ideal states, argued by Jürgen Habermas toward the end of the third chapter of *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1989). I owe this reference and other valuable critique to Marc Grignon of Laval University. Thrift's insights on the affective register of space is exemplified by his *Non-representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect* (London, UK, Routledge, 2008).
 3. Kennedy, Roger G., 1985, *Architecture, Men, Women and Money in America, 1600-1860*, New York, NY, Random House; Colquhoun Alan, 1989, *Modernity and the Classical Tradition. Architectural Essays 1980-1987*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, p. 201-212. See also Palgrave, Harry F., 1996, *Gottfried Semper: Architect of the Nineteenth Century*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, including discussion of Semper's idea of the communicative force of architectural articulation or dressing.
 4. Comparable ruptures are explored by Buck-Morss, Susan, 2009, *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History*, Pittsburgh, PA, University of Pittsburgh Press.
 5. Watkin, David and Tilman Mellinghoff, 1987 [1st ed.], *German Architecture and the Classical Ideal*, Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press; and Scobie, Alexander, 1990, *Hitler's State Architecture and the Impact of Classical Antiquity*, published for the College Art Association of America by Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, PA. See also Silver, Kenneth, 2010, *Chaos and Classicism: Art in France, Italy and Germany, 1918-1936*, New York, NY, Guggenheim Museum.
 6. British legal development during this period is discussed in Oldham, James, 2004, *English Common Law in the Age of Mansfield*, Chapel Hill, NC, University of North Carolina Press. See also: Whittington, Keith, Daniel Kelemen and Gregory Caldiera (eds.), 2008, *The Oxford Handbook of Law and Politics*, Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press; Hay, Douglas, 1975, *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-century England*, London, UK, Allen Lane; and Hay, Douglas and Nicholas Rogers (eds.), 1997, *Eighteenth-century English Society: Shuttle and Swords*, Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press. For the influence of Roman Law, see Ibbetson, David and Andrew Lewis (eds.) 1994, *The Roman Law Tradition*, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press.
 7. The approach in this essay compares with John Barrell's 1980 seminal re-examination of English landscape art in *The Dark Side of the Landscape*, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press; see also Deamer, Peggy (ed.), 2014, *Architecture and Capitalism: 1845 to the Present*, London, UK, Routledge.
 8. Brewer, E. Cobham, 1923 [new ed.], *A Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, London, UK, Cassells, p. 172. Another interesting usage occurs in Ricoeur, Paul [trans. Charles Kelbley], 1965, *History and Truth*, Evanston, IL, Northwestern University Press, when writing of work: "It is a chimera which withdraws from us, it fails to consider the full scope of the human" (p. 199). The *Oxford English Dictionary of Current English*, Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, 2005 [4th ed.], proposes (p. 148): "impossible to achieve; unrealistic." Other ancient sources for this contradictory and hybrid element are the story of the man-woman Hermaphroditus in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book IV, and the critique of contradictory or incongruous articulation—an origin of the late modern concept of hybridity—in Horace, *Ars Poetica*.
 9. Ferber, Michael, 1993, *The Poetry of Shelley*, London, UK, Penguin.
 10. Blake's aesthetic and social politics are most effectively reviewed in Ackroyd, Peter, 1995, *Blake*, London, Sinclair-Stevenson; and Lindsay, Jack, 1978, *William Blake. His Life and Work*, London, UK, Constable.
 11. Most notably in Said, Edward W., 2003 [1994], *Orientalism*, London, UK, Penguin; and 1993, *Culture and Imperialism*, New York, NY, Knopf; also in Bhabha, Homi K., 1994, *The Location of Culture*, London, UK, Routledge; and 1990, *Nation and Narration*, London, UK, Routledge.
 12. Jenkins, Richard, 1993, *The Legacy of Rome. A New Appraisal*, Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press. In his *Dignity and Decadence: Victorian Art and the Classical Inheritance* (1991, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press), Jenkins justly judges that the Victorians were "zealous hero-worshippers who used both the Middle Ages and classical antiquity to serve their purpose" (p. 19).
