

Sholto Smith: *IN SEARCH*



Dreamwold

*Sholto Smith
1910*

Right: Sholto Smith in England, about 1916. (Smith MSS)

Even to devoted scholars of Canadian architectural history, architect Sholto Smith (1881-1936) is a virtual unknown (though in his day he was not an easy man to miss: Smith was 6'3" tall, an athletic man who was an amateur boxer in his younger days). His 15-year career in Canada was unremarkable, in spite of being present at critical occasions in the evolution of the profession, and in spite of knowing and being known by some of the leading lights in the profession. In many ways, he is typical of the great mass of Canadian architects, and the architectural profession itself, at the turn of the 20th century: he was searching for a new expression, a vision of the new age. Smith put his vision on paper in 1919, shortly before he left Canada for a new start in New Zealand. He drew this vision as an ideal house, and called it Dreamwold.

This essay tracks Sholto Smith's search for Dreamwold from the Outaouais region near Ottawa to Montreal to Moose Jaw to Vancouver. To Canada's loss, he never quite found his dream in this country. It was in New Zealand that he finally hit his stylistic stride, and went on to become a very successful architect.

By Gordon Fulton



OF DREAMWOLD

SHOLTO SMITH (HIS UNUSUAL FIRST NAME is from the Irish Gaelic *Siolta*) was born at midnight, 25 January 1881 in Nice, France, son of Joseph Burley Smith and Isabella Holmes Hurle.¹ Joseph Smith was an English civil and mining engineer who was in France to supervise construction of a sea-wall and promenade he had designed.² About 1891, when Sholto was 10, the family immigrated to Canada (from England, it is believed), settling in Glen Almond, near Buckingham, Quebec. Joseph Smith had business interests in both timber and mining in Canada. He was appointed to superintend mines in the area owned by the Anglo-Continental Phosphate Company of Hamburg. Sholto, according to his eldest son, developed a love for the outdoor way of life while in Glen Almond. This led, on one occasion, to Smith and a fellow voyageur taking a canoe trip down the St. Lawrence River from Montreal to a point north of that river's confluence with the Saguenay, passing Quebec on the way, paddling a distance of some 300 miles.

His architectural education is largely unknown. It seems likely he learned his trade in Montreal, where his family had moved about the turn of the century. His earliest known sketchbook, dating from 1901, is from Montreal. A year later, according to his son, Sholto worked his way to England on a cattle boat in order to further his architectural studies in that country and on the continent.³ Smith had two options to learn architecture in Montreal at the turn of the century; he could enroll in the new architecture school at McGill, or find an apprenticeship with a local firm while taking various courses from the École Polytechnique (McGill's "poor cousin"), École des arts et métiers, Mont St-Louis College, Montreal Presbyterian College, or Mechanic's Institutes, all of which offered classes in architecture.⁴ Smith was never formally registered at McGill, so it seems likely he opted for an apprenticeship, supplemented with day or evening courses.⁵ He was most definitely a member of the Province of Quebec Association of Architects (PQAA) sketching club: in June 1906 he and R. Charbonneau, joint secretaries of the club, reported on "an exceedingly interesting object lesson in two different ideals in architecture" which came about from a sketch club visit to the McGill University Union (Percy Nobbs, 1904-06) and the Mount Royal Club (McKim, Mead & White, 1904-05).⁶ Smith was clearly interested in the current debate between the Arts-and-Crafts and Beaux-Arts ideals. The former building, he noted, was "typical of the English school of architecture," while the latter was "characteristic of United States (and French) ideals."⁷ In addition, Smith was a registered student of the PQAA: he was clearly "desirous of entering the profession of architecture."⁸

Smith reportedly worked for the architectural department of the Bank of Montreal for some time before 1907.⁹ Frank Peden was in charge of this office from September 1904 to December 1907¹⁰ (apparently indirectly employed as a private architect). It is quite possible that Smith, therefore, worked for Peden. This hypothesis could account for Smith's eventual employment by William A. Elliott, a prolific Brandon, Manitoba, architect with no obvious connection to Smith or his circle of colleagues.¹¹ Peden, in his capacity as Bank Premises architect, designed a new building for the Bank of Montreal in Brandon in 1905; Elliott was the local architect responsible for the project.¹² If Smith had had a role in the Brandon project, he no doubt would have been in contact with Elliott. Elliott at the time was involved in a number of projects in Moose Jaw, and may have approached Smith to set up a branch office in that city. This, of course, is conjecture. But without better evidence, it is perhaps the best explanation of how this 26-year old Montreal architect ended up in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, in the winter of 1906-07.

In January 1907 Smith and Elliott visited Moose Jaw to make arrangements to open a branch office for Elliott. Elliott clearly saw southern Saskatchewan as fertile territory for institutional work, particularly public schools. And Moose Jaw was familiar ground to Elliott: he had recently completed the design and supervision of Moose Jaw's second school, Alexandra, and had been short-listed for King Edward school in the city's South Hill suburb.¹³ Elliott had been able to use his successful practice in Brandon (where he had been in practice since 1899) as a springboard to Saskatchewan. Moreover, he aggressively pursued commissions in a province where architects were a novelty — in 1906 Richard G. Bunyard, later the doyen of Moose Jaw architects, told Mayor Bogue he was going to set up an architectural office. The Mayor's reaction was, "What the hell is that?"¹⁴

The novelty was to be short-lived. Architects flocked to Saskatchewan in the years immediately following provincehood. Most came from the east. From Winnipeg came David Webster and Henry S. Griffith (to Saskatoon in 1906), Richard Bunyard and Francis L. Jones (to Moose Jaw in 1906), and Francis H. Portnall (to Regina in 1907); from Hamilton came Walter W. LaChance (to Regina in 1905, moving to Saskatoon in 1906); from Kingston, Edgar M. Storey (to Regina in 1906); From Toronto, William G. Van Egmond (to Regina in

- 1 Extrait des Registres de l'état civil, naissances, Archives de la Ville de Nice, née 1881, No. 210.
- 2 This and other details about Smith's early life are from the research notes compiled by his son Rodney S. Smith (hereafter *Smith MSS*), graciously provided by Mr. V. Sholto Smith, Auckland, New Zealand.
- 3 *Smith MSS*. Before leaving he sketched Quebec City (on 26 July 1902), and after arrival the British Museum (14 August 1902).
- 4 See Kelly Crossman, *Architecture in Transition: From Art to Practice, 1885-1906* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 51-53, 58-59, 101-102.
- 5 The Council of Arts and Manufactures, for example, held evening classes at the Monument National on topics such as architecture, carpentry and stair building, and freehand drawing. *Canadian Architect and Builder* 19 (September 1906): 159.
- 6 *Canadian Architect and Builder* 19 (June 1906): 84. The sketch club was established by the PQAA in 1905 with the object of "providing junior members of the profession faculties in the study of architecture." PQAA *Yearbook* 1907: 75, cited by Crossman, *Architecture in Transition*, n. 64, p. 104.
- 7 *Canadian Architect and Builder* 19 (June 1906): 84.
- 8 National Archives of Quebec, 06-M.P./124-16: Minutes of the Council of the PQAA, vol. 4 (19 February 1901), pp. 303-05; *The Royal Architect* 4 (September 1911): 248, 251.
- 9 *Moose Jaw Times (Semi-Weekly Edition)*, 29 January 1907, p. 5. There is no record of Smith being employed directly by the Bank of Montreal.
- 10 Robert G. Hill, *The Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950* (in progress).
- 11 Ontario-born Elliott, a carpenter in his earlier years, had moved to Brandon in 1899 after studying architecture in Chicago and New York and practicing in Anaconda, Montana. In April 1913 he was appointed chief inspector for the construction of the new legislative building in Winnipeg. F. H. Schofield, *The Story of Manitoba*, 3 vols. (Winnipeg, 1913), s.v. Elliott.
- 12 Elliott took out a building permit on 6 July 1905. Brandon Building Permit Book (reference supplied by Historic Resources Branch, Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation).
- 13 *Moose Jaw Times (Semi-Weekly Edition)*, 5 January 1905, p. 8, and 11 May 1906, p. 6, for Alexandra School; *Moose Jaw Times (Semi-Weekly Edition)*, 9 February 1905, p. 5, for King Edward School. Though Elliott was initially favoured over Rastruck & Sons (Hamilton), Jas. A. Ellis (Toronto), H. S. Griffith (Winnipeg), and Frye, Colwill & Co. (Toronto), the King Edward project was eventually awarded to Moose Jaw architect George McDonald (see *Contract Record*, 4 October 1905, p. 2).
- 14 *Moose Jaw Times-Herald*, 24 September 1966, p. 11.

