

The First Leaders of McGill's School of Architecture: Stewart Henbest Capper, Percy Nobbs, and Ramsay Traquair

In 1939 the School of Architecture had been in operation forty-three years, but the venture had not proved very successful. The first director, Stewart Henbest Capper, was a scholar of great charm, a linguist, musician and Egyptologist, who laid the foundation of an excellent architectural library, but who did little to build a professional school. Percy Nobbs who followed Capper in 1903 was a superb draughtsman, an architect who often executed the work of craftsmen he could not find for his buildings.... After ten years he resigned the directorship of the school, but remained on a part-time basis in the department with his successor, Ramsay Traquair. Like Capper and Nobbs, Traquair had received his training in Edinburgh. He was an archaeologist and historian of architecture, and a brilliant lecturer, but again not the man to build up the fortunes of the school as a professional training institution. By 1939 the number of students had fallen to twenty-eight in five years of classes.¹

Found in Stanley Brice Frost's standard history of McGill, this rapid assessment does not do justice to the first three holders of the Macdonald Chair of Architecture.² This article discusses their significant impact outside academe and beyond the small number of students to whom they catered by exploring their published views on urban and housing reform, two topics which were not discussed at length in Canadian architectural circles until the early 1920s, as well as on aesthetic and cultural aspects of architecture in Canada and Québec.

"Gifted with an ingenious theorizing mind of the kind that shed light in controversy,"³ Capper, Nobbs, and Traquair (**figures 1, 2, 3**) introduced to Victorian Montréal the Scottish ideal of the architect as scholar, historian, and polemicist.⁴ Their liberal arts backgrounds acquired at the University of Edinburgh endowed them with the articulate and inquisitive spirit suited for criticism and the pursuit of reform.⁵ They typified the "highly mobile and well-trained individuals who often could not be accommodated at home but were ideally suited for roles of leadership in Britain's overseas empire" produced by a Scottish educational system based on "concepts of talent and utility rather than class or tradition," stressing "the needs of contemporary society."⁶ Like many members of Edinburgh's upper-middle class, the three men completed their training on the Continent. They all visited Italy and France on a "mini-Grand Tour." Capper studied briefly in Heidelberg, Traquair in Bonn. In part to escape the Scottish climate so detrimental to his health, Capper spent four years as tutor and later diplomatic secretary of Sir Robert Morier in Lisbon and Madrid.⁷ He was a student of Jean-Louis Pascal at the Paris École des Beaux-Arts from 1884 to 1887.⁸ Traquair, who never earned a degree from the University of Edinburgh, studied medieval churches in Greece and Constantinople under the aegis of the British School of Archaeology at Athens.

Prevented from active practice by McGill rules, heads of the architecture school found outlets in lecturing and writing. In pre-mass media days, when public lectures played a major cultural role, their academic status, as well as verbal and literary skills rarely matched by other Montréal architects, gave them prestige and credibility among their peers and the general public.⁹ Capper's numerous addresses to

by Isabelle Gournay



the Province of Quebec Association of Architects (PQAA), over which he presided in 1899-1900, were reported in the *Canadian Architect and Builder*. Nobbs wrote anonymously in the same periodical and also published in the journals of the Royal Architectural and Town Planning institutes of Canada, of which he was an active member. He contributed criticism on current Canadian architecture not only in his adopted country but also in English publications, where surprisingly little was issued on the topic.¹⁰ Nobbs' prose often had the spunk expected from a man who won the silver medal in fencing at the 1908 Olympic games. Prior to his departure, Traquair was already a prolific author; in Montréal, Traquair continued writing on Byzantine architecture, art education, and the interaction between the artist and the public.¹¹ He widened his audience to *Teacher's Magazine*, *Canadian Bookman*, and the American journal *Atlantic Monthly*, where his essays on broad social issues betrayed a "slight sententiousness of manner."¹²

In Edinburgh, Capper had played an important role in the University Hall movement, which the renowned and influential town planner Patrick Geddes had founded in 1887. He designed the original western range of Ramsay Garden (1891-93, **figure 4**), which was conspicuously located on the Castle esplanade and in which Geddes occupied a twelve-room apartment.¹³ Ramsay Garden was the starting point for Geddes' civic revitalization and gentrification of Edinburgh's Old Town. He also entrusted Capper with the restoration and partial reconstruction of Riddle's Close (1893), a tenement on Lawnmarket. In Montréal, except for a mention that a perspective of Ramsay Garden was exhibited at the Art Association in 1899, Capper's close involvement with Geddes seem to have passed unnoticed. Why should McGill and the PQAA exercised censorship on this reform issue? Most likely, Capper—whose priorities for Québec architecture were the establishment of an educational framework and the strengthening of professional organizations—thought there was no point in discussing it. McGill was too conservative to endorse the type of student self-government advocated by Geddes; Québec was too much driven by American laissez-faire and materialism to be interested in the socialist ideals of a still rather obscure Scottish biologist such as Geddes. Montréal did not have the suitable contingent of designers, craftspersons, and patrons to sustain a socially responsible version of the Arts and Crafts movement.

