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THE HOTEL ARCHITECTURE OF
ROSS & MACFARLANE/ROSS & MACDONALD

David A. Rose

A Thesis
in
The Department
of
Art History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

December 1992

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ABSTRACT

The Hotel Architecture of Ross & MacFarlane/Ross & Macdonald

David A. Rose

The American hotel type began in 1830 and spread to Canada by the late nineteenth-century through the work of American architects. During the first half of the twentieth-century the Montreal firm of Ross & MacFarlane (1905-12) and its successor, Ross & Macdonald (1913-42), continued the tradition of the grand hotel in their design of eight large Canadian hotels: three railway hotels built between 1909 and 1914 - the Château Laurier in Ottawa, the Fort Garry in Winnipeg, and the Macdonald Hotel in Edmonton; two commercial hotels in the early 1920s - the Mount Royal Hotel in Montreal and the Admiral Beatty Hotel in St. John; two railway hotels in the late 1920s - the Hotel Saskatchewan in Regina, and the Royal York in Toronto; and lastly, a 1941 post-depression hotel - the Lord Elgin in Ottawa.

The hotel architecture of Ross & MacFarlane/Ross & Macdonald was shaped by many elements. Essential to this study is a consideration of the American hotel prototype, contemporary hotels in Canada and the United States, the background and education of the architects, the fundamentals of hotel planning, the corporate clients, and the Canadian social, political, and economic contexts in which the buildings were erected.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my advisor, Dr. Ellen James, for suggesting Ross & Macdonald as a topic for my Masters thesis, and for her support when I settled on a study of the architect's hotel architecture upon the realization that a comprehensive study of the firm and its enormous production was too vast a project at this level.

My gratitude is also extended to the Canadian Centre for Architecture for allowing me continued access to its invaluable resources and the expertise of its staff. In particular I wish to thank head archivist Robert Desaulniers for providing me the opportunity to organize and compile the inventory for the Ross & Macdonald Archive, and senior archivist Robert Fortier for sharing his extensive architectural knowledge when viewing the drawings of Ross & Macdonald's buildings. The CCA's library staff, every ready to provide useful assistance, was also very much appreciated.

I am also indebted to the following people for generously contributing their time and resources: G. Everett Wilson, architect and Past President of the Ontario Association of Architects, and architect Robert Wilkinson, who both were employed as draughtsmen in Ross & Macdonald's office; Sandi Digras, Public Relations Director of the Château Laurier Hotel; Donald Blakeslee,

current Manager of the Lord Elgin Hotel; and John E. Udd, Director of Mining Research at the Canada Centre for Mineral and Energy Technology, whose father, John C. Udd, was the client for the Lord Elgin Hotel. My two thesis readers, Susan Wagg and Michael Lewis, are also gratefully acknowledged.

Lastly, I would like to thank Rosalie Hodson for her advice, editing, and, especially, her infinite patience, in helping me see this essay through.

PREFACE

The focus of this essay is on the hotel architecture of Ross & MacFarlane and Ross & Macdonald. As such it is the study of a building type rather than an attempt at chronicling the combined manifold history of these two architectural firms. Considering their prolific production and the number of noteworthy buildings they designed, it is surprising that a comprehensive history of these architects and their work has not been undertaken to date. The following is a note on the sources consulted for this thesis; hopefully it will be of use when a more complete study is commenced.

The single most important collection of material is the Ross & Macdonald Archive housed in the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal. The Archive contains several thousand original drawings and over one hundred photographs for the majority of the projects commissioned from the architects between 1909-42. This graphic material is often complimented by textual documents such as building specifications and job index cards. Secondary material that would have thrown light on the internal workings of the office -- personal papers, diaries, log-books, ledgers, business letters, or scrapbooks -- unfortunately did not come with the Archive. However, a good portion of the architect's office library, consisting of 49 books on diverse subjects from architectural theory and history to engineering, was acquired and is now in the

CCA's library. The material concerning Ross & MacFarlane/ Ross & Macdonald's eight hotels is a good indicator of the quantity of drawings available for each project. For the hotels, the number of drawings varies from only a few preliminary sketches for the Admiral Beatty Hotel, to what must be the complete series of over one-thousand drawings for the Royal York Hotel. While most of the drawings appear to be present in the Archive for the Fort Garry Hotel, the Macdonald Hotel, the Mount Royal Hotel, and the Hotel Saskatchewan, this is not the case for the Château Laurier, the Lord Elgin, and the unexecuted Hotel Qu'Appelle.

The work of Ross & MacFarlane and Ross & Macdonald received extensive coverage in contemporary architectural journals and newspapers. Most of their large and important buildings appeared within the pages of both Construction and the JRAIC, as well as occasionally in American architectural journals and various other Canadian trade magazines such as Hotel Monthly and the Contract Record and Engineering Review. Building activities by the firms were often considered important events and were reported in the major daily newspapers in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Quebec City, and Saint John.

Unfortunately, writings by the architects themselves are practically non-existent. Neither David MacFarlane nor George Ross published any thoughts on his work, the profession, or on architecture in general, as far as I know. MacFarlane retired early, and Ross was probably too busy running the office

and his many business ventures to write. On the other hand, during the Depression when business was slow, Robert Macdonald found time in 1934 to publish articles in the JRAIC on the subject of "Architectural Economics" (see bibliography), and to serve as president of the Quebec Architects Association in 1939.

It has been over forty years since George Allen Ross, the last senior member of Ross & Macdonald, died. Ross's son, John Kenneth, and Macdonald's son, Rodderick, both worked in the office during the 1930s, but the former died in 1978 and the latter was unresponsive to correspondence, and also may have passed on. Due to time constrictions and the nature of this thesis, no attempt was made to trace any other family members. Other people that could serve as primary sources on Ross & Macdonald are the innumerable draftsmen that passed through the firm. Those that I contacted -- J. Campbell Merrett in Montreal, and J. Everett Wilson and Robert Wilkinson in Toronto - - worked for Ross & Macdonald in the late twenties or thirties. At this date, it is likely that the majority of the architects associated with the firm are no longer living.

It is probable that there still exists a considerable amount of personal documents connected to the individual works of Ross, MacFarlane, and Macdonald apart from the missing office papers. Much client-related material has yet to be uncovered. The architects built churches, schools, factories, a major sports arena, apartment buildings, office buildings, as well as working for

many large corporations such as Eatons and the Canadian Railway companies. However, much of this material would take considerable patience to track down. With the hotels for example, I discovered that the management of each establishment I visited (the *Château Laurier*, the *Lord Elgin Hotel*, and the *Royal York Hotel*) had very little information apart from newspaper clippings or blueprints. The executive papers in the Canadian Pacific Railway Archives are not yet available to researchers, and the Canadian National Railway Archives in Ottawa, which inherited the documents of the Grand Trunk Railway, are still in a state of considerable disorganization.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCA	Canadian Centre for Architecture
CEA	City of Edmonton Archives
CPRA	Canadian Pacific Railway Archives
<u>CRER</u>	<u>Contract Record and Engineering Review</u>
<u>JRAIC</u>	<u>Journal Royal Architectural Institute of Canada</u>
<u>JSAH</u>	<u>Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians</u>
NAC	National Archives of Canada
NBM	New Brunswick Museum
NPA	Notman Photographic Archives, McCord Museum
OCA	Ottawa City Archives
PAM	Provincial Archives of Manitoba
R&MA	Ross & Macdonald Archive, Canadian Centre for Architecture
SAB	Saskatchewan Archive Board

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INTRODUCTION

Nikolaus Pevsner differentiates hotels from inns by stating that hotels are larger with more public rooms.¹ Hotels evolved from inns. During the eighteenth century, a new festivity called the assembly appeared amongst the leisure classes in England, which was described in 1751 as "a stated and general meeting of the polite persons of both sexes, for the sake of conversation, gallantry, news and play."² When polite society began to socialize more, it began to travel more. As this happened, inns began to acquire assembly hall additions, making their first step to becoming hotels.³

Social mores and the history of transportation were intimately tied to the development of the grand hotel. The first buildings that could pass for luxury hotels were incorporated into mixed-use, upper-class resorts. One of the earliest was the Badischer Hof built in 1807-9 in the spa town of Baden-Baden. Originally a Capuchin convent, it was converted by Friedrich Weinbrenner (1766-1826) into a series of buildings that contained a majestic

¹ Nikolaus Pevsner, A History of Building Types (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976): 169.

² Quoted from the Oxford English Dictionary under "Assembly."

³ Pevsner: 170. The changes began in the 1770s, with hotels proper emerging by the 1790s. Dan Cruickshank, A Guide to Georgian Buildings of Britain & Ireland (London: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985): 174.

ballroom, salons, parlours, library, gaming rooms, a bathing establishment and forty-eight bedrooms. A few years later John Foulston (1772-1842) built the first palatial hotel in England, the neo-classical Royal Hotel Assembly Rooms and Theatre, at Plymouth, Devon, in 1811-19. This fifty bedroom hotel was part of an ensemble that included an Athenaeum to house the local literary and philosophical society.⁴ By the 1850s, with the development of the railway system across Britain, the common travelling masses were finding accommodation in mammoth hotels at sea-side resorts and at urban railway depots. These new building types consisted mostly of bedrooms and perhaps a dining room, although the 150-room Great Western Hotel at Paddington station in London, built by Philip C. Hardwick (1792-1870) in 1852-54, contained a royal waiting room for Queen Victoria's convenience.

Historian David Watkin states that the "larger than life" quality of many nineteenth-century buildings, including the grand hotel, was modelled on the European royal palace.⁵ But between the palace and the luxury hotel was a more recognizable prototype; the elegant country houses of the English landed gentry.⁶ These Georgian period houses (1714-1830) effectively humanized and made functional the over-scaled grandeur and elaborate formal layouts of the late eighteenth-century palace, while still conveying wealth and

⁴ David Watkin, "The Grand Hotel Style," in Grand Hotel: The Golden Age of Palace Hotels, David Watkin et al. (Secaucus, N.J.: Chartwell Books, 1984): 14-15.

⁵ Ibid.: 11.

⁶ Cruickshank: 174.

authority. Many of the general characteristics of the Georgian house would reappear in nineteenth-century American hotel architecture, such as the placement of the service areas in the basement, the public rooms on the ground and first floors, and the bedrooms above.⁷ Eventually, most of the room types were appropriated for hotels -- the central halls (first called rotundas, then lobbies), salons, drawing rooms, libraries, card and billiard rooms, tea rooms, dining and banquet rooms, galleries and suite arrangements. Moreover, the well-ordered, classical façades of Georgian houses also found favour in hotel architecture after 1900, because they bore domestic associations. Even that particular English custom of women and men separating into different rooms for after-dinner refreshments and activities, which originated in England in the late seventeenth century, continued to be reflected in hotel planning two decades into the twentieth century.⁸

However, a detailed look at the origins of the grand hotel is beyond the range of this essay, as is the consideration of resort hotels constructed outside of densely populated areas, and apartment hotels, which were built in

⁷ In a parallel development, these country estate houses served as a plan model for the London club just prior to 1840, after which the club-houses began to resemble small, exclusive hotels. John Summerson, Georgian London: An Architectural Study (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970): 242-49.

⁸ Up until the First World War, the more prestigious hotels in North America regularly contained separate dining rooms, writing rooms, lounges, and entrances for women. This English custom, which was abhorred on the continent, may have originated with the increased popularity of tea drinking. See Mark Girouard, Life in the English Country House (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978): 204-05.

cities but strictly catered to clients on a long term basis. In the pages that follow, the term "grand hotel" refers to the architectural type that originated in the United States in 1830, upon the opening of the Tremont House in Boston, designed by Isiah Rogers (1800-69). Unlike the European luxury hotels, which tended to be smaller and quite preferential about the status of their clientele, the American hotel evolved into the twentieth century as a large urban establishment that democratically catered to anyone with the means to pay. Important features of these hotels were the numerous and extravagant public rooms, which provided sumptuous backdrops for latter day versions of the assembly reflecting the extroverted social life of Americans. By 1900 the success of the American hotel-type promoted its spread beyond the borders of the United States, to Europe, perhaps surprisingly, and to Canada, inevitably.

How did the prototype of the American hotel evolve in Canada? All told, there were far fewer grand hotels built in this country than in the United States, but of that smaller number, eight of the most significant were designed by the Montreal firms of Ross & MacFarlane and their successors, Ross & Macdonald. The relatively large hotel production of these architects, their training in the United States and their ensuing prominence in Canada, the longevity of their practice, and the geographic range of their work conspire to make Ross, MacFarlane, and Macdonald crucial to a study of the building type in Canada. This essay will trace the history and examine the architecture of those eight hotels, from the Château Laurier Hotel, erected in 1909-12 just as the great age of urban Canadian hotel building was starting, to the Lord Elgin

Hotel, constructed in 1940-41, when the era was reaching its end.

1. THE GRAND HOTEL TO 1900

In the United States, the first hotel to break decisively with the eighteenth-century colonial inn tradition and the hotel-in-a-social-complex⁹ was the Tremont House, built in Boston between 1827-30.¹⁰ (fig. 1) Featuring a severe Greek-revival exterior of white granite, the Tremont, according to Pevsner, was the first hotel to be built as an architectural monument.¹¹ Inside, the hotel's public spaces consisted of reception rooms, drawing rooms, a reading room library, and a two hundred-seat dining room, all accessible from a wide corridor leading off the rotunda. Much more commodious than contemporary European hotels, the Tremont had 170 double and single guest

⁹ As in Europe, early American luxury hotels tended to be integrated into mixed-use complexes. Benjamin Latrobe's (1764-1820) unbuilt ensemble in Richmond, Virginia, proposed in 1797-8, flanked a theatre with an assembly hall and a hotel on either side. Asher Benjamin's seven-storey Exchange Coffee House in Boston, built in 1806-9, included a ballroom, a two hundred-seat dining room, a merchant's exchange, a Masonic Hall, and two hundred guest rooms. It burned down nine years later, in 1818.

¹⁰ The Tremont's architect, Isiah Rogers, eventually became America's first specialist in hotel architecture. Altogether, he designed the Astor House Hotel in New York (1832-36), the Charleston Hotel in Charleston (1839), the Saint Charles Hotel in New Orleans (1851), the Burnet House in Cincinnati (1850), and the Maxwell House in Nashville (1854-60), where the coffee of the same name was first used.

¹¹ Pevsner: 175.

rooms.¹² Aside from being large, roomy and luxurious, the hotel was the first major American hostelry to banish the bar from the lobby, the first to employ bellboys, to use gaslight in the public rooms, to offer printed dinner menus, to provide a water pitcher and soap in every bedroom, and to install a different lock in every guest's door. With the Tremont, the modern form of the grand hotel was born.¹³

The Tremont House set the standard for a multitude of palatial hotels which sprang up across the country during the next fifty years.¹⁴ In the 1870s and 'eighties, fostered by the industrial revolution and furthered by American inventiveness, enormous technological innovations like the passenger elevator, improved systems for plumbing, heating, ventilation, electric lighting, fireproofing, and new materials and methods for framing and cladding buildings fundamentally affected architecture. All of these factors contributed to the birth of the skyscraper and provided hotel design with new possibilities as a high-rise complex. These advances were incorporated into hotel architecture so quickly that the Tremont House was soon rendered obsolete and was

¹² Even into the early twentieth-century European luxury hotels remained small by American standards. For instance, the Ritz Hotel in London, built in 1903-06 by Charles Mewés (1858-1914) and Arthur Davis (1878-1951) had only 150 rooms. Watkin: 22-3.

¹³ Pevsner: 175.

¹⁴ Jefferson Williamson, The American Hotel: An Anecdotal History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930): 14-18.

demolished in 1894.¹⁵

In addition to technology, numerous social and economic factors contributed to the development of the grand hotel in nineteenth-century America. Industrial and urban centres were expanding at an unprecedented rate, rapidly increasing the wealth of the mercantile and industrial classes. For each growing city competing to attract business, a large hotel was considered essential as a symbol of success.¹⁶ The demand for hotels intensified further with the completion of the trans-continental railway in 1869, which augmented the natural inclination of Americans to travel.¹⁷ All of these conditions, including the American concept of democracy and a national trait of gregariousness, played a part in initiating the grand hotel's golden age, which lasted roughly from the 1880s to the 1930s.

New York hotels in particular responded quickly to the dynamic social and economic climate of the period. Up to the First World War, not only was the city a major port of entry for millions of European immigrants, but it also was in the process of becoming a significant business, cultural, and entertainment centre. It was during this era that the robber barons made their

¹⁵ Ibid.: 54-5.

¹⁶ Travelling salesmen made up seventy-five percent of the hotel's business. Another frequent group of hotel users before movies and automobiles were travelling theatre companies. Ibid.: 123.

¹⁷ Ibid: 9.

fortunes - the Morgans, Vanderbuilts, Carnegies, Rockefellers, and Astors - and a large and wealthy upper middle class was formed. This new and powerful social elite created a demand for spaces that were suitably opulent for staging prestigious social events, conducting business ventures, and planning political strategies. As civic life took on the character of grand theatre, the city's luxury hotels assumed significant social importance.¹⁸

In 1893, New York's glamorous society began converging in the recently completed Waldorf Hotel. The Waldorf was such a popular success, its architect Henry Hardenbergh (1847-1918) was immediately engaged by the owners, the Astor family, to design a huge addition. Opening in 1897, the Waldorf-Astoria featured a sixteen-storey German Renaissance exterior and contained 1,300 guest rooms and forty public rooms, including luxurious lobbies, palm gardens, cafés, restaurants, dining and ball rooms, parlours and writing rooms, bars and lounges, and a marbled corridor called "peacock alley" where New York's elite strutted and promenaded in capricious display. Steeped in an old world opulence that provided ideal theatrical settings for exhibitions of wealth and social posturing, the interior of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel fittingly embodied the contemporary American attitude of self confidence on both a personal and national level.¹⁹

¹⁸ Robert Stern, et al., New York 1900: Metropolitan Architecture and Urbanism 1890-1915 (New York: Rizzoli, 1983): 253

¹⁹ Ibid.: 257-61.

In Russell Sturgis' 1901 Dictionary of Architecture and Building,

Hardenbergh wrote the entry on hotel architecture, in which he delineated the broad role hotels were expected to play in American urban centres.²⁰

Hardenbergh states that aside from food and lodging, the modern hotel should provide "privacy, comfort, luxury, or means of entertainment as may be secured in a private domicile, and in addition every means of carrying out the domestic, public, or social functions of life. Further, it should afford means of offering diversion or amusement to those abiding under its roof, and may also present opportunities for the transaction of business." In the published descriptions of contemporary hotels these qualities of domesticity and luxury would be invoked again and again. In effect, the grand hotel had become the equivalent of a latter day Georgian mansion, but democratically open to any man or woman with a pocket book and a social agenda.

In Canada there were few equivalents to the American palatial hotel before the turn of the century. This situation was due to the country's smaller population base spread across greater distances, a slower growing economy with fewer millionaires, and generally less corporate capital to invest in large building projects. For most of the nineteenth-century Canada accommodated its citizens and visitors in taverns, inns, and auberges. Comfortable and well-fitted urban hotels could be found in the more populous commercial centres like Toronto and Montreal, but compared to American luxury hotels, these

²⁰ Russell Sturgis, ed., A Dictionary of Architecture and Building, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1901): s.v. "hotels."

establishments were not much more than excellent inns.

The first grand hotel in Canada was the Windsor Hotel, built in Montreal between 1875-78 by the Chicago architect William W. Boyington (1818-1898).²¹ (fig. 2) The diluted Second Empire style of the Windsor was fashioned after the much acclaimed second Palmer House in Chicago, built in 1871-73 after the plans of John Van Osdel (1811-91). Enormous and luxurious, the Montreal building boasted four-hundred bedrooms, a six hundred-seat dining room, a marble staircase, and a forty-foot dome over the main entrance lobby. At first coveting an upper-middle to upper class clientele, the hotel did poorly until the management pursued the tourist trade by organizing the first Montreal winter carnival in 1893 across the street in Dominion Square. During the next decade, business improved considerably, which prompted the construction of a new annex to the hotel by Henry Hardenbergh and fellow New York architect Bradford Lee Gilbert (1853-1911) between 1906-08.²²

After the Windsor, the next Canadian grand hotel was the Château Frontenac in Quebec City, erected in 1892-93 by New York architect Bruce Price (1845-1903) for the Canadian Pacific Railway (hereafter the CPR). (fig.

²¹ Described by Condit as "prolific if undistinguished", Boyington specialized in Chicago railway stations. Carl Condit, The Chicago School of Architecture (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1964): 70.

²² Guy Pinard, "L'hôtel Windsor," in Montréal: son histoire son architecture, tome 2 (Montréal: Les Éditions La Presse, 1988): 284-86. The original Windsor Hotel was demolished in 1959, and only Hardenbergh and Gilbert's annex remains today.

3) This building, which will be discussed in more detail in chapter three, was crucial for launching the nearest equivalent of a national architectural style this country has known -- the château style.²³ Apart from the Windsor and the Château Frontenac, however, no other palatial hotels existed in Canada by the year 1900. In Montreal, the Queen's Hotel, erected in 1891-93 by local architect Alexander F. Dunlop (1842-1923) across from Bonaventure Station, and the Viger Station and Hotel, constructed in 1896-98 by Bruce Price for the CPR, possessed undeniably elegant interiors, both of these buildings were too small to fulfil the larger social functions of a grand hotel.²⁴

In Ottawa and Toronto the most renowned hotels were fashioned from mid-nineteenth century domestic structures augmented with numerous additions. The Russell Hotel in Ottawa began as the three-storey Campbell House in 1845: by 1890 it had been enlarged three times into a conventional Second Empire style building with false mansard roofs.²⁵ The same situation occurred in Toronto, where the Queen's Hotel evolved from a row of four houses built in 1844 into a rambling structure whose most distinguished feature

²³ Harold Kalman, The Railway Hotels and the Development of the Château Style in Canada (Victoria: Maltwood Museum, 1968): 11-14.

²⁴ The Queen's Hotel consisted of one hundred rooms, and the Viger Hotel eighty-eight. Both hotels were later enlarged. See Guy Pinard, Montréal: son histoire son architecture, tome 3 (Editions La Presse, 1989): 223-31 for the Queen's Hotel; and tome 2 (1986): 73-78 for the Viger Hotel and Station.

²⁵ The Queen's Hotel was enlarged four times between 1862-69, and was demolished in 1928 for the Royal York Hotel. Edwin Guillet, Pioneer Inns and Taverns, combined edition, vol. 1 (Toronto: Ontario Publishing Co., 1964): 194-200.

was a tower with a mansard roof over the main entrance. The Queen's remained Toronto's premier hotel until the Edwardian classical King Edward Hotel was built in 1901-03 by Edward J. Lennox (1855-1933).²⁶ In the still sparsely populated west, the sole hotel of note was the Manitoba Hotel and Station in Winnipeg, which opened in 1892 but burned down in 1899.²⁷ (fig. 4) Only after the turn of the century when national prosperity arrived in Canada did the grand hotel begin to proliferate.

²⁶ There is some discrepancy over the architect of the King Edward Hotel. Henry Ives Cobbs (1859-1931) of Chicago was originally given credit for the building, but now Toronto architect E.J. Lennox is generally acknowledged as the designer. William Dendy, and William Kilbourn, Toronto Observed: Its Architecture, Patrons, and History (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1986): 159

²⁷ The Manitoba Hotel, built by architect Charles Joy of Minneapolis for the Northern Pacific and Manitoba Railroad, was considered the nation's finest hotel after the Windsor and the Chateau Frontenac. J. Edward Martin, The Railway Stations of Western Canada: An Architectural History (White Rock, B.C.: Studio E Martin, 1980): 14. For more on the Manitoba Hotel see chapter four.

2. THE ARCHITECTS

G.A. ROSS, D.H. MACFARLANE, R.H. MACDONALD

The office of Ross & MacFarlane was founded in Montreal in 1905 by George Allen Ross and David MacFarlane.²⁸ MacFarlane left the firm just as it was becoming moderately successful at the end of 1912, after which Robert H. Macdonald became the second partner.²⁹ By the 1920s Ross & Macdonald had become one of the largest and most respected offices in Canada, with a substantial reputation for executing large commissions that were soundly built, on time and on budget.³⁰ Much of the firm's work was erected in Montreal, where according to a Toronto critic writing in 1929, "their architecture is well-nigh ubiquitous." He goes on to relate the heresay that

²⁸ There is a discrepancy in the sources concerning the actual date Ross & MacFarlane was founded; all of MacFarlane's biographers place the year as 1904, while all of Ross's sources claim 1905. Since Ross & MacFarlane first appears in Lovell's Montreal City Directory 1905-06 edition and because I am not aware of any projects by the firm before 1905, the later date seems more likely.

²⁹ The breakup of Ross & MacFarlane was announced in Construction 6 (January 1913): 31. In an obituary on Ross, J. Roxburgh Smith states that MacFarlane's departure was due to health problems ("George Allen Ross, F.R.I.B.C., F.R.I.B.A. 1879-1946," JRAIC 23 (April 1946): 103).

³⁰ G. Everett Wilson and Robert Wilkinson, interview by author, tape recording, 11 May 1991. G.E. Wilson worked for Ross & Macdonald from 1928-34, and R. Wilkinson from 1933-36. According to Wilson, the \$16 million Royal York Hotel in Toronto was completed on schedule and within \$100 of the original building estimate.

"Ross & Macdonald have built upon every corner in that city, and ... it only remained for them to fill the spaces in between."³¹ Yet, Ross, MacFarlane, and Macdonald worked extensively outside of Montreal as well, and an important part of their impressive architectural legacy in Canada was their eight large hotels erected in six provinces.³²

George Allen Ross was born in Montreal on 24 October 1879, and received his secondary education at the Montreal High School.³³ In Lovell's Montreal City Directory 1900-01, Ross was listed as a draughtsman with the Grand Trunk Railway. He began courses at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA (hereafter MIT) in the fall of 1900, continuing his studies until 1902.³⁴ Ross then apprenticed with two American firms: Parker &

³¹ Sinaiticus, "The Royal York Hotel, Toronto," Construction 22 (July 1929): 210.

³² For the most complete listing of Ross & MacFarlane's and Ross & Macdonald's projects, see David Rose "Ross & Macdonald Archive: Guide to the Inventory," 2 vols. MS (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1991).

³³ Ross' parents were Donald and Julia Ross. The elder Ross headed a wholesale grocery firm, the D.W. Ross Co., while concurrently acting as the managing director for the Mount Royal Milling Manufacturing Co. The most informative biographical sources on G.A. Ross include the following: Who's Who and Why in Canada 1912, p. 369; Who's Who and Why 1919/1920, p. 843; Ross Hamilton, ed., Prominent Men of Canada 1931-32 (Montreal: National Publishing Co. of Canada, 1932): 293; The Canadian Who's Who 1936-37, pp. 942-43; Who's Who in Canada 1943-44, pp. 467-68; Montreal Star, 21 January 1946, 4; Montreal Gazette, 22 January 1946, 12.

³⁴ Massachusetts Institute of Technology, George A. Ross, Registrar's Record. Ross attended Architecture Course 4 in the first and second semesters in 1900-01 and in 1901-02. There is no record of a degree issued.

Thomas in Boston, from 1902-03,³⁵ and then Carrère & Hastings, in New York, between 1903-04.³⁶ A trip to Paris to study in an Ecole des Beaux-Arts atelier, mentioned in all of Ross' biographies, probably occurred after he left Carrère & Hastings and before he associated with MacFarlane in 1905. In the annual exhibition held at the Montreal Artists Association, 12 March to 8 April 1905, Ross showed a measured drawing of the Palais du Petit Trianon at Versailles, indicating that he had already been to France.³⁷ After his partnerships with MacFarlane and Macdonald, Ross became the senior member of one other firm, Ross & Ross, formed with his son John Kenneth Ross (1915-78) in 1944. At the end of a long and productive career, George Ross died on 21 January 1946 in Montreal.

David Huron MacFarlane was also born in Montreal in 1875.³⁸ He

³⁵ J. Harleston Parker (1873-1930) and Douglas H. Thomas (1872-1915) both studied at MIT and then at the Ecole des Beaux-arts in Paris at the same time as Ross. The firm of Parker & Thomas was formed in Boston in 1900. Most of their work was executed in Boston, and in Thomas's home town of Baltimore, particularly for Johns Hopkins University. "Notes on the Work of Parker, Thomas & Rice of Boston and Baltimore," Architectural Record 34 (August 1913): 121-30.

³⁶ Students of the Ecole des Beaux-arts in Paris, John Mervin Carrère (1858-1911) and Thomas Hastings (1860-1929) worked for McKim, Mead & White before starting their own New York practice in 1884. Their masterpiece is widely considered to be the New York City Public Library (1902-11), which was being built when Ross was working in the office.

³⁷ Canadian Architect and Builder 18: 61.

³⁸ MacFarlane's parents were Jane Black and John MacFarlane, a published poet from Abington, Scotland. In Montreal, John MacFarlane became the president and managing director of the Canadian Paper Co. before assuming the same position for the Saint Raymond Pulp Co. Ltd. in 1902. The

attended Bishop's College, Lennoxville, probably up to the 1891-92 year³⁹, and then undertook his initial architectural training in the Montreal office of Hutchison & Wood between 1891-96.⁴⁰ After studying at MIT from 1896 to 1898, MacFarlane returned to Montreal to apprentice in the office of Edward Maxwell, from September 1898 to the end of 1901.⁴¹ He then joined Hutchison & Wood again from 1902 to 1903, and later that same year

most useful biographical sources on D.H. MacFarlane are from two obituaries: Montreal Star, 3 February 1950, p. 24; and, Montreal Gazette, 3 February 1950, p. 9.

³⁹ The only time D. MacFarlane's name is listed in the University of Bishops College calendar [sic] is in 1891-92, when he was in 4th form. This would have been his final junior year according to the British school system. MacFarlane's obituaries mistakenly state that he attended the "Bishops School of Architecture," an institution that has never existed.

⁴⁰ Letter from MacFarlane to the PQAA, 12 June 1907. PQAA Correspondence 06-P124-2, chemise 1 (1903). My thanks to Sandra C ley for bringing this letter to my attention. Alexander Cowper Hutchison (1838-1922) and George W. Wood (1863-1941), both Montreal natives, formed a partnership in 1891. By the early 1900s, the firm had built numerous Montreal residences and commercial buildings, including the Canadian Express Co. Building, the La Presse Building, and the CPR Telegraph Building, as well as the Erskine Church (now the Erskine and American United Church). For Hutchison see Julia Gersovitz, "Montreal Architects 1870-1914" (Master's thesis, Columbia University, 1980), 44-5.

⁴¹ Maxwell Archive, Box 13, Book K, Canadian Architecture Collection, McGill University. Montreal native Edward Maxwell (1867-1923) received his training with Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, Boston. In 1892, he began his own practice in Montreal, executing commissions for many of the city's prominent businessmen. Before his brother William (1874-1952) became a partner in 1902, Edward executed numerous mansions on the so-called Square Mile, the Henry Birks Store, the London & Lancashire Life Building, and several important commissions for the CPR. See, The Maxwell Project, The Architecture of Edward & W.S. Maxwell, Montreal: The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1991.

undertook a tour of Europe, travelling through England, France, and Italy.⁴² MacFarlane was back in Montreal by the fall of 1904, and in partnership with Ross by the following year. After resigning from Ross & MacFarlane in 1912, he designed the Westmount High School on Academy Road in 1913, but seems to have accepted few commissions after that. In 1925 MacFarlane retired from architecture to paint landscapes and manage an orchard in Saint Hilaire, Quebec, where he died in 1950.⁴³

Unlike Ross and MacFarlane, Robert Henry Macdonald received little formal academic training, but acquired his architectural education primarily through apprenticeship. The son of Scottish immigrants, Macdonald was born in Melbourne, Australia, on 7 March 1875.⁴⁴ After attending local state schools and Brunswick College in Melbourne, Macdonald worked as an articled pupil

⁴² Letter from A.C. Hutchison to PQAA, 12 June 1903, PQAA correspondence 06-P124-2, chemise 1 (1903).

⁴³ MacFarlane, who studied with artists Maurice Cullen and William Brymner, seems to have been an accomplished watercolour painter. Both he and Ross exhibited works at the MMFA Spring exhibition on numerous occasions throughout their lives: Ross presented exclusively architectural drawings, usually of current projects, while MacFarlane displayed primarily Quebec landscapes. An exhibition of MacFarlane's watercolours at the Arts Club of Montreal received a favourable review in the Gazette, 26 April 1941.

⁴⁴ Macdonald's parents were Roderick and Joanna Urquhart Macdonald. Informative biographical sources on R. H. Macdonald can be found in the following: l,Ordre des architectes du Québec, Application For Admission, 30 May 1939; Who's Who in Canada 1930-31, pp. 361-2; (Toronto) Daily Commercial News, 21 December 1942; Montreal Gazette, 18 December 1942; Montreal Daily Star, 17 December 1942; Gordon McLeod Pitts, "Robert H. Macdonald, (F), F.R.I.B.A.," in JRAIC, (February 1943): 24; Royal Institute of British Architects Journal 50 (April 1943): 141.

for four years with architect Richard B. Whitaker. While with Whitaker, Macdonald studied at Melbourne Technical College for three years, where he would have learned surveying, building construction, and some architectural history; but at that time there were no courses offered in subjects like planning theory, aesthetics, or architectural design.⁴⁵

With the onset of a severe economic depression in 1892 and the resulting building slump in Australia, Macdonald left Melbourne for Montreal in 1895 to work for his cousin, the architect Robert Findlay (1859-1951).⁴⁶ In 1900, he travelled through Britain and Europe, returning to Montreal and Findlay's office in 1901. Ever restless in his youth, Macdonald was in New York working for George B. Post & Sons from 7 July 1904 until 22 September 1905.⁴⁷ Later that same year he took a position as head draughtsman with the firm of Critchton & McKay in Wellington, New Zealand, but returned to New

⁴⁵ Melbourne would not have a bona-fide architectural program until 1915 at the University of Melbourne. See, J.M. Freeland, The Making of a Profession; A History of the Growth and Work of the Architectural Institutes in Australia (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1971).