1906); from Petrolia, Edward G. Gilbert (to Regina in 1906). A few came from England: Norman L. Thompson immigrated to Saskatoon in 1906. A few, like Portnall, intended to homestead, but drifted back to architectural work when faced with the penury of homestead life: Portnall took a position as local agent for Toronto's Darling and Pearson before setting up his own practice.¹⁵ Many others came with the sole objective to practice architecture — and succeeded. Edgar Storey, for example, found the workload so great he sent for his son Stanley and an Ontario acquaintance, William Van Egmond, to help with the work.¹⁶

The population boom was unprecedented. Between 1901 and 1906 the population of Saskatchewan increased 280%; between 1906 and 1911 it increased another 190%. A phenomenal building boom paralleled the population growth. Saskatoon was a case in point, as the Board of Trade recounted in 1909:

At the time of incorporation as a City, in the spring of 1906, there were not a half a dozen buildings of permanent character in the place [Saskatoon]. But, what were then, for the most part, prairie trails, are today transformed into street after street of fine brick and stone blocks. The transition from bare prairie to city has been phenomenal, and is without parallel in the annals of the Dominion.¹⁷

The province was under the spell of a boom psychology,

an urban phenomenon born of the visible signs of material success and the unlimited expectations of future riches. It was fed by the boundless optimism in business circles, incredible real estate promotions and the reiterated claims of a multitude of boosters. In back of it all was the evidence of rapid and solid growth in business, apartments, office space, schools, churches and private dwellings.¹⁸

Moose Jaw, until the matter of the location of the provincial capital was resolved, rode the very crest of the boom. In 1906 it was the largest city in the province (population 6,249), fifth largest in Western Canada. And even the disappointment of being passed over for Regina as provincial capital did not faze Moose Jaw's boosters, who were determined to mold their city into the Chicago of the north. They essentially ignored the provincial economic downturn of 1906-1908 and bulled ahead with their vision.

Smith and Elliott stepped off the CPR station platform at the foot of Main Street on a cold day, 29 January 1907, intending to facilitate building the vision in brick and stone. The two proceeded to secure office premises in the Grayson Block, on Main Street. It was reported that "Mr. Smith will have charge of the Moose Jaw office, and Mr. Elliott will also spend a considerable portion of his time in the city."¹⁹

MOOSE JAW CENTRAL FIRE STATION

Smith wasted no time landing a commission for Elliott. In March 1907 local architects "who wished to do so" were asked by the city to submit plans for a fire hall to cost \$17,000.²⁰ Smith won. The idea of erecting a new fire hall had been discussed in June 1906 (the city engineer to prepare the plans and specifications), but the project stalled and nothing more had been done until 1907. Smith, then, proved to be the right man at the right time.

The style of Smith's winning design was described as

of the Renaissance, and will have a substantial and up-to-date appearance. A lofty tower is one of the prominent features. The station throughout is to be equipped with all modern appliances. Working plans are to be got out at once. The estimated cost will be \$17,000.²¹

Tenders for a building 36 by 80 feet, brick on concrete basement, were called in May; A. Mather, with a low bid of \$17,875, was awarded the contract at the end of the month.²² A week later city council, for the second time in twelve months, decided against building the fire hall. It was the general opinion of council that the city couldn't afford it. They resolved that the architect would be entitled to his fees of two and one-half percent, and that the contractor "ought to receive something." It was moved that Mather be returned his deposit cheque.²³

The subject of a fire hall came up again a year later, in March 1908. Smith was no longer involved, however, as he left Moose Jaw about this time. A motion to build his fire hall was lost on a tie vote. Alderman Grobb pursued the matter at the next council meeting, pleading for protection for Moose Jaw's schools and taller buildings. As a result, the Fire, Water and Light Committee recommended a bylaw to provide the use of \$35,000 in debentures to build and equip a fire hall, install a fire alarm system, and provide alternate protection for the working-class neighbourhood of South Hill, on the south side of the Moose Jaw River (\$20,000 was estimated for the fire hall itself). Alderman Rutherford spoke against spending a great deal of money on protecting South Hill.²⁴

15 Alex Hermann, ed., *Historic Architecture of Saskatchewan* (Regina: Focus Publishing and the Saskatchewan Association of Architects, 1986), 168.

16 *Ibid.*

17 Board of Trade, Saskatoon (Saskatoon, 1909), p. 1, cited in *Saskatoon History* 3 (Summer 1985): 20.

18 John H. Archer, *Saskatoon: A History* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), 162.

19 *Moose Jaw Times (Semi-Weekly Edition)*, 5 February 1907, p. 5.

20 *Moose Jaw Times (Semi-Weekly Edition)*, 8 March 1907, p. 3, and 19 March 1907, p. 8: "At a meeting of the Fire, Water and Light Committee held Tuesday afternoon the plans prepared by Sholto Smith, local manager of W. A. Elliot, were placed first in the competition for the new central fire station."

21 *Moose Jaw Times (Semi-Weekly Edition)*, 19 March 1907, p. 8.

22 *Moose Jaw Times (Semi-Weekly Edition)*, 31 May 1907, p. 7.

23 *Moose Jaw Times (Semi-Weekly Edition)*, 7 June 1907, p. 1.

24 *Moose Jaw Times (Semi-Weekly Edition)*, 27 March 1908, p. 3; 3 April 1908, p. 5; 24 April 1908, p. 1.



Figure 1 (right). Moose Jaw's central fire station a short time after construction was completed under William Elliott's supervision. (Moose Jaw Public Library Archives)

Figure 2 (above). William Elliott's central fire station in Brandon, Manitoba: more refined, more self-confident, and less tenuous looking than Moose Jaw's fire hall. (Jim Merrithew, Tourism Canada)



Finally, in December 1908, a new fire hall was sanctioned, though a site had not yet been identified. Construction was to start in the spring of 1909, following the plans created in 1907:

The building will be a brick structure of two storeys, with basement and attic, and stables and hayloft behind, and a hose tower at one end.

The main building is 80 feet long by 36 wide, the stables and hayloft 79 feet by 15, and the hose tower 55 feet high and 11 feet 6 inches square.

On the ground floor is space for four pieces of apparatus, with four large double doors opening on the street, and behind are stalls for ten horses, eight being for the four fire teams, and two for the chief's horse and sick animals. The harness room is also on the ground floor, and a passage runs all the length of the building behind the stalls to allow of admission to the stall from the rear.

Two stairways lead to the first floor, one to the chief's apartments and the other to the rooms of the firemen. The chief's apartments consist of a sitting room, diningroom, kitchen, pantry, bedroom and bath, and upstairs in the attic two other bedrooms are reserved for the chief and his family. There are seven bedrooms on the first floor for the firemen, each with accommodation for the men. There is also a general sitting room beneath, and a bathroom for the men. The attic has a large gymnasium, 3[?] feet by 25, with a sliding pole to the floor beneath, and four more bedrooms for the men.

The basement is fitted up with a general workroom, and boiler room and coal room.

The building is of brick, with concrete basement, heated throughout by steam, and fitted with electric lighting.²⁵

In the spring of 1909, three years after serious discussions had begun over the construction of a new fire hall, there was still nothing to show but Smith's plans. Or so local critics thought: the plans, as city clerk Simpson was to discover in March 1909, had vanished. Simpson "suspected they were left in the hands of Mr. Smith, who attended to Mr. Elliott's office here."²⁶

Elliott took over direct supervision of the fire hall project after the departure of Smith. He wrote to council, saying he "assumed the city would allow him to complete his contract as architect in connection with the fire hall, for which he should receive the sum of five per cent. of the contract price."²⁷ Council recommended "that W. A. Elliott, architect, be allowed to complete his work on the Fire Hall, plans and specifications, and that he be notified that it is desired to change the specifications, so that tenders can be called at once."²⁸ Before that happened, however, Elliott wrote a "very unsatisfactory letter" to council concerning the fire hall; council threatened "to make arrangements with an architect here" if the unspecified problems were not resolved. They apparently were: tenders were called by Elliott in April, and Moose Jaw's Navin Brothers were awarded the contract for their bid of \$19,000.²⁹ This was higher than that of the Brandon Construction Co., but council thought preference should be given a local firm.

25 *Moose Jaw Times (Semi-Weekly Edition)*, 4 December 1908, p. 6.

26 *Moose Jaw Times (Semi-Weekly Edition)*, 5 March 1909, p. 1.

27 *Ibid.*

28 *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 9 March 1909, pp. 1-2.

29 *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 23 March 1909, p. 1, and *Moose Jaw Times (Semi-Weekly Edition)*, 23 April 1909, p. 2.

The final design called for Portage la Prairie face brick with stone trimming of Calgary sandstone, Tyndall or Bedford limestone (the sandstone was ultimately used). The front facade was to have incorporated stone pilasters, but brick was substituted. Otherwise, save for the addition of a fifth bay, the building appears to have been faithful to the earlier description of Smith's plans (figure 1). The local press considered it similar to Regina's central fire station, which opened 23 December 1907. Regina's station, in fact, bore little resemblance to Moose Jaw's.