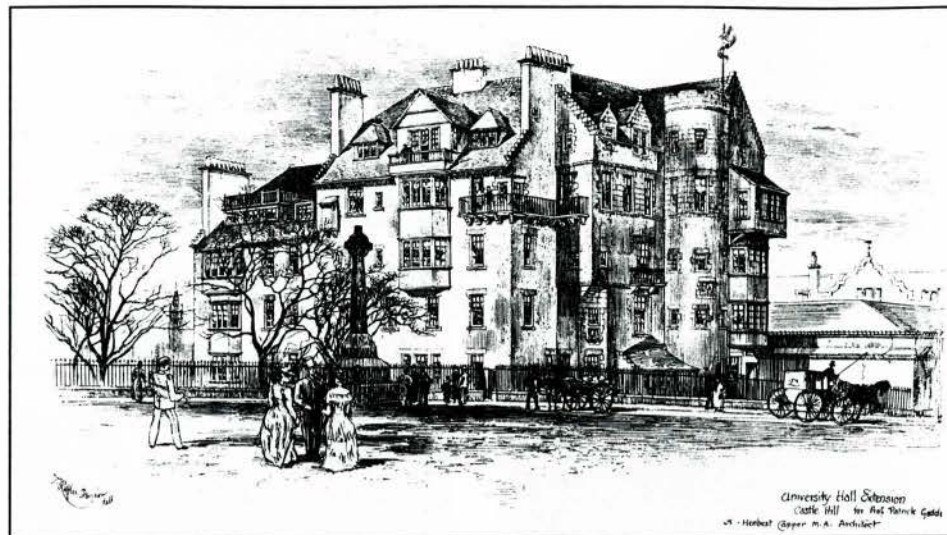
Traquair's record as an advocate of urban and housing reform was modest. Nonetheless, in early 1919, when hopes among professionals and the educated public for change in national and regional policies reached a high point, he contributed two significant articles in a series on "Canada in the Building" sponsored by the *Montreal Daily Star*.¹⁴ Resulting from workers' "constant anxieties, discomforts and worries of their home life," labour unrest was a "far more acute" threat than before: "under the present conditions, slum property pays—the slummier the better." Traquair traced the origins of worker housing betterment to Britain and praised wartime communities in this country and the United States. He argued that "if congestion is forbidden and local transportation improved, land prices will fall." To this end he advocated low-density

Figure 1 (left). Stewart Henbest Capper. (McGill Collection)

Figure 2 (middle). Percy Nobbs. (Notman Photographic Archives, McCord Museum, McGill University)

Figure 3 (right). Ramsay Traquair. (McGill Collection)

Figure 4. University Hall Extension, Castle Hill, Edinburgh, 1891-93, S. Henbest Capper, architect. (*Academy Architecture* 5 [1893]: 67)



communities along Garden City lines, and regarded the provision of parks and playgrounds as civic duties. His Scottish background encouraged Traquair to identify “the urban place with higher levels of authority and order than what was expected by the English”:

The State can and indeed must give assistance in several ways. Firstly, by collecting, tabulating and distributing information as to housing conditions, prices and labor. ...

Secondly, by organizing the production of standard materials on a large scale, and by arranging for their distribution.

Thirdly, by providing, at a small cost, skilled advice and model plans. ...

Fourthly, by legislation on public health, on the acquisition of land for public purposes, and on city planning.

Fifthly, by providing initial capital at a low rate of interest.¹⁵

Progressive within the boundaries of bourgeois reformism, Traquair warned against an excess of state intervention, as in England, where “much harm has been done by the attempts of overzealous reformers to enforce impossible and expensive regulations compelling, for instance, fireproof construction in isolated cottages.” He concluded his second article with a call for gaining the necessary “support of enlightened public opinion” and enforcing proposed policies by the Edinburgh-born planner Thomas Adams, “an expert adviser of proved ability.”¹⁶