⁴⁶ Findlay's mother's name was Elizabeth Macdonald. Robert Findlay came to Montreal from Scotland in 1885. Much of his work was domestic architecture in Westmount, where his public buildings, the Westmount Public Library (1897-99), and Westmount City Hall (1922-24), are also located.

⁴⁷ New York Historical Society, George B. Post Collection, Staff List & Pay Ledger A-Z, 1875-1918. Trained in civil engineering and in the atelier of Richard Morris Hunt, George Browne Post (1837-1913) ran a successful New York office which concentrated primarily on commercial architecture. Winston Weisman, "The Commercial Architecture of George B. Post," JSAH 31 (Oct. 1972): 176-203.

York in 1906 to take a similar position in the office of William W. Bosworth.⁴⁸ Finally in 1907, he was back in Montreal as head draughtsman for Ross & MacFarlane, becoming a full partner in the firm of Ross & Macdonald in January 1913. Macdonald remained with the firm until his death in Montreal, on 16 December 1942.

The academic training that Ross and MacFarlane received at MIT was modeled on the architectural courses of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, which at the time was widely considered to be the best architectural training ground in the world.⁴⁹ Essentially, Beaux-Arts theory was formulated on a "doctrine of imitation," wherein the best qualities of universal nature -- symmetry, order, harmony, and proportion -- were studied in both antique architecture and in the monuments of French classicism.⁵⁰ A Beaux-Arts composition, "the unified whole of the building conception seen in the plan,

⁴⁸ William Welles Bosworth (1869-1966) studied at MIT and at the Ecole des Beaux-arts before working briefly for Carrère & Hastings. Bosworth began his own practice in New York in 1900, but after World War I he worked mainly in France for the Comité Franco-Américain pour la Restauration des Monuments.

⁴⁹ When Ross and MacFarlane were at MIT the head of the school was Constant Désiré Despradelle (1862-1912), a highly esteemed graduate from the Ecole in Paris. Francis S. Swales, "Master Draftsmen, XI, Désiré Despradelle 1862-1912," Pencil Points 6 (May, 1925): 58-9, 70.

⁵⁰ Donald Drew Egbert, The Beaux-Arts Tradition in French Architecture (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980): 99-103.

elevations and section together," was determined above all by beauty.⁵¹ This translated into highly symmetrical plans, in which the utilitarian areas of the building were organized by means of the circulation routes. Simplicity and clarity were essential and so the number of axes were kept to a minimum, usually two dominant paths which ideally would intersect at the largest and most important space. Thus, by means of a variety of simple geometric shapes arranged with the purpose of creating carefully planned perspective views (enfilades) along the axes, a formal plan of processional architecture was achieved. Symmetry was crucial in the elevations as well, because the exterior of the building had to reflect the clarity of the interior's geometric arrangement.

In the Beaux-Arts system it was essential that the "character" of the architecture also be considered. Traditionally the character was general, based on abstract values associated with past ideals, but towards 1900, character came to mean building type, which entailed designing buildings suitably identifiable as a museum, bank, hotel.⁵² As defined by teacher and theorist Jules Guadet,

⁵¹ David van Zanten, "Architectural Composition at the Ecole des Beaux-arts from Charles Percier to Charles Garnier," in The Architecture of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Arthur Drexler, ed. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977): 115-18. Importantly, Van Zanten points out that the Beaux-Arts was not a style but a technique or system of architectural design.

⁵² Two excellent studies on how the Beaux-Arts approach translated into specific building types are David van Zanten, "Le systeme des Beaux-Arts", AD Profiles 17: 66-79, which examines the Indianapolis Public Library by Paul Cret, and Rosalind Pepall, Construction d'un musée Beaux-Arts/Montréal 1912/Building a Beaux-Arts Museum (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1986).

character was "the identity between the architectural impression and the moral expression of the architectural program,"⁵³ and it was usually deduced by studying exceptional examples of the building type in whichever architectural style was relevant, ancient or contemporary. Although straight copying was frowned upon, quoting from well-known buildings was commonplace among Beaux-Arts architects and was not considered unethical.

Ross and MacFarlane's academic education would have taught the architects how to design large buildings with grandly conceived, logical plans and refined elevations imbued with the appropriate character. But, as critics of the Beaux-Arts technique hastened to point out, the abstractness of the training often resulted in students unable to solve the problems of an actual building situation.⁵⁴ Adherents to the school countered that the drawbacks of the system were rectified by several years of required study in the offices of established architects. What practical experience would Ross and MacFarlane have gained in hotel design during their assistantships?

In Edward Maxwell's office, MacFarlane drafted several of Maxwell's

⁵³ Egbert: 135-6, notes 1 and 3.

⁵⁴ Opposition to the methods of the Paris school began mounting in the United States after 1900. See, Stewart Barney, "The Ecole des Beaux-arts, Its Influence on Our Architecture," Architectural Record 22 (Nov. 1907):333-42; and, A.D.F. Hamlin, "The Influence of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts On Our Architectural Education," Architectural Record 23 (April, 1908): 241-47.

many projects for the CPR.⁵⁵ Specifically, MacFarlane worked on the extension to the neo-Romanesque Windsor Station in Montreal (1900), and two châteauesque depots in British Columbia: the station-hotel at Sicamous Junction, (1898-99, dem. c. 1964), and the station at New Westminster (1899). More significant, however, was his extensive work from June to October 1899 on Maxwell's scheme for a large hotel and station in Winnipeg, designed in the same bulky chateau-style as Maxwell's recently completed CPR Vancouver Terminal (1897-98, dem. c. 1914).⁵⁶ This proposed hotel-station was never executed, but the general composition of the building recurs in Ross & MacFarlane's châteauesque Macdonald Hotel. That MacFarlane was possibly responsible for the design of two of the firm's three chateau-style hotels will be discussed in chapters three and four.

As for G.A. Ross, when he was with Carrère & Hastings, he was undoubtedly aware of the numerous hotels completed during the firm's first decade, particularly the Spanish Mission-style Ponce-de-Leon Hotel in Saint Augustine, Florida, which virtually launched the New York firm's practice in

⁵⁵ Maxwell Archive, Box 13, Book K, Canadian Architecture Collection, McGill University.

⁵⁶ Idem. After construction of the Winnipeg hotel was delayed, William Maxwell reworked the design, and the hotel was built in 1904-06 as the Royal Alexandra, in a contemporary Parisian Beaux-arts mode. Harold Kalman, in The Architecture of Edward and W.S. Maxwell, pp. 92-3.

1888.⁵⁷ But of more importance was Ross's earlier association with Parker & Thomas in 1902-03, when their French Renaissance-style Hotel Belvedere was being constructed in Baltimore.⁵⁸ This hotel would have a direct influence on Ross & MacFarlane's Fort Garry Hotel, of which Ross was the chief architect.

It is difficult to determine what direct experience in hotel design Macdonald brought to the Montreal office. In Melbourne, he would have witnessed the construction of the Federal Hotel in 1888, one of the many "pompously ostentatious" High Victorian hotels which sprang up in Australia during the building of the trans-continental railways.⁵⁹ Macdonald was with George Post & Sons at a time when hotel construction was the firm's main source of income during the first decade of the twentieth century.⁶⁰ Post is

⁵⁷ Other hotels by Carrère & Hastings included the Alcazar Hotel, also in Saint Augustine (1888), the Laurel-in-the-Pines Hotel in Lakewood, New Jersey (1889-90), and Hotel Jefferson in Richmond, Virginia (1893-94). Each hotel was built in a different Renaissance style, Spanish, French, and Italian respectively.

⁵⁸ "Notes on Parker, Thomas & Rice": 123.

⁵⁹ The architects of the Federal Hotel were Ellerker and Kilburn. According to J.M. Freeman, the Federal's size and magnificence "caught the essence of all the changes that were taking place," during the railway era. J.M. Freeland, *Architecture in Australia*, Mentone, Victoria: Penguin Books Australia Ltd., and Alexander Bros, 1972: 168.

⁶⁰ Diana Balmori, "George B. Post: The Process of Design and the New American Architectural Office (1868-1913)," *JSAH* 46 (Dec. 1987): 353. According to Balmori, Post was in constant demand as a hotel architect because his accountant, Edward Horwath, "helped Post determine the exact cost per square foot of hotel units (room, bath, and corridor system)".

credited with being instrumental in producing the standard American hotel plan of one bathroom to every guest room, which he perfected in Ellesworth Statler's second hotel in Buffalo in 1910-12.⁶¹ Macdonald may have contributed practical skills to solving the problems of designing a functional hotel that his academically trained colleagues Ross and MacFarlane possibly lacked.

The formative influence of contemporary American architecture and practise was fundamentally important to Ross & MacFarlane and Ross & Macdonald. The young architects were eclectic in their choice of architectural styles according to each project, as dictated by the Beaux-Arts manner, although they seemed to prefer a restrained classicism reminiscent of McKim, Mead & White over the more ornate "Modern French Style,"⁶² which was often favoured by Carrère & Hastings and Edward & W.S. Maxwell.⁶³ The principal examples of Ross & MacFarlane's early work extant in Montreal include the Dominion Guarantee Building on Saint Jacques Street (1906-07), and the Bank

⁶¹ For Post's accomplishments in the Statler Hotel, see Pevsner: 187. The first Statler Hotel opened in Buffalo in 1908. It was designed by local architects Esenwein & Johnson.

⁶² According to Robert Stern, the Modern French style was a contemporary term which referred to a forward-looking use of Classicism, in contrast to the archeological approach, which attempted to express current ideas of technology and taste. Stern: 22-24.

⁶³ The differences in approach originated in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts with students siding with either the "ancients" or the "moderns". The ancients avoided by the more conservative approach long established at the school which harkened back to the pure classicism of Greece and Rome, while the moderns looked to the flamboyant work of contemporary Charles Garnier and the ensuing Second Empire style of the late 1880s and '90s. Egbert: 101.

of Toronto (1907-08) built at the corner of Saint Catherine and Guy Streets. (fig. 5) Both of these buildings show the significant influence of New York architecture: the former resembles the Riverside Branch of the New York library by Carrère & Hastings, and the latter is a close copy of McKim, Mead and White's Knickerbocker Trust Building, built in 1901-04.⁶⁴

From the start, Ross & MacFarlane probably attempted to model their office after large, successful architectural firms in the United States.⁶⁵ The Maxwells already had set an important precedent in Canada by arranging their firm on the example of Henry Hobson Richardson's (1838-1886) office.⁶⁶ MacFarlane worked for Edward Maxwell, while the office experience that Ross and Macdonald gained in New York and Boston must have provided a further basis for instituting their operations after the likes of George Post & Sons and Carrère & Hastings. By the 1920s, an established office hierarchy and a factory of draftsmen enabled Ross & Macdonald to handle a steady flow of sizeable commissions at any one time. This practise eventually led to the

⁶⁴ My thanks to Robert Lemire for this information.

⁶⁵ In describing the American businessman as a client, Leland Roth notes that they "could not help but be reassured by the large, efficient staff," in offices like McKim, Mead & White's, where the architects "organized and operated their business along much the same lines as practised by the plutocrats." Leland Roth, McKim, Mead & White, Architects (New York: Harper & Row, 1983): 5. These sentiments were likely shared by Canadian businessmen, who made up a large portion of the Montreal architect's clients.

⁶⁶ Edward Maxwell entered the Boston office in 1888 when it was being managed by the former employees Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge after the death of Richardson. John Bland, "The Importance of the Maxwells in Canadian Architecture," in The Architecture of Edward & W.S. Maxwell: 17-19.

3. RAILWAY HOTELS I

THE CHÂTEAU LAURIER

The last spike was driven on 7 November 1885, completing Canada's first trans-continental railway. By the following year three CPR hotels, built of wood in a Swiss chalet mode, were in place in the mountains of British Columbia.⁶⁸ These buildings were followed by similar but larger resort hotels in Banff in 1888 and Lake Louise in 1890.⁶⁹ A major part of CPR President William Van Horne's ambitious vision of a coast to coast chain of hotels was realized when the first Vancouver Hotel opened in 1887, and, in the east, the Château Frontenac reached completion in 1893. Apart from the ill-fated Manitoba Hotel, it was twenty years before any of the CPR's numerous competitors could produce hotel architecture that could match the scale and grandeur of the CPR hotels.

National prosperity was a factor in the birth of the Château Laurier. By 1900 Canada was experiencing an increase of economic good fortune accompanied by optimistic nationalism, similar to what was already happening

⁶⁸ Kalman: 6-7. The three hotels built in 1886 were the Mount Stephen House at Field, the Fraser Canyon Hotel at North Bend, and the Glacier House at Glacier. Kalman credits CPR president William Van Horne with the conception of the hotel system.

⁶⁹ Ibid.: 7-11.

creation of a standard office style of sometimes uneven quality, as will be discussed in chapter five.

The Canadian architects were also indebted to Americans for commissions. In Montreal between 1910-12, Ross & MacFarlane collaborated with Ross's former employers, Carrère & Hastings, on the Transportation Building (dem. c.1964), and with another New York office, Jackson & Rosencrans, on the Central YMCA building erected on Drummond Street. The latter project led to the execution of several other buildings for the YMCA solely by the Montreal architects.⁶⁷ Yet, as obviously important as these associations with American architects were in Montreal, it was a project in Ottawa by New York architect Bradford Lee Gilbert that would set the course for Ross, MacFarlane and Macdonald's busy future, because in 1908 Gilbert would inadvertently be responsible for the Canadian firm's first large independent commission. This commission would produce two buildings that would make Ross & MacFarlane's name nationally by bringing them to the attention of the profession and public alike -- the Central Union Passenger Station and the Château Laurier Hotel.

⁶⁷ Between 1910-13, Ross & MacFarlane built the YMCA buildings on Park Avenue and on Sherbrooke Street in Westmount, as well as numerous YMCA camp buildings.

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in the United States. Taking power in 1896, Liberal Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier initiated his National Policy of high protectionist tariffs and mass immigration to farm the prairies just as events in the world economy were becoming favourable. Laurier's agenda induced rapid growth in the fledgling industries of the east during the first decade of the twentieth-century, but with an escalation of grain prices world-wide coupled with a decline in ocean freight rates, it was the production of wheat that catalyzed the Canadian economy until the outbreak of World War I.⁷⁰

With the flow of western grain increasing every year, the eastern-based Grand Trunk Railway of Canada (GTR) decided to compete against the CPR for the huge shipping profits. Consequently, in September 1904, the GTR bought the Canadian Atlantic Railway which ran a line to the port and grain elevators of Depot Harbour on Georgian Bay. The \$14 million paid to timber baron John R. Booth for the Canadian Atlantic also included Booth's-rail depot in Ottawa, just south of Rideau Street by the canal.⁷¹ On 27 April 1907, the GTR incorporated the Ottawa Terminal Railway Company for the purpose of building a new central union passenger station on the depot site and to

⁷⁰ George A. Nadar, Cities of Canada, vol. 1: Theoretical, Historical and Planning Perspectives (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1975): 205-07

⁷¹ G.R. Stevens, Canadian National Railways, vol. 2: Towards the Inevitable 1896-1922 (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1962): 244, 361-71.

complement it with a grand hotel across the street in Major's Hill Park.⁷²

To design the hotel and station, C.M. Hays, the GTR general manager, hired Bradford Lee Gilbert who was currently co-designing the Windsor Hotel annex in Montreal with Hardenbergh.⁷³ By the autumn of 1907, Gilbert produced a French Gothic scheme for both the Ottawa hotel and the station to harmonize with the neo-Gothic of the Parliament Buildings and the proposed Government Buildings slated for the east side of Major's Hill Park.⁷⁴

At first all went smoothly. By October 1907, Laurier's government had certified the sale of crown land in Major's Hill Park for the building of the "Grand Trunk Hotel."⁷⁵ After federal approval of the plans, the footings for the hotel's foundations were laid the following month. By January 1908, Gilbert announced that he was preparing drawings for the hotel's steel structure

⁷² Joan E. Rankin, Meet Me at the Chateau (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 1990): 5. The park was named after Major Daniel Bolton, an engineer of the Rideau Canal.

⁷³ Appointed the official architect of the New York, Lake Erie and Western Railroad in 1866, Gilbert was responsible for numerous train stations in the United States and Mexico. He is now noted mainly for his 15-storey Tower Building (1888-89), generally considered to be New York City's first steel frame building. Biographies of Gilbert appear in the Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects 2: 201; and Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970): 233.

⁷⁴ Reports on Gilbert's conception appeared in The Railway and Marine World (November, 1907): 801; and in "Ottawa's Proposed Terminal," Construction (May 1908): 39-41.

⁷⁵ Construction 1 (October 1907): 66.

prior to calling for tenders.⁷⁶ All that remained to be done was to have Ottawa City Council confirm that the total cost of the station and hotel would amount to \$2.5 million, enabling the GTR to receive a twenty year fixed assessment on the buildings. But on 14 February 1908, when the plans were presented for approval, something went amiss and Gilbert was released. The following May fifteenth, Hays publicly announced that the new architects of the hotel and station would be Ross & MacFarlane.

In Gilbert's version of the incident, the architect was contacted by Hays six days before the presentation and told to cut one million dollars from the scheme, which he did. When a city counsellor questioned whether the submitted plans would indeed cost \$2.5 million as promised, Gilbert refused to verify it, and so was fired by Hays.⁷⁷ In all probability Gilbert was innocent of any unethical conduct: even the editor of Construction, a periodical which staunchly endorsed Canadian architects over Americans for important commissions in Canada, admitted that "we have every reason to believe that [Gilbert] was conscientious in the performance of his duties. We know of no instance in which he transgressed the laws of professional ethics."⁷⁸ Not only

⁷⁶ Construction 1 (January 1908): 65

⁷⁷ Gilbert's defence appears in the article "Architectural Ethics," Architectural Record 24 (October 1908): 293-99.

⁷⁸ The editorial appears as a preface to an article by C.P. Meredith, "Remarkable Similarity in Plans," Construction 1 (August 1908): 33. The contemporary concerns about the preference of Canadian clients to hire American architects for large commissions in Canada are discussed in detail in Kelly Crossman, Architecture in Transition: From Art to Practice, 1885-1906

was the finger pointed at Hays, but Ross & MacFarlane were accused of stealing Gilbert's design.

It is unlikely that Hays suddenly decided to commission Canadian architects out of respect for the profession in Canada, although this was the official reason given. Charles Melville Hays had been hired in 1896 to manage the Canadian Grand Trunk. He was an American, an experienced and successful railway man, but he was also a maverick, relentlessly ambitious, and proven in retrospect to have dealt in bad faith with the railway worker's union, the CPR, Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier, and even his own employers.⁷⁹ The change of architects may have been due to the extreme competitiveness of Hays, and his intense envy of the accomplishments of fellow American, CPR president William Van Horne. On 19 January 1908, the CPR's Empress Hotel opened in Victoria with great fanfare, just weeks before Gilbert was fired. (fig. 6) The new hotel's elegant châteauesque style, designed by architect Francis Rattenbury (1867-1935), may have made Gilbert's neo-Gothic conception look archaic in the eyes of Hays. (fig. 7) The "new" Château Laurier's exterior by Ross & MacFarlane was unveiled four months after the Empress opened and

(Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987).

⁷⁹ Stevens: 141-46. Although Hays went down with the Titanic in April 1912, his policies had already put the GTR irrevocably on the road to disaster. Stevens states unequivocally that Hays was "beyond all doubt ... responsible for the decisions that destroyed the Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada." The company went bankrupt in 1919 and was incorporated into the Canadian National Railway system in January 1923.

closely resembled the Victoria hotel stylistically.⁸⁰

Nevertheless, as noted by C.P. Meredith, Gilbert's supervising architect for the Ottawa projects, the plans by Ross & MacFarlane for the Château Laurier Hotel were those of the New York architect, with minor changes. A comparison of the plans and elevations of both schemes verify Meredith's claim: the positioning of the building on the site, the floor plans and layouts of the principle rooms and entrance, the canal-side terrace over the train tracks, and the general massing of the exterior are all identical.⁸¹ In 1908, the young Montreal architects had no major projects to their credit and no practical experience in hotel design, apart from their work as apprentices. Understandably eager for such a prestigious commission, Ross & MacFarlane probably appropriated Gilbert's plans with the consent of Hays and quite possibly as a condition of employment.⁸² It is also possible that Hays enticed the Montreal architects into using Gilbert's design by further offering them the chance to build the Grand Trunk's western hotels.

⁸⁰ It is interesting to note that a plaque on the front of the hotel states that MacFarlane was the architect of the building, which perhaps indicates that he was the author of the new design.

⁸¹ Meredith: 32-6. The article contains photographs of models, perspectives, and plans for a comparison between Gilbert's and Ross & MacFarlane's designs. The Montreal architects changed the style of the passenger station from gothic to a Roman classical revival reminiscent of McKim, Mead & White's Pennsylvania Station in New York (1904-10).

⁸² Meredith, who was present at the unveiling of Ross & MacFarlane's projects, quotes Hays as saying that "the hotel was substantially in accordance with Mr. Gilbert's plans and model ... in design and appearance." Ibid.: 36.

Due to a major reorganization of the Ottawa municipal government, which saw the institution of a Board of Control to watchdog the city's budget, the construction on the Château Laurier was delayed for another year.⁸³ In May 1909, Ross & MacFarlane executed the working drawings for the hotel, the tenders were settled by the fall, and work recommenced in February 1910. Two years later the Château Laurier was completed and officially opened on the first of June 1912. Faced with buff Indiana limestone and resting on a Stanstead granite base, the Château Laurier was an immediate success; in 1927, just before the building was enlarged, Toronto architect John Lyle stated that it was "one of the finest hotel exteriors in the world," and he challenged anyone to name one more beautiful "in the United States, in England or on the continent."⁸⁴ (fig. 8)

The new hotel was erected at the south-west corner of Major's Hill Park, with the Rideau canal on its west side and MacKenzie Avenue on the east side. The park site was distinctive for its natural attractions and neighbouring architecture, features not missed by a contemporary illustrators. (fig. 9) The Parliament Buildings dominated a rising plateau above the

⁸³ John H. Taylor, Ottawa: An Illustrated History (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., and Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1986): 166. Taylor states that the board "became the initial contact point for negotiations, including those for major developments like the Chateau Laurier and Union Station".

⁸⁴ John M. Lyle, JRAIC (February 1927): 61. The Chateau Laurier was doubled in size by Archibald & Schofield in 1927-29.

wooded opposite bank of the canal, while north along the waterway, the Ottawa River and Gatineau hills provided a lovely scenic vista. Located just to the west of the Château Laurier was a robust Second Empire-style Post Office (d. 1937), and the neo-classical Central Union Passenger Station faced the hotel across the street in Connaught Place (now Confederation Square). In 1914, this ensemble was joined by the imposing Tudor Gothic Connaught Building, constructed behind the hotel by government architect David Ewart.

The Château Laurier did not reassemble any specific historic building, although writers compared it with various French chateaux.⁸⁵ Inexplicably overlooked, however, was the Château D'Azay-le-Rideau (1518-27) at the Indre-et-Loire.⁸⁶ The L-shaped plan of this château, with its long wing overlooking a waterway, and its early French Renaissance character would have seemed an obvious comparison to the Château Laurier. In the Ottawa hotel's L-plan, the main façade fronting Rideau Street comprises the shorter block of 135 feet, while the longer wing of 285 feet extends alongside the canal. The building's château style is manifested by the asymmetrical massing, picturesque skyline punctuated by a conical roof atop a circular corner tower, and the donjon-like

⁸⁵ Herbert Clark remarked "It recalls the Château of Chantilly with its moat ... at certain angles especially, the fine masses of stone suggest the bastions and flanking towers of the old citadel at Carcassonne." Herbert Clark, "Château Laurier," Construction 5 (October 1912): 61. Later, the enlarged hotel was called an inspired adaption of the Château of Langeais. Merrill Denison, "The Complete Hotel," Canadian National Railways Magazine 15 (July 1929): 7.

⁸⁶ An illustration of the Château D'Azay-le-Rideau appeared in CAB 7 (January 1894).

main façade with its flanking faceted towers. Above the irregular cornice line, the fanciful impression is amplified by an eruption of decorated wall dormers and two tiers of roof dormers embellishing the hipped copper roofs. Typical of the French châteaux during the reign of François I (1515-47), the hotel's style merges late Gothic and Italian Renaissance features: the architectural forms are medieval, but the overall harmony and balance is Renaissance. Moreover, the Gothic detailing of tourelles, machicolations, three-pointed gabled wall dormers with crockets and finials, high pitched roofs, and flat, unadorned walls, are matched by the classical features of double windows forming bays, carved-stone motifs of flowers, crests, scrolls and animals holding shields, and a covered entrance loggia with basket-handle arched openings.

The precedents drawn upon for the château style were the summer estates of the French aristocracy built in the Loire valley region at the beginning of the sixteenth-century. The French Renaissance exterior of the Château Laurier was of a later historical date than Gilbert's correct French Gothic, and even further removed from the progenitor of the château style hotel in Canada, the Château Frontenac. As noted by Harold Kalman, the design of the Château Frontenac -- solid, horizontal, and broadly massed, with picturesque towers, Gothic machicolations and dormers, flat walls and a steep pitched roof -- was Price's inventive interpretation of fourteenth and fifteenth-century French domestic architecture filtered through the Romanesque revival

of H.H. Richardson.⁸⁷ The Château Frontenac was purely medieval, with no Italian Renaissance classical details like the Château Laurier, and by comparison, the Ottawa hotel appeared as lighter, more vertical, and more refined.⁸⁸

The château style was an inspired choice for railway hotels because it was easily associated with distant and exotic places. As Canada was still a country of open, wilderness spaces and under-developed, low-rise cities, the picturesque silhouettes of the château style were striking and romantic when viewed from a distance. On the other hand, the château style had acquired an aura of luxurious city living in the 1890s after Richard Morris Hunt (1827-95) had designed a series of châteauesque mansions in New York City.⁸⁹ In Canada, there was an appealing familiarity in the château hotel exteriors due to their resemblance to contemporary residences, which were often built in neo-Gothic, Queen Anne, or Richardson Romanesque employing irregular plans,

⁸⁷ Kalman: 11-13

⁸⁸ Kalman's suggestion that the chateau style railway hotels after the turn of the century were stylistically inferior is off the mark, because he bases his arguments on the premise that these hotels were all derived from the prototype of the Chateau Frontenac. While the Quebec hotel may have set the trend, he does not take into account the changes in architectural fashions and clients' tastes, or the eclectic approach permitted by the Beaux-Arts trained architects like Ross & MacFarlane. Similarly, his conjecture (p.19) that the "chaste body" of the Château Laurier perhaps reflects the new movement towards the International Style does not take into consideration the conservatism of the architects and the period.

⁸⁹ Hunt's château style residences include the Astor mansion (1891-95), Lawrence house (1891), and the Schmid mansion (1895), all built on Fifth Avenue. (Stern: 316-21).

steeply pitched roofs, wall dormers, pointed windows, turrets and towers.⁹⁰

Examples of these kinds of houses included the Romanesque Peter Lyall House (1889) by John James Browne and the châteauesque Angus-McIntyre House (1894) by Edward Maxwell, both in Montreal.

Nationalism was an important component of the optimistic mood generated by the growing country, and according to Kelly Crossman, "[by] the early 1900s, the idea that architecture should be expressive of history, climate, and national life had taken hold in Canada."⁹¹ This idea originated in the early nineteenth century, linking together nationalism, romanticism and Gothic architecture in England and Germany, but to many in Canada it was the chateau style that appeared to be perfectly suited to express these concerns.⁹² Historically, the style was derived from a northern country, and its specific ancestry in France associated it with one of the two founding cultures of Canada.⁹³ Structurally, the steep roofs (to shed snow), the thick, insulating

⁹⁰ David Spector, "The Fort Garry Hotel: An Analysis of Main Floor and Mezzanine Finish and Furnishings in 1913", unpublished MS, Historic Resources Branch, Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation, Winnipeg, 1980: 3.

⁹¹ Crossman: 109.

⁹² For the origins of "Gothic Nationalism" see Peter Collins, Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture 1750-1950 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1965): 100-5. It should be noted that Percy Nobbs (1875-1964), the prominent architect and teacher at McGill, advocated a regional approach to Canadian architecture based on more indigenous forms of building. Crossman: 122-35, and Susan Wagg, Percy Erskine Nobbs: Architect, Artist, Craftsman (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press).

⁹³ Crossman: 113-14.

stone walls, and the small windows (to protect against cold winds and hot sun), were ideal for the severities of the Canadian climate. These characteristics, plus the tendency toward medieval ornamentation, and irregular, copper-covered roof-lines, made the style compatible with the High Victorian Gothic of many of Canada's important public buildings. Indeed, in 1915, the Report of the Federal Plan Commission recommended that the Château Laurier be considered as a model for future government architecture in Ottawa.⁹⁴ Ross & Macdonald's last hotel, the Lord Elgin, built in Ottawa twenty-five years later would still come under the influence of these recommendations.

The eclectic nature of the Château Laurier was the direct result of the Beaux-Arts training of the architects. From a larger point of view, the hotel's exterior corresponds to four of the five predominant components -- variety, movement, irregularity, and intricacy (but not roughness) -- of historian Carroll Meeks's definition of "picturesque eclecticism," the aesthetic underlying the myriad of architectural styles of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁹⁵ However, in considering the interior of the hotel, which followed the standards of decor set by current American grand hotels, the term

⁹⁴ The Federal government would endorse characteristics of the Château style for its Ottawa buildings almost until 1960. Kalman: 23-30.

⁹⁵ Meeks uses the railway station to illustrate his theory, and concentrates primarily on the exteriors of the building type. Carroll L. V. Meeks, The Railroad Station: An Architectural History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956).

"scientific eclecticism" seems more definitive and appropriate.⁹⁶ Scientific eclecticism was a principle trend of the American Renaissance, the c.1875-1915 classical revival in the United States that was born from the belief that America was the inheritor of European culture and civilization.⁹⁷ During this period, the increasing precision of nineteenth-century science and the expanding collections of the museums swayed artists and architects to oust "the earlier synthetic eclecticism of strange novelties and combinations with a new eclecticism of scholarly and scientific pretensions."⁹⁸

By the 1880s, architects and artisans were collaborating more and more in the design and decoration of domestic interiors.⁹⁹ In the neo-Renaissance Villard houses, completed in New York in 1886, McKim, Mead & White firmly established the trend of closely studying historical precedents and then producing a re-creation without slavish imitation. Shortly afterwards, the same firm designed a facsimile of a Marie Antoinette salon for the main dining room of their Imperial Hotel, built in 1889-90, also in New York¹⁰⁰. Up to the

⁹⁶ A refinement on Meeks's late phase of creative eclecticism, scientific eclecticism is used in Richard Guy Wilson, et al., The American Renaissance 1876-1917 (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1979): 57-61; and in Stern: 21-22.

⁹⁷ Stern: 21. According to Wilson, the first use of the term "American Renaissance" occurred in 1880 (Wilson: 63).

⁹⁸ Wilson: 57-8.

⁹⁹ Dianne H. Pilgrim, "Decorative Art: The Domestic Environment," in Wilson: 145.

¹⁰⁰ Dubin: 44.

Depression, the principle of scientific eclecticism would manifest in all of Ross & MacFarlane and Ross & Macdonald's hotel interiors, where often a variety of styles from different periods and countries would be freely interpreted from archaeologically correct examples derived from the firm's well-stocked library. In the Château Laurier, for example, the rooms that were intended exclusively for men were Flemish in inspiration, the ladies' rooms were Louis XVI, and in formal areas where company was mixed either English, Italian, or French Renaissance decor was employed.¹⁰¹

Ross & MacFarlane were faithful to Gilbert's general layout for the interior of the Château Laurier. The hotel consisted of thirteen levels: two basements, ground floor and mezzanine, five bedroom floors, and -- on the sixth-floor -- were sample rooms¹⁰² for travelling salesmen and dormitories for the less well-off. Above these two storeys were two partial floors accommodating staff quarters, and, on the ninth-floor, storage areas and access to the roof decks. The hotel had 302 bedrooms but only 155 had private baths, a 1:2 ratio that was usual for hotels of the period. However, whereas

¹⁰¹ For a contemporary description of the hotel's interior see Clark: 61-73. The list of contractors and suppliers at the end of the article notes that the interior decorations were provided by Bell's Galleries, Montreal, and Tiffany Studios, New York.

¹⁰² Specially designed for travelling salesmen, sample rooms eliminated the need to rent two hotel rooms, one to sleep in and one to display goods in, by providing an extra-large space with beds folded into the closets and wide doors to bring in sales trunks. Salesmen travelling across the country by train were important clients for hotels before department stores and catalogues became common.