In 1911 Elliott, using the same architectural vocabulary, designed Brandon's central fire station. The overall result was more refined and self-confident, a less tenuous-looking structure than Moose Jaw's fire hall. The central dormer was given more weight, the main facade more horizontal emphasis (figure 2). But the two are clearly cut from the same cloth. The question must be asked: how much of Elliott was in Smith's original design? The general form and disposition of elements is strikingly similar to Elliott's Brandon station, but the manner of execution (prominent hipped roof, second floor windows tight to the cornice, shallow pilasters) falls easily into Smith's repertoire. This may indicate that Elliott established the concept while Smith carried out the detailed design. Conversely, Elliott may have drawn on Smith's design when developing his Brandon fire station.

CARON PUBLIC SCHOOL

Before Smith left Moose Jaw in late 1907 or early 1908, he designed a public school for Caron, Saskatchewan, a few miles west of Moose Jaw (figure 3). The school's trustees had decided in January 1907 to construct a larger school. A debenture of \$7,000 was issued to build a school of brick, stone or cement, repayable at 6% in 30 installments. The old school was put up for auction in September 1907. Smith left before the new school was finished, and Elliott stepped in to see it to completion. Two rooms were opened in 1908, and three more rooms were opened in 1914. It was closed on 21 October 1918 for an indefinite period due to the influenza epidemic. It reopened, but was closed permanently in 1970.³⁰

Elliott had already gained a reputation in Saskatchewan and Manitoba for his public school designs.³¹ Many schools, including Arcola (1904), Carlyle (1907), Elkhorn, Manitoba (1910), and Newdale, Manitoba (1911), were variations on a theme — the same theme used for Moose Jaw's Alexandra School (1905). They are easily spotted as being from Elliott's pen; there are even similarities between the Elkhorn school and his Brandon fire station.

Caron Public School, though credited in some sources to Elliott, is clearly unlike these school designs. The massing, disposition of windows, the treatment of the main entrance, and the tower are not typical of Elliott. It seems the Caron Public School, though finished by Elliott, was not his design. Smith's architectural vocabulary can be found throughout: hipped roof with hipped dormers and tower roof, flat pilasters, upper storey windows tight to the cornice. All except the dormer roofs were used on the fire hall. In its basic form the school was similar to the "standard" Saskatchewan school:

In a number of growing towns a new plan is being adopted. A two-roomed structure with the entrance and hall on one side is first erected. This admits of an additional wing when required without any change in the interior arrangements. The district is thus required to build only as an increased accommodation is needed.³²

Unusual for a town the size of Caron was that both wings were built at the same time. The unused rooms were sealed until enrollment justified their opening. Few small towns felt sufficiently confident in their future growth at the outset to risk construction of both wings at the same time.

DURING SMITH'S STAY IN MOOSE JAW he made a considerable effort to fit into the life of the city. He participated in athletic circles by joining the local rugby football team; he was elected captain in September 1907.³³ And he appears to have fitted well in social circles, if his attendance at a dance at the Legislative Building in Regina in October 1907 is any indication.³⁴ He also had the chance to test his architectural skills on a couple of moderately-scaled commissions. Both displayed a number of the design characteristics which were to be touchstones throughout his career, though Smith did not hit his stylistic stride with either. But his stay on the Prairies was short, and he soon moved on to new challenges.

Smith arrived in Vancouver some time before mid-June, 1908.³⁵ He may have been prompted to move for any number of reasons. He may have had a dispute with Elliott over the Moose Jaw office or projects (this could explain why Smith left town with the fire hall competition drawings in his possession and commissions unfinished). The fact that Elliott kept his Moose Jaw office operational (by hiring David Gorman to take Smith's place)³⁶



Figure 3. Like the Moose Jaw fire station, completion of Smith's public school in Caron, Saskatchewan (20 km west of Moose Jaw) was handled by William Elliott. (Moose Jaw Public Library Archives 28-240)

30 From *Buffalo Trails to Blacktop* (Caron, Sask: Caron History Book Committee, 1982), 27-28.

31 Schofield, *The Story of Manitoba*. Elliott is credited with designing more than 40 public school buildings.

32 Hermann, *Historic Architecture of Saskatchewan*, 143-44.

33 *Moose Jaw Times (Semi-Weekly Edition)*, 24 September 1907, p. 5.

34 *Moose Jaw Times (Semi-Weekly Edition)*, 1 October 1907, p. 7.

35 Smith first appears in the *Vancouver Henderson Directory* in the 1908 issue (published 15 June 1908).

36 David Gorman, born 25 September 1885 in Belfast, Ireland, was educated at the Institute of Technology (Belfast) and Dublin University. He came to Western Canada in 1906, and was recorded at Elliott's Moose Jaw office in the 1911 issue of the *Moose Jaw Henderson Directory*. He moved to Virginia, Minnesota, in 1913 and to Detroit in 1916, where he died 28 December 1941. *Michigan Society of Architects Bulletin* 16 (13 January 1942): 3.

suggests that the potential for work in Moose Jaw was still high, at least in Elliott's mind.

On the other hand, a large volume of work did not seem to be going Smith's way; moreover, with the exception of the fire hall, the larger commissions were going to other architects like Richard Bunyard (the Y.M.C.A., 1907, with Capt. Francis L. Jones [not built]; the Mathews-Ferguson Block, 1907, again with Jones; and the Moose Jaw Collegiate Institute, 1908, with John D. Atchison).³⁷

Why Vancouver? Vancouver at this time was booming. Its population doubled from 38,414 to 78,900 between 1904 and 1909. Architects (and would-be architects) flowed into the city, setting up offices to capitalize on the housing crunch. Smith waded into the flood. In 1908 he established an office with William Alexander Doctor in the Fairfield Building at the north-west corner of Granville and Pender Streets. The Smith & Doctor partnership, though, was short-lived. Doctor struck out on his own, leaving Smith at the Fairfield Building.³⁸ About 1909 Smith's older brother Clifford joined him in Vancouver. He set up an office next to Sholto from which he operated as advertising agent for the *B.C. Building News*. Clifford, too, moved on in short order.³⁹

On 7 April 1909, in the Methodist Church, West Vancouver, Smith married Cora Lilley Woodward (known as "Peg" because she disliked her given names), the youngest daughter of retail magnate Charles W. Woodward. They had a house — perhaps designed by Smith — at 2216 West 14th Avenue, some way out of town at that time.⁴⁰

Another possibility for deciding to move to Vancouver lies in Smith's passion for the Arts and Crafts movement in architecture. Some of the leading Canadian lights in the movement were practicing on the West Coast, Samuel Maclure, C. C. Fox, Francis Rattenbury, and R. MacKay Fripp among them. Smith's choice of office location seems to have been deliberate: the Fairfield Building had been home to Vancouver's Arts and Crafts community at the turn of the century. Charles and James Bloomfield's studio was located there (they designed a magnificent stained-glass window for Maclure's *Gabriola*, home to B. T. Rogers), as was the Builder's Exchange, where the Vancouver Arts and Crafts Association held its meetings.⁴¹

Family tradition links Smith and Maclure, though this may simply be because both favoured the Arts and Crafts and Tudor modes. The two crossed paths soon after Smith's move to Vancouver. At a meeting called to look into the formation of a provincial association of architects (the British Columbia Association of Architects) held in the Vancouver Board of Trade Rooms on 29 January 1909, officers elected included Rattenbury (president), Fripp, and Maclure. Sholto Smith and others (including T. E. Julian, Smith's next-door neighbour in the Fairfield Building) were appointed an entertainment committee for a smoker to be held at an early date in February to bring members together.⁴² Both Smith and Maclure subsequently relocated their offices to the newly-completed Winch Building, next door to the new Post Office on West Hastings. Maclure was on the fourth floor, Smith in the basement.⁴³

Smith clearly had a deep interest in the formation of professional associations for architects. In addition to the BCAA, he was present at the birth of the Institute of Architects of Canada (later the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada). Smith's name does not appear in the original "roll call" of the first annual convention of the IAC (held in Montreal, 19-24 August 1907), nor in the list of 97 subscribers to the formation of the IAC, but does appear as an associate (#102) in the charter assented to on 16 June 1908. It is likely he qualified under the second criteria for admission; that is, by having practiced for two years in Canada, rather than having been a member of the PQAA, OAA, AAA, MAA, Toronto Architectural Club, or Regina Architectural Association.⁴⁴

It seems the only reason he did not participate in the formation of the Saskatchewan Association of Architects (which would have been his third charter membership) is that he was in Vancouver at the time the draft bill was presented to the Executive Council of the Government of Saskatchewan (November 1909) and the bylaws adopted (15 January 1912). It is possible, however, that Smith (who later styled himself "SAA") was present at the SAA's first general meeting, held in Regina on 19 October 1912.⁴⁵

About 1910 Smith joined forces with William Douglas Bamford Goodfellow to create the firm of Smith & Goodfellow.⁴⁶ Goodfellow was the son of William Goodfellow Sr. (1847-1915), an architect of some reputation in New Westminster. William Sr. had attended the British Columbia Association of Architects meeting of 29 January 1909; perhaps the seeds of a partnership between Smith and William Jr. were sown at this time.