By comparison, Nobbs’ contribution to town planning reform in Montréal was considerable and more thoroughly argued.¹⁷ In particular, he introduced urban studies at McGill and involved PQAA members in planning issues. Of note were his broader outreach efforts as chair of the Urbanism Committee of the Civic Improvement League, a privately sponsored organization founded by French- and English-speaking business leaders and educators in 1909. Nobbs’ tireless attempts to overcome “the natural inertia of opinion” and gain “a very different spirit in the matter of community feeling and community rights” are best expressed in a 1928 article from the supplement to the *McGill News*; his specific aim was to find support for a comprehensive Town Planning and Zoning Enabling Act he had submitted to the provincial government.¹⁸ Nobbs blamed Montréal for being the prey of “unrestrained individualism” and Montréalers for having been “so busy making money rather easily that they have occupied their mind with little else.” The city’s “all-pervading gridiron layout, whose directions or axes are determined by the old farm boundaries and thus ignore the orientation desirable for dwellings in these latitudes,” was “radically defective and inept.” Montréal could learn “from the Scandinavian Kingdoms, the new Baltic Republics, and the despised Balkan States, to say nothing of the French colonies in Africa.” He proposed that Montréal’s “happy-go-lucky regime” should be converted into a borough system like the London County Council, the fire brigade of which he had worked for. Nobbs concluded by advocating co-partnership (the battle horse of English Garden City reformers such as Raymond Unwin, with whom he corresponded and whom he invited to lecture in Montréal) as “the sanest, cheapest, and in every way the best method of owning realty on the moderate scale of a house for oneself to live in.”

A Report on Housing and Slum Clearance for Montreal, drafted in 1935 with Leonard Marsh on behalf of the City Improvement League and the Montréal Board of Trade, was Nobbs' major attempt at reaching out to industrialists and the business community.¹⁹ This well-documented inquiry on living conditions for Montréal workers, on planning, and on financing of housing units in the United States, England, and Western Europe alerted readers to the increasing gap between Canada and other countries. Insisting on the inadequacy of existing duplex or triplex flats, Nobbs again advocated reconfiguring the Montréal grid by subdividing its long and narrow blocks (figure 5). Going against conventional views, he insisted that "social work must be associated with slum clearance operations" and promoted corporate ownership and management of low rent dwellings, with a system of state aid adapted from the British Housing Act. Because of Québec's climate, he estimated that decent government-assisted housing would be twice as expensive in Montréal as in Great Britain. Only large-scale operations, accompanied by the remission of taxes, would therefore be financially sound.

The lack of cultural identity and the aesthetics of recent buildings in Québec apparently disappointed Capper, Nobbs, and Traquair on their arrival in Montréal. Missing, according to Capper, were the "freshness and vigor of design sufficient to give character and value to architectural work"²⁰ so evident at Ramsay Garden, a "brilliant essay in Old Town picturesque tinged with late mediæval and early renaissance Continental influence."²¹ Neither he nor his successors advocated direct borrowing from Scotland's past, since it was ill-fitted to the local climate. However, Nobbs' and Traquair's Scottish legacy had an impact on their search for a Canadian style, drawing from the country's national past. Having both worked for Robert Lorimer, they were fully aware of the Second Scottish Revival.²² Devised in reaction to the excess of the Baronial style, this movement took its cue from 17th-century religious and domestic vernacular architecture. In the same way, for Nobbs and Traquair, an architecture suitable for Montréal and Canada should rely on the "long French cottages" and "older churches" of rural Québec.²³ In ecclesiastical and residential works they encouraged their colleagues to pay more attention to local rather than to foreign precedents. At McGill, expanding Nobbs' initiative of sketching trips, Traquair launched in the 1920s a systematic inventory of vernacular architecture and related crafts, along the same lines as the National Survey of Scotland, for which he had been an intern.²⁴ Because there was for him no other residential form distinctive of North America, he focused his literary energy on the subject, summarizing his findings in *The Old Architecture of Quebec* (figure 6). Traquair's tireless advocacy extended to foreign publications such as the *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*²⁵ and the widely distributed American magazine *House Beautiful*, in which he stated that "just because we cannot copy the French Canadian House is no indication that we may not learn a great deal" from its "straightforward use of the material to hand; simple, usually rectangular shape; and absence of 'features'" and "general largeness of parts, and a simple dignity which avoids even the smallest touch of frivolity."²⁶

Traquair's early version of critical regionalism—unknown among French- or American-trained architects in Montréal—also stemmed from traits of character. Very adaptable to other cultures, Scottish immigrants generally supported the idea of Canadian national identity.²⁷ To Traquair, who felt proud to regard Canada as his adopted country,²⁸ being pro-New France did not mean being openly pro-French. He stressed the originality of old Québec architecture, which he regarded as less dependent on its European roots than that of the English colonies south of the border. "Canadian settlers took many liberties," he wrote in *The Old Architecture of Quebec*. "They developed their traditions very freely and so produced a real Canadian architecture, moulded by climate and life and by a genuine feeling for beauty."²⁹ At the same time, Traquair, who wrote in the *Atlantic Monthly* that French Canadians were "a virile and flourishing race, with a well preserved French culture," was one of the few Quebecers able to (at least partially) transcend linguistic and ethnic boundaries.³⁰ Among Francophones he successfully lectured to nonprofessionals and collaborated with intellectuals, such as the anthropologist Marius Barbeau.