Gilbert had placed the bathrooms on the outside walls of the rooms for light and ventilation, Ross & MacFarlane relocated them to the inside corridor walls, which, as Meredith hastened to point out, was considered bad design.¹⁰³ Hardenbergh had cautioned against this problem in his encyclopedia entry on hotels a decade earlier. But in the issue of Construction reviewing Ross & MacFarlane's next hotel, where the architects repeated the design, it is emphasized several times that the inside chambers were well ventilated by a positive air flow from the bedroom, through the bathroom, and up the vent shaft. Presumably this "scientifically proven" method was also used in the Château Laurier.¹⁰⁴

The Château Laurier's large staff of 325 was fairly typical for the period. Hotels were extremely labour-intensive operations, despite all of the technological innovations of the previous twenty years, and because efficiency of operation was not yet a priority in hotel planning. As much a machine as a building, hotels required large spaces for service areas, and accordingly, the underground levels of the Château Laurier were reserved primarily for such purposes. The sub-basement contained the general storeroom, wine and beer cellars, facilities for the laundry, bakery and workshops, baggage and shipping rooms, a fan room, and lockers and offices. In the basement, extensive kitchens and the staff dining room filled the long wing of the L, while the

¹⁰³ Meredith: 33.

¹⁰⁴ "Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg," Construction 7 (June 1914): 213 and 231.

short wing housed the barber shop and shoeshine stand, as well as the bar room and the grill room, which were both decorated as dark Dutch interiors.

The L-plans of the hotel's principle floors were laid out simply and clearly. On the ground floor, the short wing was centrally planned around the square lobby, which provided direct access to the large palm room and men's lounge. (fig. 10) Whereas the horizontal layout was uncomplicated, the points of vertical circulation were more problematic because of their inconspicuous locations; the elevators and a spiral staircase (which occupied the large corner tower) were tucked into the hall to the left of the lobby, while two other staircases were inconveniently placed in the men's lounge and a back hall of the palm room, respectively. In the long wing, a wide, straight-through corridor (the Peacock Alley) connected service areas, the ladies' dining room, and, at the end, the main dining room fashioned with Elizabethan decor. This room could seat three hundred, and commanded splendid views of the park, the canal, and the Houses of Parliament.

The main floor's two dining rooms were overlooked by a musicians' gallery on the mezzanine, which was connected by way of the ladies' writing room to another balcony overlooking the main lobby. (fig. 11) Above, on the first floor, the public rooms were concentrated at the front of the building, where a large foyer fronted the banquet room and the ballroom, all designed in Louis-XVI. (fig. 12) The ball room was separated from the foyer by a marble balustrade, and was reached by descending a short flight of marble

stairs. Two three-room state apartments were located at the turn in the L, and down the long wing were private dining rooms and the more expensive guest rooms. Such facilities and opulence had never before been seen in Ottawa.

The Château Laurier and the Union Station were pivotal projects both for Ottawa and for the Montreal firm. During Ottawa's slow transformation from a lumber town to the nation's capital after the turn of the century, the city desperately needed a prestige hotel. The numerous small hotels in the lower town which previously catered to transient sawmill workers, were entirely inappropriate for visiting dignitaries or the burgeoning numbers of civil servants. The Russell House was previously the largest hotel in the city and the most popular with government bureaucrats. But this outmoded structure was chronically overbooked and functionally obsolete despite constant refitting. The Château Laurier provided Ottawa with an up-to-date, versatile, well-serviced hostelry capable of hosting the city's increasingly sophisticated social life, while accommodating in style the swelling numbers of politicians, tourists, and businessmen that would relentlessly flock to the Capital from that point on.

The Château Laurier Hotel also greatly enhanced the reputation of Ross & MacFarlane. Within the profession the Montreal architects were likely seen as heroes, in that they captured a prestigious Canadian commission from an American architect. The controversy over the stolen plans was ambiguous because architectural copying was an acknowledged part of the business. For

example, McKim, Mead & White's Knickerbocker Trust Building, completed in 1904, was imitated not only in numerous American projects, but also in the Bank of Toronto built in Winnipeg in 1905, by Howard C. Stone, and shortly afterwards in the Bank of Toronto in Montreal, by Ross & MacFarlane.¹⁰⁵

Upon completion of the Château Laurier in 1912, large projects quickly followed, in Montreal and particularly in Toronto. In the latter city the firm was soon involved in designing the twenty-storey Royal Bank Building (1913-15), the immense Central Technical School (1912-15), and Toronto Union Station (1914-21).¹⁰⁶ The Château Laurier also established the Montreal firm's name as hotel architects, which resulted in the construction of seven more grand hotels.

¹⁰⁵ For a list of some of the American buildings derived from the Knickerbocker Trust Building, see Roth: 350.

¹⁰⁶ It is interesting to note that with the Ottawa buildings the architects began to number their jobs in a consistent manner for the first time: the baggage annex to the train station was marked job number 100, the Central Union Passenger Station as 101, and the Chateau Laurier as 102, and so on. The jobs numbers reached 999 in 1930, at which time the architects began over again at 100. (Ross & Macdonald Archive).

4. RAILWAY HOTELS II

FORT GARRY HOTEL, MACDONALD HOTEL, HOTEL QU'APPELLE

Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier's intent to forge a Dominion from sea to sea required a stimulation of east-west trade and mass immigration in order to settle the prairies before the Americans could lay claim. To achieve this Laurier needed another transcontinental railway to complement and compete with the CPR. In 1903, General-manager Hays of the GTR reached an agreement with the federal government to build such a railway from Winnipeg to Prince Rupert, British Columbia. Construction began in 1906 and included the usual infra-structure of rail yards, locomotive shops, stations and hotels. Around 1910, with the erection of the Château Laurier well under way, Ross & MacFarlane began to design château style hotels for the new subsidiary, the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway (GTPR), in the western provincial capitals of Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Regina.¹⁰⁷

Beginning in 1900, the influx of close to a million immigrants, the continuing expansion of the railways, and the successful development of arid land farming, generated spectacular prosperity on the prairies. The west's first

¹⁰⁷ A block plan for the Winnipeg hotel was drawn up by Ross & MacFarlane in 1910, the same year that the GTP reached agreements with the cities of Edmonton and Regina for two other hotels.

city, Winnipeg (incorporated 1873), profited immensely from the growth, while elsewhere small communities like Edmonton, Regina, Calgary, and Saskatoon "compressed a century or more of eastern urban growth into a few short years."¹⁰⁸ Winnipeg grew to become the third largest city in Canada before the economic downturn in 1913. During this period, the "Gateway to the West" completely dominated the highly profitable wholesale and grain trade, and emerged as the most powerful financial, commercial, and manufacturing centre in the prairies.¹⁰⁹ As the city's construction trade boomed, amongst the new buildings that sprang up was Edward & W.S. Maxwell's Royal Alexandra Hotel (1904-06, d. 1971), which became the sole bastion of Winnipeg's Anglo-Saxon ruling class until the Fort Garry Hotel opened seven years later.¹¹⁰

The impending erection of the GTPR Selkirk Hotel, as the Fort Garry was originally named, was announced in April 1911.¹¹¹ In July of that year, Ross & MacFarlane completed the working drawings (which were

¹⁰⁸ Alan F.J. Artibise, "The Urban West: The Evolution of Prairie Towns and Cities to 1930," in The Canadian City: Essays in Urban and Social History, Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise, eds. (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1984): 158.

¹⁰⁹ Alan F.J. Artibise. Winnipeg, An Illustrated History (Toronto: James Lorimer and National Museum of Man, 1977): 30-44.

¹¹⁰ Winnipeg's charter group were British and Ontario migrants who would maintain their ethnic superiority over the city into the 1920s. Alan F.J. Artibise, "Divided City: The Immigrant in Winnipeg Society, 1874-1921," in The Canadian City: Essays in Urban and Social History, Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise eds. (Ottawa: Carlton University Press, 1984): 360-91.

¹¹¹ "Winnipeg's New Hotel, 'The Selkirk' to be Erected on Historic Ground," Dominion Magazine 2 (June 1911): 95.

approved by Ross) for the ten-storey hotel. By the time construction began on 23 September 1911, the decision was made to enlarge the hotel to fourteen storeys, and a second set of elevation and floor plans were drawn up between October 1911 and January 1912. The Fort Garry Hotel opened on 10 December 1913.¹¹²

The Fort Garry Hotel was built on a virtually square site (260 X 250 feet), on the south side of Broadway Avenue, between Fort and Garry Streets, with Assiniboine Avenue and the river of the same name not far to the south. The location was adjacent to the historic Upper Fort Garry, which was demolished in 1882 with the exception of one of its gates. In 1911 the area was still primarily upper-class residential, about four blocks from the city's commercial and business core at Portage Avenue and Main Street. On tree-lined Broadway Avenue, government buildings stood west of the hotel, while, located to the east, were the Manitoba Club, and, one street over, the huge Union Station fronting Main Street.¹¹³ The Fort Garry hotel was the first commercial building on Broadway, and -- at a height of 192 feet -- it was the

¹¹² "Opening Ball at the Fort Garry Function of Great Brilliancy," Winnipeg Free Press (11 December 1913): 9. Such was the optimism of the era that plans for an extension to the Fort Garry Hotel were already drawn up by April 1913.

¹¹³ The commission for the Union Station, which the Grand Trunk was sharing with the Canadian Northern Railway, went to the prestigious New York firm Warren & Wetmore, architects of New York's Grand Central Station, instead of Ross & MacFarlane. The Union Station opened in August 1911, a month before construction began on the Fort Garry. Martin: 34.

tallest structure in the city when completed.¹¹⁴ (fig. 13)

Because of the Fort Garry's almost square, compact site, the architects could not utilize extended wings as they did with the Château Laurier and, later, with the Macdonald Hotel. Consequently, the exterior of the Winnipeg hotel was designed as a block using the standard tripartite formula favoured by Beaux-Arts architects for the tall office building; a distinctive base (of Canadian grey granite), unadorned shaft (of buff Indiana limestone), and embellished capital (pitched copper roof with ornate details). While the Fort Garry may have resembled a skyscraper with a château top more than a French château, it belonged to a family of related hotels.

Like the Château Laurier, the Fort Garry was designed in the French Renaissance or François I-style, with a pronounced vertical emphasis balanced by the horizontals of protruding string courses. As noted by Anthony-Blunt, these traits in the façades of the French châteaux divided the walls "by a network of lines crossing at right angles, which pattern out the surface but hardly disturb its flatness. It is, in fact, a completely non-plastic wall treatment."¹¹⁵ The flatness of the Fort Garry's main façade was broken only by the two slightly projecting end pavilions which each contained paired bays of

¹¹⁴ Randy Rostecki and Janet Wright, "Fort Garry Hotel, 222 Broadway, Winnipeg, Manitoba," agenda paper, Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada [Ottawa], 1980. n.p.

¹¹⁵ Anthony Blunt, Art and Architecture in France 1500-1700, Fourth edition (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982): 26-7.

oriel windows. Large, segmental windows in the base were repeated at the seventh floor, and most of the elaborate detailing was above the cornice line. The building's truncated, pitched roof was accented at each of its four corners by steeply sloped pavilion roofs, surmounted by pinnacles. These corner roofs were fronted by three-pointed wall dormers, decorated with ornamental crests and finials, extending upwards from the bracketed and dentilled cornice. Other château style details included balustrades at the top of the oriel windows, stone mullions in the windows, and, on the hotel's rear elevation, a turret capped with a conical roof and a bracketed cornice decorating the brick-and-stone chimney.

While the Fort Garry shows some resemblance to some late nineteenth-century Chicago hotels ¹¹⁶, particularly in an early perspective sketch (fig. 14), the building's design was more closely related to numerous hotels in the eastern United States, where the François I-style hotel had been prevalent for over a decade.¹¹⁷ Hardenbergh initiated the fashion of French Renaissance-style hotels with his Hotel Manhattan in New York (1895-96) and perpetuated

¹¹⁶ The sketch resembles the work of Chicago hotel specialist Clinton J. Warren (1860-?), particularly his Metropole Hotel of 1891, and Michigan Hotel, built in 1891-92. Condit: 153, and ill. 113 and 114. Warren's buildings follow the functional approach of the Chicago School, and thus eschews the elaborate roof, but the Selkirk Hotel is similar to his hotels in its blockish austere form, arcaded base, heavy cornice, and the rows of projecting oriel windows running down each of the elevations.

¹¹⁷ Although the François I-style luxury hotel flourished chiefly between 1900-10, hotels with French facades and pavilion roofs appeared in New York as early as 1857-60, beginning with the Albemarle Hotel by Renwick & Auchmaty (Pevsner: 181).

the trend with the Willard Hotel in Washington D.C. (1900-01) and his most successful effort in the genre, the Plaza Hotel in New York (1906-07).¹¹⁸ In its general characteristics, the Fort Garry Hotel has more than a passing similarity with the Plaza, particularly with the New York hotel's Central Park elevation. (fig. 15) Related features include the classic base, shaft, and capital divisions of the skyscraper, flat façades with slightly projecting four-bay end pavilions, an arcade of large segmented windows below a prominent cornice, and the composition of the steeply sloped roofs.¹¹⁹

A more direct influence on the Fort Garry, however, was another French Renaissance building, the Hotel Belvedere in Baltimore, which was built in 1902-03 when G.A. Ross was in the office of the architects Parker & Thomas.¹²⁰ (fig. 16) Although the exterior of the stripped-down, stone-faced Fort Garry Hotel was unlike the generously detailed, brick and stone elevations

¹¹⁸ Hardenbergh's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, completed just after his Hotel Manhattan, was considered to be the originator of the "main lines of design of the hotel 'skyscraper'." It was seen as the best way to design "a skyscraper of very considerable dimensions in such a manner that it would be distinguished from the office-building and suggest some relation to domestic life," because the hotel's sloping roof and dormers were indicative of domestic architecture. A. C. David, "Three New Hotels," Architectural Record 17 (March 1905: 167-68).

¹¹⁹ Another prominent French Renaissance-style hotel which may have influenced the Fort Garry was George W. & W.D. Hewitt's eighteen-storey Bellevue-Stratford Hotel in Philadelphia (1902-04), which also employed oriel windows and pavilion roofs. The hotel was favourably reviewed in 1905. See David: 179-188.

¹²⁰ The Belvedere Hotel was praised for the "peculiarly successful adaptation which it exhibited of a French domestic model to the needs of a towering American hotel." "Notes on Parker, Thomas & Rice": 123.

of the Baltimore hotel, the ground floor plans in both buildings were identical in the general layout of their principle rooms. (figs. 17, 18) Within a rectangular block, each plan revolved around the centrally placed main lobby, with the café and bar located to the left, the main dining room to the right, and the palm room situated behind, exactly the same in each hotel. The plans reveal the Beaux-Arts emphasis on symmetry, axial planning, and straight through vistas created by lining up the window and door openings. These views were planned to be most effective from just inside the main entrance of the lobby, where the mezzanine floor opened overhead in a rectangular gallery.¹²¹

According to a contemporary critic reviewing the Fort Garry, "The impression received upon entering the rotunda ... is a feeling akin to that of a real home life."¹²² One would be tempted to ask, whose "real home life"? (fig. 19) The Louis XIV-styled lobby, like a spacious and luxurious living room, was furnished with leather arm chairs, heavy rugs on the marble floor, plants, Tiffany lighting fixtures, oak divans, and a carved oak grandfather clock. The architects also chose the Louis XIV style for most of the Fort Garry's public rooms except for the palm room and state apartments, which were decorated in

¹²¹ Many of the smaller elements are identically placed as well, including the ladies' entrance and reception room, the front desk and office, the food service room, and elevators. Unfortunately, it was not possible to locate any other plans of the Hotel Belvedere to compare with the Fort Garry. For a description of the interior of the Hotel Belvedere see A.C. David: 168-175.

¹²² "Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg," Construction 7 (June 1914): 220.

the Adam style, and the private dining rooms, which were Jacobean. Characteristic of the grand hotel type, the extravagant interiors were designed to cater to fantasies of an aristocratic life style, while enjoying more than the usual home comforts.

The 290-room interior of the Fort Garry paralleled that of the Château Laurier in the arrangement of the major public spaces, guest rooms, service and storage areas. The only notable exception was the placement of the ball and banquet rooms. (fig. 20) Located on the first floor in the Ottawa hotel, these rooms were housed on the seventh floor in the Fort Garry, probably because, with less of the building's weight above them, the rooms could be made larger without obstructing their space with supporting columns.¹²³ The added advantage of having these social rooms near the top of the hotel was that the connecting loggia provided a splendid view of the city and the plains beyond. For the guest in 1913, this view may have subtly confirmed an inherent difference between eastern and western hotels. In a prairie city like Winnipeg, as in the other instant urban centres of the west, a building like the Fort Garry Hotel would have meant more than glamorous social events and refined accommodation; it would have also provided the

¹²³ In the Chateau Laurier, the ball room was 70 X 40 feet, the banquet room 60 x 26 feet, and the foyer 50 x 45 feet, but it contained four columns. In the Fort Garry, the column-less banquet hall and ball room each measured 80 X 40 feet.

reassuring appearance of civilization in an essentially pioneer setting.¹²⁴

Even more spectacular than Winnipeg's growth was that of Edmonton. In 1901 the population of the town was a mere 2,626; by 1914 it was 72,516. Edmonton was incorporated as a city in 1904, Alberta became a province the next year, and a year later Edmonton was named the capital. The advantages of being the seat of the provincial government were augmented by the city's industrial monopoly in the northern half of Alberta and the founding of the University of Alberta in 1908.¹²⁵ The Grand Trunk Pacific railway lines entered Edmonton in 1909, and on 23 November 1910, it was reported that the company had purchased a site for the Macdonald Hotel.¹²⁶

The working drawings for the Macdonald Hotel were completed by Ross & MacFarlane in June of 1912, six months before Robert Macdonald replaced MacFarlane as the second partner. Construction of the hotel began in September 1912, and continued despite the onset of a severe economic recession the following year. Built of variegated (buff and grey) Indiana limestone on a basecourse of Stanstead granite, the Macdonald Hotel opened

¹²⁴ Abraham Rogatnick, "Canadian Castles: Phenomenon of the Railway Hotel," Architectural Review 141 (May 1967): 368-69.

¹²⁵ J.G. MacGregor, Edmonton, a History, 2nd. ed. (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1975): 177

¹²⁶ "G.T.P. Railway Co. to Build Big Hotel in Grand View Site," Edmonton Bulletin (24 November 1910).

on 5 July, 1915, almost three years after excavations began.¹²⁷

The site chosen for the Macdonald Hotel was ideal for both its physical features and for its proximity to Edmonton's main commercial and business area one block away on Jasper Avenue. The hotel was planned in an open U -shape: the main entrance pavilion was in the middle, directly facing the intersection of McDougall Avenue and a widened lane (now 100 Street), and the two wings of the building (the arms of the U) ran parallel to each thoroughfare. Facing the city, the street elevations of the hotel had a relatively symmetrical and ordered appearance (fig. 21) compared to the back of the building, which was more asymmetrically massed to present a strikingly picturesque appearance at the top of the wooded two-hundred-foot ravine overlooking the North Saskatchewan River. (fig. 22) From a large ground floor terrace, hotel patrons could enjoy a spectacular view of the river valley and prairies, while the concave curve of the rear elevation took full advantage of the warm southern exposure. It is interesting to note that the GTPR was always careful about positioning prairie train stations on the north side of the tracks in order to take advantage of the winter sun on the platform sides.¹²⁸ The terrace façade of the Macdonald hotel may have resulted from a company policy regarding the siting of their buildings.

¹²⁷ "Nearly 500 Guests Attend Opening of the Macdonald Hotel Last Night," Edmonton Daily Bulletin (6 July 1915): 7.

¹²⁸ Martin: 4.

The general massing of the Macdonald Hotel resembles the unexecuted Winnipeg Hotel for the CPR which MacFarlane had worked on, but the precedent likely stretches back to Charles Joy's Manitoba Hotel of 1891-92. (fig. 4) The massive château-romanesque Manitoba featured shingled, conical roofs, oriel windows and, significantly, a large round entrance tower fronting a main intersection at the apex of its triangular plan. The Manitoba was destroyed by fire in 1899, the same year that MacFarlane was drawing up Edward Maxwell's plans for the aborted Winnipeg hotel. (fig. 23) Maxwell's château style building was also to be anchored by a massive circular tower capped with a conical roof, dominating the corner of Higgins and Main Streets, and the two flanking wings were to be terminated by pavilions topped with steeply pitched roofs.¹²⁹ By comparison, both the hotel by Maxwell and the Macdonald Hotel were planned for a corner lot, both had the main entrance placed in a central tower facing an intersection (although this focal element recedes in one hotel and protrudes in the other), and both featured extended wings which ended with shallow projecting pavilions surmounted by similar types of steeply pitched roofs, hipped and pointed.¹³⁰

The austere elegant exterior of the Macdonald Hotel shows little deviation from the restrained François Ier-style previously employed in the

¹²⁹ Railway and Shipping World (Dec. 1899): 349.

¹³⁰ Although the Maxwell building was to include a train station, it would be interesting to compare the general plan of each hotel. Unfortunately no floor plans or descriptions of the Maxwell hotel's interior came to light to make further comparisons with the Edmonton hotel.

Château Laurier and Fort Garry hotels. Typically, the vertical emphasis of the flat elevations is broken by various horizontal elements: dentilled cornices and string courses, bracketed balconies, and arcades of double-height segmented windows in the bottom storeys. The sparse exterior decoration consists of various classical details, mostly concentrated around the entrances. Pilasters frame a three-windowed bay on the first storey of the central pavilion above the balustraded, main entrance loggia, while carved shields decorate the loggia's spandrels, and intricately carved animals and human faces adorn the capitals of its four piers. In the terrace arcade surrounding the hotel's rear doors, the keystones and pilaster capitals are similarly embellished with ornament.

Smaller than Ross & MacFarlane's two previous hotels, the Macdonald Hotel contained only 190 guest rooms, and had only one basement. The space required for the laundry, refrigeration units, and engine room was constructed under the broad 170-foot terrace which stretched the length of the rear façade.¹³¹ Because the hotel also lacked a banquet hall and ball room, the granite terrace was used for dining and dancing when the weather permitted. The ground floor plan of the Macdonald Hotel recalled that of the Château Laurier, in that it was composed around two corridor axes crossing at an essentially square lobby. (fig. 24) Between the main lobby and the circular palm room in the west wing was a new feature that would become an

¹³¹ The revised plan which extended the basement under the terrace was executed by Macdonald in October 1913, ten months after MacFarlane had left. Ross & Macdonald Archive, project #13-022.

important component of the 1920s hotels -- the commercial shop. In the east wing, the corridor led to the bar (which became a coffee room when prohibition was enacted in 1916), the café, and the main dining room.

Although the interior decoration of the Macdonald Hotel was in keeping with the previous hotels, nevertheless, it was more restrained. Possibly because of the recession, the contemporary reviews of the hotel tended to minimize any hint of lavishness in the decor. An article in Construction insisted that the interior, while still striving for a "domestic atmosphere," was designed "with a view to the accommodation and comfort of patrons of refined taste, but eliminating any element of gorgeous display and extravagance."¹³² At this date, the GTPR was beginning to experience serious financial difficulties and was likely looking to cut costs wherever possible.

Ross & MacFarlane's third luxury hotel for the GTPR was slated for Regina, the small city designated in 1905 as the capital of the new province of Saskatchewan. When the Grand Trunk lines entered Regina in 1911, its population had reached a peak of 30,213, and with the Legislative Building nearing completion, the city was in need of a large, first-class hotel. The scheme for the GTPR hotel was unveiled in September 1912, but construction was delayed for a year when a citizen's group mounted opposition to the

¹³² "Hotel Macdonald, Edmonton, Alberta," Construction 9 (May 1916): 150. Much of the description is reserved for the service facilities and mechanical systems in the hotel, rather than the public rooms.

proposed site in Wascona Park at Albert Street and Sixteenth Avenue.¹³³

When work finally got under way in 1913 at the intended site, the recession had overtaken Regina and the project was abandoned one year later. Only the hotel's foundations and five storeys of the steel frame were completed.

A preliminary sketch of the Hotel Qu'Appelle, as the Regina hotel was named, notes the architects as Ross & MacFarlane. (fig. 25) However, the working drawings for the château style building were executed by Ross & Macdonald in the summer of 1913, and the number of departures the hotel displayed from the previous three hotels may be due to the influence of Macdonald as the new partner.¹³⁴ The Hotel Qu'Appelle would have been crowned with a typical complex roof-line of copper, but instead of a stone facing, the building's exterior was to consist of a terra cotta base with walls of grey brick and ceramic tile. Extravagant polychrome chimneys and layered banding were to decorate the cornice level, reminiscent of Price's Vig  r Hotel and Station in Montreal.¹³⁵ The massiveness of the Hotel Qu'Appelle would

¹³³ The GTP hotel was announced in "May Start on \$1,000,000 Hotel by November 1st," [Regina] Morning Leader (12 September 1912): n.p. Opposition to the site was reported in "G.T.P. Hotel Application Withdrawn," [Regina] Morning Leader (1 October 1912): n.p.

¹³⁴ The working drawings for the Hotel Qu'Appelle were drafted in June and July of 1913, making it the first hotel by the firm to be actually designed without MacFarlane. Ross & Macdonald Archive, project #13-027.

¹³⁵ The rich polychromy of the Hotel Qu'Appelle may have been dictated by other prominent Regina buildings designed in the same "streaky-bacon" style. These included the City Hall, and the 150-room, King's Hotel, constructed in 1908 by Storey & Van Egmond. The Saskatchewan Association of Architects, Historic Architecture of Saskatchewan (Regina: Focus Publishing, 1986): 103.

have been mitigated by machicolations and dentilled courses, tourelles with conical roofs, bartizans, a variety of dormers, stone mullioned windows, and carved crests. Had it been built, the hotel would have taken the fantasy-castle version of the château style in Canada to new heights.

The ground floor plan of the Hotel Qu'Appelle also showed a marked departure from the forced Beaux-Arts symmetry of earlier hotel's plans. Previously, the major public rooms were arranged around two corridor axes converging on the square, central lobby. In the Regina hotel, the plan is more flexible, revolving instead around a functional central core as in an office building. Consisting of elevators, vents, and service rooms, this central shaft ran from the two basements up through the six U-planned bedroom storeys. The Hotel Qu'Appelle would have had an L-shaped lobby wrapped around the elevator bank and a large service area placed in one corner of the plan to cater to both the main dining room and palm room. In freeing the ground floor spaces from the rigid, square lobby format, the architects were anticipating the more functional layouts of their 1920s hotels. Lastly, because the Hotel Qu'Appelle was designed without a large banquet hall or ball room, it would have had a roof garden, which was another feature not seen earlier, overlooking a wide terrace.

The Château Laurier, the Fort Garry, and the Macdonald Hotel comprised the last concentrated era of château style hotel building in Canada. These three hotels were not forward looking in any way, but were completely

characteristic of their time: the exteriors were dictated by the personal ambitions of the client and the nationalist aspirations of the country, and the interiors faithfully followed what American hotel architects had set down beforehand. By comparison, the competition seemed slightly more advanced. Edward & W.S. Maxwell's Palliser Hotel, built in 1911-14 for the CPR in Calgary, was planned with a Beaux-Arts clarity that must have been duly admired by Ross & MacFarlane. The Palliser's ground floor plan incorporated an advance in efficiency that was just beginning to appear with the Hotel Qu'Appelle -- the placement of the main kitchen between the café and dining room on the main floor instead of hiding it in the basement. Moreover, the clean-edged, commercial look of the Palliser's elevations was precursory of the next decade's grand hotels. The Grand Trunk completed its railway to Prince Rupert by 1914, but by 1918 the company was bankrupt. The romantic period of railway building ended when World War I began; at a time when the country was more or less settled, but the economy was at a stand-still:

5. METROPOLITAN HOTELS

MOUNT ROYAL HOTEL, ADMIRAL BEATTY HOTEL

The recession of 1913, followed by the advent of World War I, put a halt to urban building in Canada. After the war, construction resumed but only slowly, as the country's economy staggered under the weight of collapsed wheat prices, high inflation, unemployment, and labour unrest. By comparison, the highly productive and self-sufficient economy of the United States made the transition from war to peace-time with great efficiency.¹³⁶ Two far-reaching results of the "Era of Commerce and Convenience" in America were the enormous increase of automobile ownership, putting more and more people on the road for touring and trade, and the rise of the large corporation at the expense of the small business.¹³⁷ Americans were also beginning to invest substantially in Canada, replacing Britain as the largest source of foreign capital by 1923.¹³⁸ Consequently, as the Canadian economy struggled through the early 1920s, Ross & Macdonald's next two hotels were built in Montreal and Saint John, New Brunswick, for an American corporation as additions to a rapidly

¹³⁶ Michael Bliss, Northern Enterprise: Five Centuries of Canadian Business (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987): 381-89.

¹³⁷ Robert Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, and Thomas Mellins, New York 1930: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Two World Wars (New York: Rizzoli, 1987): 29-30.

¹³⁸ Bliss: 400.

expanding hotel chain.

No Canadian city benefitted more from the Laurier boom years than Montreal, as the development of the prairies after 1900 reinforced the city's position as the nation's foremost metropolis. Supported by the western hinterland, the production and value of Montreal's manufactured goods increased enormously, the port thrived, and the city was the hub of Canada's entire railway network. Montreal's financial institutions had dominated the country since Confederation. By the first decade of the twentieth-century, the 250,000 residents of the city's wealthy "Square Mile" district, controlled seventy per cent of the nation's wealth. The momentum generated by this period of tremendous growth sustained Montreal's top-ranked position in Canada through the 1920s, even though Toronto was emerging as a serious contender.

Despite Montreal's unprecedented prosperity and growth before the war (between 1900 and 1911 the city's population doubled to 479,480 people), and the accelerating influx of visiting businessmen and tourists, little was accomplished in the area of quality hotel building. Hardenbergh and Gilbert's new annex for the Windsor Hotel opened in 1908, but the original hotel was now thirty years old. The Queen's Hotel tried to keep pace by adding one hundred more bedrooms by means of two enlargements. However, it was not until the Carlton Hotel Company was founded in 1909 that the construction of a new luxury hotel was initiated. Completed at the end of 1912, the organization and interior of the Montreal Ritz-Carlton Hotel was modelled on

the luxurious Carlton Hotel in London, by architects C.J. Phipps and then Isaacs and Florence, built in 1897-99.¹³⁹ The exterior of the Montreal hotel was constructed of Indiana limestone with terra cotta ornament, and was designed by the New York architects Warren & Wetmore. (fig. 26) The architects used a restrained Beaux-Arts classical manner for the hotel, similar to their Ritz-Carlton Hotel in New York, completed in 1910, but minus the monumental colonnade.

As construction of the Ritz-Carlton was getting under way in the spring of 1911, it was announced that another large hotel was being planned for Montreal with Ross & MacFarlane as the architects.¹⁴⁰ The projected four-hundred room Mount Royal Hotel was proposed for the south-east corner of Peel and Sainte Catherine Streets where the Dominion Square Building now stands. Intended to be ten-storeys high and faced with Missisquoi marble, the hotel's standard tripartite façade was possibly suggested by the Montréal Ritz-Carlton, although the rusticated, pilastered base and bracketed cornice were decidedly Italianate in conception. (fig. 27) The promoters of the hotel were George Allan Ross and local real estate agent H.R. Kirkpatrick, and negotiations to finance the venture were said to be underway with competing

¹³⁹ Charles Mewès designed the main public rooms of the Carlton (Watkin: 20). The great hotel administrator César Ritz, who had acquired an interest in the London Carlton, endorsed the Montreal project in 1911 for \$25,000, and a guarantee that the new Ritz-Carlton would be managed like an exclusive European luxury hotel. Adrian Waller, No Ordinary Hotel: The Ritz-Carlton's First Seventy-Five Years (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1989: 25-43.

¹⁴⁰ "The Hotel Mount Royal", Montreal Gazette, 15 April 1911: 18

groups in London and New York.¹⁴¹ However, probably because the financial backing never materialized, nothing came of this project.

Privately owned hotel chains began in the United States in the mid-1800s, but it is unlikely that any expanded into Canada before the twentieth century.¹⁴² One of the first, if not the first, to establish its hotels north of the border was the United Hotel Company of America. The corporation was founded by Frank A. Dudley in 1910, two years before Ellesworth Statler began to propagate his famous chain of large economy hotels.¹⁴³ During its first decade, the United Hotel Company acquired or built nearly twenty hotels in the northern United States and in Canada, where the company controlled hotels in Niagara Falls, Windsor, Hamilton, and Toronto.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ The Grand Trunk Railway was also rumoured to be involved, although nobody knew exactly to what extent. "Big Uptown Hotel Again Promised", Montreal Gazette (12 April 1911): 7.

¹⁴² Williamson: 153. Williamson states that hotel chains were the first chains of any sort of business in the United States. The first hotel chain supervisor was Paran Stevens (b. 1802, d. 1872), who operated hotels in New York and Boston.