Smith & Goodfellow opened an office at 303 West Hastings Street, around the bend from Woodward's Department Store. If Smith was hoping for some business from his inlaws, the Woodwards, it never came his way. Charles Woodward was pugnacious, a difficult man to work for or with. His son Billy, the heir apparent in the Woodward clan, was not fond

37 See Gordon Fulton, *By Design: Moose Jaw's Resident Architects, 1882-1942* (Moose Jaw: privately printed, 1984).

38 *Vancouver Henderson Directory*, 1908 and 1909. Of Doctor little is known. According to Robert Hill, he was an obscure architect, active in Vancouver between 1908 and 1918, best known for his Vancouver Police Headquarters (with W. F. T. Stewart and H. S. Davie, 1913-14). He last appears in the Vancouver city directory in 1922. Hill, *Biographical Dictionary of Architects*.

39 *Vancouver Henderson Directory*, 1909.

40 *Smith MSS*, genealogy of the Smith family; and Douglas E. Harker, *The Woodwards: The Story of a Distinguished British Columbia Family, 1850-1975* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1976), 65.

41 Janet Bingham, *Samuel Maclure, Architect* (Ganges, B.C.: Horsdale and Shubart, 1985), 76 and 78, n. 7.

42 *Institute of Architects of Canada* (hereafter IAC) *Quarterly Bulletin* 2 (April-July 1909): 31-32.

43 *Vancouver Henderson Directory*, 1910 (see classified section for Smith).

44 *IAC Quarterly Bulletin* 1 (November 1907): 10-11, and 1 (August 1908): 55-56. See also *Proceedings of the First Annual General Assembly ... 1908* (Montreal: J. Bourguignon, 1909), 111-113.

45 E. J. Gilbert, *Up the Years With the S.A.A.* ([Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Association of Architects, 1969]), 2-3.

46 *Vancouver Henderson Directory*, 1910. Goodfellow was born 29 February 1883 in Edinburgh. He practiced in the Vancouver area from about 1910 until his enlistment late in 1914. He appears to have immigrated to Hankow, China, about 1920.

of Smith. He had opposed his sister Peg's marriage to Smith in 1909. Even Charles' oldest surviving son, Donald, found working for Woodward more than he could bear, and left the company in 1909.⁴⁷ All the while Woodward was expanding his retail operations without the help of his architect son-in-law.

The Woodwards' growing status in the business community did nothing to gain Smith access to the substantial wealth held by Vancouver's business elite. Other architects — notably Maclure — made comfortable careers designing houses for those who moved in Vancouver's upper echelons. Charles Woodward was at this time not particularly well-connected, nor did he move easily with the social elite in Vancouver; he had made his business reputation as the friend of the common working man, his social reputation as an opinionated scrapper.⁴⁸ He held no keys to the doors of Vancouver's moneyed classes.

THE WIGWAM INN

Smith apparently did manage to land one major commission during his tenure in Vancouver. In 1910 two Vancouver developers, Benjamin Dickens and Alvo von Alvensleben, completed a lodge north of Vancouver on Indian Arm, the north arm of Burrard Inlet. Alvensleben allegedly received financial backing for the venture from several prominent Germans, including Emma Mumm, the champagne heiress. Kaiser Wilhelm's name was also linked to the lodge, called the Wigwam Inn. In addition to providing funding for it, the Kaiser was rumoured to have plans to use the Wigwam Inn as a retreat. The Inn was seized by the Custodian of Enemy Property in 1914 due to Alvensleben's German connections.⁴⁹

The story of the Wigwam Inn began about 1906, when Dickens bought some undeveloped property at the mouth of the Indian River. Three months later T. O. Townley, District Registrar, registered a townsite plan for Dickens. By August 1907 Dickens was advertising "Indian River Park" in Vancouver papers. The ads featured a sketch of the proposed Wigwam Inn, an awkwardly-rendered illustration of a building vaguely Swiss or Chateausque in character (figure 4).⁵⁰ This may be the "sketch" Dickens had mentioned in 1937, when he recalled his role in the development of the Wigwam Inn:

I made a design for the hotel; then I got Fred Townley ... he was apprenticed then to Sholto Smith, architect, in Vancouver and just a boy, to improve on my sketch, and the "Wigwam Inn" resulted.⁵¹

Dickens ran into financial problems in selling lots, and sold half interest to von Alvensleben, a millionaire real estate and stock broker. The hotel, built between 1909 and 1910, was expected to open on Empire Day, 24 May 1910, but was completed nearly three weeks late. On 10 June 1910 600 people sailed to the Inn on the steamer *Baramba* for the opening ceremonies. The 32-room hotel was smaller than originally envisioned by Dickens, and his idea of an Indian theme had been replaced by von Alvensleben's vision of a *Luftkurort*, or "fresh air resort."⁵²

Dickens tired of von Alvensleben's taste for the limelight. "It was Alvensleben this, and Alvensleben that, but I did the work," complained Dickens:

Finally Alvensleben and I separated our interests. The hotel license had to be in my name, and I did not like that; my dear old mother would have turned in her grave if she had known I had a license to sell liquors. So, I took the townsite and he took the rest ...⁵³

Dickens' recollection of the sequence of events seems to indicate that the design of the Inn was made after von Alvensleben had taken control and while Smith was an architect in Vancouver. Dickens clearly leaves Smith out of the picture in his account of the authorship of the final design. Was it possible that Fred Townley, T. O. Townley's 22-year old son, was the designer of the Inn? There is no doubt that Townley had a special interest in the building: he visited at least twice (once with his parents and family) on board the launch *Edith* shortly after the Inn opened in 1910. Other architects (W. T. Dalton and R. MacKay Fripp among them) signed the guest register in its first seasons open, but Smith is unrecorded as visiting.⁵⁴

Yet two factors suggest that Smith had a major role in the design. First, Smith's descendants in New Zealand recalled that he was the architect of a hunting lodge at Indian Arm for the Kaiser. The only building fitting that description on the Lower Mainland is the Wigwam Inn.

Second, the Wigwam Inn certainly exhibits many of Smith's mature design signatures: a prominent steeply-gabled roof with every fourth course of shingles doubled for emphasis; overscaled gabled dormers; the lower portion of the roof extended to shelter a porch

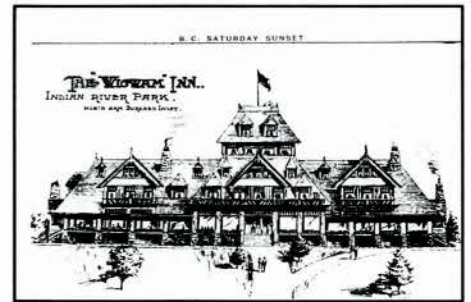


Figure 4. An awkwardly-rendered sketch of the proposed Wigwam Inn, vaguely Swiss or Chateausque in character, was used to promote the Indian River Park development. (B.C. Saturday Sunset, August 1907)

47 After several failed enterprises, Charles sent Donald to California to look into land there, either as an investment or for Charles' own retirement. Harker, *The Woodwards*, 76-77.

48 *Ibid.*

49 Victoria Blinkhorn, Archivist, City of Vancouver Archives; and Pam Humphreys and Steven G. Wong, *The History of Wigwam Inn* (Vancouver: Perfect Printers, 1982). See also *The Province*, 12 September 1980, and *The Vancouver Herald*, 12 June 1956.

50 See *B.C. Saturday Sunset*, August 1907.

51 Major J. S. Matthews, "Memo of conversation with Mr. B. F. Dickens ... June 24, 1937," *Early Vancouver: Narratives of Pioneers of Vancouver B.C.*, vol. 4 [1935-39], City of Vancouver Archives (typescript, 1944), 229. Fred Laughton Townley, born 17 July 1887 in Winnipeg, came to Vancouver at an early age. He was educated there and at the University of Pennsylvania, graduating in 1910 or 1911. He joined Robert M. Matheson in a very successful partnership in 1919, designing the Vancouver Stock Exchange building and City Hall among others. He died in Vancouver 15 October 1966. Hill, *Biographical Dictionary of Architects*, and City of Vancouver Archives.

52 Humphreys and Wong, *Wigwam Inn*, 8-11.

53 Matthews, "B. F. Dickens," *Early Vancouver*, 230.

54 "Wigwam Inn Guest Register," in Special Collections, University of British Columbia.