As Scottish immigrants, Capper, Nobbs, and Traquair were particularly sensitive to the growing impact of the "highly specialized architecture of the United States."³¹ While not rejecting its modernity *a priori*, Capper underscored the technical and formal difficulties in achieving truth in skyscraper construction, which he deemed undesirable for Europe.³² In the *Atlantic Monthly*, Traquair attacked North American civilization as a whole for being too utilitarian and too much controlled by

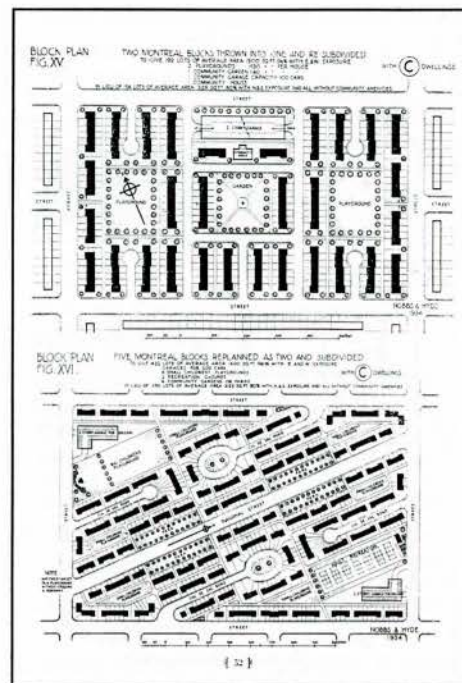


Figure 5. Proposals for reconfiguring Montréal city blocks, Nobbs & Hyde, architects, 1934. (*A Report on Housing and Slum Clearance for Montreal* [Montréal: Montreal Board of Trade and the Civic Improvement League, 1935], 32)

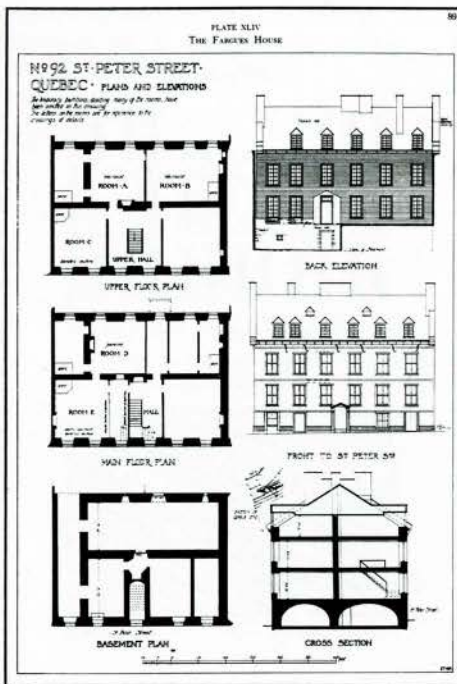


Figure 6. An illustration from Ramsay Traquair, *The Old Architecture of Quebec* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1947): the Fargues House, Québec City, drawn by Traquair in 1929.

women, whom he deemed “inferior to men in imagination, intuition and the abstract qualities” (and therefore unable to become good architects).³³ For him, “Canada’s independence of Great Britain has been assured for years; but her independence of the United States is less certain. Canadians wish to be themselves: there are few things they dislike so much as being taken for ‘Americans.’”³⁴ In Traquair’s opinion, the first great blow to the New France tradition occurred when the Church of Notre Dame on Place d’Armes was rebuilt in “a bastard American Gothic.”³⁵ American Beaux-Arts buildings were “designed in an emotional vacuum”; with McKim, Mead and White’s Bank of Montreal in mind, Traquair humoured whether “bank managers should wear togas to suit their Roman banks.”³⁶ At the same time he acknowledged that Canadians, as much as their southern neighbours, were a commercial people and that it was to “our commercial buildings that we must look for a true expression of our national character”: skyscrapers were “not economical” but “often very beautiful.”³⁷