 13. Jenkins, *Legacy of Rome* : 12.
 14. Liscombe, Rhodri Windsor, 1980, *William Wilkins, 1778-1859*, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, p. 103.
 15. Among later notable and much reprinted exemplars of this fabric of ideas and images associated with architectural design are Scott, Geoffrey, 1980 [1st ed. 1914], *Architecture of Humanism*, London, UK, Architectural Press; and Wittkower, Rudolf, 1949, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, London, UK, Warburg Institute; carried forward in such data-driven compendiums as Curl, James, 1992, *Classical Architecture: an Introduction to its Vocabulary and Essentials*, London, UK, Batsford; or Rowans, Alistair, 2003, *Bob the Roman: Heroic Antiquity and the Architecture of Robert Adam*, London, UK, Sir John Soane Museum; such aesthetically framed histories as Ackerman, James, 1966, *Palladio*, Harmondsworth, UK, Penguin; and 1986, *Architecture of Michelangelo*, Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press; or Blunt, Anthony, 1953, *Art and Architecture in France, 1500 to 1700*, Harmondsworth, UK, Penguin, coll. "Pelican History of Art"; social contextual studies such as Scully, Vincent, 1962, *The Earth, the Temple and the Gods*, 1962, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press; and his 2003 essay, "The Nature of Classical

- Art," in his *Modern Architecture and Other Essays*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press; or Anderson, Christy, 2007, *Inigo Jones and the Classic Tradition*, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press; and cultural analyses such as Hershey, George, 1988, *The Lost Meaning of Classical Architecture. Speculations on Ornament from Vitruvius to Venturi*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press; or Rykwert, Joseph, 1986, *The Dancing Column. On Order in Architecture*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.
16. One dramatic instance was Shakespeare's characterization of Caliban in *The Tempest* (c. 1603). The dating, sources, and recent bibliography, including reference to the play's reflection of late Elizabethan cultural attitude, are examined by Stritmatter, Roger and Lynne Kositsky, 2007, "The Spanish Maze and the Date of the Tempest," *The Oxfordian*, vol. 10, p. 8-19. For the literary and cultural origins of colonial "othering," see Lockey, Brian, 2006, *Law and Empire in English Renaissance Literature*, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press.
 17. The history of slavery, including its cultural dimension, is examined in Draper, Nicholas, 2010, *Price of Emancipation: Slave-ownership, Compensation and British Society at the End of Slavery*, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press; and Paquette, Robert and Mark Smith (eds.), 2010, *The Oxford Handbook of Slavery in the Americas*, Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press.
 18. These monumental assertions of cultural as well as political hegemony are studied in Irvin, Robert G., 1981, *Indian Summer. Lutyens, Baker and Imperial Delhi*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press.
 19. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, op. cit.; Etlin, Richard, 1996, *In Defense of Humanism*, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press; Hersey, op. cit., McEwan, Indra K., 2003, *Vitruvius: Writing the Body of Architecture*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.
 20. Vidler, Anthony, 1987, *The Writing of the Walls: Architectural Theory in the Late Enlightenment*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press; and with respect to the capacity of architecture to convey ideas and values, Colomina, Beatriz, 1997, "On Adolf Loos and Josef Hoffman: Architecture in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in Max Risselada (ed.), *Raumplan Versus Plan*, Delft, NL, Delft University Press, p. 65-77.
 21. Quoted with discussion in Liscombe, *William Wilkins, 1778-1839* : 91; see also Liscombe's 1979 article, "Richard Payne Knight: Some Unpublished Correspondence," *Art Bulletin*, vol. 61 no. 4, p. 604-606.
 22. Summerson, John, 1964, *Classical Language*, London, UK, Methuen, p. 46.
 23. Worsley, Giles, 1995, *Classical Architecture in Britain. The Heroic Age*, published by Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art.