Figure 5. The Wigwam Inn, about 1911. The building has fallen into disrepair on a number of occasions, and was for a time an illegal gambling casino. It is now an outstation for the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club. (City of Vancouver Archives, OUT P725)

and then returned on the gable ends; overscaled braces; and an Arts-and-Crafts sensibility about natural materials (figure 5). On this circumstantial evidence, and family tradition, it appears that the Wigwam Inn was substantially Smith's design.

THOUGH COMMISSIONS OF THIS SCALE WERE FEW, not all was bleak for Smith. There were personal highlights — his first child, Phyllis Geraldine, was born in Vancouver on 6 November 1910 — and professional growth: he had found kindred spirits in the Arts and Crafts movement, who no doubt gave Smith the challenge and commitment to develop his personal style. He matured architecturally during his stay in Vancouver, if one can judge by the Wigwam Inn alone. Nevertheless, by 1912 his career prospects must not have appeared promising. The first tastes of what the Vancouver Board of Trade euphemistically called “a pause” in the economy (but would, by 1913, become a dead halt) were in the wind.⁵⁵ On the Prairies, though, the boom was running stronger than ever. Early in 1912 Smith decided to pack up his practice, leave Goodfellow behind, and head east with his family to reestablish his Moose Jaw connections.

Moose Jaw was experiencing a building boom unlike anything in its thirty-year history. Building permit values in 1910 had totaled \$1,071,000; in 1911, \$2,425,000; in 1912, for April and May *only*, a staggering \$2,175,000.⁵⁶ British capital was flowing into the West, and Moose Jaw, with its strong British roots, was attracting a significant share. Smith must have felt he had finally found his time and place: commissions came fast and furious as developers rode a massive wave of confidence, a wave with no apparent limits to size or duration.

In April 1912 the *Moose Jaw Evening Times* reported Smith had moved his offices to the Ferguson Block on Main Street; a month later he tendered a new plant for the Moose Jaw Cold Storage Co. on Manitoba Street West, near the Immigration Hall.⁵⁷ According to the *Evening Times*, “It is understood the company will erect a substantial three story building and basement and install a plant with all the latest scientific improvements.”⁵⁸ The tender called for a brick and concrete building worth about \$60,000. It presumably was built, though no photographs seem to exist; a building on the site in question was demolished in 1964.⁵⁹

55 Alan Morely, *Vancouver: From Milltown to Metropolis*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1969), 134.

56 From the City of Moose Jaw, Engineer's Department records (hereafter MJED).

57 *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 5 April 1912, p. 16, and 13 May 1912, p. 9.

58 *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 30 November 1911, p. 10.

59 A demolition permit was issued “12-3-64.” MJED.

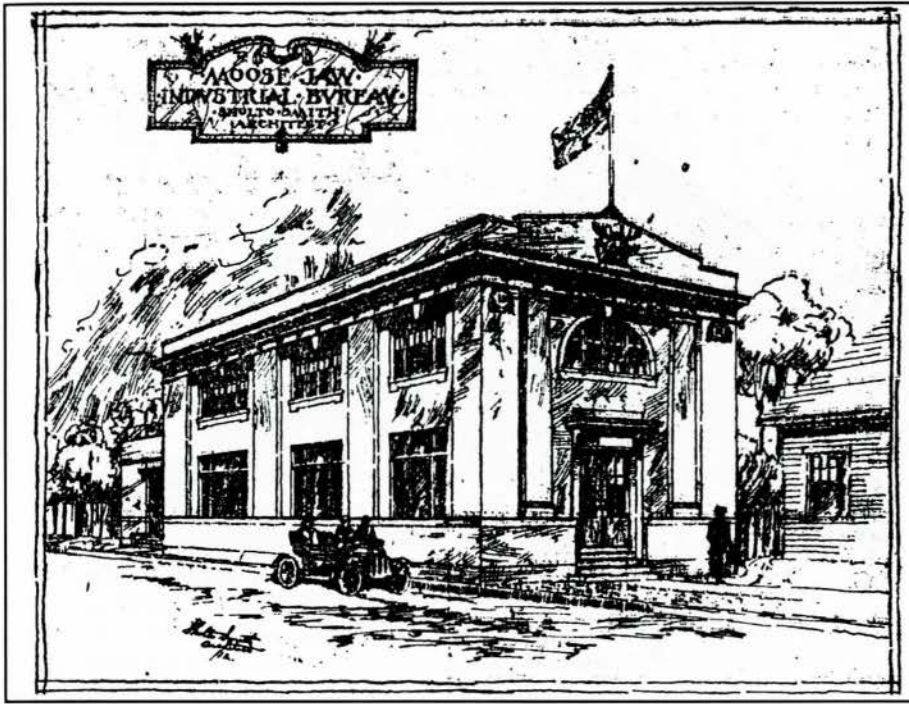


Figure 6. Smith's sketch of the proposed Industrial Hall for the Board of Trade. (Moose Jaw Evening Times, 4 January 1913, p. 14)

THE INDUSTRIAL HALL FOR THE BOARD OF TRADE

In June 1912 the Board of Trade announced their intention to erect a building on Manitoba Street East, between the CPR telegraph office and the red water tank.⁶⁰ The cost would be about \$3,000. By 27 June plans had been prepared by Sholto Smith for a building 25 by 50 feet, of "about a story and a half," with a "very handsome facade."⁶¹ On 25 September he called for tenders for the Industrial Hall for the Board of Trade. Two weeks later excavations were begun on Manitoba Street East.⁶²

The Board had moved into the new building by January 1913. The Board's appropriations for 24 October 1912 show \$107.25 for Sholto Smith for "advertising, printing, etc."⁶³ This may have represented some aspect of payment for the design.

A rendering by Smith published in January 1913 shows a handsome classically-inspired two-storey structure (figure 6).⁶⁴ A heavy cornice is carried by broad, shallow pilasters, and a carved moose head tops the cornice on the principal facade. This facade also features a flat pediment over the main door and an arched window on the second storey. In all, the composition, while not exceptional, seems quite pleasing in its proportions and competent in its execution. Smith, as usual, tucked the second-storey windows tight under the cornice.

There is some question, however, that this small classical building was ever built as drawn: no photographs have been found which show this particular building. This is surprising, since the Board of Trade was an organization which boosted itself with almost as much zeal as it boosted the city. Flaunting a building such as Smith sketched would have been an obvious means to establish the Board's credibility in the competitive world of prewar Western Canadian civic boosterism.

Perhaps the truth was that the structure built was not the handsome design Smith drew. \$3,000 was not a substantial sum in 1912, and perhaps the project had to be scaled down. Whatever was built was, by October 1919, in need of major repairs, which were deferred pending a decision on the construction of a new CPR station. Until more evidence surfaces, it might have to be assumed that Smith's handsome design never saw the light of day. All physical evidence of the Industrial Hall was removed about 1922, when the CPR finally built its new railway station on the site.

Hard on the heels of the Industrial Hall project came the commission for an apartment block on the corner of Alder and Marlborough Avenues in Moose Jaw. Montgomery Court was announced in June 1912, and was to be finished by November of that year.⁶⁵ The backers were F. Montgomery, of the Montgomery Brothers (real estate agents in the city), and J. W. Anderson. They intended the building to have over thirty suites, a substantial project for prewar Moose Jaw. Smith completed drawings at the end of June and called for tenders on 3 and 4 July,⁶⁶ but, like a number of other projects announced in the frenzied climate of boom-time development, the building never got off the drawing boards.

60 *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 22 June 1912, p. 1.

61 *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 27 June 1912, p. 9.

62 *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 25 September 1912, p. 15, and 9 October 1912, p. 16.

63 *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 4 April 1913, p. 10.

64 *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 4 January 1913, p. 14.

65 *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 28 June 1912, p. 16.

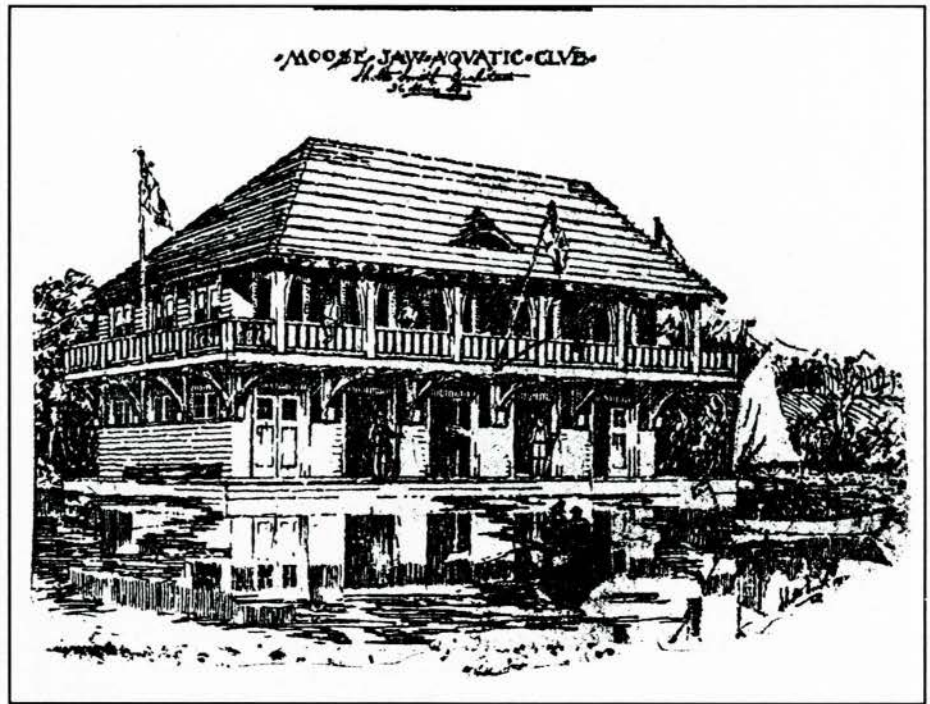
66 *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 3 July 1912, p. 20.