¹⁴³ "Frank A. Dudley of United Hotels", New York Times (Saturday 22 September 1945): 17

¹⁴⁴ By 1922 the United Hotel Company had a total of seventeen hotels under its direction, including the Mount Royal Hotel, with three more under construction. "Hotels of the United Hotel Company of America," Montreal Gazette (20 December 1922): The Canadian hotels included the Clifton in Niagara Falls, the Prince Edward in Windsor, the King Edward in Toronto, to which a sixteen-storey addition was added in 1917 by architects Esenwein & Johnson (who built the first Statler Hotel), and, built by the same architects in 1919, the Royal Connaught Hotel in Hamilton.

In 1920 Dudley came to Montreal to forge the next link in the United Hotels chain.¹⁴⁵ In August, Ross & Macdonald began preliminary drawings for the new project, again using the name "Mount Royal Hotel". The firm's first important commission of the early 1920s, the Mount Royal was billed as "the largest in the British Empire" with thirteen levels and 1,046 rooms. It was certainly much larger and more complex than any of their previous hotels. Excavations began 9 September 1921, three weeks before the working drawings were completed; one year and four months later the Mount Royal Hotel hosted its opening gala ball, on 22 December 1922.¹⁴⁶

The Mount Royal Hotel was erected on a two-acre area bound by Peel Street, Metcalfe Street, Burnside Place (now Boulevard de Maisonneuve), and a lane to be called Mount Royal Place. (fig. 28) Similar to the intended site of the first Mount Royal, the new location placed the hotel on the busy Peel Street corridor occupied by the Windsor and Queen's hotels and the Windsor and Bonaventure Stations. Peel Street was also on the axis of the Victoria Bridge, the island of Montreal's only automobile link with the south shore and the United States. This route became especially important after 1920, when American tourists flooded into the city following the enactment of

¹⁴⁵ Paul Garceau, Chronique de l'hospitalité hôtelière du Québec de 1880 à 1940. Montréal: Editions du Méridien et Les Publications du Québec, 1990: 48. Ross & Macdonald seem to have been contacted about the Montreal and Saint John hotels at the same time, in 1920, judging from the dates of the preliminary drawings and the job numbers. Ross & Macdonald Archive.

¹⁴⁶ "All in Readiness for Hotel Opening," Montreal Gazette (20 December 1922): 4.

prohibition in the United States.¹⁴⁷ Other advantages claimed by the new hotel were its nearness to the park on Mount Royal and to the main thoroughfare of Saint Catherine Street with its tramways, stores, and theatres.

All four elevations of the Mount Royal Hotel were consistently designed with the formula of base, shaft, and capital. Filling the entire block, the hotel's rectangular base comprised of two storeys of buff Canadian Benedict stone resting on a lowermost base-course of pink Stanstead granite.¹⁴⁸ Above the base, the storeys were built of buff brick with Benedict stone trim, and were planned as two H's (a smaller H inside a larger H) crossing at their middle bar. (fig. 29) This configuration formed L-shaped light wells which divided the hotel's front and back elevations into three distinct blocks, breaking up the otherwise enormous mass of the main façades. The hotel's upper-most courses were constructed of brick and Benedict stone in the two end blocks, while the aediculed middle block consisted exclusively of stone.

¹⁴⁷ Quebec outlawed hard liquor in 1919, but unlike the other Canadian provinces, kept beer and wine legal. Prohibition hit the hotels in the United States very hard, as the banishing of alcohol from hotel bars and restaurants resulted in the emptying of the public rooms and, consequently, the failure of many establishments. See, Stern, Gilmartin and Mellins: 201.

¹⁴⁸ Benedict stone was an artificial building material that was cast in various textures from a mixture of stone and cement. Very versatile and quite durable, it was used in numerous large buildings in Montreal during the 1920s, including the Canada Cement Building by Barott & Blackader, which was constructed contemporaneously with the Mount Royal Hotel. Susan Wagg, Ernest Isbell Barott/Architect/An Introduction (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1985): 12 and note 22.

The design of the Mount Royal Hotel was probably inspired by McKim, Mead & White's monumental Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City, the largest hotel in the world when completed in 1919.¹⁴⁹ (fig. 30) This is particularly evident in a preliminary sketch of the Mount Royal executed in early 1920, which shows a proposal with a similar overhanging cornice and square-headed windows in the base. (fig. 31) The neo-Georgian style selected for the Mount Royal was ideal in theory for hotel architecture, because its prototypes were primarily domestic buildings, usually from the American Colonial and Federal periods. The style was perpetuated in American residential architecture, apartment hotels, townhouses, hospitals and schools into the 1920s by such architects as Charles Platt, and William Delano and his partner Charles Aldrich.¹⁵⁰ In Montreal, Barott & Blackader would effectively use the neo-Georgian mode for terraced housing in Summerhill Terrace (1923), and Chelsea Place (1923-24), although the inspiration for these buildings came from English rather than American Georgian architecture.¹⁵¹ The Mount Royal Hotel also appears to have drawn upon late Georgian British public buildings, such as William Chambers's Somerset House, built in London in 1776-96.

The main problem inherent in the Georgian revival style, according to

¹⁴⁹ By 1909, both McKim and White had died, but the firm continued on under the directorship of its senior partners. Built between 1915-20, the Hotel Pennsylvania consisted of twenty-two storeys with 2,200 rooms. Roth: 339.

¹⁵⁰ Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, England: MIT Press, 1981): 159-65.

¹⁵¹ Wagg, *Ernest Isbell Barott*: 12-13.

Marcus Whiffen, was that it was generally modeled on small-scaled buildings.¹⁵² When applied to large-scaled architecture, the ornament was often enlarged out of proportion and concentrated in the upper and lower storeys, leaving the large expanse in the middle unadorned, unarticulated, and unrelated to the rest of the design. In the Mount Royal Hotel these difficulties were moderately avoided by conscientious attention to the overall symmetry, good proportions and refined detailing. In the hotel's main façades, the relationship between the building's primary architectural masses and the three major horizontal divisions of the elevations were well conceived and executed. The careful consideration of the parts to the whole, as well as the framing of the three bedroom blocks with well-proportioned stone quoins, effectively tied the middle storeys into the overall composition of the building. Further interest was added to this area by the precision of the historic Georgian details, including the Flemish-bond brickwork, the recessed sash windows, and the wrought ironwork of the centrally placed balconies.¹⁵³

In the hotel's main façade, the double-storey, rusticated base consisted of a rhythmic series of three-bay arcades alternating with bays of square-

¹⁵² Whiffen: 163.

¹⁵³ Much of the design for the hotel's exterior and interior detailing was probably drawn from books in the Ross & Macdonald library, such as John Gardner's English Ironwork of the XVIIth & XVIIIth Centuries (1911), which was concerned with "exterior smithcraft", and, for the hotel's interior, George P. Bankhart's The Art of the Plasterer (1909), which focused on the decorative development of the craft in England from the sixteenth to the eighteenth-centuries. CCA Library.

headed windows positioned under the light wells. The base was variously detailed with large scrolled keystones, ornamental metal work, balustrades decorated with volutes and shields, and a niche with a large urn. The principal entrance was similar to that of the Hotel Pennsylvania; a grand portico of four Doric columns supporting an iron marquis and an entablature surmounted by four urns sitting on a balustrade. The uppermost storeys of the hotel's two end blocks featured stone-trimmed windows with scrolled pediments and dentilated cornices crowned with balustraded parapets. In the uppermost storeys of the hotel's middle block, stone coupled pilasters framing windows echoed the central street level bay below. Surmounted by a projecting, dentilated cornice, these storeys contained the hotel's banquet room on one side of the building and an Adam style ball room on the other.

The Mount Royal Hotel was efficiently arranged to contain a greater number of rentable spaces than in the earlier hotels. Located in the south half of the building, where a semi-basement resulted from the downward slope of the site towards Saint Catherine Street, were seventeen two-storied shops opening on to on to Peel Street and Mount Royal Place. (fig. 32) The Mount Royal's incorporation of numerous stores into its plan was taken up in the United Hotel Company's next large project, the Roosevelt Hotel, built by George Post & Sons in 1923-24, which was the first New York hotel to turn

most of its ground floor over to commercial outlets.¹⁵⁴

The main floor of the Mount Royal displayed the development of a number of features which first appeared in the Hotel Qu'Appelle. (fig. 33) In the Montreal hotel, the placement of the main kitchen and service area in between the two principal restaurant spaces eliminated the time consuming and labour intensive operation of transferring food up from the basement, as would have been the case in the earlier hotels.¹⁵⁵ This increasing concern with function led to modifications in the architect's still prevailing Beaux-Arts approach. The rectangular shape of the Mount Royal's main lobby made it more conducive to the flow of guests throughout the hotel than the previous square lobby format. In this dominating space, the two major axes from the primary entrances (opening on to Peel Street and Mount Royal Place) crossed, while at one end, a long secondary corridor ran along the Mount Royal Place elevation of the building, providing access to a series of rented offices, telegram booths and a second entrance to the café. Moreover, the Mount Royal lobby possessed a grandeur beyond any of those in the three GTR hotels; its 153 by 72 foot space was comfortably furnished and surrounded by a colonnade of marble piers with foliated capitals stretching up through the mezzanine to a

¹⁵⁴ The inclusion of stores in the hotel was an attempt make up revenue lost because of Prohibition. Stern: 203. The George Post archive in New York contains a set of blueprints of Ross & Macdonald's Mount Royal Hotel.

¹⁵⁵ Ellesworth Statler is credited with first coming up with this idea.

marble entablature, which supported a coved, coffered ceiling.¹⁵⁶ (fig. 34)

There were other notable differences in the Montreal hotel. A separate entrance and dining room for ladies was omitted. The mezzanine contained a small hospital, a hairdressing parlour, twenty-five office outlets, and, as a sign of the times, an indoor golf school located just about where the musician's gallery would have been in the earlier hotels.¹⁵⁷ The era of chamber music was giving way to the jazz age, and public entertainment would take place in the hotel's large ninth floor rooms which would eventually house a well-known night club called the Normandie Roof. The Mount Royal Hotel's predominant commercial ambience was intended to attract a large business clientele, and to this end a convention room was also placed on the ninth floor.¹⁵⁸

The Mount Royal Hotel marked a change in the management and production of Ross & Macdonald's office. In the early 'twenties the office was

¹⁵⁶ The importance of the hotel lobby as a social "institution" was still recognized in 1922, when the public space was described as filling "a transcendent need in social life, commerce, politics and art", and as "the nerve centre of the community", "the mirror of contemporary life", and was compared in function to the Roman forum, except a lot more comfortable. "Hotel Lobby as Public Utility", Montreal Gazette (20 December 1922): 27.

¹⁵⁷ The main dining room and palm room were decorated in an Italian Renaissance style. For a contemporary description of the interior of the Mount Royal Hotel, see, "The Mount Royal Hotel, Montreal," Construction 16 (May 1923): 157-75.

¹⁵⁸ R.J. Young, "Conventions Are Good Business", Montreal Gazette (20 December 1922): 27. Young worked for the United Hotel Company.

evolving into a highly organized and efficient architectural firm, which by late in the decade employed about seventy-five draughtsmen. Ross began to concentrate on bringing in the jobs, while Macdonald handled the administration. Although both men continued to supervise projects, the designs were increasingly being assigned to senior draughtsmen.¹⁵⁹ The Mount Royal Hotel, for example, was primarily designed by Robert Heughan.¹⁶⁰ It was during this decade that the buildings of Ross & Macdonald became increasingly standardized, and although a high level of structural and functional competence was maintained, the quality of the architectural aesthetics began to fluctuate.

Early in 1922, as construction proceeded with the Mount Royal Hotel, Dudley entered into a tentative agreement to build the United Hotel Company's next Canadian project in Saint John.¹⁶¹ Previously, a major hotel had been planned for the city in 1912 with Ross & MacFarlane as architects; however, as was the case in Montreal, the project never materialized.¹⁶² A

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Wilson and Wilkinson.

¹⁶⁰ Heughan approved all of the Mount Royal Hotel's plans. An obituary for Robert Gall Heughan (1887-1950) notes that his ability as a designer was indicated by his work on the "Royal York Hotel in Toronto, Mount Royal Hotel, Dominion Square Building, Holt Renfrew Building and the Cenotaph in Montreal (the latter won in competition) and Price Building in Quebec." J.W.W., *JRAIC* 27 (Aug. 1950): 283. He would later become a partner in the office of Ross, Patterson, Townsend & Heughan, the successors to Ross & Ross.

¹⁶¹ "History of the Admiral Beatty," Unidentified newspaper clipping, Willet Scrapbook, vol. 89: 186.

¹⁶² Ibid.

decade later, Saint John's prosperity still must have seemed uncertain. The least prosperous of Canada's major cities since Confederation, Saint John was chronically on the brink of economic depression, even though the situation improved considerably when it became a national port after 1900. Between the turn of the century and the early twenties, Saint John's population had increased by only seven thousand since the turn of the century, and the city was experiencing the worst of the country's economic woes.¹⁶³

Ross & Macdonald were commissioned to prepare preliminary designs for the new hotel in June 1922, and in April 1923, Dudley committed his company to the project. After the Saint John Citizen Committee, a local group backing the hotel scheme, managed to sell the required amount of stock, construction began on the hotel in July, 1924. Eleven months later, on 22 June 1925, the Admiral Beatty Hotel was inaugurated.¹⁶⁴

The Admiral Beatty Hotel was the Montreal firm's smallest and most economical to date. Facing King Square South, on the south east corner of Charlotte Street, the hotel's location in the city centre was a good one; it was in the commercial district, near the market, the port, and the Union station. It was also across from King Square, a pleasant park laid out in the form of a

¹⁶³ Nadar, 2: 55-62.

¹⁶⁴ "The Admiral Beatty Hotel: A Structure Worthy the Honoured Name It Bears," Saint John Telegraph-Journal, Tourist Edition (22 June 1925): 1-8. The hotel was named after war hero Sir David Beatty, a former Admiral of the British Fleet who defeated the German navy at the Battle of Jutland in 1916.

Union Jack by the Loyalist's in the early 1800s. However, because the site was composed of a ledge of solid rock rising above street level, it presented a challenge for new construction. Previously the occupant of the plot had been the Dufferin Hotel, an establishment created in 1878 from an ancient house which was demolished to make way for the Admiral Beatty. Upon the removal of the old hotel, cavities in the stone were discovered which had been excavated to hold the vats and tanks of an early nineteenth-century tannery.¹⁶⁵ Consequently, to avoid the expense of further excavation, the architects designed the Admiral Beatty to rest on top of the rock, and used the old tannery pits to house the boilers. Probably because of these difficulties with the foundations, the structural frame of the hotel was constructed out of reinforced concrete instead of steel, as in the other hotels.

When the Saint John hotel was publicly announced in 1923, the preliminary plans had already been prepared by Ross & Macdonald for a larger building. Similar to the Mount Royal Hotel in general appearance, with the main façade consisting of three blocks separated by two light wells (but crowned with hipped instead of flat roofs), the Admiral Beatty was originally designed with eight-storeys including a mezzanine over the main floor, 210 guest rooms, and ten shops. The hotel as ultimately realized was likely the result of a reduced budget, since it was reduced by fifty feet on the sides, lacked a mezzanine, and housed only 184 bedrooms and two shops. The

¹⁶⁵ "Description of the New Hotel by the Builder," Saint John Telegraph-Journal, (22 June 1925): 7.

Admiral Beatty did, however, retain the eight storeys, with a two-storey base of Benedict stone supporting six storeys of brick trimmed with the same stone. (fig. 35)

The exterior of the Admiral Beatty Hotel was designed in the same neo-Georgian style as the Mount Royal Hotel, but with much less success. The uninspired treatment of the upper and lower storeys left the elevations to be dominated by a monotonous repetition of square-headed windows from top to bottom. Above the ashlar base, the main façade was divided into three vertical sections by prominent stone quoins, which accented the corners of the building and marked a shallow recession of the middle bay. The vertical emphasis of these elements was opposed by three moulded Benedict stone courses, one above the base and two framing the top-most story, which, when combined with the profusion of windows, created a static grid effect common to the Georgian revival style when poorly conceived.

Devoid of any distinguishing features, the hotel's boxy form suffered from unsatisfactory proportions and mediocre detailing. The relationship between the base and upper storeys was ill-considered, and the building's symmetry was disrupted by the placement of a protruding penthouse above extra large shop windows at street level without any balancing elements on the opposite side of the hotel. Characteristic of the Montreal firm's buildings, the architectural ornament was sparse; an iron marquee and scrolled volute keystones over the hotel's two arched entrances, balustrades in the two

uppermost courses, and, along the roof-line parapet, decorative urns placed over the vertical line of the quoins. On the whole, the elevations of the Saint John hotel lacked the precision of design and crispness of detailing exhibited in the Montreal hotel, and appeared second-rate by comparison.

The revised interior of the Admiral Beatty Hotel was without the variety of public rooms usually found in a grand hotel, but it was adequately decorated and planned for a city of Saint John's stature. The hotel's simple arrangement consisted of two floors situated in the rectangular base and six L-shaped upper storeys filling out the two street-side elevations, to provide the best possible views of the park and city. Without a basement level, the machinery, laundry, and storage areas were housed in a three-storey structure attached at the north-east corner at the back of the building. On the first floor, the principle entrance led directly into a large central lobby, with a small dining room located to the left, and two shops and a second entrance to the right on the Charlotte Street side. (fig. 36) A cafeteria on the same street side was serviced by the kitchen which was also linked to the dining room. A ballroom on the hotel's second floor was ornamented in Georgian motifs, as was most of the hotel's interior, which was fitting considering the city's Loyalist history. The third floor consisted entirely of sample rooms.

There was a consistent quality in the design of the earlier hotels for the GTR, but this was not the case in the Montreal and Saint John hotels. Whereas the Mount Royal was arguably the firm's most successful hotel overall,

inside and out, by the same comparison the Admiral Beatty was their least impressive. Undoubtedly, the huge difference in budgets was a major factor (the former building cost \$10 million, the latter, \$1.4 million), but each hotel also reveals two designers of quite different abilities.¹⁶⁶ As the early 'twenties were the beginning of Ross & Macdonald's busiest years, it is possible that when the time came to plan the Admiral Beatty, the firm's top designers were occupied with other jobs. While the same discrepancy in size and budget would occur again in Ross & Macdonald's next two hotels, the quality of the designs was not so far apart. By the mid to late twenties, the firm was achieving a standardized approach to hotel architecture, with more highly skilled draftsmen on the office staff.

¹⁶⁶ I could not discover who the draughtsman was for the Admiral Beatty as the working drawings for the hotel are not in the Ross & Macdonald Archive. It is interesting to note that although all of the Montreal architect's hotels are still standing, only the Mount Royal and the Admiral Beatty no longer serve in their original capacity as hotels. See David Rose, "Mount Royal's Sister Hotel in Saint John had a Better Fate," [Montreal] Gazette, 26 October 1991.

6. RAILWAY HOTELS III

HOTEL SASKATCHEWAN, ROYAL YORK HOTEL

By the mid-twenties, Canada's economy began to show signs of regaining the vitality of the Laurier years. Led by the production of automobiles, eastern manufacturing once again worked to capacity, while the development of northern resources launched the new giant industries of mining and pulp and paper.¹⁶⁷ These factors, combined with a surge in world grain prices and another wave of western immigration, stimulated an energetic phase of expansion by Canada's two major railways; the long established CPR, under its new president Edward W. Beatty, and the government-run Canadian National Railway Company (CNR), founded in 1922 from the remnants of the bankrupt GTR, GTPR, and Canadian Northern Railways. Expanding to compete with its formidable new rival, the CPR constructed new feeder lines in the west, built a huge fleet of ocean steamships, and erected large hotels in Regina and Toronto, both designed by Ross & Macdonald.¹⁶⁸

Saskatchewan was the only western province without a grand hotel,

¹⁶⁷ Bliss: 401-03.

¹⁶⁸ The CPR's major hotel project of the early twenties was the enlargement of the Chateau Frontenac, carried out by Edward & W.S. Maxwell, and Maxwell & Pitts from 1920-24. See, Maxwell Project: 96-99.

and the capital city of Regina was the obvious place to erect one. The CNR had first claim to the city because the railway company had inherited the Hotel Qu'Appelle project from the defunct GTPR. With the CNR intending to continue construction of the hotel, Ross & Macdonald produced a set of record drawings of the Hotel Qu'Appelle in December 1923.¹⁶⁹ But the citizens of Regina were bitter over the problems and the broken promise of the first hotel and were not eager to conduct business with the upstart railway company. On 15 December 1925, after the project was grounded by legal complications and miscarried alternatives, the CNR was released from the obligations of the original 1910 contract.¹⁷⁰ The failure to recommence the building of the Hotel Qu'Appelle was in all probability facilitated by CPR officials, who were conducting behind-the-scene negotiations with the city council.¹⁷¹

In February 1926, an official agreement was endorsed by the Regina

¹⁶⁹ CCA, Ross & Macdonald Archives, #13-092, "Proposal for Regina Hotel".

¹⁷⁰ The date of the city bylaw which released the CNR from its contract was mentioned in "Canadian Pacific Railway Hotel Opening and Meeting at Regina," Canadian Railway and Marine World (July 1927): 409. Thwarted in Regina, the CNR began to plan a chateau style hotel for Saskatoon in 1927 which resulted in the Bessborough Hotel, built in 1930-32 by Archibald & Schofield. The Bessborough's profuse French Renaissance detailing and open U-plan similar to the Macdonald Hotel made it a carry-over from the pre-World War I era.

¹⁷¹ The 1925 CPR Annual Report states that after protracted negotiations with the City of Regina to build a 200-room hotel, a basis of an agreement had been reached, which probably meant that the CNR was now out of the picture.

government and the CPR to construct a new hotel.¹⁷² Having just completed a train station in 1924 for the CPR in Three Rivers, Quebec, Ross & Macdonald were retained for the new hotel project. The Hotel Saskatchewan, as it was called, was rapidly designed and built: the preliminary drawings were produced by March 1926, and following the final agreement between the railway company and the city in April, the working drawings for a nine-storey building were executed in May. Shortly after construction commenced on 23 June, the hotel was expanded to eleven storeys. Less than a year later, on 23 May 1927, the Hotel Saskatchewan was officially opened.¹⁷³

Although the CPR acquired the rights to use the materials and the site of the abandoned Hotel Qu'Appelle, only the former was utilized. The new site chosen for the Hotel Saskatchewan was geographically in the centre of the city, on the south side of Victoria Avenue between Scarth and Cornwall Streets, opposite Victoria Park. The location was in an exclusive residential area, but closer to the Union Station and the business district than the old site to the south in Wascona Park. Constructed with the steel of the aborted Hotel Qu'Appelle, the Hotel Saskatchewan's structural frame was built on a reinforced concrete raft, as the Victoria Avenue site consisted of soft clay with no rock ledge near to the surface.

¹⁷² "A Long Period Required Before Negotiations for Hotel Were Concluded," [Regina] Leader (23 May 1927): 2

¹⁷³ "Regina Now Well to Fore in Hotel Accommodation," The [Regina] Leader (23 May 1927): n.p.

As Ross & Macdonald's third neo-Georgian hotel, the Hotel Saskatchewan is essentially a severe, classically detailed building dominated by straight lines and relentlessly flat walls. (fig. 37) Built of grey brick with a two-storey base of Tyndall stone, the imposing hotel was designed as a great cubic mass to which large-scale volume and depth were imparted by a series of setbacks. The base of the building was planned as a rectangular cruciform, which in the main façade created a long projecting middle section of nine bays. Above the base, seven H-planned storeys form two large end pavilions connected by the central block, which is set back and rises two storeys higher. Positioned in the middle of the flat roof, the penthouse is crowned by a copper roof with sloping sides.

The architectural aesthetic of the hotel is what Robert Stern calls "Modern Classicism" in describing one of the approaches American architects took between the wars.¹⁷⁴ The trend's primary influence came from the 1925 Paris Exposition des Arts Décoratifs, where the exhibition buildings displayed "centralized plans, bilateral symmetry, and pyramidal massing" derived from traditional Beaux-Arts planning and composition, as well as the simplified and rigorous classicism of prewar Austrian and German architecture.¹⁷⁵ The design of the Hotel Saskatchewan, however, was probably more immediately inspired

¹⁷⁴ Stern, New York 1930: 23.

¹⁷⁵ Idem.

by a pre-Exposition building in New York -- the seminal and much-admired Shelton Hotel, completed in 1924 by Arthur Loomis Harmon. (fig. 38)

The thirty-four storey Shelton was New York's first skyscraper hotel, and one of the first skyscrapers to comply with the city's 1916 zoning laws requiring setbacks in tall buildings.¹⁷⁶ Probably inspired by Eliel Saarinen's entry in the 1922 Chicago Tribune Competition, the Shelton proved to be an important prototype for the "art deco" buildings of the latter 'twenties, due to the subordination of its traditional detailing by the sculptural massing of its soaring pyramidal form.¹⁷⁷ Although the Hotel Saskatchewan failed dramatically to achieve the Shelton's sense of upward sweep, it still incorporated many of the prominent characteristics of the New York hotel: the dominant pyramidal massing achieved through major setbacks, the large expanse of unadorned walls contrasted with austere traditional detailing, the extending middle tower flanked by multi-storey wings, and the centrally placed penthouse topped with a pitched roof.

Modern Classicism initiated the new art deco sensibility in ornament, but it also endorsed the "stylized interpretation of traditional architectural

¹⁷⁶ Paul Goldberger, The Skyscraper (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981): 61.

¹⁷⁷ Goldberger states that the Shelton "became a textbook example, as sure as Hugh Ferriss's renderings, of what the tower of the future would be like." Idem. Also see Stern (New York 1930: 208-12) for a good description of the Shelton Hotel's impact on critics, artists, and architects.

elements,"¹⁷⁸ which is the more conservative approach taken by Ross & Macdonald in applying the scant classical detailing to the Hotel Saskatchewan. The hotel's end pavilions carried only corner quoins and pediments over the third storey windows, leaving the bulk of the ornament to be concentrated in the middle section of the base and the topmost storeys. Mimicking the façades of Georgian terrace housing, the projecting portion of the hotel's base consisted of a half basement and two storeys crowned with a balustraded parapet and urns.¹⁷⁹ The nine bays were separated by strip pilasters capped by stylized corinthian columns, with the first and ninth bay protruding modestly to frame the entire section. All the windows were square headed, but an arcade was formed at the ground floor level by the placement of ornamented, blind arches above the fenestration. Situated in the first bay, the hotel's main entrance was indicated by steps and an ornamental iron marquee.

Although the upper storeys of the Hotel Saskatchewan were originally to be topped with parapeted balustrades, these were replaced by plain blocking courses. Otherwise, the ornament was provided by sets of double pilasters, which, by framing the fenestration of the top two storeys, created a visual link with the hotel's base. But, unlike the Mount Royal Hotel, where the same

¹⁷⁸ Stern, New York 1930: 23. The new art deco sensibility is described by Stern as "natural forms influenced by the reductive aesthetic deemed by Modernists to be the result of machine as opposed to craft production." Idem.

¹⁷⁹ The late work of Robert Adam (1728-92) in Edinburgh, and his Fitzroy Square in London, c.1790-94, seem to be relevant here. See Joseph and Anne Rykwert, Robert and James Adam, (New York: Electra / Rizzoli, 1985).

method was used, the stately detailing of the Hotel Saskatchewan's upper storeys was a false front; there was no lavish banquet or ball room behind the colonnade, only more guest rooms. Overall, the Hotel Saskatchewan's thin neo-Georgian dressing was better proportioned and distributed than in the Admiral Beatty Hotel, but it was also perfunctory and formulaic, lacking the integration of detail achieved in the Mount Royal.

The interior of the 240 room Hotel Saskatchewan was planned with Ross & Macdonald's usual efficiency and was devoid of any unique characteristics except perhaps for the peculiar choice of Spanish decor for the lounge and "Isabella" tea room on the main floor. (fig. 39) On the same floor, the kitchen arrangement connecting the grill room and the dining room, was standard practice by this date, and it was repeated on the first floor with another large service area providing for the private dining rooms and the Colonial ball and banquet room. To take care of business there were two conference rooms situated in the basement and twenty sample rooms occupying the entire third floor. The H-plan of the hotel's guest room floors became a fixed feature in Ross & Macdonald's later hotels: the configuration was ideal for the insertion of standard bedroom units, the avoidance of enclosed courts (thus allowing each customer more light, air, privacy, and view), and, with the centrally placed elevator core, the plan also provided easy circulation to all

sections of each storey.¹⁸⁰ (fig. 40).

The Hotel Saskatchewan was built during Ross & Macdonald's most productive period, when the office was fullest, the commissions plentiful, and their buildings were reaching unprecedented dimensions. In Toronto during the latter 1920s, two of the firm's most important projects involved two of Canada's most eminent corporations, Eaton's and the CPR. Although the Eaton's College Street Store was never completed as planned by the Montreal firm (the sleek, set-back skyscraper surmounting the store was never built), but the CPR's flagship hotel, the Royal York, was.¹⁸¹ Costing \$16 million, the Royal York was the firm's largest project ever, and the CPR's most expensive undertaking in any Canadian city. The new hotel would wrench the title of "the largest hotel in the British Empire" from the Mount Royal Hotel, just as Toronto was superseding Montreal's position as Canada's foremost metropolis.

The decision to build the Toronto hotel came soon after work had begun on the Regina hotel. In December 1926 CPR officials noted that it was "very much in the interests of the Company to erect a hotel in the City of Toronto, where the hotel accommodation is quite inadequate to meet the

¹⁸⁰ The Hotel Saskatchewan's bedrooms were a standard size used throughout North America. The width of the rooms was governed by the length of the bathtubs, the entrance corridor and the clothes closet, while the depth was variable. "Newest Ideas Helped Workers Building Hotel," [Regina] The Leader (23 May 1927) n.p.

¹⁸¹ For the Eaton's College Street Store project see William Dendy, Lost Toronto (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1978): 156-62.

commercial and tourist traffic."¹⁸² This resolution was made in spite of press reports that other large hotel projects were being contemplated for the city, including the unexecuted twenty-storey Hotel Commodore by Ross & Macdonald.¹⁸³ However, the architects began preliminary sketches for the CPR Toronto hotel in February 1927, and the project was officially announced in March. The working drawings were executed over the next two months, and in November the site was cleared and the excavations commenced. Built in association with Toronto architects Sproatt & Rolph, the Royal York Hotel opened 11 June 1929.¹⁸⁴

Measuring 390 feet by 194 feet, the Royal York Hotel filled the huge lot that was bounded by Front Street West, York Street, Piper Street and the specially constructed New Street. The site was formerly occupied by the venerable Queen's Hotel, a long established and well loved Toronto hostelery

¹⁸² Annual Report of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company For the Year Ended December 31st, 1926: 8. CPR president Beatty's remarks during the opening ceremonies of the Royal York, that the hotel project had been contemplated since the war, confirm William Dendy's conjecture that the Toronto hotel was intended to compliment Union Station from the start, much like the Chateau Laurier and Union Station in Ottawa. Dendy, and Kilbourn, Toronto Observed: 213

¹⁸³ In August 1926, Ross & Macdonald drew up preliminary sketches for a large Toronto hotel, probably the twenty-storey Hotel Commodore. The client is unknown, and the building was never executed.

¹⁸⁴ In Toronto, the work of Henry Sproatt (1866-1934) and Ernest Rolph (1871-1958), who specialized in collegiate Gothic architecture, included Hart House and Soldier's Tower (1912-25) for the University of Toronto, and the Canada Life Assurance Company Building (1929-30). Robert Hill, Macmillian Dictionary of Architects, Toronto: 118.

that had evolved, like so many other nineteenth-century Canadian hotels, from a succession of houses and hotels.¹⁸⁵ The location was advantageous for its proximity to the city's business and financial district on King Street, the Ontario Legislative Buildings in Queen's Park, and the main commercial avenue of Yonge Street. Moreover, Toronto Union Station was located just across the street on Front, and would be linked to the hotel by a tunnel.¹⁸⁶ According to a contemporary critic, the combined Union Station and Royal York Hotel gave that section of Front Street a flavour of New York's Seventh Avenue, as he compared the Toronto ensemble to McKim, Mead & White's Pennsylvania Station, built in 1906-10, and Pennsylvania Hotel, completed opposite the station in 1919.¹⁸⁷ The comparison is favourable, and quite apt, between the two Roman classical-revival train stations, but is off the mark when the writer claims that with the Royal York, "we have outdone New York."¹⁸⁸ Failing to look beyond New York's two major railway hotels, the Pennsylvania and the even earlier Commodore Hotel (built by Warren & Wetmore over Grand

¹⁸⁵ The Queen's Hotel began as a row of four, three-storey dwellings called Ontario Terrace. It became the Sword's Hotel in 1853, the Revere House in 1959, and the Queen's in 1862. Guillet, vol I: 194-6.

¹⁸⁶ Toronto Union Station was begun in 1912 by Ross & Macdonald in association with John M. Lyle and CPR architect Hugh Griffith Jones (1872-1947). The station was finally declared finished in August 1927, although it was not fully functional until 1930. Douglas Richardson, "A Blessed Sense of Civic Excess: The Architecture of Toronto Union Station, in The Open Gate: Toronto Union Station, ed. Richard Bébout, Toronto: Peter Martin associates, 1972: 67-95.

¹⁸⁷ Sinaiticus, "The Royal York Hotel, Toronto," Construction (July 1929): 212.

¹⁸⁸ Idem.