Facing the combined challenge of Beaux-Arts education and modern technology, Nobbs was also unable to adopt a clear position towards American architecture. In private he shared his concern over a Beaux-Arts takeover with his fishing partner and regular correspondent Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue. However, he had also learned to admire Charles McKim’s “rarefied classic”³⁸ while working in England. He welcomed the opportunity to write in journals such as the *American Architect* and the *AIA Journal*. To British readers, Nobbs mentioned that “far more cultural unity (outside the realm of political ideals) exists between Canada and the United States as between Canada and England. It is probably of far greater significance to us ... that the country is situated on the North American continent, than that it is within the hegemony of the British Empire.”³⁹ He stressed the North American businesslike quality of Canadian hotels, railway stations, and office buildings, which he favoured over British fussiness.⁴⁰

At the same time idealistic and pragmatic, polemical and constructive, writings by Capper, Nobbs, and Traquair betray many contradictions. They loved to denounce Montréal’s cultural backwardness. However, they refused to put “scholarship and tradition in the waste paper basket,”⁴¹ and seem to have been content with its stable social order, even taking delight—especially in Traquair’s case—in Canada being “one of the most conservative countries in the world.”⁴² Their discourses were sometimes inconclusive: Nobbs, for instance, could only stress to British readers that “beyond the practicality and roof making,” Canadian architecture was still “a polite fiction”: to English eyes it was “very American, while to American eyes it often appear[ed] a little English.”⁴³

ACCLIMATING THEIR BRITISH BACKGROUND TO A NEW CULTURE, Capper and his successors were undoubtedly major public figures in Montréal and beyond. Their intellectual integrity and energy are still exemplary. Between the two world wars, Nobbs’ endorsement of Garden City ideals and Traquair’s advocacy of regionalism complemented each other.⁴⁴ Today, architects in Canada and elsewhere stress the notions of “urbanity,” meaningful design precedents, and regional identity; they certainly can find stimulation from the first three holders of the Macdonald Chair of Architecture.

Isabelle Gournay is an associate professor in the School of Architecture at the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland. She is the author of *Ernest Cormier and the Université de Montréal / Ernest Cormier et l'Université de Montréal* (Montréal: CCA, 1990).