Figure 7 (right). Smith's sketch of the proposed Club House for the Aquatic Club. (*Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 24 May 1913, p. 15)

Figure 8 (top). The Club House, as built. (*Moose Jaw Public Library Archives*)

Figure 9 (above). The William D. Wood house, 1550 Ballour Street, Vancouver, 1989, designed by Fred Peters in 1912. (Photo: author)



THE AQUATIC CLUB

These three commercial commissions did not leave Smith much room to exercise his forte and true passion, Arts and Crafts design. One project begun in 1912 did: the Moose Jaw Aquatic Club. It is possible Smith's drawing of the proposed Club House (figure 7, dated 1912) was produced to help the club with their canvassing efforts, which had been underway for about two years. The primary objective of the Aquatic Club, according to the *Evening Times*, was to beautify the Moose Jaw River in a very comprehensive manner. Schemes of various natures had been discussed, "but for several reasons these plans never materialized."⁶⁷ Progress was slow in 1912, too, for it wasn't until the spring of 1913 that the focal point, the Club House, began to show promise of actually being built.

The city council advanced the project by agreeing to give the club an ideal riverfront site for the Club House, and to assist them in cleaning weeds and shrubbery from the river. The canvass had \$2,000 assured by the end of May 1913, and club members felt confident they could secure at least \$4,000 within a few more days. Many of the city's business leaders were elected officers of the Aquatic Club on 27 May in Smith's new Board of Trade building. Sholto Smith himself was elected captain, fourth in the club's chain of command.⁶⁸ A giant regatta was planned for Labour Day to mark the formal opening of the club.

The Aquatic Club's plans were indeed comprehensive. The Club House was to have "baths and showers, a fine club room, and up-to-date lockers for the members. Besides this, the most modern boat houses will be built." The riverside drive was to be widened, improved, and extended to the college being built up the hill from the river. A dance pavilion was also planned, to be located "where the shrubbery has already been removed, in the proposed flower garden."⁶⁹ This may be the pavilion currently in Kingsway Park, renovated into a picnic shelter in the mid-1980s. Its design was very similar to Smith's later residential work.

Plans were submitted on 28 May; the contract for building the Club House was let on 11 June to J. Baker, who intended to complete work by 15 July 1913. In spite of inclement weather, the Aquatic Club was formally opened by Mayor Pascoe on 7 August 1913.⁷⁰ The *Evening Times* described the building:

The main feature of the club house is the very spacious and beautifully smooth dance floor in the club room on the second storey. The dance hall takes up the whole of the second floor with the exception of the ten foot verandah space and a small cozy reading room with a big rough brick fireplace.

The building has been covered with shingles as siding and with peaked roof and gables, all stained brown, presents a very handsome appearance.⁷¹

The exterior appearance of the Club House had changed quite a bit from Smith's original concept in the year and a half since his sketch was completed (figure 8). The building

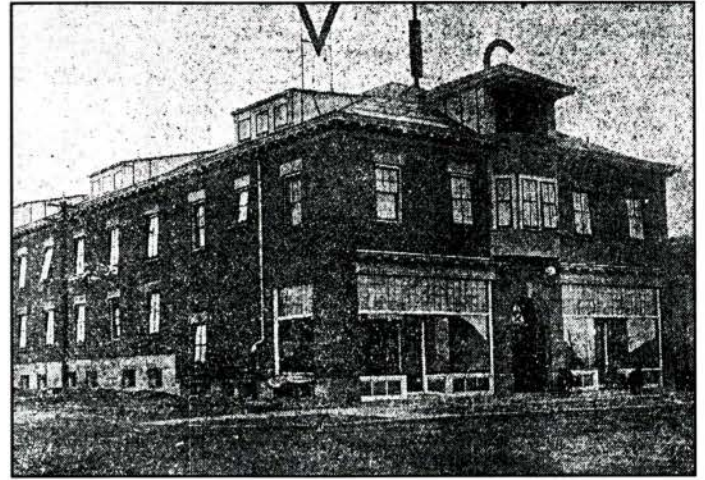
⁶⁷ *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 24 May 1913, p. 15.

⁶⁸ *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 28 May 1913, p. 9.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 11 June 1913, p. 5.

⁷¹ *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 8 August 1913, p. 7.



appears to have been widened, with a jerkinhead gable added to each end of the river elevation. The single eyebrow dormer on the river facade was eliminated, and a steeply-sloped shed dormer was added to each end elevation. The balcony was kept, supported as in the original sketch by oversized braces. The balcony roof, too, retained its large support columns and curved braces. The changes, particularly the half-timbering in the jerkinhead gables, resulted in a more “Elizabethan” effect, not unlike some of the residential work being undertaken in Vancouver at the same time — Fred Peters’ house for William D. Wood, 1550 Balfour Street, 1912, being a prime example (figure 9).⁷² It was a design which Vancouver Arts and Crafts aficionados would no doubt have appreciated.

The Club House was rescued from demolition when the South Saskatchewan Wildlife Association moved it up the hill from the riverfront in 1959-61,⁷³ though it was drastically altered: its length was increased by 30 feet, the verandahs were covered in, the interior was modified, and the reading room was apparently removed — though the original maple dance floor was kept.

VICTORIA HALL

1913 began with promise. Smith issued a tender call for an apartment and business block for Harold Matthews, a local confectioner and real estate agent. Victoria Hall, at the corner of Lilloet and 9th Avenues on South Hill, was to be two storeys, brick, with the largest dance hall in the city in its basement.⁷⁴ A permit was issued in February for \$32,000, and the building seems to have been completed a short time later. *The Evening Times* featured the Hall in its review of the highlights of the 1913 construction year: “Practically every night of the week this hall is engaged by either private persons or clubs or similar organisations for the purpose of dances or other amusements.”⁷⁵

Smith’s undated construction drawings⁷⁶ for the building show a flat-roofed building with a symmetrical front facade two storeys high (figure 10). On the main floor was an arched central doorway flanked by two storefronts, each with large prismatic glass transoms above plate glass display windows. The second storey featured an oriel window above the central doorway. The heads of the second storey windows and oriel met the underside of the simple cornice. All was capped by a modest parapet. Inside, on the second storey, Smith detailed a pleasant one-bedroom apartment which contained a living room (14 by 16 feet) with a beamed ceiling, arched fireplace nook, and built-in seat in the oriel window.

As built, the parapet was eliminated, and the flat roof was replaced by a hipped roof. The objective, presumably, was to gain an extra storey: a large hipped dormer was placed over the oriel, and broad but very shallow shed dormers were added to the side elevations. The cornice was maintained, but it and the wall were raised clear of the second storey window heads (again, presumably, to gain usable space under the roof). And the oriel was increased in height, eliminating two small decorative brackets and changing its appearance from rather airy to rather solid. The overall result was not elegant (figure 11). The building, as originally designed, was already stripped to its decorative essentials. The alterations did nothing to mitigate the barracks-like appearance of the hall’s secondary elevations, and changing the oriel and eliminating the parapet compromised the proportions of its front facade. Victoria Hall has since undergone a complete denuding: the brickwork has been stuccoed, the oriel removed, the storefronts blocked in, and a cacophony of dormers added. The dance floor is long gone.

Figure 10 (left). Smith’s original design for Victoria Hall. (From Moose Jaw Engineer’s Dept., drawing file #19, n.d.)

Figure 11 (right). Victoria Hall, as built in 1913. Design changes compromised the proportions of the front facade. (Moose Jaw Evening Times, 23 March 1914, p. 10)

⁷² Information on the Wood house was provided by Mrs. Sue M. Baptie, City Archivist, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁷³ See the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald*, 25 September 1961.

⁷⁴ *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 28 February 1913, p. 11.

⁷⁵ *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 23 March 1914, p. 10.

⁷⁶ MJED, drawing file #19, n.d.