Central Station in 1913), the critic neglected to consider the skyscraper hotels of the 'twenties.

Resting on a granite plinth and completely faced with Indiana limestone, the twenty-eight storey Royal York Hotel was comprised of a rectangular base, with H-planned storeys above, and an extended tower through the middle section which culminated in a pitched roof. (fig. 41) As with the Hotel Saskatchewan, the distinctive pyramidal massing and prominent set-backs of the Royal York were drawn from the mould of the Shelton Hotel, and, as was also the case with the Regina hotel, the Toronto hotel was bulkier and lacked the upward thrust of its American counterpart, although both of these truncated, broad-shouldered buildings still created impressive, "modern" silhouettes on their respective city skylines for years to come.¹⁸⁹

The detailing of the Royal York Hotel predominately followed the same Venetian Gothic and Romanesque mode as the Shelton Hotel. In both buildings, the decorative elements were concentrated at the upper and lower storeys, with extensive wall surfaces in between left untreated. The most prevalent and unifying detail in the Royal York was the biforate Lombard window (practically identical to those in the Shelton), consisting of two semi-circular heads separated by a slender colonette mullion and framed by two

¹⁸⁹ Another prominent Canadian example of the pyramidal skyscraper hotel was the third Hotel Vancouver, begun for the CNR by Archibald & Schofield in 1928 but only completed in 1939. This building was very similar to the Royal York in its massing.

twisted columns at the jambs. (figs. 42, 43) These windows were grouped into medieval arcades in the middle sections of the base and upper storeys, respectively fronting the hotel's ballroom and roof garden restaurant. Other detailing common to both the Toronto and New York hotels included vertical cable mouldings at the corners of the buildings, machicolations, foliated capitals, ornamental band courses, acroteria, and a multitude of gargoyles and animals. In the manner of the *château* style and the neo-Georgian of the previous hotels, the Venetian Gothic references were probably meant to recall a type of historic luxury residence, the Venetian palace of the sixteenth century. However, beginning with the Regina hotel, the design emphasis shifted predominately to the building's larger geometric and abstract forms, considerably weakening the ornament's power for association.

Some of the ornamental motifs in the Royal York's low-relief wall panels stemmed from nature such as flowers and grain and were stylized to the point where they resembled the new, reductive, "art moderne" designs. (fig. 44) Other panels display geometric patterns formed from lozenges, diamonds, and chevrons that were even more art deco in spirit. (fig. 45) Moreover, the characteristic feature of projecting piers, which would be used to give art deco buildings an emphatic sense of verticality, and which appeared in the Shelton, was modestly employed in the Royal York. Boldly crowned with stylized palmettes, these sets of piers projected over the parapets of the hotel's highest

setback, with another set extending past the eaves of the crested copper roof.¹⁹⁰ (fig. 46) The roof construction itself, with the steep pitch, huge chimney, and dormer windows, neatly recalled the roofs of the earlier château style railway hotels.¹⁹¹

For the most part, contemporary writers considered the Royal York Hotel's exterior an unqualified success; the general arrangement of the massive forms and the composition and detailing of the tower stories were particularly praised. However, some criticism was expressed concerning the sparseness of the main façade and the Gothic hood labels over the windows.¹⁹² Part of the problem with the Venetian-Gothic details may have been due to the architect's increasing tendency, after the mid-twenties, to apply similar ornament to many of their buildings in an almost indiscriminate manner. In Montreal, Ross & Macdonald's Eaton's Store (1925-27), Dominion Square Building (1928-29), and Hermes Building (1927) with its annex (1930), all displayed many of the same Gothic-romanesque motifs as the Royal York. Furthermore, most of the hotel's exterior ornament was under-scaled and was either lost against the vast wall surfaces or was too high up for its intricacies to be appreciated. By

¹⁹⁰ Buildings by Ross & Macdonald that are more completely art deco in design include the Tramways Building, built in 1928-29, and the Architect's Building, constructed in 1929-30 (dem.), both in Montreal. One of the firm's first "streamline modern" buildings was Maple Leaf Gardens, built in Toronto in 1931.

¹⁹¹ Kalman, The Railway Hotels,: 21.

¹⁹² Gladstone Evans. "A Stately and Impressive Structure", Contract Record and Engineering Review (12 June 1929): 659.

comparison, as paper-thin and pasted-on as the Hotel Saskatchewan's ornament appeared, it was still sufficiently well proportioned and positioned to enhance the building's imposing presence.

As large as the Royal York Hotel was, it still lagged behind American hotels of the period, especially those in Chicago. Two of the largest hotels in the world were built in that city between 1925-27 by Holabird & Roche. The twenty-five storey third Palmer House Hotel contained 2,200 rooms and cost \$20 million, while the Stevens Hotel, also twenty-five storeys, housed three-thousand rooms and cost \$17 million. The incredibly complex plans of these two buildings accommodated a considerable amount of commercial space; the Palmer House had "250,000 square feet of renting area distributed over the whole ground floor and over four additional floors on the principal retail street of the city,"¹⁹³ while the Stevens Hotel was designed specifically as a huge convention centre. Both of these giant hotels attracted abundant attention nation-wide, and as Canadian Pacific officials "searched the globe for designs and ideas"¹⁹⁴ for the Royal York, it is certain that they visited Chicago and members of Ross & MacDonald's office accompanied them. In May 1927 a draftsman of the firm executed a measured plan and a detail drawing of a

¹⁹³ Architect John W. Root, quoted from an article in The Architect (July 1926): 417-18, in Robert Brueggemann, Holabird & Roche/Holabird & Root, vol. II (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1991):

¹⁹⁴ CRER, 12 June 1929: 655.

standard bedroom in the Palmer House.¹⁹⁵

What the Montreal architects did not borrow from the Chicago hotels, however, was their complicated layouts. In the Royal York, the plans of the two principle street level floors were essentially drawn from the Mount Royal Hotel, simplified and superbly reworked for clarity and efficiency. The Royal York's ground floor plan was divided in two along its longitudinal axis, with the coffee shop, grill room, elevators, kitchen and services placed to the rear of the building. (fig. 47) The other half of the plan was occupied by the equivalent of an indoor shopping mall, which was arranged around a central hall, and two arcade corridors of commercial shops and a bank. The inclusion of an exhibition hall on this floor was probably inspired by the Stevens Hotel.

The Royal York's main floor plan improved upon the Mount Royal's by moving the café to the right rear corner of the building in order to enlarge the kitchen and services area. (fig. 48) Otherwise, the major spaces were similarly organized; the Royal York's rectangular lobby ordered the plan by instituting a processional direction along its longitudinal axis, up a short series of steps into a large lounge (taking the place of two smaller rooms in the Mount Royal's plan), which in turn led up more steps to an even larger main dining room. Each of these formal public spaces were of double height, columned, and elaborately decorated with oak woodwork, travertine walls and

¹⁹⁵ Ross & Macdonald Archive, project #13-120.

stairs, terrazzo floors, ornamental ironwork, and painted coffers in the beamed concrete ceiling.

Above the hotel's main mezzanine was a symmetrically-planned convention room floor containing three principle public rooms which altogether could seat three thousand people -- the concert or convention hall (with a stage and a huge pipe organ), the ball room, and the banquet hall. (fig. 49) Because these rooms were columnless, a network of supporting steel trusses were built above into the first two guest room floors in order to support the immense weight of the upper storeys. The H-planned fourth to sixteenth floors housed the hotel's 1,100 bedrooms, whose standard design may have been influenced by the research conducted in the Palmer House Hotel. Apart from the luxurious and prestigious Vice-Regal suites, the Royal York contained fourteen special suites, each designed in an exotic fashion: Venetian, Jacobean, Chinese, Russian, Louis XVI, and Art Moderne, among others. Behind the uppermost arcade of windows on the twenty-second floor was a two-storey roof garden restaurant.

The Royal York Hotel was an extraordinary monument to the grand hotel tradition in Canada, but like its counterparts in the United States, it was also something of an anachronism by the early 1930s. For the CPR, the hotel was their architectural crown jewel and a symbol of the company's determination to out-compete the CNR to remain Canada's foremost railway

company.¹⁹⁶ For Ross & Macdonald, it was the culmination of their extensive experience in hotel design; it allowed the designers full expression of their ability to organize functionally, plan, and decorate an impressive hotel structure in the Beaux-Arts manner. But the Royal York was one of the last of its kind: within a decade, not only the Beaux-Arts influence in North America, but the grand hotel tradition would be practically extinct. Only four months after the Royal York Hotel opened, the Stock Market crash ushered in the Great Depression, and large hotels were never built in quite the way same again.

¹⁹⁶ Both the Hotel Saskatchewan and the Royal York Hotel were originally planned to accommodate large additions at a future date. Only the Royal York was successful enough to merit an enlargement, which was carried out between 1956-59 by Ross, Patterson, Townsend & Fish.

7. THE LAST HOTEL AND CONCLUSION

THE LORD ELGIN HOTEL

The Depression effectively ended the golden era of the grand hotel in Canada and in the United States. The mammoth, 2,200 room "new" Waldorf-Astoria Hotel by Schultz & Weaver was opened in New York in 1931, but after that no significant hotel was constructed in America until the Washington Statler was completed in 1943 by Holabird & Root. (fig. 50) During the Depression, four-fifths of the country's hotels went bankrupt, and of the five large hotel companies, only the Statler chain survived intact. Despite widespread misgivings about the viability of the large-scale grand hotel-type, the Washington Statler succeeded primarily because the corporation's efficient and economical approach to hotel construction and management perfectly complimented the new architectural ideas of the Bauhaus which were incorporated into this hotel.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ "Hotels", Encyclopedia of Architecture, Design, Engineering & Construction. vol.2. Joseph Wilkes, ed. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1988. The Washington Statler's large public rooms were multi-functional and incorporated virtually no ornamental detailing. "Washington Statler," Architectural Forum 78 (June 1943): 61-76.

The Washington Statler was begun in 1941, when accommodation in the American capital was drastically insufficient to house the multitudes of political and military bureaucrats preparing for the nation's entry into the war. That same year, Ross & Macdonald built a large economy hotel, the Lord Elgin, in Ottawa for similar reasons, but due to government involvement, the firm's inclinations, and the client's agenda, the result bore no resemblance to the International style Statler.

Even before the Wall Street crash, the writing had been on the wall for the traditional luxury hotel. In 1928 the Albert-Pick Barth Company, an American supplier of hotel equipment and furnishings, published Hotel Planning and Outfitting, a comprehensive book that was intended to guide promoters and architects in economical and successful hotel ventures. In the book, the writer wonders why the functional distribution of space in a hotel was not analyzed more frequently on a cubic foot basis (which took into account the height of the rooms as well as the width and length), in order to reduce the financially non-productive areas.¹⁹⁸ These areas were first and foremost the public rooms:

The provision of clubrooms, ballrooms, private dining rooms and other space for which the income must be derived through local, social and fraternal activities is a dangerous problem ... As a rule, unless the demand is clearly evident or long term leases are offered, it is better to omit this kind of space. Food service in this kind of space is rarely

¹⁹⁸ Stanley C. Taylor, and Vincent R. Bliss, eds. Hotel Planning and Outfitting. Chicago: Albert Pick-Barth Co., 1928: 28.

profitable ...¹⁹⁹

The Pick-Barth book was probably written in response to the hotel boom which occurred in the United States during the 1920s. Many of these American hotels were planned much the same as the grand hotels of the previous century, with extravagant public spaces, high-ceiling guest rooms, tons of expensive materials, excessive ornament, and poorly planned utility areas.²⁰⁰

One small hotel company founded in 1927 whose mandate was to create a chain of economic, no-frills hotels similar to Statler's was Ford Hotels Inc. Starting with two hotels, one in Rochester and one in Buffalo, owner Richard T. Ford doubled his chain in 1928 with the construction of hotels in Erie, Pennsylvania, and Toronto, and then followed up with the Ford Hotel in Montreal in 1929-30. All of these buildings were designed by Rochester architect J. Foster Warner (1859-1937).²⁰¹ Except for the earliest hotel in Rochester, built in 1915, Warner established a standard design for the other Ford Hotels which consisted of a two-level base of main floor and mezzanine, with either U-planned (Erie), or E-planned (Buffalo, Toronto, Montreal) upper storeys of brick, with the courts open to the street and virtually no exterior

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. 30.

²⁰⁰ Encyclopedia: 803.

²⁰¹ Withey: 634. The Ford Hotel in Montreal is still standing at the corner of René Levesque Boulevard and Bishop Street. It was sold to the Canadian Broadcasting Company in 1950, and is now a commercial and office rental building.

ornament. (fig. 51)

Ford's intent to build more hotels was thwarted by the economic recession. In the late 'thirties, the company came under the directorship of John C. Udd, a structural engineer who was recruited out of the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburg, in 1927 for the company's first expansion.²⁰² In early 1940, Udd prepared for a second expansion phase following an invitation by the city of Ottawa, which was desperate for both housing and hotels. Because of the ever enlarging federal civil service, Ottawa had continued to grow even during the Depression, and with the outbreak of war with Germany in September 1939, the additional influx of personnel made the dearth of accommodation critical.

In May, 1940, Udd wrote to Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King concerning "the matter of obtaining the location most suitable for the hotel-site."²⁰³ Prime Minister King was taking a close personal interest in the federal government's public works program for Ottawa, initiated in 1935, which had already produced the new Central Post Office by W.E. Noffke and the Supreme Court Building by Ernest Cormier. Part of the program also involved

²⁰² John C. Udd (1902-1962), patented a type of wall construction in 1932 that he developed for the Ford Hotel in Montreal. My thanks to his son, John E. Udd, for information about his father, the Ford Hotel Co., and the Lord Elgin Hotel.

²⁰³ Udd had already met with the Prime Minister about the hotel three times by this date. Letter from J.C. Udd to the Right Honourable W.L. Mackenzie King, May 9th, 1940. Courtesy of John E. Udd.

the widening of Elgin Street as a ceremonial route to the soon-to-be-erected War Memorial on Confederation Square. By July, the site of the proposed hotel was confirmed for government expropriated land on Elgin Street, between Slater and Laurier Streets. The location was in the heart of Ottawa, within easy walking distance of the Parliament Buildings.

However, King had a say over more than just the location of the hotel. The Prime Minister had already been instrumental in seeing that the classical-style new Central Post Office and Supreme Court Building were both constructed with high-pitched, château style roofs.²⁰⁴ Although J. Foster Warner had died in 1937, an early sketch of the proposed hotel shows a building in keeping with the standard Ford Hotel design developed by this architect.²⁰⁵ (fig. 52) However, the proposal's stripped down, modern look did not suit the Prime Minister, who favoured a traditionally ornamented, stone-faced building.²⁰⁶ It is not certain when Ross & Macdonald became the architects of the project, but they likely were chosen because the firm had already designed the Château Laurier Hotel, which was much admired in government circles.

Excavations for the Lord Elgin Hotel were begun in the early fall of

²⁰⁴ Kalman: 25-6.

²⁰⁵ Donald Blakeslee, the current manager of the Lord Elgin Hotel, told me that the drawing was of the original proposal for the hotel. It is not known who the architects of the proposal were.

²⁰⁶ Letter from Udd to King.

1940, and the working drawings were executed in January of the following year. Over the steel frame of the building, the walls were constructed of concrete cinder blocks faced with a combination of Queenston limestone and Deschambault stone set in random courses. The hotel was designed in association with Ottawa architect William Caven Beattie (1886-1945), and was completed in ten months despite the war-time shortages of men and materials. The Lord Elgin opened on 19 July 1941.²⁰⁷

Costing \$1.3 million (the Château Laurier cost \$2 million in 1912), the twelve-storey Lord Elgin was an economy hotel in the Ford hotels tradition, despite its un-Ford-like appearance. (fig. 53) Similar to the Hotel Saskatchewan and the Royal York Hotel, the Lord Elgin was designed with the same type of setbacks, H-planned guest room storeys, and extended middle block topped with a pitched copper roof, although this last element was more elaborate than in the two previous hotels. Instead of a rectangle, the one-storey base was laid out in a truncated U-plan, with the recessed middle section occupied by a porte-cochère over the main entrance. (fig. 54)

Referred to in the contemporary press as "Norman," in style, the Lord Elgin was a continuation of the 1920s mode of Modern Classicism, although by this time it was seriously out of date. The building's simplified French

²⁰⁷ Beattie was responsible for the small Cornwallis Hotel, in Cornwall, Ontario, and the Chateau Huntingdon, in Huntingdon, Quebec, both built during the twenties. "Associate Architect is Ottawa Man," Ottawa Journal, 19 July 1941, p. 7B.

Renaissance detailing consists primarily of strips of flattened oriel windows, stretching upwards to break the cornice line with either rounded or pointed peaks. Otherwise the walls of the hotel are mainly bare, except for a few pseudo-balconies, decorative wall panels and spandrels, and dentils under the plain blocking courses. The broken skyline, created by three interlocking pitched roofs enlivened by stylized dormers and finials, and the building's pleasing proportions lent the Lord Elgin enough distinction to make the hotel an instant Ottawa landmark.

It is ironic that the first and last hotels by the Montreal firm were in built in the same city and that both, to a certain extent, were not completely designed by them. Much of the interior of the Lord Elgin was fitted according to the principles of the Ford Hotel company, rather than being custom-designed by the architects. However, one space that Ross & Macdonald did design, surprisingly in a streamline modern style, was the oak-paneled, walnut and marble lobby, which dominated the main floor. (figs. 55, 56) The hotel's dining room in the north wing was by an architect employed by Murray's Lunch Limited, who operated it as a conventional restaurant.²⁰⁸ The south wing contained a barber shop, beauty parlour, and committee room for business gatherings, which could seat "at least" one-hundred people. In the basement, along with the mechanical equipment, staff rooms and a small kitchen, were men's and ladies' beverage rooms, which were separate probably because of

²⁰⁸ The architect was C.D. Goodman. "'At Home' Atmosphere Featured in Hotel Dining Room," Ottawa Journal (19 July 1941).

Ford hotel policy. There were no other public rooms in the hotel and no mezzanine.

The remainder of the Lord Elgin Hotel was occupied by 378 standard-sized guest rooms that measured ten by fourteen feet, all with private baths. The original Château Laurier, which cost twice as much as the Lord Elgin (in 1912 dollars), contained 302 bedrooms measuring twelve by fifteen feet on the average, but only 155 had baths. The Château Laurier employed a staff of 325: The Lord Elgin, 225. Ross & MacFarlane's first hotel was in the grand tradition, where resplendent public rooms for social functions were a higher priority than efficiency of operation or the convenience of the guest rooms. Thirty years later, constructed during a time of rationing rather than a time of plenty, Ross & Macdonald's last hotel was comprised of purely functional spaces established on the criteria of meeting the minimum needs of the individual guest. In the Lord Elgin, the absence of stately social areas was compensated for by placing a radio in every guest room.

In the December 1941 issue of the JRAIC, an article entitled "Hotel Planning" was published by Robert Macdonald, accompanied by photographs of the Lord Elgin Hotel and its floor plans.²⁰⁹ In the article, Macdonald discusses the requirements pertaining to a "City Hotel," but he does not specify the Lord Elgin. There is a note of ambivalence at the beginning of the essay, where the

²⁰⁹ Robert H. Macdonald, "Hotel Planning," JRAIC 18 (December 1941): 198-99.

architect states that he hopes the outline "will not only be of interest to the reader, but lead to intelligent inquiry on the problems involved." It is likely that the "problems involved" concerned the interior of the Lord Elgin, because the outline reads more like a client brief from Ford Hotels than anything else. The article is divided into an order of priorities within which are the policies innovated or followed by Ford Hotels, such as setting apart an entire hotel floor for women.²¹⁰ With all of his experience with hotel architecture, Macdonald clearly had definite ideas on hotel planning, and they would surely have conflicted with those of Udd.

While the Washington Statler marked the end of the traditional grand hotel in the United States, the Lord Elgin was an indicator of the era's slower decline in Canada. Ford Hotels built two more projects in Canada -- the huge, 1,100-room Laurentian Hotel in Montreal in 1946-48, and the much smaller 160-room Lord Beaverbrooke in Fredericton in 1947-48 -- just before the company was absorbed into Sheraton Hotels when Udd became the president of the chain in 1950. Leaving the historically styled Lord Elgin behind, the Laurentian Hotel was a sleek, stone and aluminium clad, set-back skyscraper. The hotel was twenty-three stories high, as large as the Royal York, but was designed on the principle that "today's hotel guest is not so interested in vast lobbies, great and ornate public rooms and a forest of potted palms as he is in

²¹⁰ This feature began with the Ford Hotel in Erie. "Innovations Announced by Ford Hotel; Particular Attention Will Be Paid to Women Travelling Alone," Erie Dispatch-Herald, 23 April 1928: 22.

a comfortable, homelike room to stay in."²¹¹ An important part of the equation that was crucial to defining and developing the grand hotel style, the eagerness of the guests to socialize amid old world luxury, was no longer being catered to. The International Style hotel arrived in Montreal in 1958, when the twenty-one storey Queen Elizabeth Hotel was completed by CNR architects, with Holabird & Root as consultants.²¹²

The achievement of Ross & MacFarlane and Ross & Macdonald in Canadian hotel building was considerable. After the grand hotel type was imported into Canada by American architects, the Montreal firm took up and perpetuated the style with quality buildings imbued with the appropriate spirit and taste. Their eight large hotels were the most designed by a single Canadian office. Ross, MacFarlane, and Macdonald gave seven Canadian cities major, landmark buildings, frequently as their first grand hotel. All the firm's hotels admirably fulfilled their purpose not only by supplying much needed accommodation in rapidly growing Canadian cities, but also by providing elegantly designed facilities to meet the demands of the social life of the citizenry.

The architectural background and training of Ross, MacFarlane, and

²¹¹ Wally, "Opening of the New Laurentian Hotel Broadens Montreal's Hospitality," The Montrealer 22 (April 1948): 16. The hotel was built by architects Amos & Amos and has since been demolished.

²¹² The architects were George Drummond, Harold Greensides and John Wood. Cloutier, Albert, "The Queen Elizabeth Hotel," JRAIC 35 (July 1958).

Macdonald prepared them well for the task of designing large buildings. As hotel specialists they were the Canadian equivalent of the great American hotel architects like George Post, Henry Hardenbergh, Warren & Wetmore, and Holabird & Roche. Although not particularly innovative, the Montreal firm's hotels were certainly on par with the best of contemporary American hotel building; they were soundly built, well disposed on their sites, skillfully planned, and always fitted with the most up-to-date equipment. All possessed attractive exteriors which were restrained and tasteful, if not exceptionally striking. Perhaps the greatest testimony to the quality of the hotels of Ross & MacFarlane and Ross & Macdonald is that after more than half a century, all eight of the buildings are still standing, all of them are highly regarded in their respective cities, and all are recognized as an important part of Canada's architectural history.

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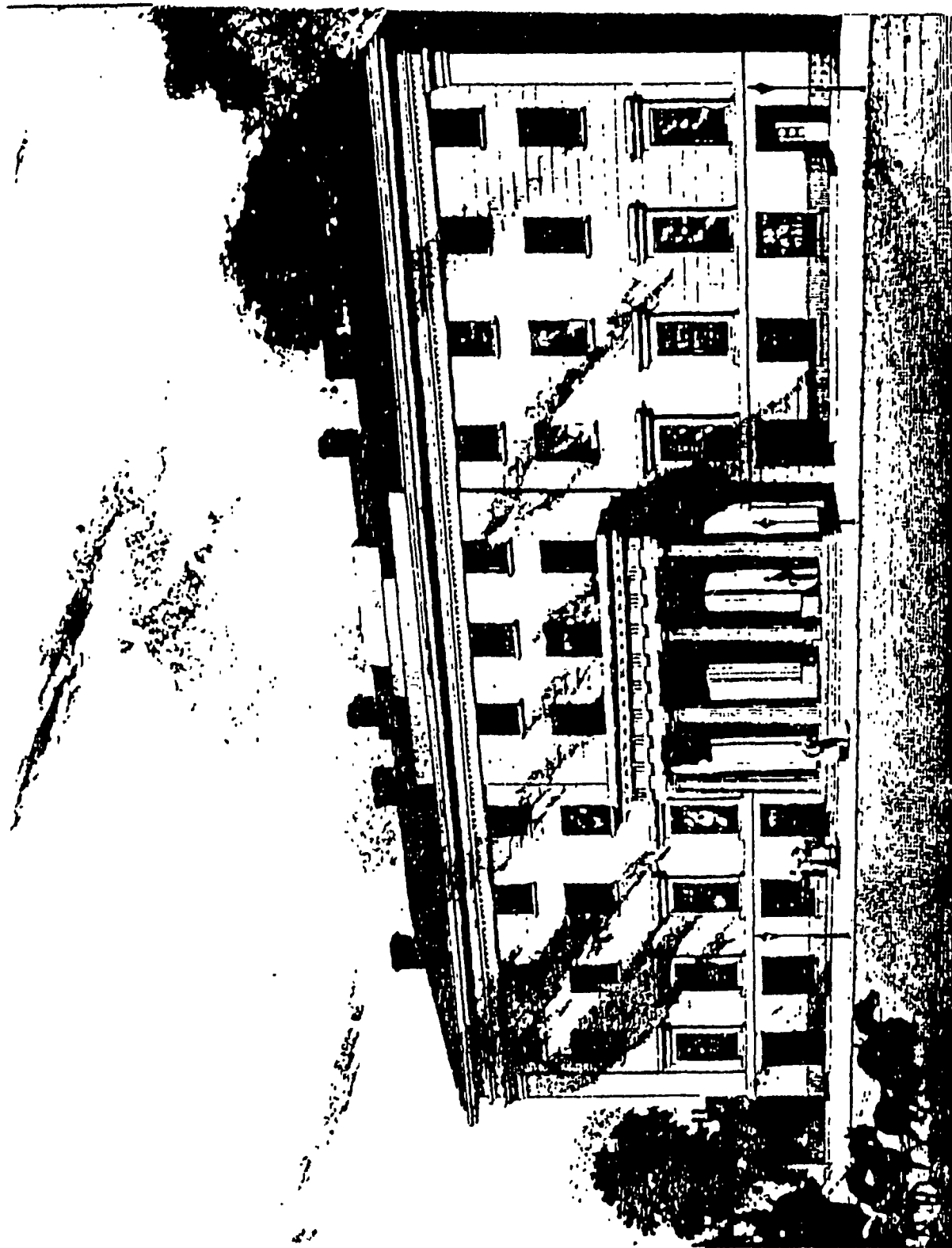


Fig. 1. Isaiah Rogers. Tremont House, Boston (1827-30).

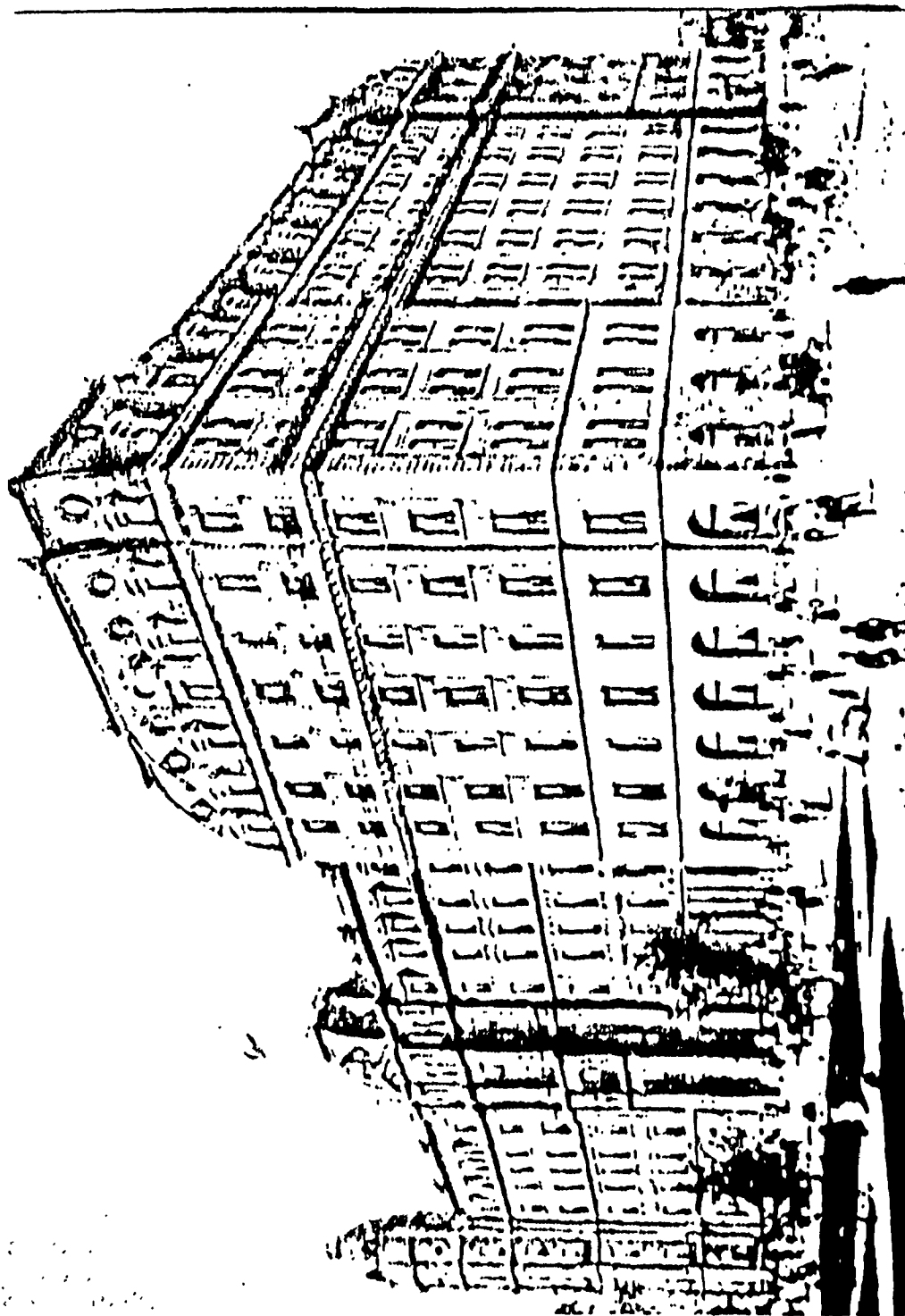


Fig. 2. William Boyington. Windsor Hotel, Montreal (1875-78, also showing the annex completed in 1908 by H. Hardenbergh and B.L. Gilbert.



Fig. 3. Bruce Price. Château Frontenac Hotel, Quebec City (1892-93).

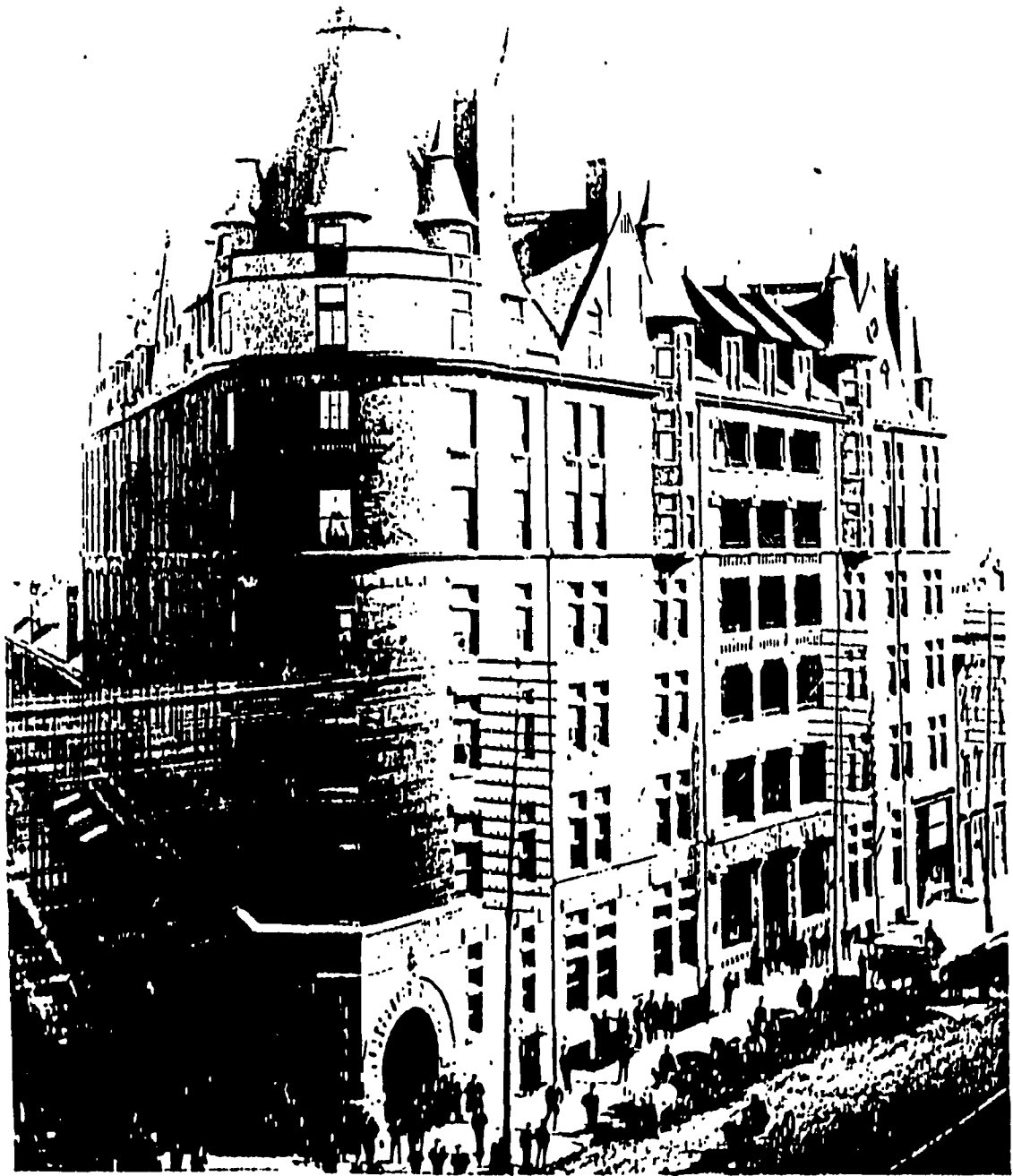


Fig. 4. Charles Joy. Manitoba Hotel and Station, Winnipeg (1891-92).