- 1 Stanley Brice Frost, *McGill University for the Advancement of Learning*, vol. 2, 1895-1971 (Kingston and Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), 351-52.
- 2 Maureen Capper, "S.H. Capper: Founder of the School of Architecture (1896) McGill University, Quebec" (student paper, McGill University, Blackader-Lauterman Library of Architecture and Art, 1979), provides an excellent introduction to Capper's life and career. For biographical information on Nobbs and Traquair by John Bland, and a complete list of their writings, including unpublished texts for lectures, see Irena Murray, ed., *Percy Erskine Nobbs and His Associates: A Guide to the Archive and Ramsay Traquair and His Successors: A Guide to the Archive* (Montréal: McGill University, Blackader-Lauterman Library of Architecture and Art, 1986). For their significant pedagogic contributions, see Norbert Schoenauer, "McGill's School of Architecture: A Retrospection," *McGill School of Architecture and Urban Planning: Prospectus* (Montréal: McGill University, School of Architecture, 1987), 3-28, and *Stewart Henbest Capper: First Macdonald Professor of Architecture* (Montréal: McGill University, School of Architecture, 1996). A close friend of Nobbs, Traquair had also worked for Capper in Edinburgh. Connections between Capper and Nobbs are not well documented, but it is certain that their paths crossed. A substantial tribute to Traquair is long overdue; in particular, it would be worth exploring whether his affiliation with Free Masonry had an impact on his thinking and writing.
- 3 Percy Nobbs, "Ramsay Traquair, Hon. M.A. (McGill), F.R.I.B.A., On His Retirement from the Macdonald Chair in Architecture at McGill University," *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada* [hereafter *RAIC Journal*] 16, no. 6 (June 1939): 147.
- 4 In addition to Nobbs, the most significant Scottish-born practitioners in Montréal during this period were Andrew S. Taylor, Robert Findlay, and John Smith Archibald, who had moved to Montréal in 1883, 1885, and 1893 respectively.
- 5 No architecture program existed in Edinburgh at the time. Born of English parents within greater London in 1896, Capper was 10 when he moved to Edinburgh, where he became "Dux" (head boy) at the Royal High School. In 1880 he was awarded a Master of Arts with first-class honours in the Department of Classical Literature. Eleven years later he resumed his connections with the University of Edinburgh as a lecturer, and later as an examiner for the Department of Art History and Archaeology.
- 6 J.M. Bumsted, *The Scots in Canada* (Ottawa: Canada Historical Association, 1982), 5. The great Scottish immigration boom of 1901-14 mostly benefitted Ontario and the West. In 1881, Scots comprised 4% of Québec's population; in 1921, 2.7%.
- 7 Capper lectured on Spanish architecture at McGill and contributed short notes to J. Lacoste's photographic survey *Masterpieces of Spanish Architecture* (New York: F.A. Stokes, 1909).
- 8 For a broader perspective on Capper's Beaux-Arts training, which resulted in part from a short stay in John Burnet's Glasgow office, see David Walker, "Scotland and Paris: 1874-1887," in John Frew and David Jones, eds., *Scotland and Europe: Architecture and Design, 1850-1940*, St Andrews Studies in the History of Architecture and Design II ([St Andrews: University of St Andrews], 1991), 15-40. Back in Edinburgh, Capper, who, according to Alexander Patterson in the *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* [hereafter *JRIBA*], 3rd series, 33 (24 January 1925): 201, was "never a brilliant draughtsman," worked for George Washington Browne, then practiced shortly with his Beaux-Arts classmate Frank Worthington Simon (1862-1933), who would later design the Manitoba Legislative Building in Winnipeg (1913-20). Because he wanted to be allowed to practice and in spite of his preference for Montréal's climate over that of Britain, Capper, who never married, accepted the first Chair of Architecture at the University of Manchester, where he built the Whitworth Laboratory in 1909. He resigned in 1912. In 1914 he moved to Egypt, where he served in the British Army. At the time of his death in 1925 he was Chief Press Censor for the Ministry of Interior, in Cairo.
- 9 For instance, Capper "was called upon at the very outset of his career in McGill to deliver the annual university lecture," according to Maureen Capper ("S.H. Capper," 3). In 1899 he was elected to the Royal Canadian Academy.
- 10 Nobbs' London lecture on Canadian architecture at the time of the 1924 British Empire Exhibition resulted in a small book, *Architecture in Canada*, and articles in *JRIBA*, *The Builder*, *Architects' Journal* and *Architectural Review*.
- 11 It is worth noting that, in February 1918, Traquair contributed to the new progressive French-Canadian review *Le Nigog*.
- 12 Letter, Gerald Baldwin Brown, Professor of Fine Arts, University of Edinburgh, to Principal William Peterson, McGill University, 12 April 1913, reproduced in Murray, *Ramsay Traquair and His Successors*, 10.