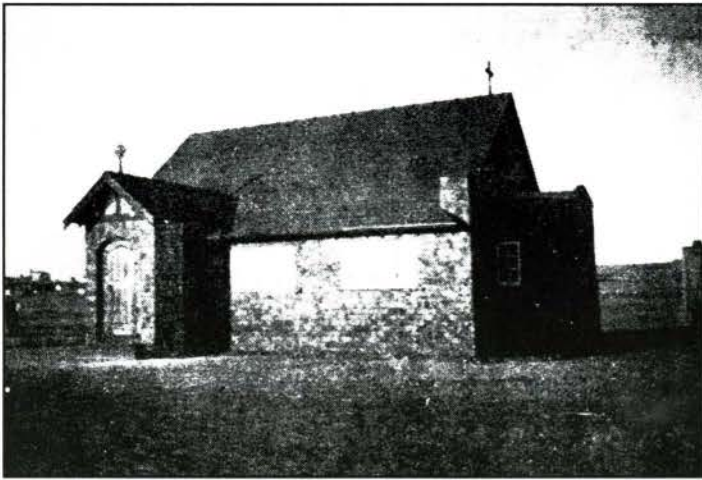
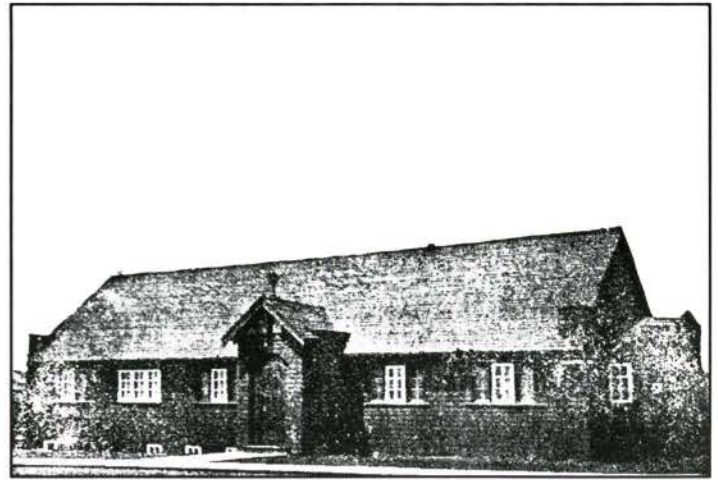


Figure 12 (left). St. Barnabas Anglican Church Sunday School on 9th Avenue N.E., as originally built in 1913. (Souvenir of the Consecration of St. Barnabas Church ...)

Figure 13 (right). St. Barnabas, after enlargement to twice its original size in 1914. (Souvenir of the Consecration of St. Barnabas Church ...)



On 12 April 1913 Smith and his wife Peg left on a holiday trip to “Vancouver and other coast points.”⁷⁷ Peg at this time was expecting their second child. One suspects a rift in their marriage, for in September, a little more than a month after their first son was born in Vancouver, Sholto and Peg separated. Encouraged by her brother Billy, she stayed in Vancouver with her father and sister on Marine Crescent.⁷⁸

His personal crisis was followed by a professional setback: in May he lost a bid to design a school in the west end of Moose Jaw. The competition was won by Carl Volkman over plans submitted by Smith; Nicolay & Co.; Reilly, Dawson, Hancock & Reilly; Reid & McAlpine; and R. G. Bunyard.⁷⁹ (Volkman ultimately lost, too, as the school project was eventually shelved by the city.) By September 1913 Smith was back in Moose Jaw, where he designed St. Barnabas Anglican Church Sunday School on 9th Avenue North East. H. J. Gabb, honorary lay reader, had arranged for the erection of a small frame building, 24 by 30 feet, to be used as a Sunday school for the children on the east side of the city; Smith drew the plans free of charge. Kitchen Bros. had the building completed for its official opening on 27 November 1913 (figure 12).⁸⁰ In less than six months it was decided to enlarge the building to 24 by 60 feet, twice its former size. On Sunday, 20 September 1914, the opening service was delivered in the newly-enlarged building (figure 13). A “storm of cyclonic proportions” wrecked the building in 1932, but it was patched until replacement buildings could be erected. The old building was finally torn down in 1935 and its lumber used to erect a parish hall, built in connection with a new St. Barnabas church on Hochelaga Street East.⁸¹

THE RIVER PARK HOUSES

It was for his house designs that Smith was apparently best known in the city. Though there are few confirmed commissions, the *Moose Jaw Daily News* singled out his “having built many beautiful homes in Moose Jaw.” Certainly, the two houses he is known to have designed in the Moose Jaw River valley were a cut above the average.

The first known intervention Smith had in the picturesque river valley was inauspicious: he designed a septic tank plant for A. Westwood in October 1913.⁸² In May 1914, however, he undertook a more challenging project in preparing plans for a riverfront house in Wellesley Park for John Holmested.⁸³ Holmested was vice-president of the Wellesley Securities Corporation of Toronto, agents for and developers of the Wellesley Park subdivision (president was Arthur Wellesley Holmested, K.C.). A Mr. H. T. Taylor of England had purchased a large portion of Wellesley Park from A. W. Holmested with the intention of developing it along the lines of his “highclass residential” developments in England; “Parklanlgey,” previously developed by Taylor, was cited as his model.⁸⁴

In April 1914 the city and Wellesley Securities reached an agreement for Wellesley to erect ten houses worth \$5,000 each in 1914, and the same again in 1915.⁸⁵ John Holmested intended the subdivision to become a showplace, and to that end hired Smith to design his own house. The city reneged on its promise to extend water and sewer service to Wellesley Park by 1915, apparently unable to finance the work, and by May 1915 only John Holmested’s house was under construction. But he never lived in it; he said he did not wish to live in Wellesley Park until it became the showplace promised. Instead, the house was rented for eight months and then sold to Archie Benson.⁸⁶ It wasn’t until 1922 that more houses were built, designed by local architect Henry Hargreaves in the California bungalow mode.⁸⁷

77 *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 14 April 1913, p. 2, and 15 April 1913, p. 2.

78 Harker, *The Woodwards*, 116.

79 *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 15 May 1913, p. 1.

80 “History of the Parish of St. Barnabas,” in *Souvenir of the Consecration of St. Barnabas Church, Wednesday May 29th, 1935, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan* (Moose Jaw: privately printed, 1935), 17-24.

81 *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 9 May 1934.

82 *MJED*, misc. plans (W-22), 22 October [1913]. Aubrey E. Westwood was president of Nixon’s Booksellers and Stationers in Moose Jaw.

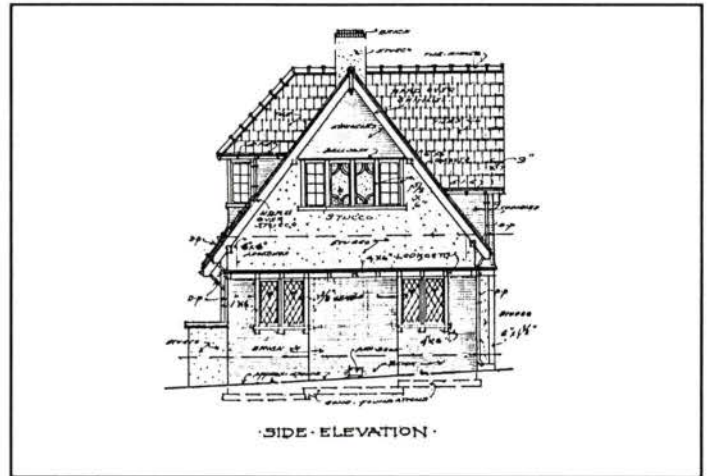
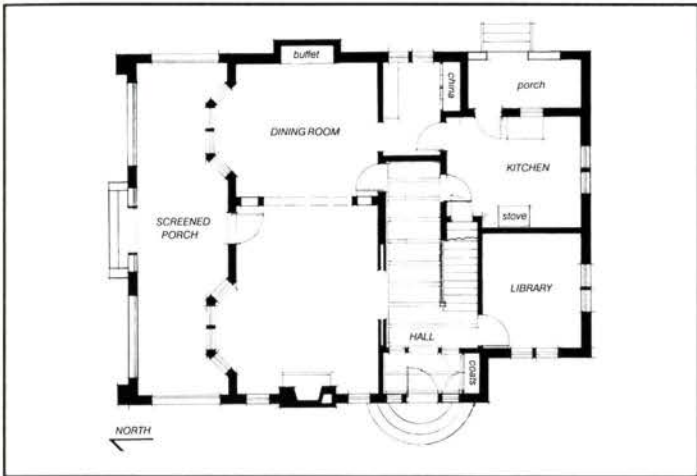
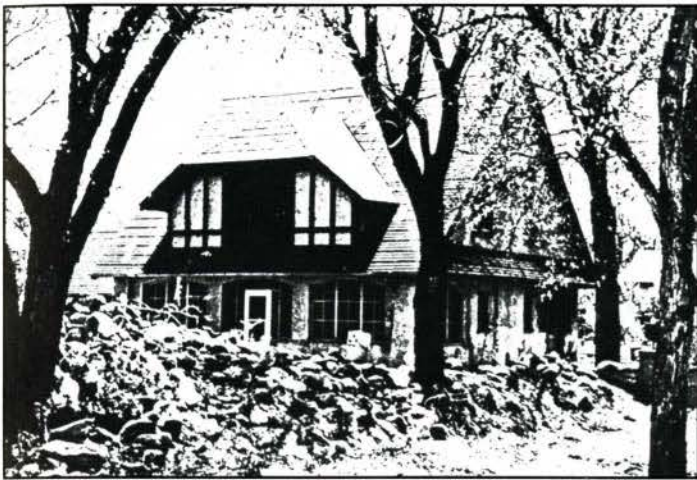
83 *MJED*, misc. plans (W-64), 30 May 1914. A building permit was issued on 6 July 1914.