 24. Parissien, Steven, 1994, *Palladian Style*, London, UK, Phaidon Press.
 25. Harris, John, 1996, "Architecture of the House," in Andrew Moore (ed.), *Houghton Hall: the Prime Minister, the Empress and the Heritage*, London, UK, Philip Wilson.
 26. Stark, Jeremy, 1990, *Robert Walpole and the Nature of Politics*, Houndsmill, UK, Macmillan.
 27. At Stowe, Cobham commissioned James Gibbs to build what became dubbed the Temple of Liberty, 1739-1740, in the Gothic[k] mode as demonstration of his superior command of democratic process. Friedman, Terry, 1984, *James Gibbs*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press.
 28. Thompson, Edward P., 1975, *Whigs and Hunters. The Origin of the Black Act*, London, UK, Penguin, p. 23.
 29. In a paper given at the 2008 Universities Art Association of Canada, entitled "The Repository of Glamour: Ackermann, Brummell, Nash and Visual Enticement," Liscombe argued that the constituents of late modern glamour originated in eighteenth-century elitist chattel purchase; see also Grundle, Stephen, 2008, *Glamour: A History*, Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press.
 30. For enclosure see Burt, Richard, 1994, *Enclosure Acts; Sexuality, Property and Culture in Early Modern England*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press. Interestingly, Edmund Burke, in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* ([1790, 1st ed., J.G.A. Pocock], 1993, Indianapolis, IN, Hackett Publishing), stated: "The power of perpetuating our property in our families is one of the most valuable and interesting circumstances belonging to it, and that tends the most to the perpetuation of society itself" (p. 36).
 31. Thompson : 197. There is an uncanny resemblance to the etymology, and thus ontology, of Blunt's (1954) description of Poussin's classicism in his elitist (ironically, given his supposed Soviet affiliation) summation of elite French art and architectural practice. Poussin's classicism possessed, Blunt wrote, a "mobile-like detachment and also its coldness, which at some moments comes near to lack of life," a quality that compounded in later work wherein the artist "mould[ed] his imaginative conceptions with forms of perfect clarity which should, further, conform to certain canons derived from classical art . . ." (p. 193 and 195). Anthony Blunt's thought and scholarship form the subject of Luke Nicholson's 2011 doctoral dissertation, "Anthony Blunt and Nicholas Poussin: A Queer Approach," Montreal, QC, Concordia University.
 32. This passage engages with the work of Nigel Thrift (see note 2) and of Thomas Markus, particularly his 1993 *Buildings & Power: Freedom and Control in the Origins of Modern Building Types*, London, UK, Routledge.
 33. See, for example, St. Clair, William, 1967, *Lord Elgin and the Marbles*, Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press; and Liscombe, Rhodri Windsor, 2000, "Deconstructing William Wilkins," in David Watkin (ed.), *The Age of Wilkins: The Architecture of Improvement*, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, p. 35-53.
 34. Lavery, Brian, 1989, *Nelson's Navy; the Ships, Men and Organization, 1793-1825*, London, UK, Conway Heritage Press.
 35. Waddell, Gene and Rhodri Windsor Liscombe, 1989, *Robert Mills's Courthouses and Jails*, Easley, SC, Southern Historical Press; and Liscombe, Rhodri Windsor, 1994, *Altogether American: Robert Mills Architect and Engineer*, New York, NY, Oxford University Press, esp. p. 111-117.
 36. Waddell, Gene, 2003, *Charleston Architecture 1670-1860*, Charleston, SC, Wyrick & Co., p. 93-94; and Poston, Jonathan H., 1991, *The Buildings of Charleston: A Guide to the City's Architecture*, Columbia, SC, University of South Carolina Press, p. 228-230.
 37. An Italian treatise on architecture by architect Andrea Palladio, 1508-1580: *I quattro libri dell'architettura* [The Four Books of Architecture].