- 13 According to Schoenauer, *Stewart Henbest Capper*, 8, "The building was operated on a cooperative basis, which was similar to the 'common interest' practice, peculiar to Scots law, whereby ownership of the different flats contained in a single building conveyed certain rights to proprietors over every part of the building in addition to the flats they owned.... Ramsay Garden ... was intended to lure men of professional standing and their families back to the Old Town." See also *The Builder* 65 (19 August 1893): 13-16, and *Academy Architecture* 5 (1893): 67; Margo Johnston, "Ramsay Garden, Edinburgh," *Journal and Annual Report: The Scottish Georgian Society for the Study and Protection of Scottish Architecture* 16 (1989): 3-19; and Murdo MacDonald, "Place Work Folk: Patrick Geddes and Edinburgh," *Rassegna* 17, no. 64 (1995): 48-51. Other works by Capper are: in Edinburgh, a villa with decorative half-timbering at 34 Inverleith Terrace; in Glasgow, an orphanage in the "Scotch Domestic" style, published in *The Builder* 63 (30 July 1892): 89; in Blairhoyle, Perthshire, model worker houses (mentioned in Robert Naismith, "Dash of Genius on City Skyline," *The Scotsman*, 23 December 1991).
- 14 Ramsay Traquair, "Industrial Housing and City Planning," *Montreal Daily Star*, 1 February 1919, 15, and 15 February 1919, 14.
- 15 Robert Morriss, "Urbanization and Scotland," in W.H. Fraser and R.J. Morriss, eds., *People and Society in Scotland*, vol. 2, 1830-1914 (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1990), 91. In "The Planning of Three European Cities," *McGill University Publications*, series 13, no. 9 (1926): 12, Traquair stated that Edinburgh's industrial districts were "ugly, drab and hopeless," a "huge slum in prospect."
- 16 See Michael Simpson, *Thomas Adams and the Modern Planning Movement* (London: Mansell, 1985).
- 17 See Annick Germain, *Les mouvements sociaux de réforme urbaine à Montréal au tournant du siècle*, Collection les cahiers du CIDAR 6 (Montréal: Université de Montréal, Département de sociologie, Centre d'information et d'aide à la recherche, 1984); Susan Wagg, *Percy Erskine Nobbs: Architect, Artist, Craftsman* (Kingston and Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1982), 45-57; and Jeanne Wolfe and Hannah P. Shostack, "The Town Planning Movement in Montreal, 1900-1941" (typescript, McGill University, School of Urban Planning, 1979-80).
- 18 Percy Nobbs, "Montreal and Town Planning," *Supplement to the McGill News*, December 1928, 12-17. See also Percy Nobbs, "Suburban Community Planning, Montreal," *McGill University Publications*, series 13, no. 7 (1926): 5-22. In the end, Nobbs' Act was not passed; his efforts were finally rewarded in 1941, when he was appointed as advisor to the new Montréal City Planning Commission. Nobbs' views were also echoed and analyzed in French-language publications; see, for example, "Développement rationnel des centres urbains: M. Percy Nobbs donne une intéressante conférence sur ce sujet au collège Victoria," *Le Canada*, 15 avril 1926, 2.
- 19 The report's frontispiece indicated that "The Council of the Board of Trade commends this Report to those interested ... without, however specifically approving of the implied recommendations of the report as to financing." On the report and its implications, see Marc Choko, *Les Habitations Jeanne-Mance* (Montréal: Éditions Saint-Martin, 1995), 20-27.
- 20 "PQAA President's Address," *Canadian Architect and Builder* [hereafter *CAB*] 13, no. 9 (September 1900): 174-75. It is interesting to note that the notion of "character" was a major tenet in academic training at the École des Beaux-Arts.
- 21 Walker, "Scotland and Paris: 1874-1887," 35. According to Maureen Capper ("S.H. Capper," 3), Capper's opening lecture at the Renaissance Club—a gathering of young architects, art students, and amateurs he had helped found in 1899—was on Scottish Baronial architecture.
- 22 See Peter Savage, *Lorimer and the Edinburgh Craft Designers* (Edinburgh: Paul Harris, 1980), and Deborah Mays, "Lorimer in Perspective," *JRIBA* 97 (December 1990): 25-28. On differences between the Baronial Revival and the vernacular revival sponsored by Lorimer, see Frank Walker, "National Romanticism and the Architecture of the City," in George Gordon, ed., *Perspectives of the Scottish City* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1985), 125-59.
- 23 Percy Nobbs, "Present Tendencies Affecting Architecture in Canada," *RAIC Journal* 7, no. 9 (September 1930): 315. For Nobbs' early ideas on Canadian architecture, see Kelly Crossman, *Architecture in Transition: From Art to Practice, 1885-1906* (Kingston and Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 122-35.
- 24 See Ian Gow, "Sir Rowand Anderson and the National Art Survey of Scotland," *Architectural History* 27 (1984): 543-54. Traquair's interest in the decorative arts, which resulted in his extensive study of Québec silverware, was triggered by his Irish-born mother Phoebe, a major figure in the Scottish Arts and Crafts movement. On the collaboration between Phoebe and Ramsay Traquair, see Elizabeth Cumming, *Phoebe Anna Traquair* (Edinburgh: Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1993), 41-42. Briefly mentioned in John Gifford, Colin McWilliam, and David Walker, *Edinburgh* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), 570, 580, Traquair's Edinburgh works—the First Church of Christ Scientist on Inverleith Terrace (1910-11) and the Mackenzie House (1910), a boarding school in the same district—deserve closer attention.
- 25 Ramsay Traquair, "Old Churches and Church Carving in the Province of Quebec," *JRIBA*, 3rd series, 35, no. 8 (25 February 1928): 247-62, and (in collaboration with Gordon A. Neilson) "The Architectural History of the Ursuline Monastery, Quebec," *JRIBA*, 3rd series, 44, no. 5 (9 January 1937): 225-35.
- 26 Ramsay Traquair, "Old Cottages of Quebec," *House Beautiful* 63 (May 1928): 656. Traquair's regionalist writings are analyzed in Daniel Le Couedic, "Les ressorts communs des régionalismes architecturaux du Québec et de la Bretagne," *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 4 (Fall 1991): 49-75; Lucie K.