84 A. W. Holmested, Wellesley Securities Corporation, Toronto, to W. F. Heal, City Commissioner, Moose Jaw, 31 May 1916, in Wakamow Valley Authority files (W-84-412).

85 Wakamow Valley Authority files (W-84-412).

86 *Ibid.*

87 Fulton, *By Design*.



Hargreaves, coincidentally or not, was also the Holmstedes' agent, and collected the rents on these houses. As late as 1928 Wellesley Securities was still announcing its intention to build more houses in Wellesley Park, but none were built.⁸⁸ Most of the houses, including the Holmsted house, were demolished between 1978 and 1981 under a flood protection scheme.

The Holmsted house was one of Smith's best design efforts in Moose Jaw (figures 14, 15, 16). In general massing it formed the model for a number of his smaller New Zealand houses (the M. Colebrook house, for example, in Orakei, Auckland [figure 17]). The most notable feature was the large screened porch which faced north to the Moose Jaw River. A half-timbered jerkinhead gable, a favourite Smith device first seen on his Aquatic Club House, was placed prominently on the north facade. The elevations featured roughcast walls judiciously highlighted with brick. While the house was irregular in overall form, individual components were treated in a symmetrical or nearly symmetrical fashion. Particular attention was paid to the formal entrance, which was located on the west facade facing Wilton Avenue. A beamed ceiling and paneled walls were used in the entrance hall of what was essentially a centre-hall plan. Another Smith trademark can first be recorded in the Holmsted house: an elaborate built-in dining room buffet.

Facing the Holmsted house, in River Park across the river, stands a house which surely must have been designed by Smith (figure 18).⁸⁹ The roughcast-and-brick exterior, broad, low hipped roof, and characteristic arched doorway (which he subsequently used on his own house, *Colwyn*, in Auckland) all point to Smith. The house was first occupied by Robert H. Kennedy, president of Kennedy Bros. Ltd., a successful wholesale boot and shoe dealer in Moose Jaw. Kennedy was first recorded living in River Park in 1917,⁹⁰ so presumably the house was completed in that year. Little is known about the circumstances surrounding the construction of the house. If designed by Smith, it (like the Holmsted house) must have been constructed at least in part after Smith had left Moose Jaw to enlist in the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

Figure 14 (top left). The John Holmsted house, Wellesley Park, Moose Jaw, 1978, shortly before demolition. (Wakimow Valley Authority W-84-307)

Figure 15 (top right). West facade, Holmsted house, Wellesley Park, Moose Jaw. (From Moose Jaw Engineer's Dept., misc. plans W-22, 22 October [1913])

Figure 16 (bottom left). Main floor plan, Holmsted house, Wellesley Park, Moose Jaw. (From Moose Jaw Engineer's Dept., misc. plans W-22, 22 October [1913])

Figure 17 (bottom right). Side elevation, M. Colebrook house, Orakei, Auckland, New Zealand. (Smith MSS, n.d.)

⁸⁸ *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 2 October 1928, p. 7.

⁸⁹ His design for St. Heliers Flats in Auckland shows the same architectural vocabulary used in a multi-unit dwelling.

⁹⁰ *Moose Jaw Henderson Directory*, 1917.



Figure 18 (left). Robert H. Kennedy house, River Park, Moose Jaw, 1988, attributed to Sholto Smith. (Photo: author)



Figure 19 (right). Colwyn, Auckland, New Zealand, 1925, the "Dreamwold" Smith designed for himself in 1925. (Photo: V. S. Smith)

BY THE SPRING OF 1914 THE PROVINCE'S ECONOMY was slowing noticeably:

It is the opinion of W. Zimmerman, the well-known local architect, that the building activity in Moose Jaw this year will be on a smaller scale even than last year. Several big buildings which were contemplated to be erected last year, will, he thinks, be held over for a couple of years yet.⁹¹

The building boom in Moose Jaw collapsed in mid-year over the prospect of war. British capital stopped flowing. Architects, including Zimmerman, packed their equipment and left. Smith stayed for a while, attending a Board of Trade meeting in March,⁹² but on 23 September he enlisted with the 11th Battalion, C.E.F., and went overseas on 4 October 1914.

Lieutenant Sholto Smith spent five years overseas, finally returning to Moose Jaw on 28 October 1919.⁹³ He intended to reopen his Moose Jaw practice after a few weeks in Vancouver, but changed his mind while there and decided to stay. He formed a short-lived partnership in 1920 with Edmund Y. Grasset, who seems to have been a dabbler in construction and real estate. Smith and Grasset may have crossed paths in 1911 when both had offices in the Winch Building.⁹⁴ Perhaps the firm Grasset & Smith was a marriage of convenience, with Smith supplying the architectural expertise and Grasset the real estate moxie. Grasset's own firm was "Sask. Realty Exchange," a reasonable name to link Smith, fresh from Moose Jaw, with Grasset, real estate broker. In their only known project, Grasset & Smith undertook renovations to the 1911 Elysium Hotel on West Pender Street.⁹⁵

Smith was clearly unsettled. He had reversed his decision to stay in Moose Jaw after traveling to Vancouver, and if he was looking for reconciliation with his estranged wife and family, this was not forthcoming.⁹⁶ Smith, at age 39, decided to move on. Early in 1920 he sailed for New Zealand, arriving in Auckland on 17 March 1920.⁹⁷ In the month following his arrival Smith secured employment with architects Thomas Coulthard Mullions and C. Fleming McDonald. A short while later he became a partner in the firm. On the death of McDonald the firm became known as T. C. Mullions and Sholto Smith. Although working within the structure of a partnership, it would seem that Mullions and Smith each had his own particular clients, and each prepared his own designs and drawings.⁹⁸

Smith's decision to move to New Zealand may have been linked to his future wife, Phyllis Mary Hams, whom he had met during the war while on leave in Colwyn Bay, North Wales (Smith had almost knocked her over when leaving a tobacconist's shop). She and her family immigrated to New Zealand in 1921. Smith and Hams were married in Auckland on 3 March 1925, and moved into Colwyn, the recently-completed house — the Dreamwold — Smith had designed for them (figure 19).⁹⁹ For his house designs he drew inspiration from Canadian colleagues such as Maclure, and from the British masters, including C. F. A. Voysey and M. H. Baillie Scott (Colwyn being reminiscent of the latter's *Corrie Wood*, Letchworth, Herts). Smith's Arts-and-Crafts and Tudor house designs were, and remain, in demand in Auckland.

While his Canadian sojourn was not without professional (and personal) struggle, the seeds of his vision of the new age were sown and subsequently nurtured. There were brief flashes of Smith's latent architectural talent in Vancouver and Moose Jaw, but it wasn't until he left Canada that his personal architectural vision finally coalesced. Regrettably, his Auckland career was short: Smith's health grew progressively worse in the 1930s as a result of gas poisoning during the war. He died at his home in St. Heliers on 8 July 1936, leaving a legacy of more than 100 buildings in New Zealand.¹⁰⁰

91 *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 18 April 1914, p. 11.

92 *Moose Jaw Evening Times*, 12 March 1914, p. 7.

93 *Moose Jaw Daily News*, 29 October 1919, p. 5.

94 *Vancouver Henderson Directory*, 1911 and 1912.

95 Vancouver City Archives, index to the City Permits and Licences Department files.

96 His relationship with his father-in-law Charles Woodward may have been reasonable: as the address of his "next-of-kin" on his C.E.F. attestation in 1914 Smith gave Woodward's retirement home *Woodcroft* in Rivera, California — a property found, incidentally, by Charles' son Donald Woodward (see note 47).

97 *Smith MSS*.

98 *Ibid*.

99 *Ibid*.

100 *Ibid*, and *The New Zealand Herald*, 14 July 1936.