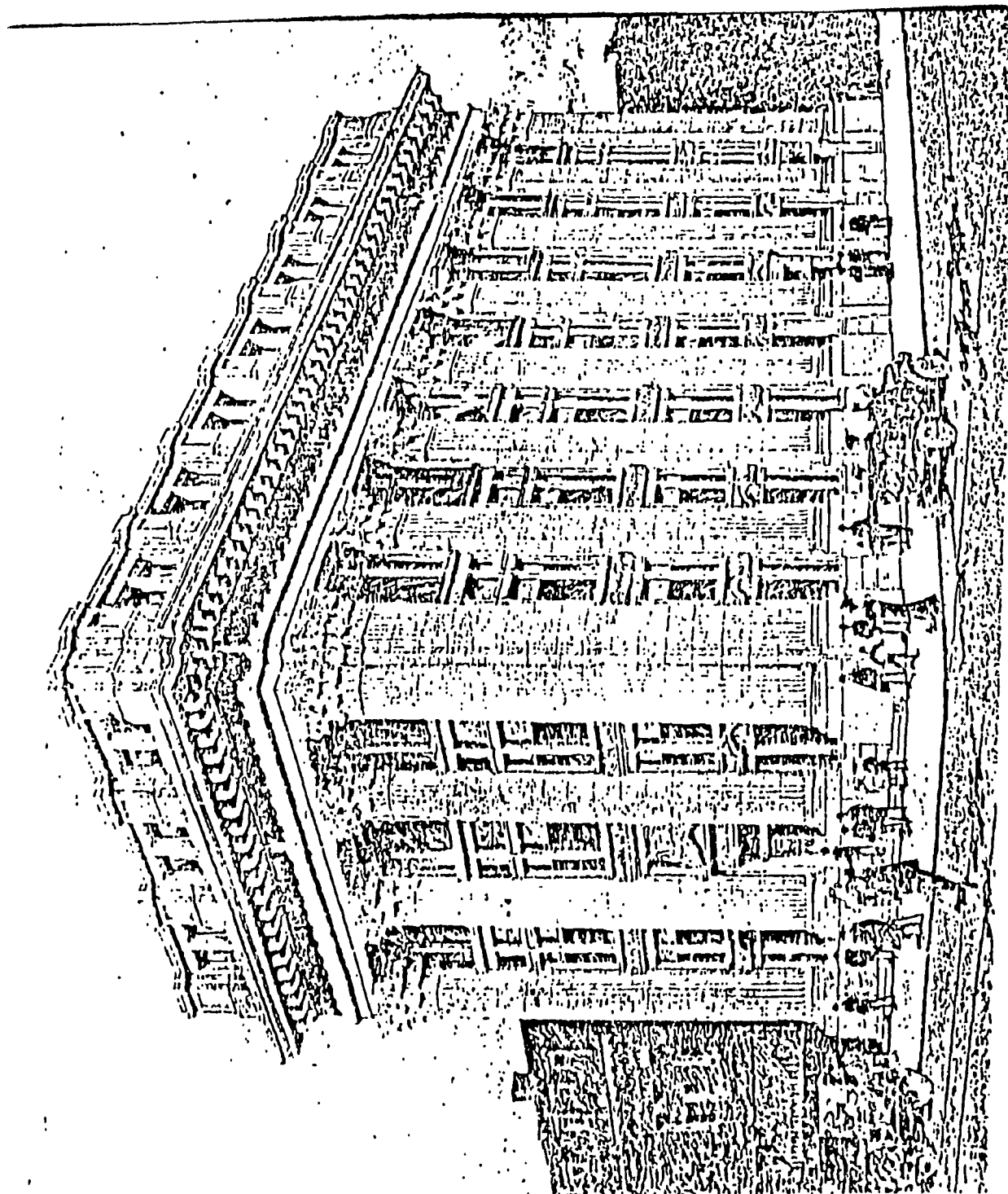
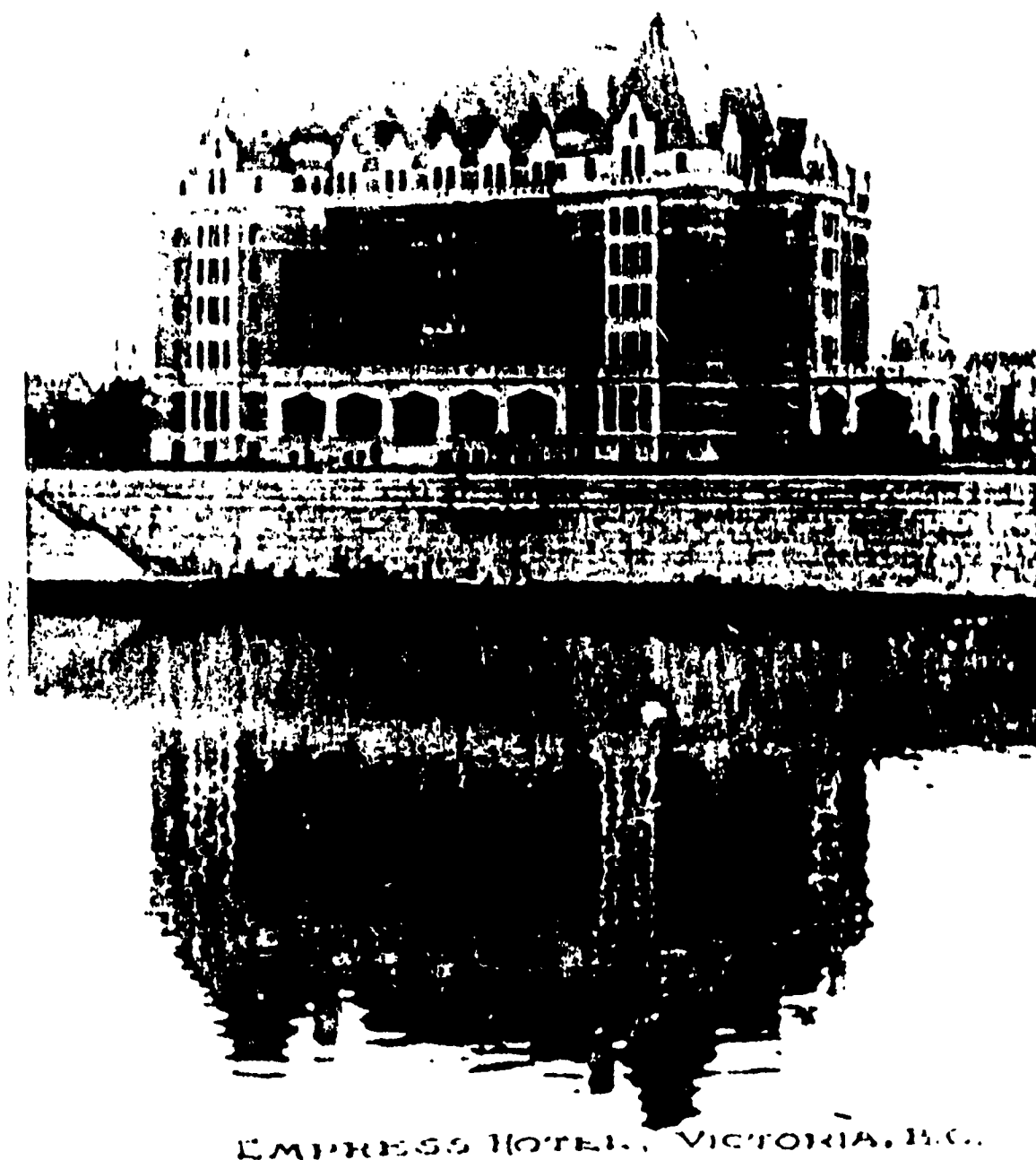


Fig. 5. Ross & MacFarlane. Perspective drawing of the Bank of Toronto, Montreal (1907-1908)



EMPRESS HOTEL, VICTORIA, B.C.

Fig. 6. Francis Rattenbury. Empress Hotel, Victoria (1904.08).

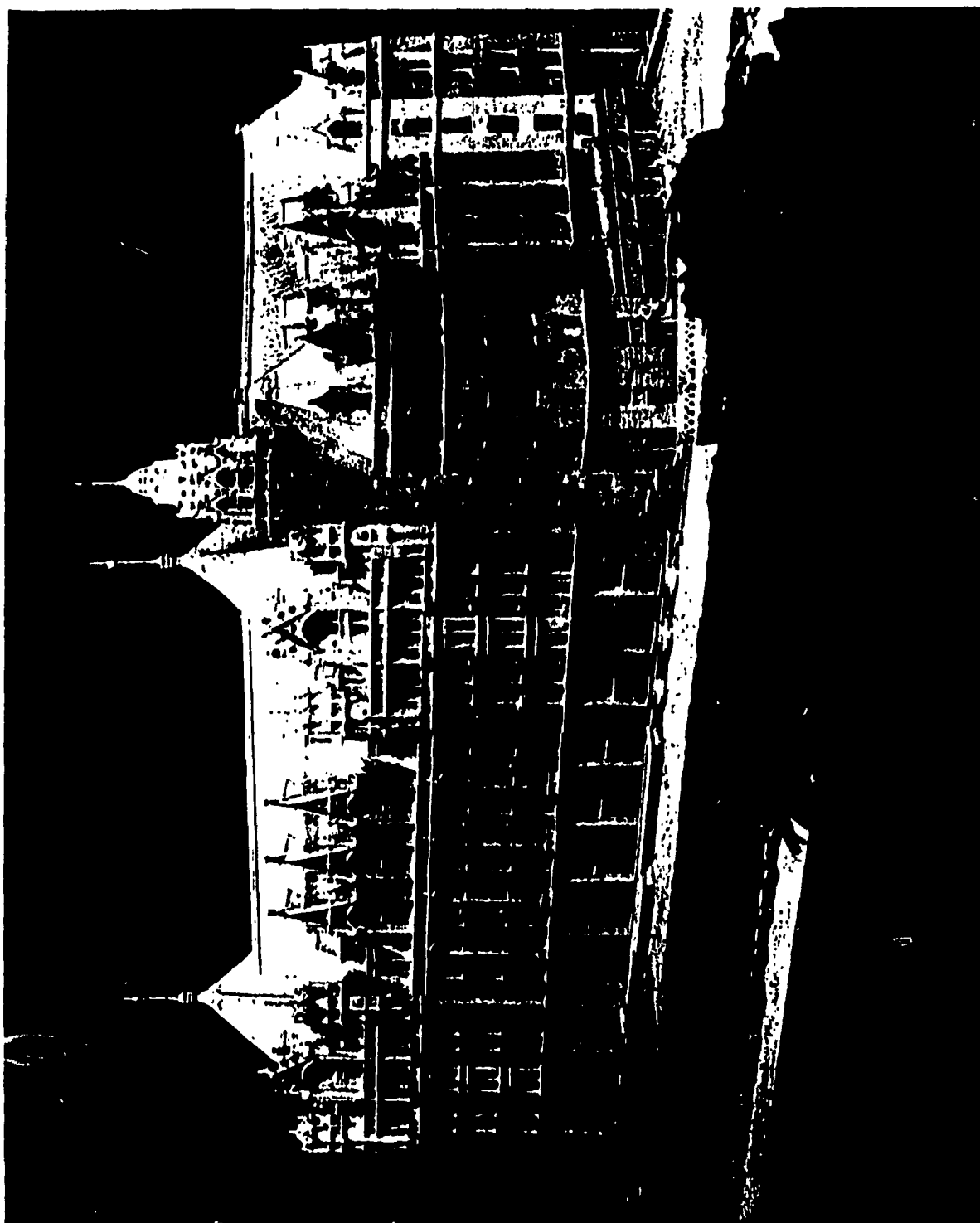


Fig. 7. Bradford Lee Gilbert. Plaster model for Grand Trunk Hotel, Ottawa (ca. 1907).

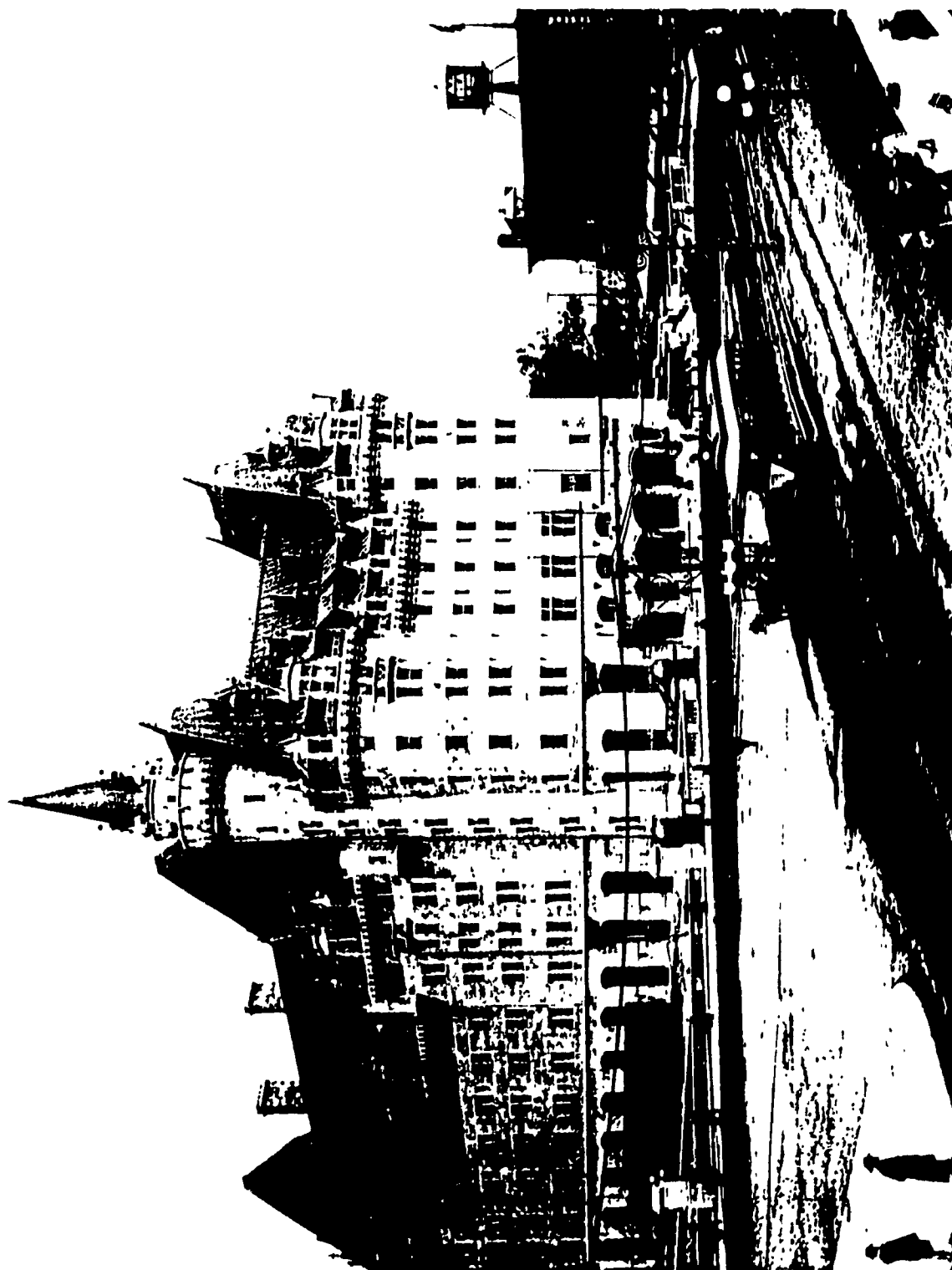


Fig. 8. Ross & MacFarlane. Château Laurier Hotel, Ottawa (1909-12).



Fig. 9. Artist unknown. Perspective drawing showing (left to right) Parliament Buildings, Post Office, Chateau Laurier Hotel, Central Union Passenger Station (ca. 1912).

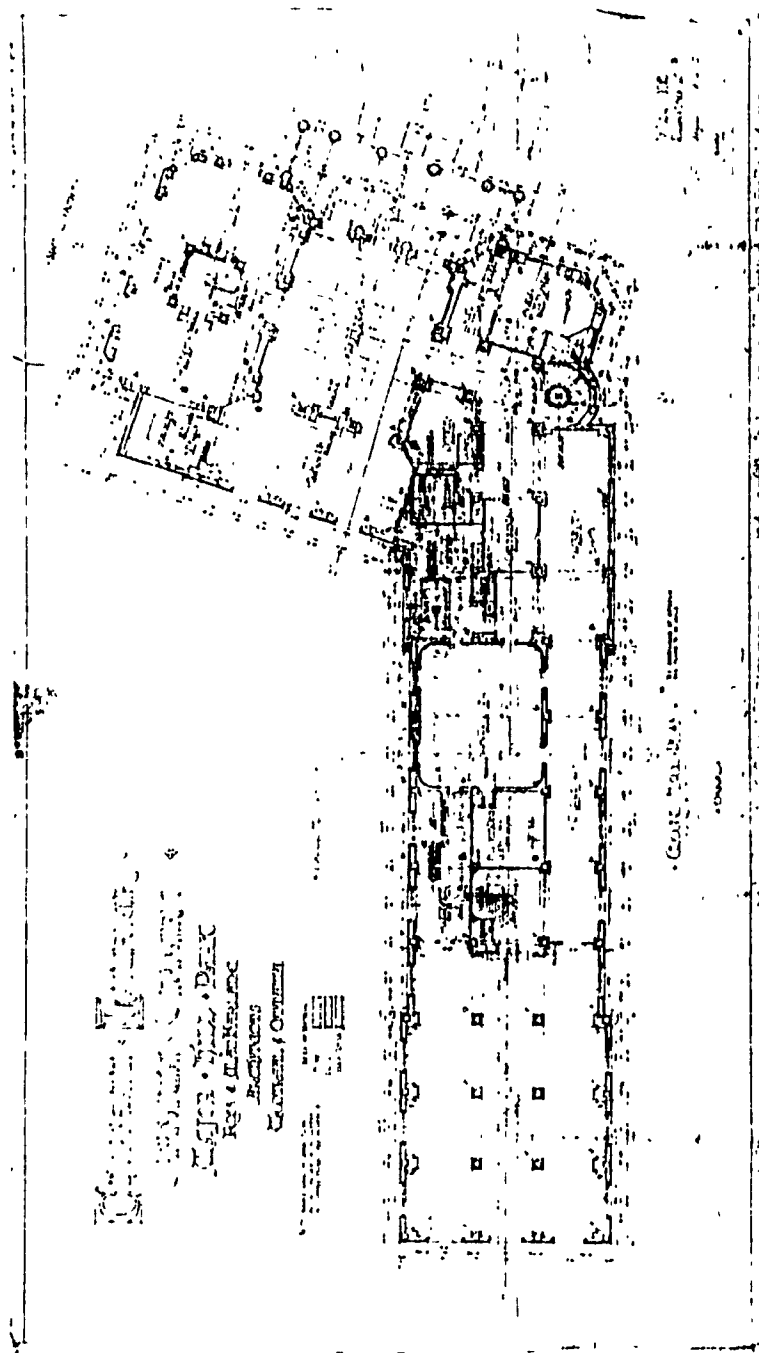


Fig. 10. Château Laurier Hotel. Main floor plan.

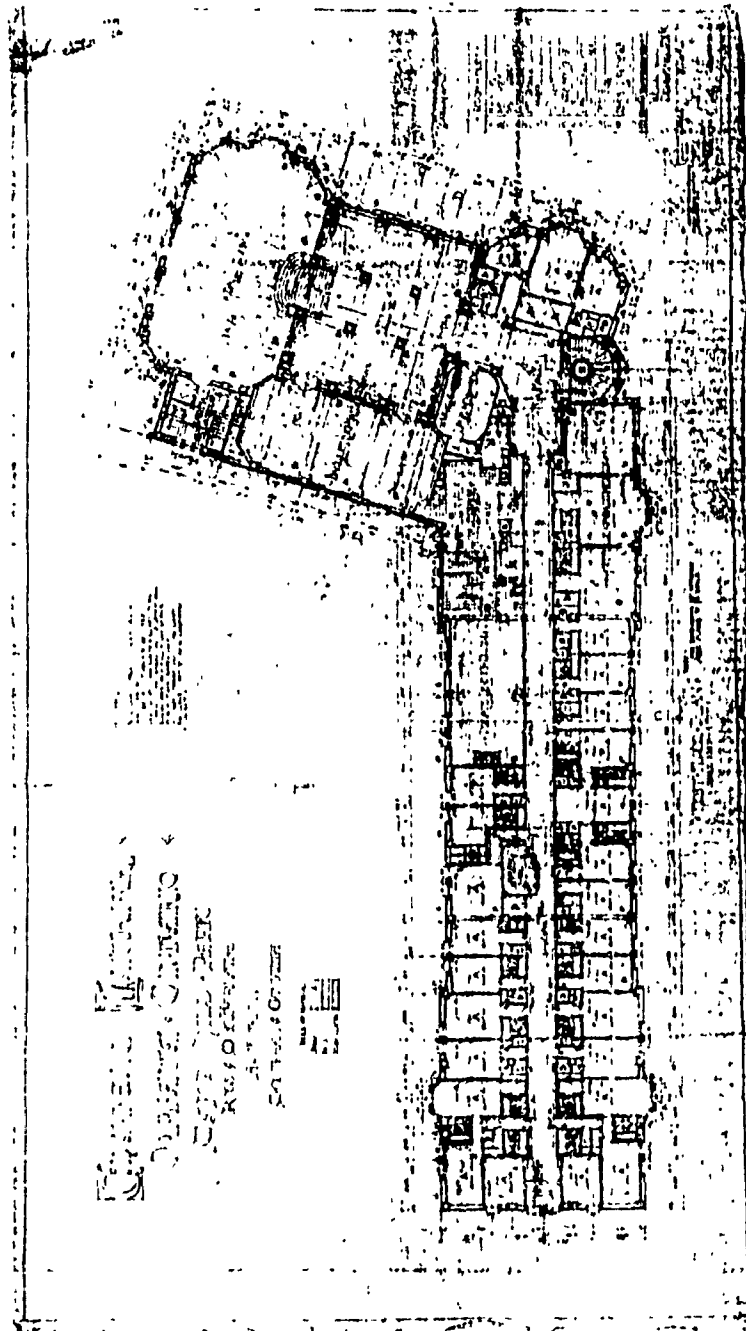


Fig. 12. Château Laurier Hotel. First floor plan.

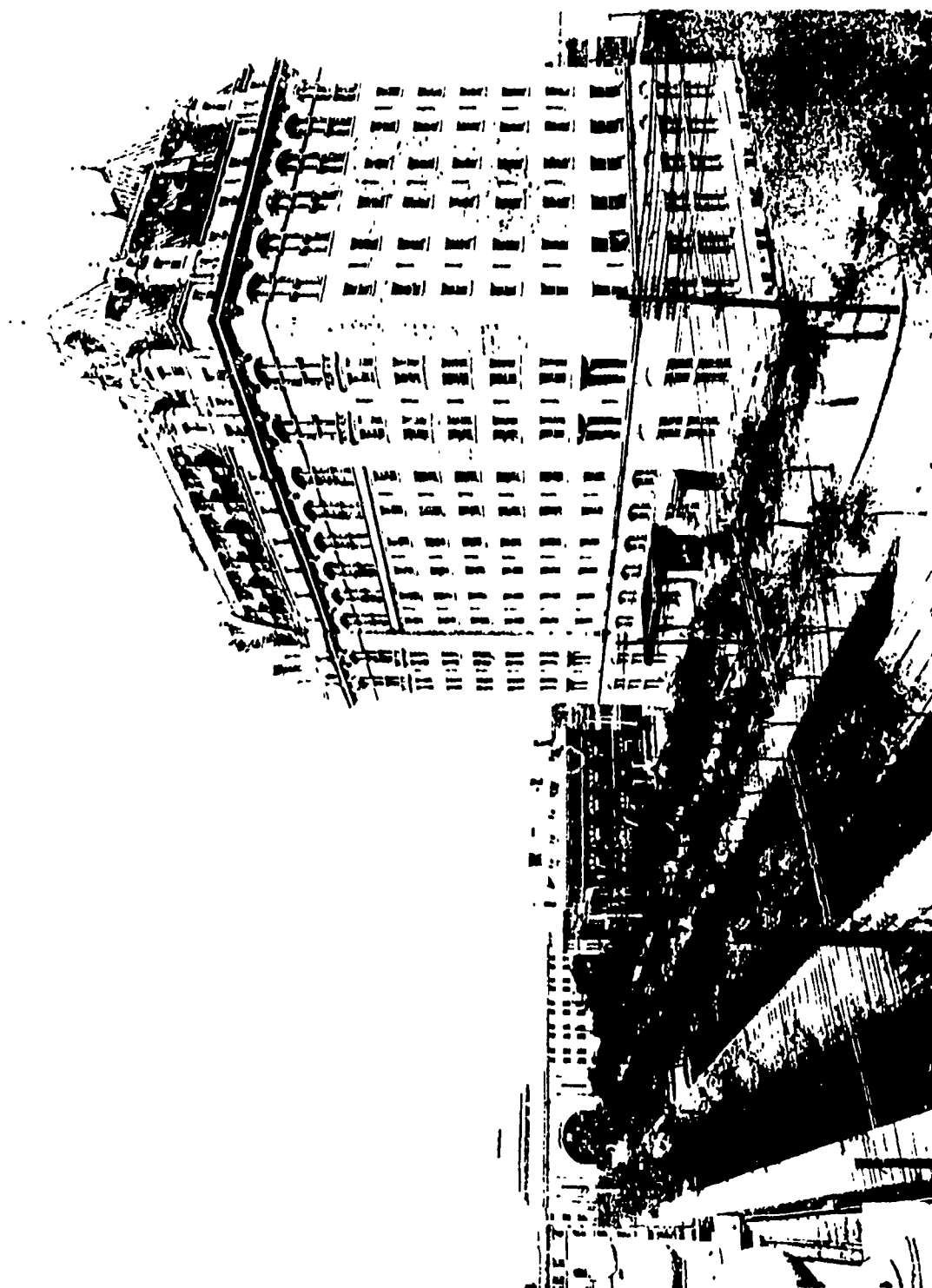


Fig. 13. Ross & MacFarlane. Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg (1911-13),
with the Union Station in the background.



Fig. 14. Perspective for the Fort Garry Hotel Proposal (c. 1911).



Fig. 15. H. Hardenbergh. Plaza Hotel, Central Park façade, New York (1906-07).



Fig. 16. Parker & Thomas. Belvedere Hotel, rear elevation, **Baltimore**
(1902-03).

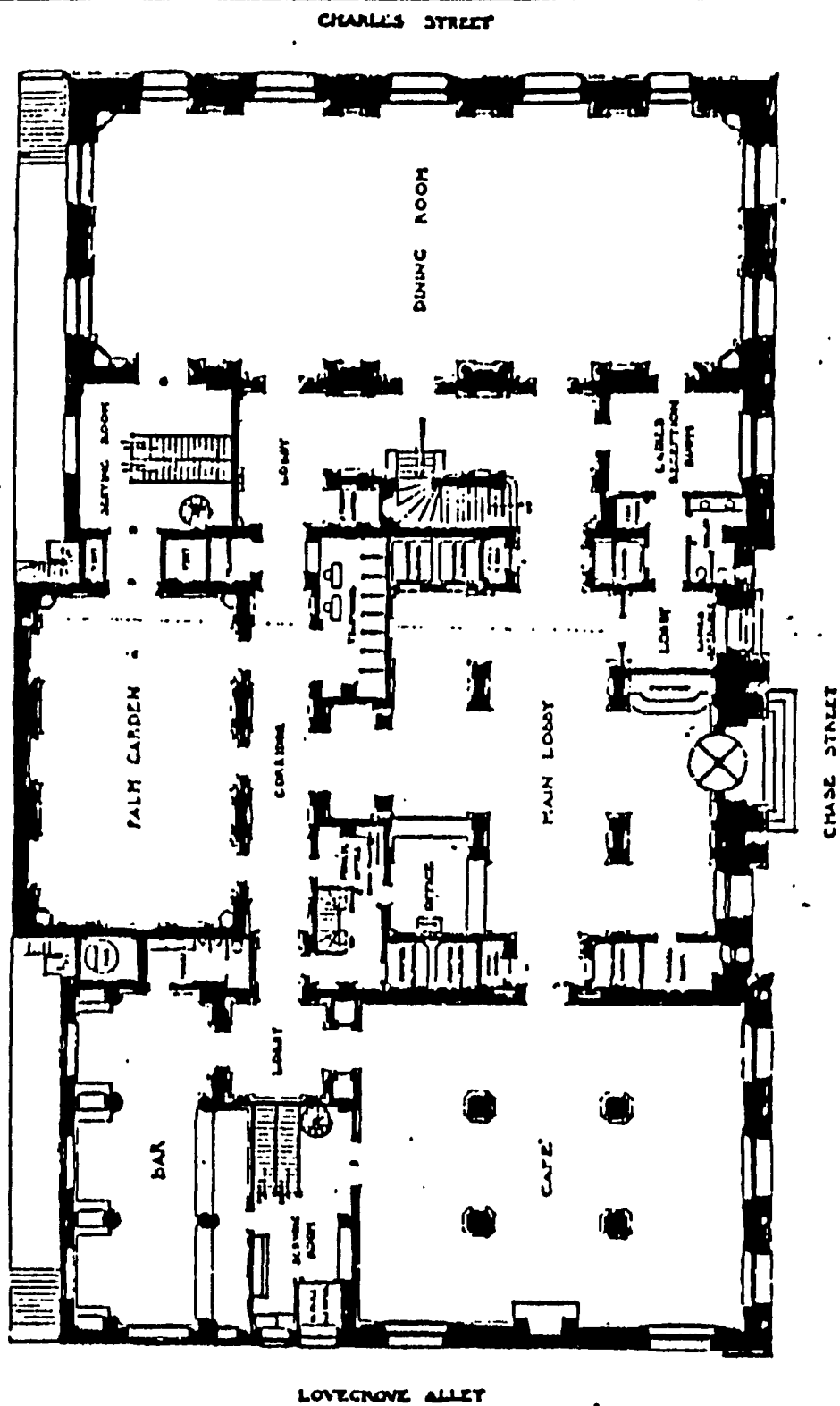


Fig. 17. Belvedere Hotel. Main floor plan.



DETAIL OF ROTUNDA AND MEZZANINE GALLERY, FORT GARRY HOTEL, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA.

Fig. 19. Fort Garry Hotel. Interior, main lobby.