 38. Liscombe, *Altogether American...* : 109-110; and Waddell, Gene, 1980, *Mills's Atlas of the State of South Carolina*, Easley, SC, Southern Historical Press; see also Bryan, John M., 1989, *Robert Mills Architect*, Washington, DC, American Institute of Architects.
 39. Gene Waddell (1987, "The First Monticello," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 46, March, p. 5-29) relates the design to Thomas Jefferson's remarkable intellectual capacity but rather underplays

- the gap between his pronouncement and his actions, personal and political, with respect to slavery. See also Howard, Hugh, 2003, *Thomas Jefferson, Architect*, New York, NY, Rizzoli. Richard Etlin (1999, *In Defense of Humanism*, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press) discusses Monticello in personal and cultural terms (p. 48-54 and 187-188). See also Kennedy, Roger, 2003, *Mr. Jefferson's Lost Cause: Land, Farmers, Slavery and the Louisiana Purchase*, New York, NY, Oxford University Press.
40. Scott, Pamela, 1983, *Buildings of the District of Columbia*, New York, NY, Oxford University Press, arguing that Mills intended his public buildings to serve as exemplars of building types.
 41. Henrietta, James and David Purdy, 2010, *America. A Concise History*, Burton, MA, St. Martin's.
 42. Cook, J. Mordaunt, 1981, *William Burges and the High Victorian Dream*, Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press, esp. p. 79-83, 85-91, 119-123, 146-162, and 250-251, concentrating on the aesthetic rather than socio-economic conditions.
 43. Thomas, Christopher, 2002, *The Lincoln Memorial and American Life*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press. See also Rahe, Paul, 1992, *Republics Ancient and Modern: Classical Republicanism and the American Revolution*, Chapel Hill, NC, University of North Carolina Press; and Foner, Erik, 2010, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*, New York, NY, W.W. Norton.
 44. Barman, Jean, 2007, *The West Beyond the West. A History of British Columbia*, Toronto, ON, University of Toronto Press.
 45. Summarized in McNaught, Kenneth, 1988, *Pelican History of Canada*, London, UK, Penguin.
 46. Young, Carolyn, 1995, *The Glory of Ottawa*, Montreal, QC, and Kingston, ON, McGill-Queen's University Press.
 47. Respectively published at Toronto by the University of Toronto Press and at Fredericton by the University of New Brunswick.
 48. Liscombe, Rhodri Windsor and Anthony A. Barrett, 1983, *Francis Rattenbury and British Columbia. Architecture and Challenge in the Imperial Age*, Vancouver, BC, University of British Columbia Press.
 49. Liscombe, Rhodri Windsor, 2004, "Fabricating Legalities of State in the Imperial West. The Social Work of the Courthouse in Late Victorian and Edwardian British Columbia," *Law - Text - Culture*, vol. 8, p. 57-82.
 50. The processes with respect to Aboriginal Peoples is related by Harris, Cole, 2002, *Making Nature Space: Colonialism, Resistance and Reserves in British Columbia*, Vancouver, BC, University of British Columbia Press; see also Barman, *op. cit.*; and Macdonald, Robert, 1996, *Making Vancouver: Class Status and Social Boundaries, 1863-1913*, Vancouver, BC, University of British Columbia Press.
 51. Persky, Stan, 1998, *Delgamuukw: The Supreme Court of Canada Decision on Aboriginal Title*, Vancouver, BC, Greystone Books.
 52. The temporal aspect of cultural mindset is examined in an article by Liscombe, Rhodri, 2010, "Henry Newbolt in Canada: The Time of Meaning," *The Clifton Magazine*, p. 131-134.
 53. The scheme is contextualized in Service, Alastair, 1977, *Edwardian Architecture: a Handbook to Building Design in Britain, 1890-1914*, London, UK, Thames & Hudson; and Fellows, Richard, 1995, *Edwardian Architecture: Style and Technology*, London, UK, Lund Humphries.