Morisset and Luc Noppen, "A la recherche d'identités: usages et propos du recyclage du passé dans l'architecture au Québec," and France Vanlaethem, "Modernité et régionalisme dans l'architecture au Québec: du nationalisme canadien de Percy Nobbs au nationalisme canadien-français des années 1940," in Luc Noppen, ed., *Architecture, forme urbaine et identité collective* (Sainte-Foy and Sillery, Qué: CÉLAT [Université Laval]/Septentrion, 1995), 11-125 and 157-77.

- 27 Henry B.M. Best, "The Auld Alliance' in New France," in Stanford Reid, ed., *The Scottish Tradition in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), 15. Scottish implant was facilitated by the physical and cultural kinship between Scotland and Québec and by their equally harsh climates, comparable desires of political and cultural individualization within the British Empire, and awareness of powerful neighbours south of their borders whose domination they feared. It was eased by the presence of an influential Scottish business community in Montréal and by the long tradition of intellectual kinship between France and Scotland.
- 28 Ramsay Traquair, "The Canadian Type," *Atlantic Monthly* 131 (June 1923): 821.
- 29 Ramsay Traquair, *The Old Architecture of Quebec: A Study of the Buildings Erected in New France from the Earliest Explorers to the Middle of the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1947), 1.
- 30 Ramsay Traquair, "The Caste System of North America," *Atlantic Monthly* 131 (March 1923): 422. It continued: "They keep themselves separate from the English but the two nationalities live side by side on very excellent terms, only emphasized by occasional little squabbles."
- 31 Percy Nobbs, "Canadian Architecture," in Adam Shortt, ed., *Canada and its Provinces* (1914-17; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 12:674.
- 32 Stewart Henbest Capper, "The American Tall Building," *CAB* 11, no. 1 (January 1898): 5-7, discussed in Crossman, *Architecture in Transition*, 80-84; and "The American Tall Building from a European Point of View," *Engineering Magazine* 14 (November 1897): 239-52, discussed in Sarah Bradford Landau and Carl W. Condit, *Rise of the New York Skyscraper, 1865-1913* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 275-76.
- 33 Ramsay Traquair, "Women and Civilization," *Atlantic Monthly* 132 (September 1923): 291. Traquair's homosexuality was probably not entirely foreign to such anti-feminism.
- 34 Traquair, "The Canadian Type," 825, 826.
- 35 Traquair, *Old Architecture of Quebec*, 2.
- 36 Ramsay Traquair, "How to Understand Architecture," lecture given to the Art Club of Montréal in 1919 and the St. James Literary Society in 1920, p. 9. McGill University Archives, Traquair Papers, M.C.3089, c.1.
- 37 Traquair, "Architecture and Democracy," *Canadian Bookman*, n.s., no. 4 (October 1919): 12 (review of the eponymous book by Claude Bragdon).
- 38 Percy Nobbs, "Address by Prof. Percy E. Nobbs," in Alfred Stone, ed., *Proceedings of the Forty-First Annual Convention of The American Institute of Architects* (Providence, R.I.: Freeman, 1907), 149.
- 39 Percy Nobbs, "The English Tradition in Canada," *Architectural Review* 55 (June 1924): 238.
- 40 George Taylor Hyde, Nobbs' partner for 34 years, was a Montréaler trained at MIT who practiced for five years in Pittsburgh. Their firm's commercial work, such as the new Birks Building on Phillips Square and the Drummond Medical buildings derived

directly from American precedents. In the teens, this "Americanness" began attracting some young Scottish architects. They came to Montréal, where work permits were easier to get than in the United States, to train in large firms headed by American-trained practitioners and run along American lines. For instance, Alfred Lohead (1888-1972) worked for Ross and Macdonald, and James Steel Maitland (1887-1982) designed a skyscraper in the Tudor Gothic style for Brown and Vallance.

- 41 Nobbs, "Present Tendencies Affecting Architecture in Canada," 314.
- 42 Traquair, "The Canadian Type," 822. According to Vanlaethem ("Modernité et régionalisme dans l'architecture au Québec," 172), Nobbs was "much more open to change than Traquair and his French Canadian friends and disciples."
- 43 Percy Nobbs, *Architecture in Canada* (London: Royal Institute of British Architects, 1924), 9, 11.
- 44 By the 1940s, Garden City ideals had become acceptable to lower-middle class French Canadians, as demonstrated by a development designed by a former student of Nobbs, Samuel Gitterman. See Marc Choko, *Une cité-jardin à Montréal: la cité-jardin du tricentenaire, 1940-1947* (Montréal: Éditions du Méridien, 1988).

This article derives from a lecture given at the 1994 meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians. I would like to thank Annmarie Adams, the session's co-chair, as well as, in Edinburgh, David Walker and Deborah Mays of Historic Scotland, Robert Morriss, and Robert Naismith, who generously shared his research on Capper with me; and, in Montréal, Guy Besner, Irena Murray, David Rose, Françoise Roux, France Vanlaethem, and Laurier Lacroix.