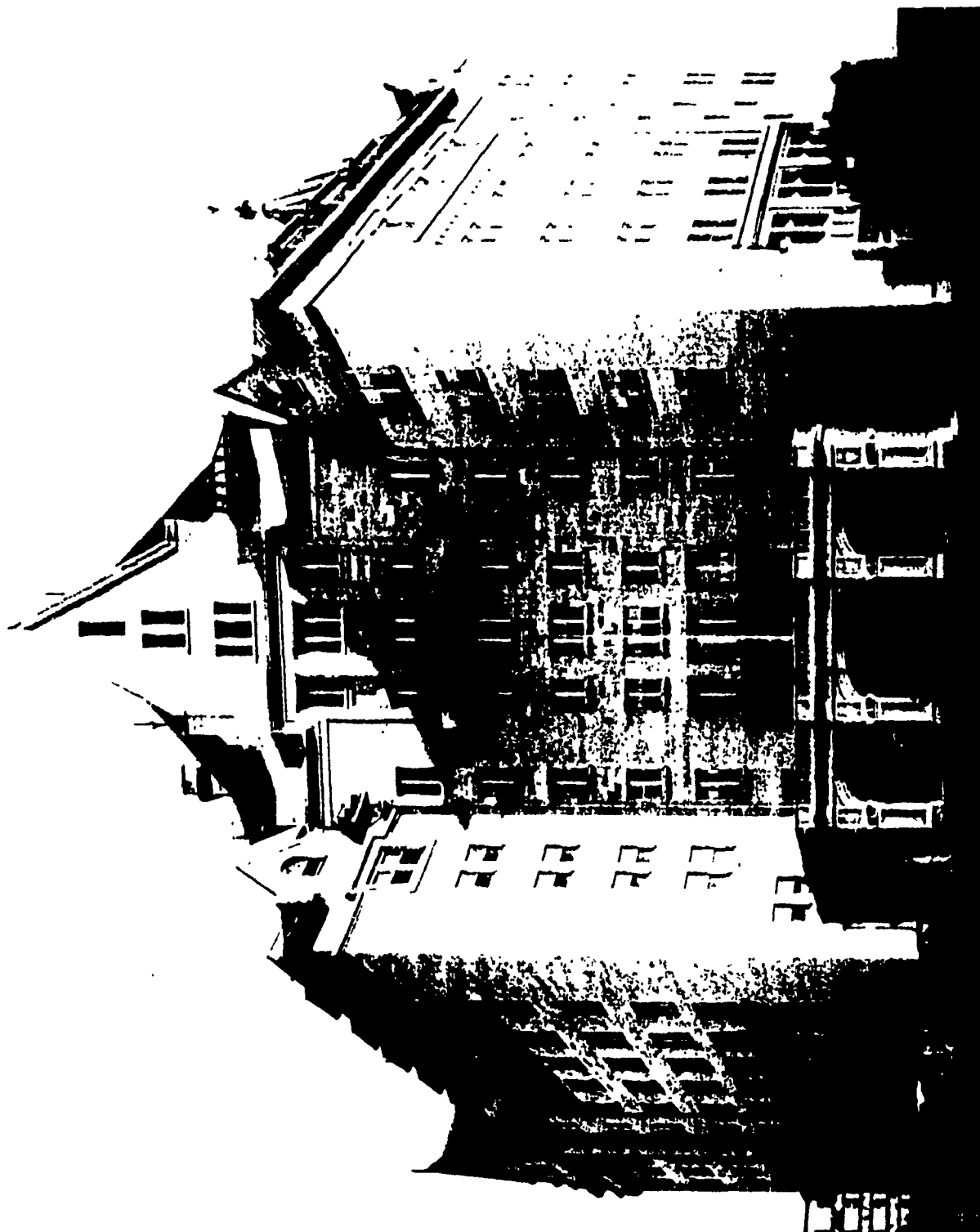


Fig. 21. Ross & MacFarlane. Macdonald Hotel, front and side elevations, Edmonton (1912-15).¹

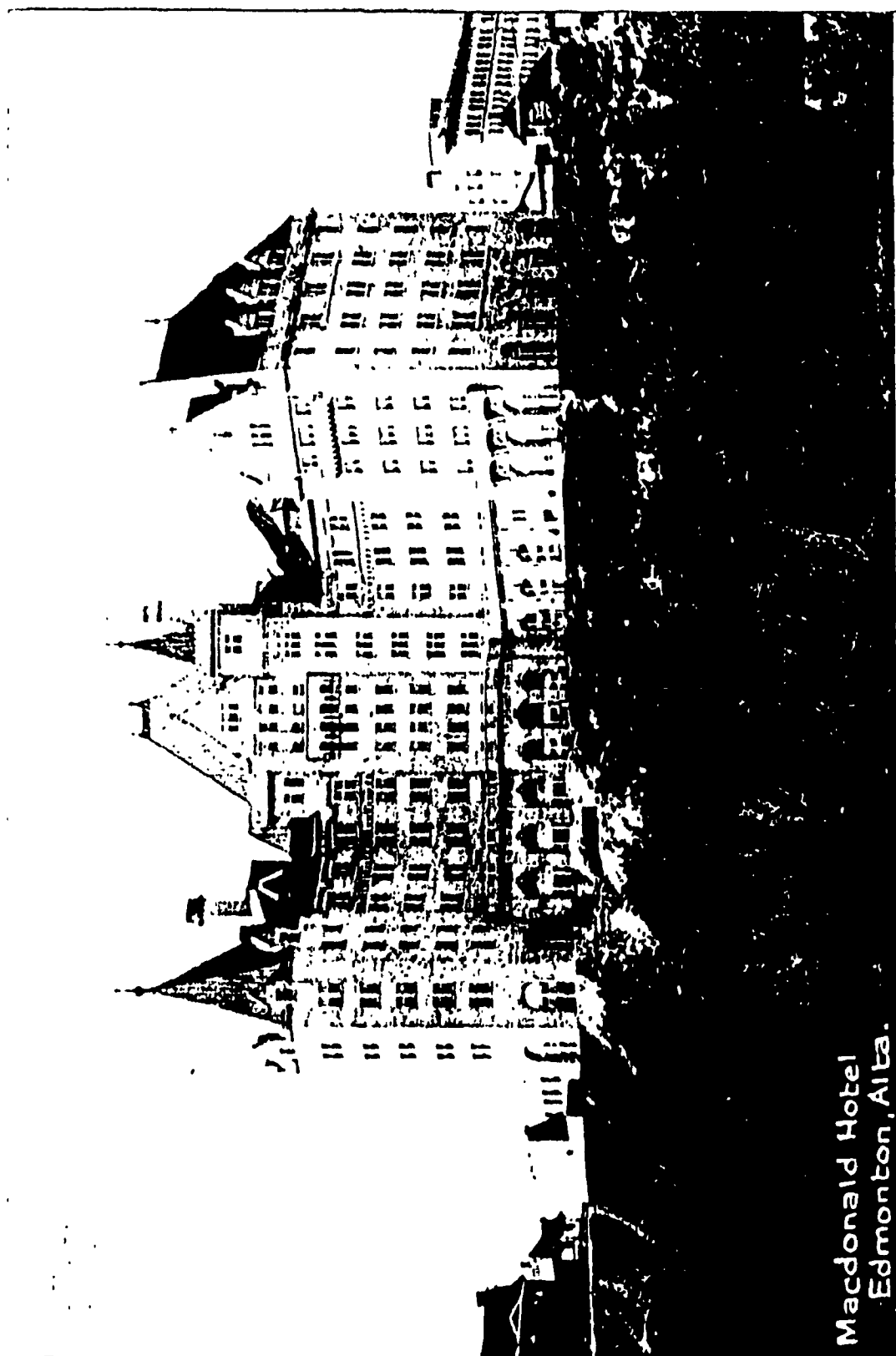


Fig. 22. Ross & MacFarlane. Macdonald Hotel, rear elevation, Edmonton (1912-15).

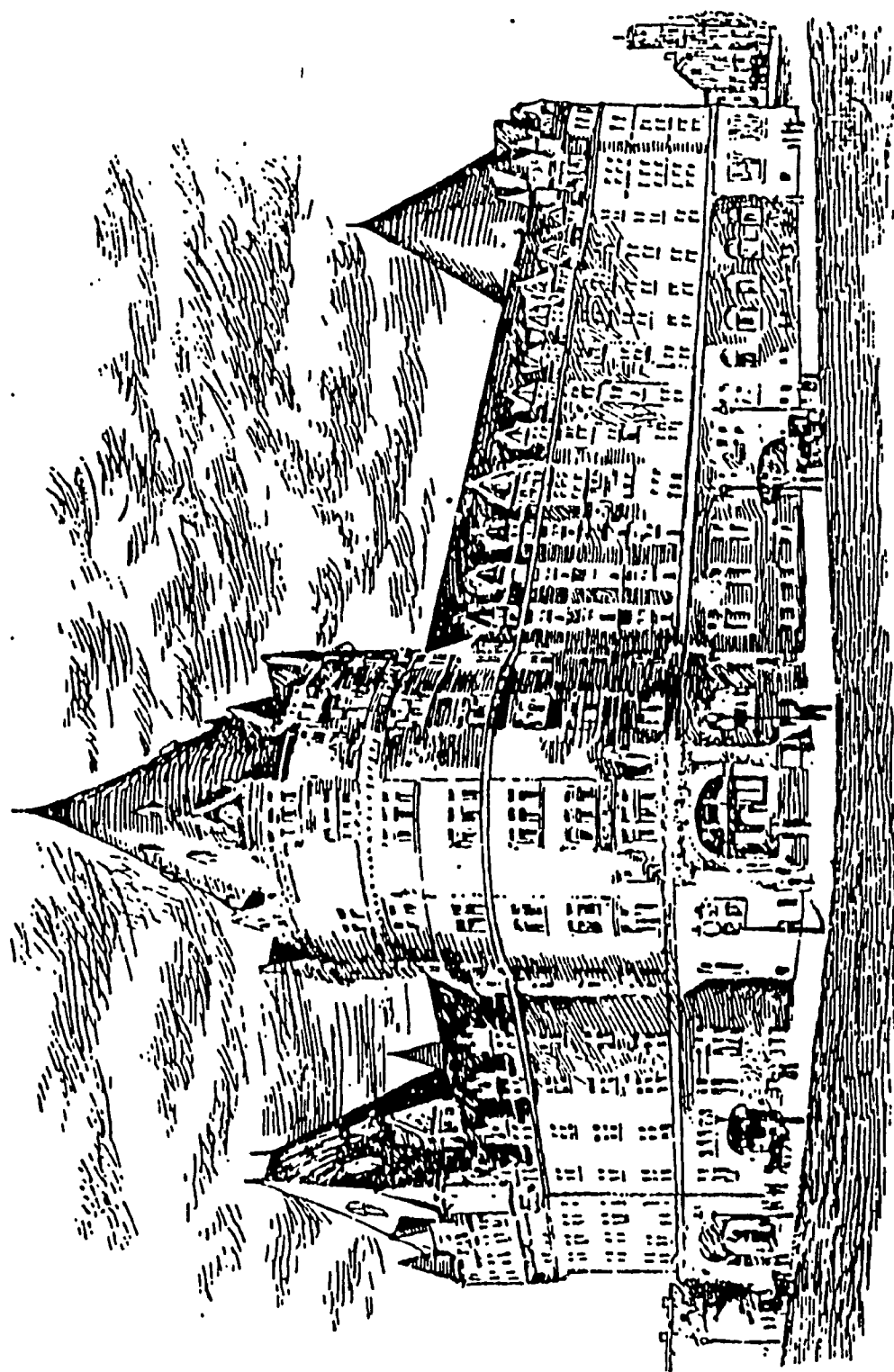


Fig. 23. Edward Maxwell. Proposal for CPR Hotel, Winnipeg (1899).

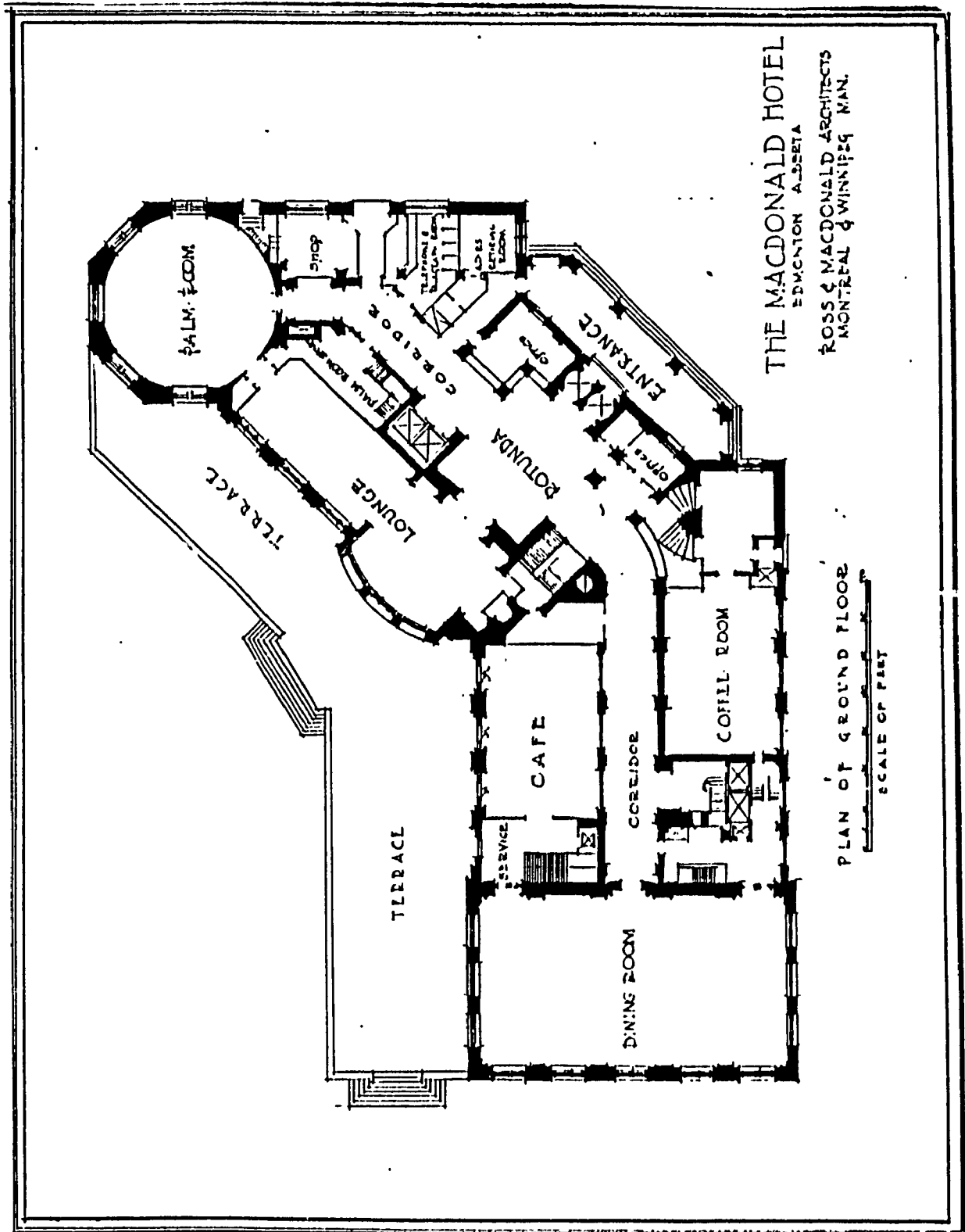


Fig. 24. Macdonald Hotel, main floor plan.

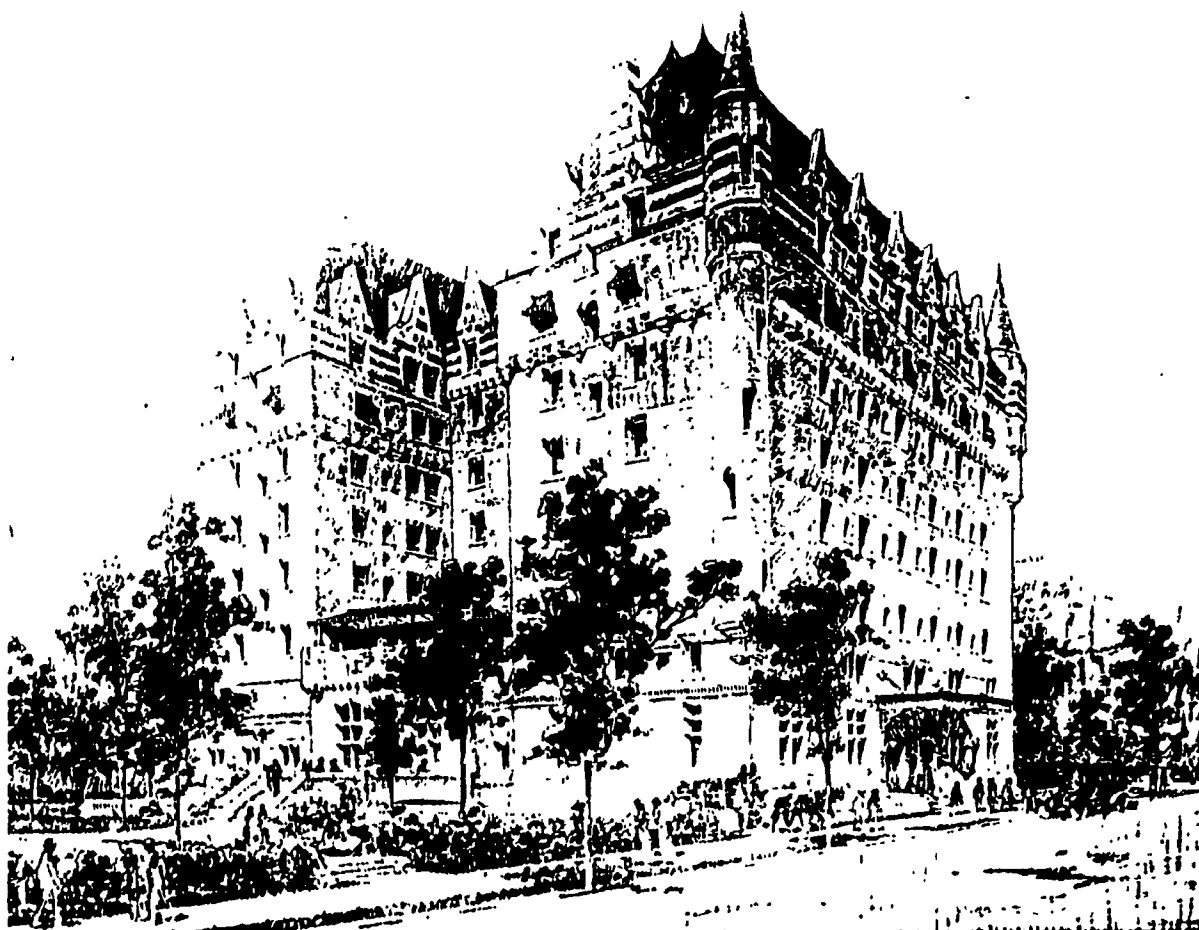


Fig. 25. Ross & MacFarlane. Proposal for Hotel Qu'Appelle, Regina (1912).



Fig. 26. Warren & Wetmore. Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Montreal (1909-10).



Fig. 27. Ross & MacFarlane. Proposal for first Mount Royal Hotel, Montreal (1911).

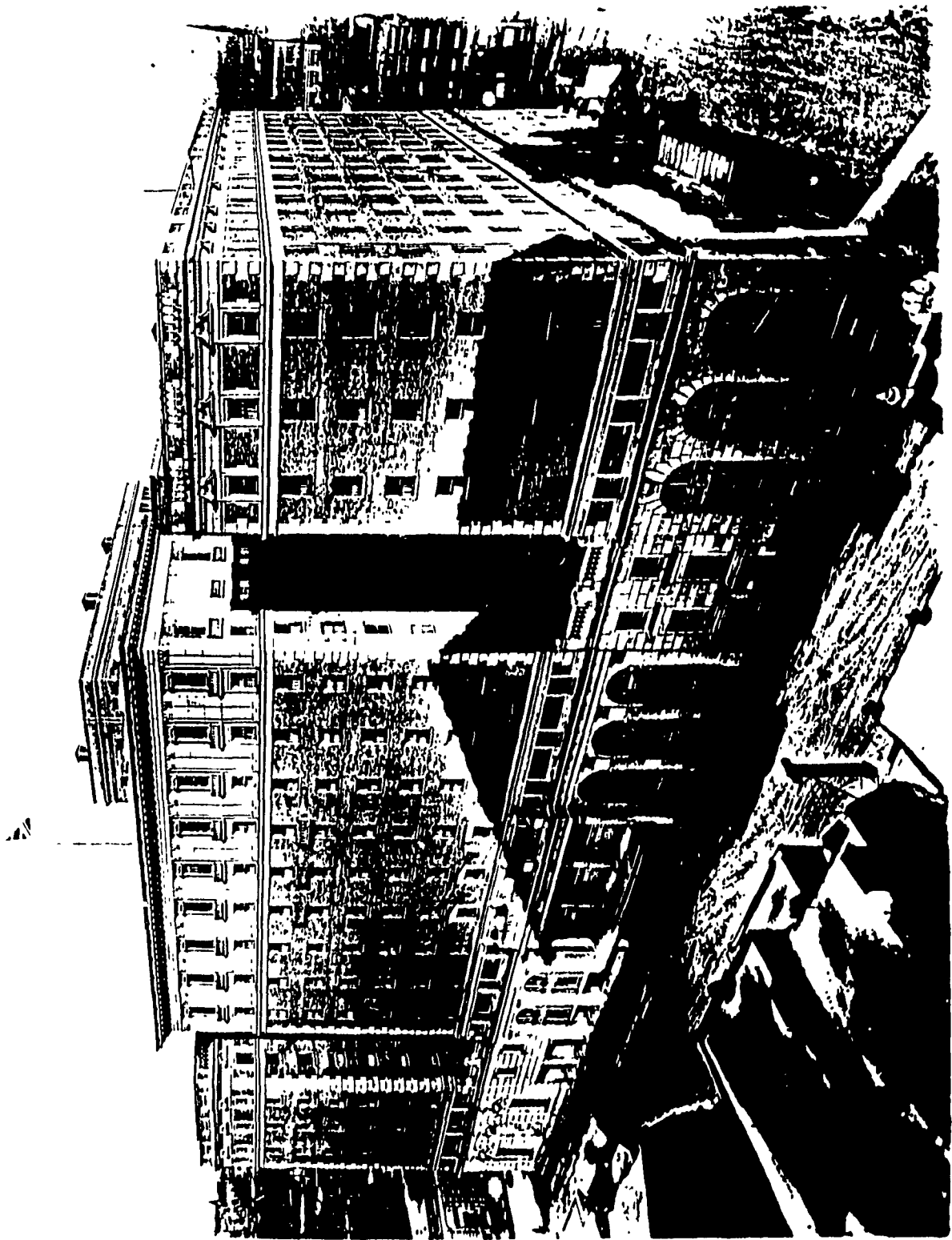


Fig. 28. Ross & Macdonald. Mount Royal Hotel, Montreal (1921-22).

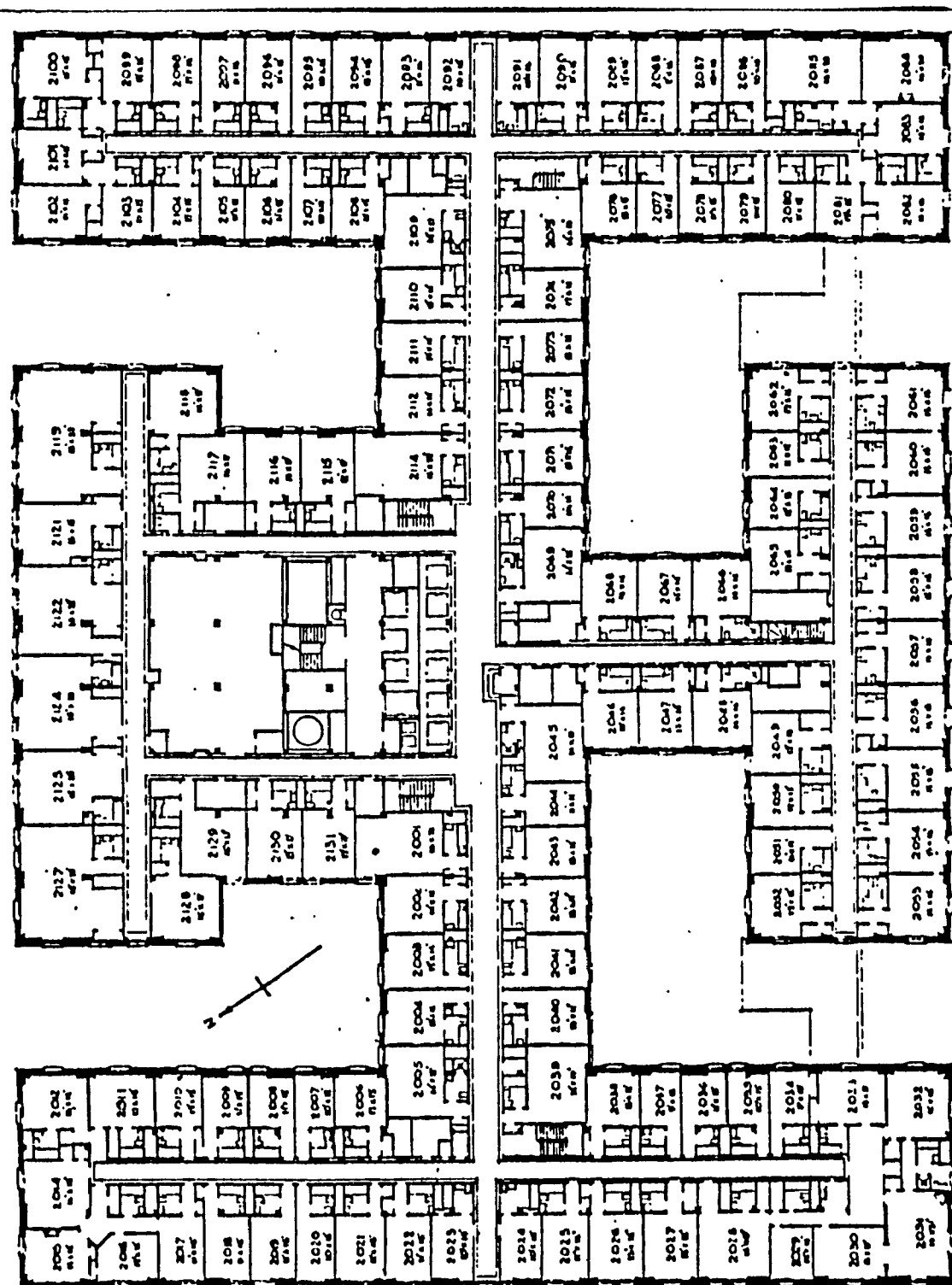


Fig. 29. Mount Royal Hotel, typical floor plan.



Fig. 30. McKim, Mead & White. Hotel Pennsylvania, New York (1915-19).



Fig. 31. Perspective for Mount Royal Hotel Proposal. Sketch by Robert Heughan (February 1920).

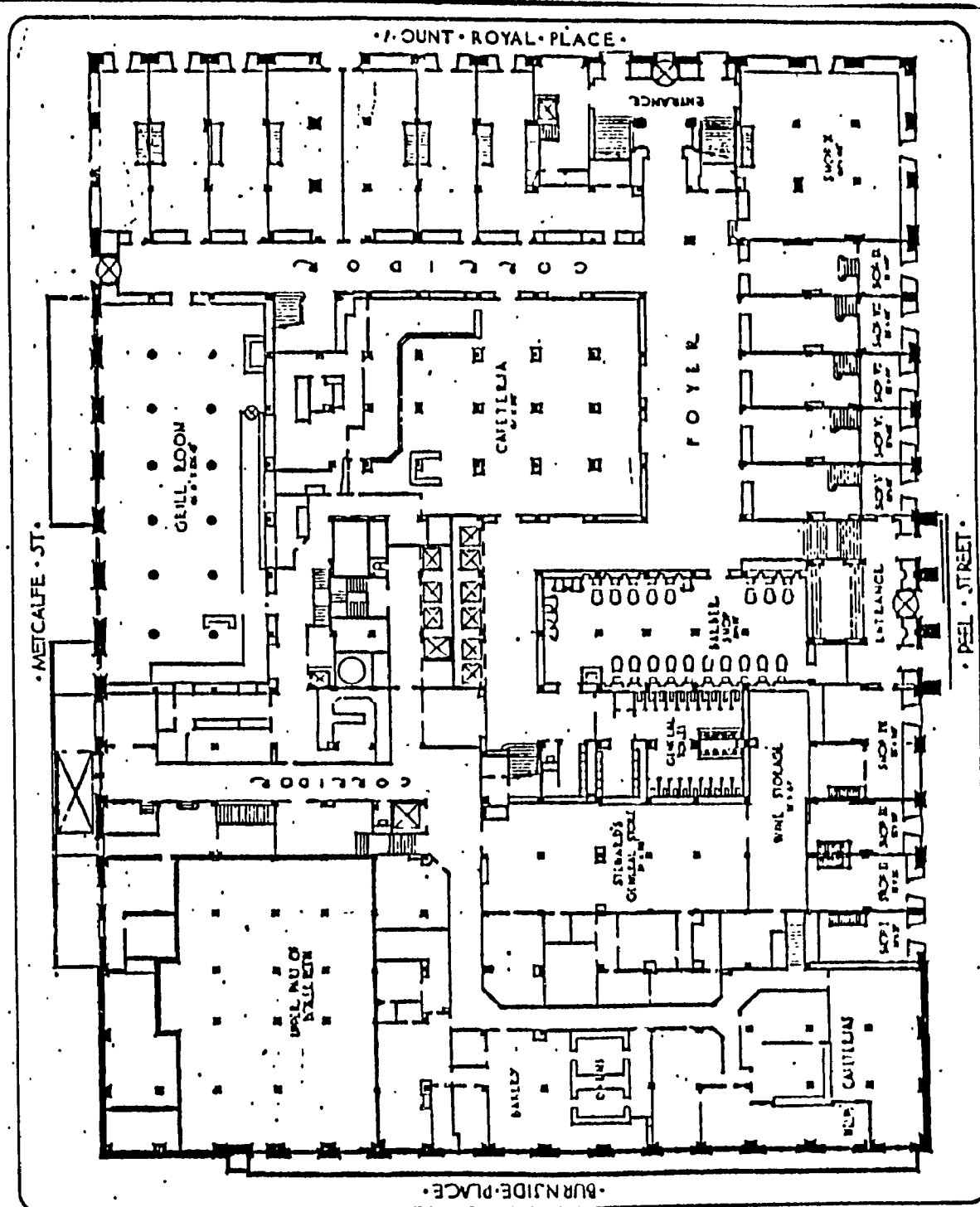


Fig. 32. Mount Royal Hotel, ground floor plan.

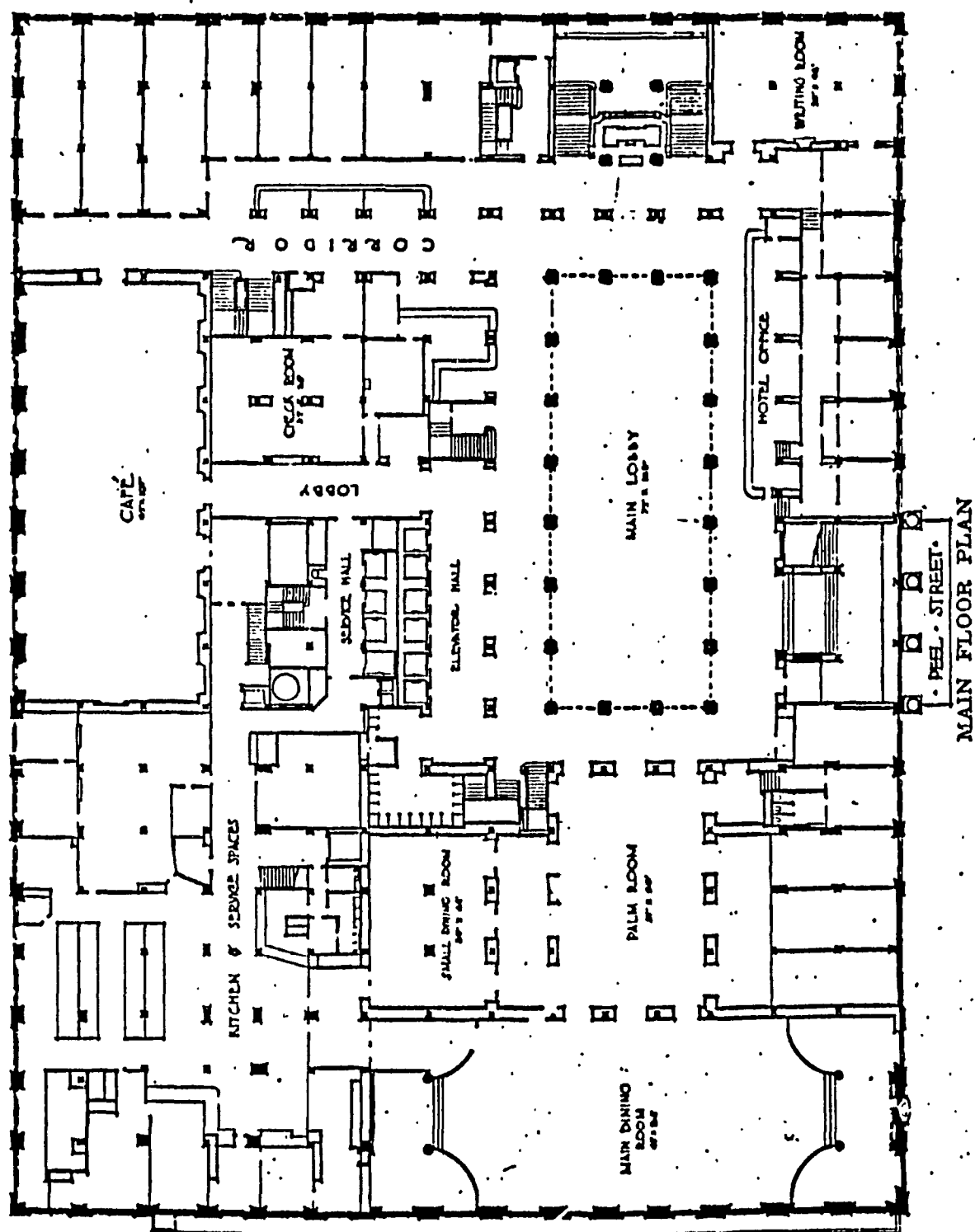


Fig. 33. Mount Royal Hotel, main floor plan.

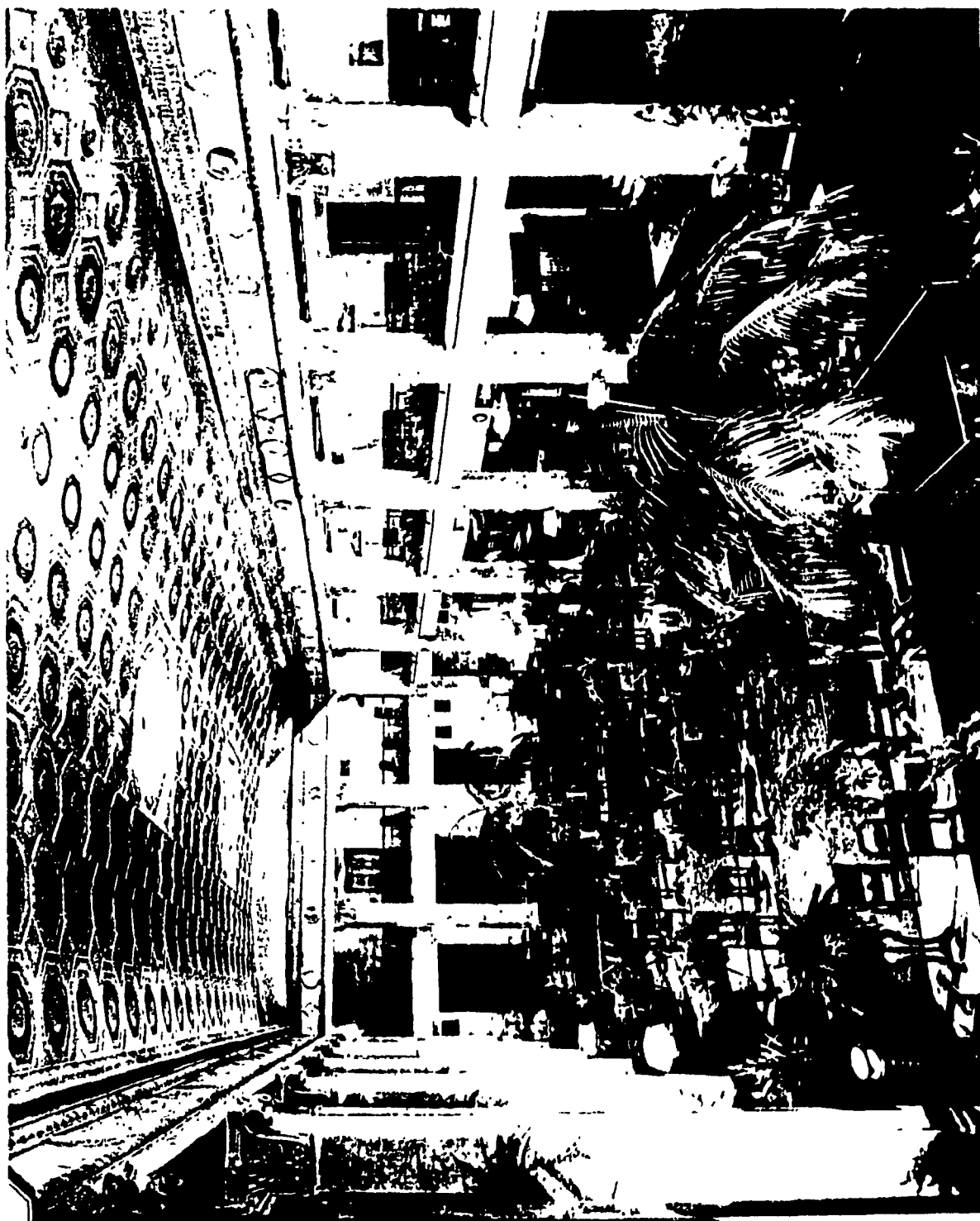


Fig. 34. Mount Royal Hotel. Interior, main lobby.

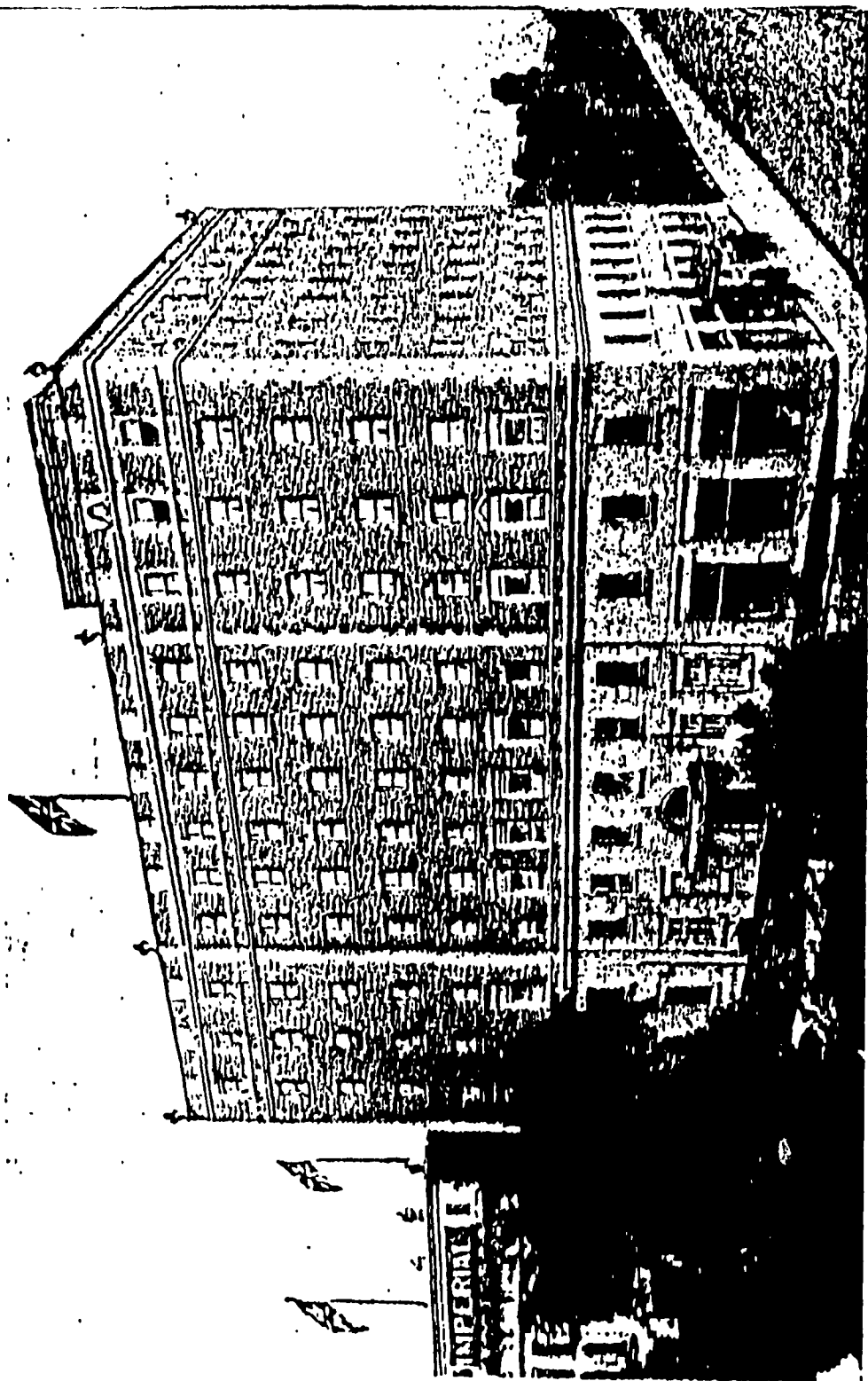


Fig. 35. Ross & Macdonald. Admiral Beatty Hotel, Saint John (1924-25).

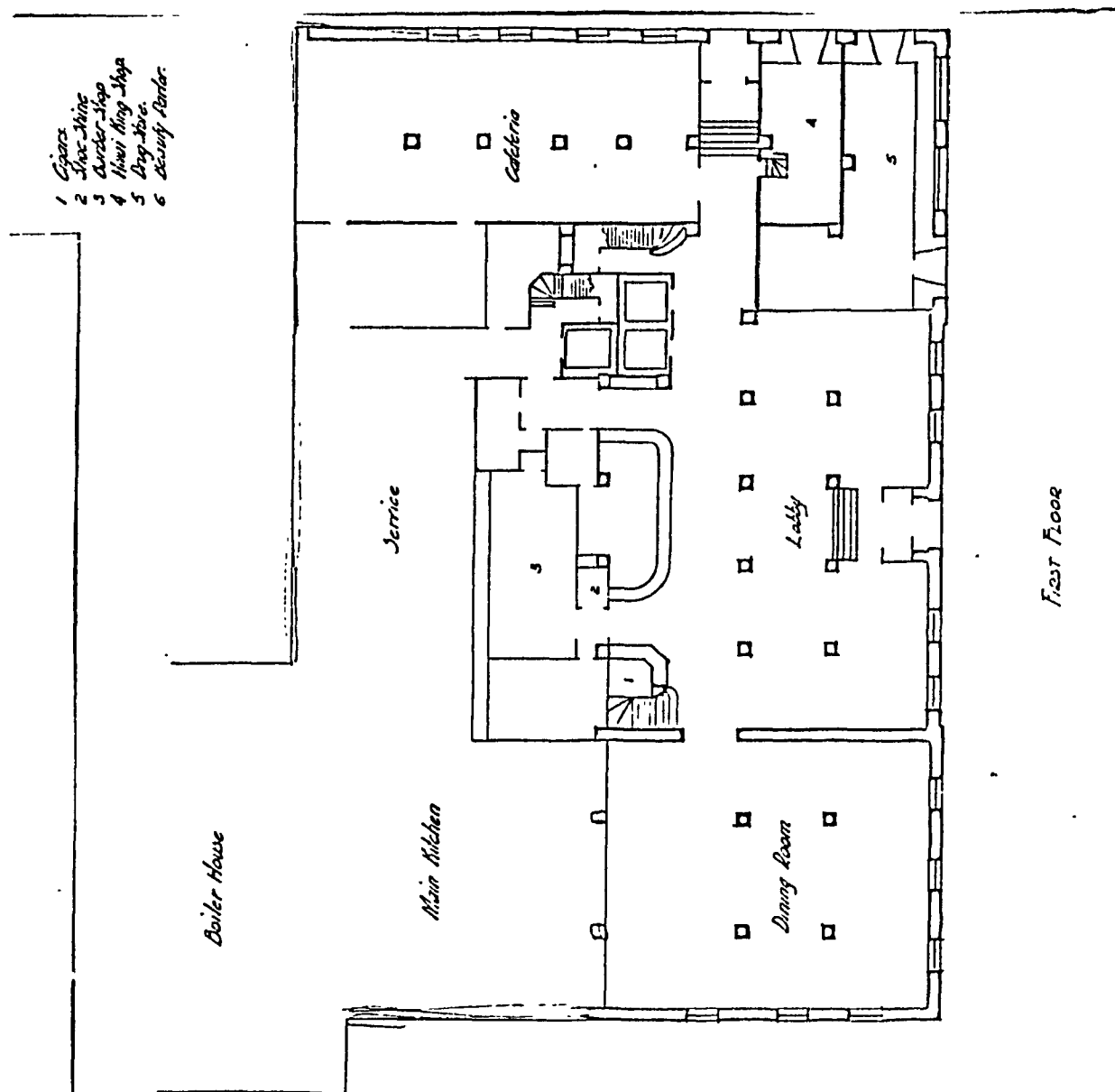


Fig. 36. Admiral Beatty Hotel, main floor plan.

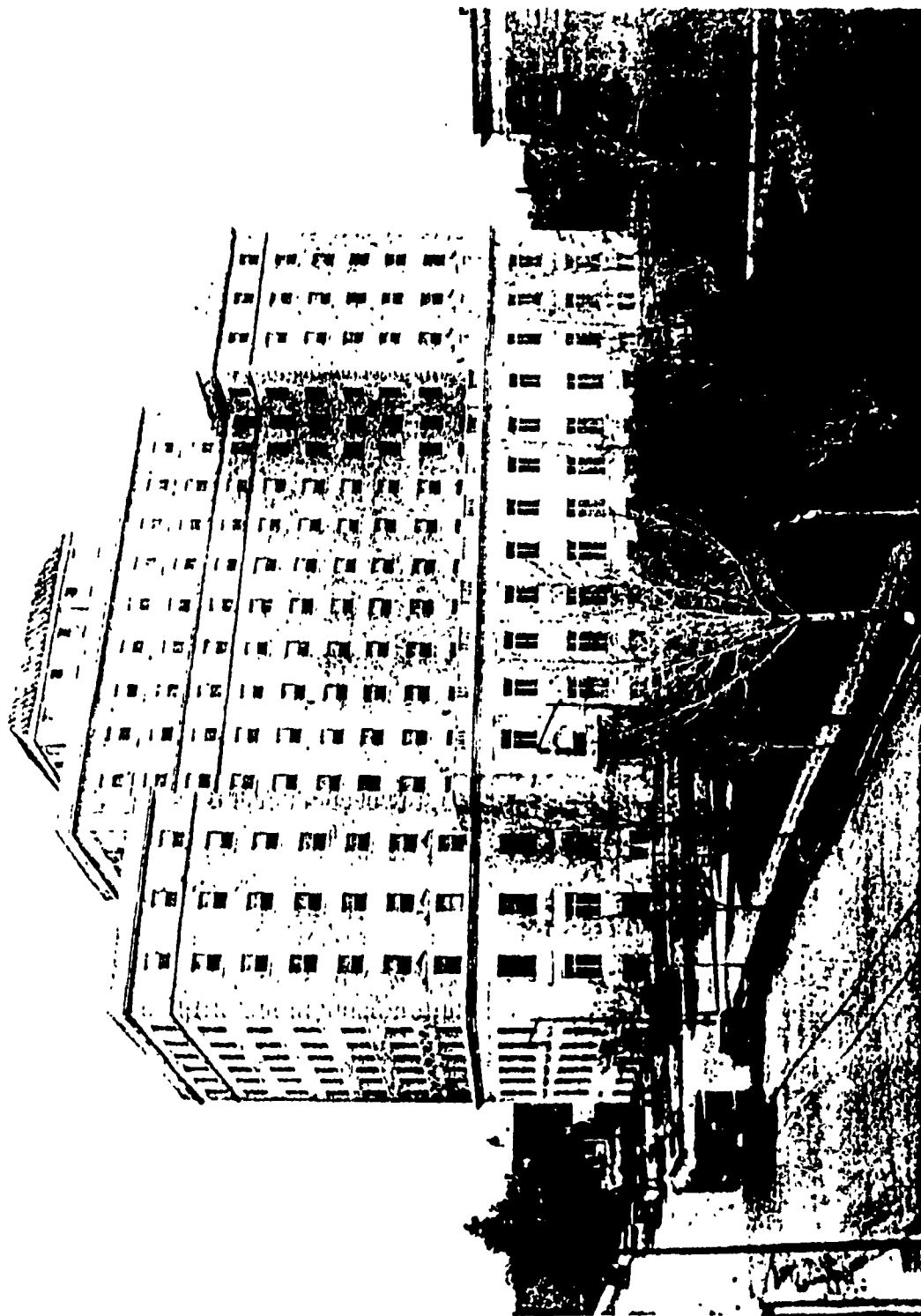


Fig. 37. Ross & Macdonald. Hotel Saskatchewan, Regina (1926-27).

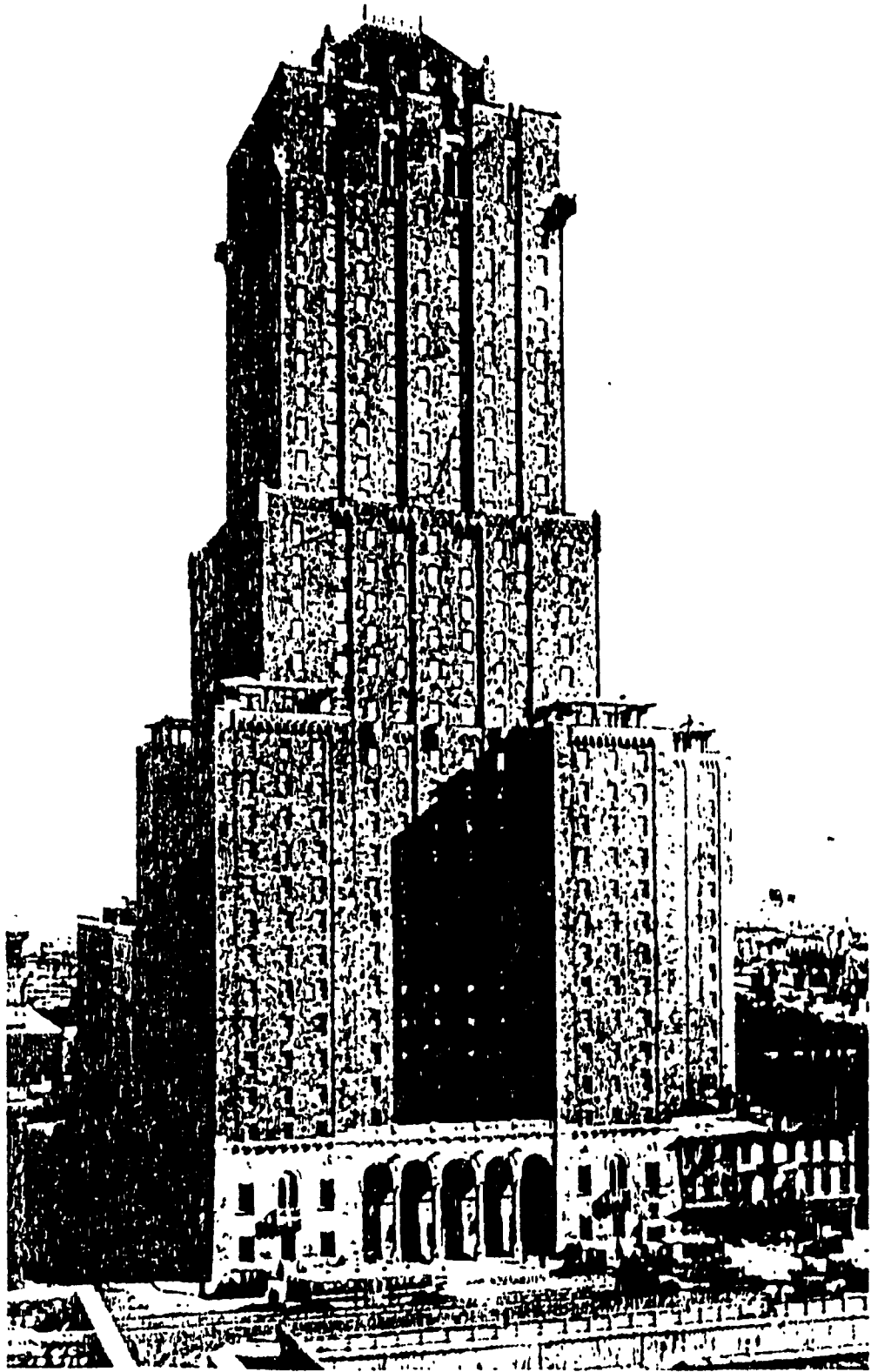


Fig. 38. Arthur Loomis Harmon. Shelton Hotel, New York (1923-24).

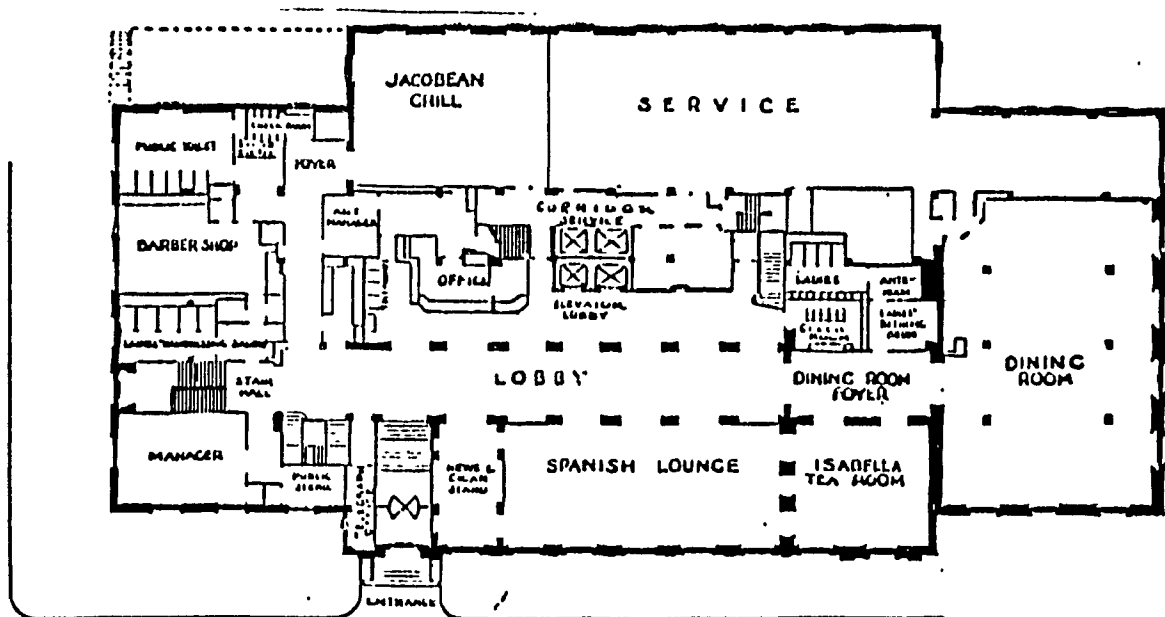


Fig. 39. Hotel Saskatchewan, main floor plan.

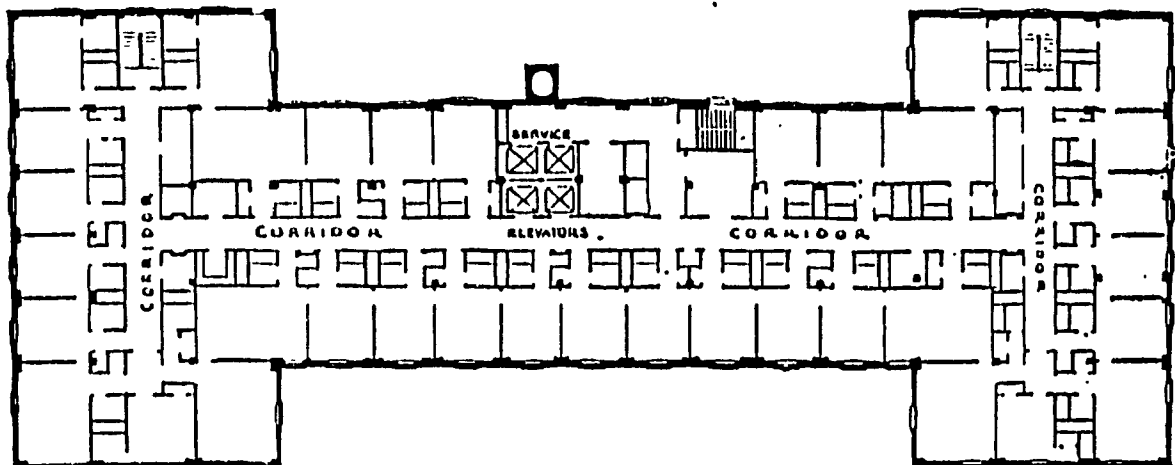


Fig. 40. Hotel Saskatchewan. Typical floor plan.



Fig. 41. Ross & Macdonald. Royal York Hotel, Toronto (1927-29).

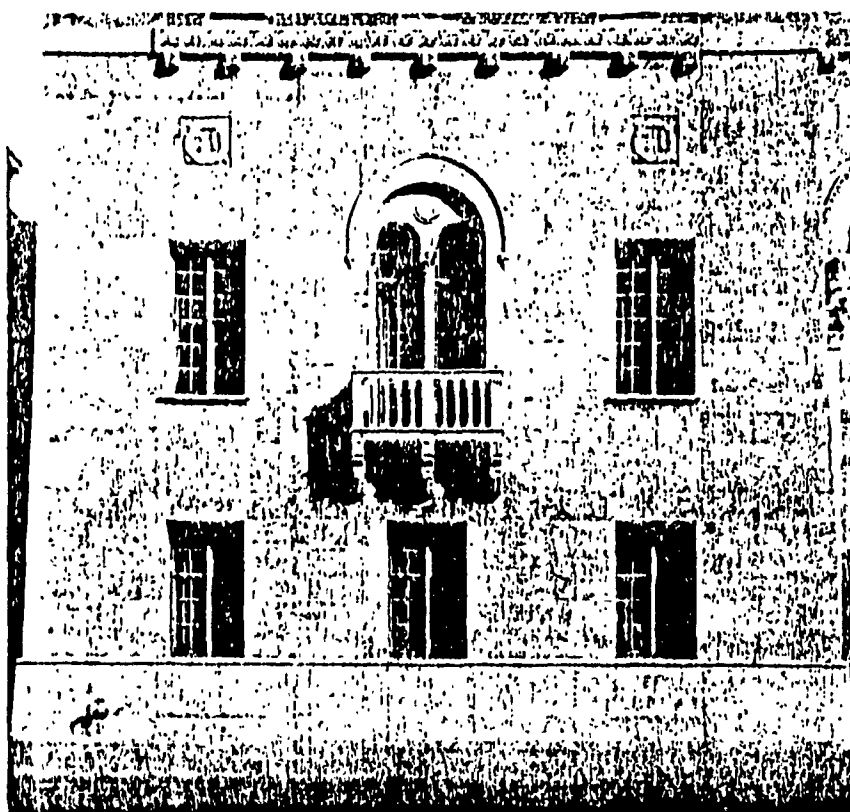


Fig. 42. Shelton Hotel, detail of corner pavilion.



Fig. 43. Royal York Hotel, detail of west wing of Front St. façade.

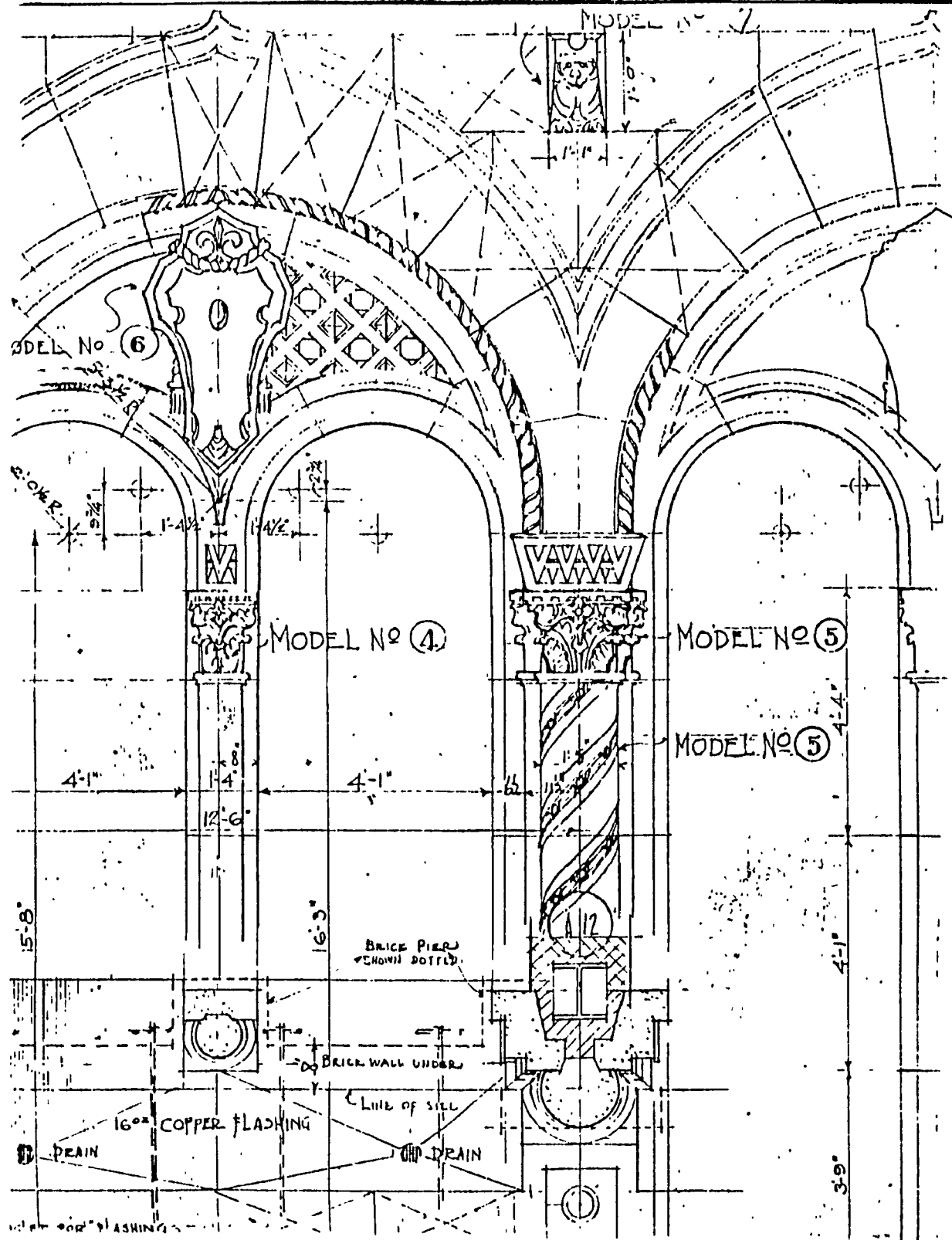
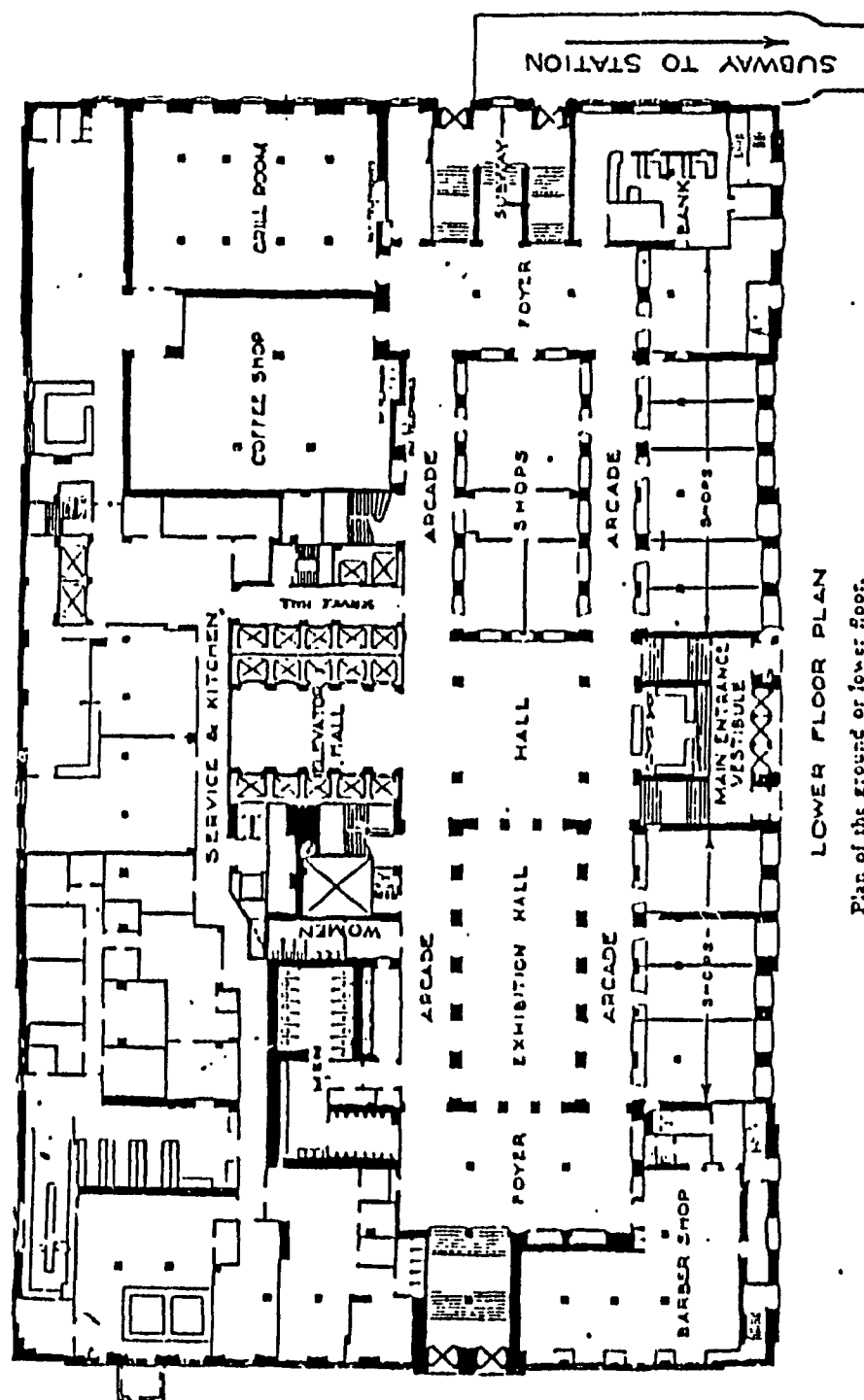


Fig. 45. Royal York Hotel. Drawing of main elevation details.



Fig. 46. Royal York Hotel. Detail of tower storeys.



LOWER FLOOR PLAN
Plan of the ground or lower floor.

Fig. 47. Royal York Hotel. Ground floor plan.

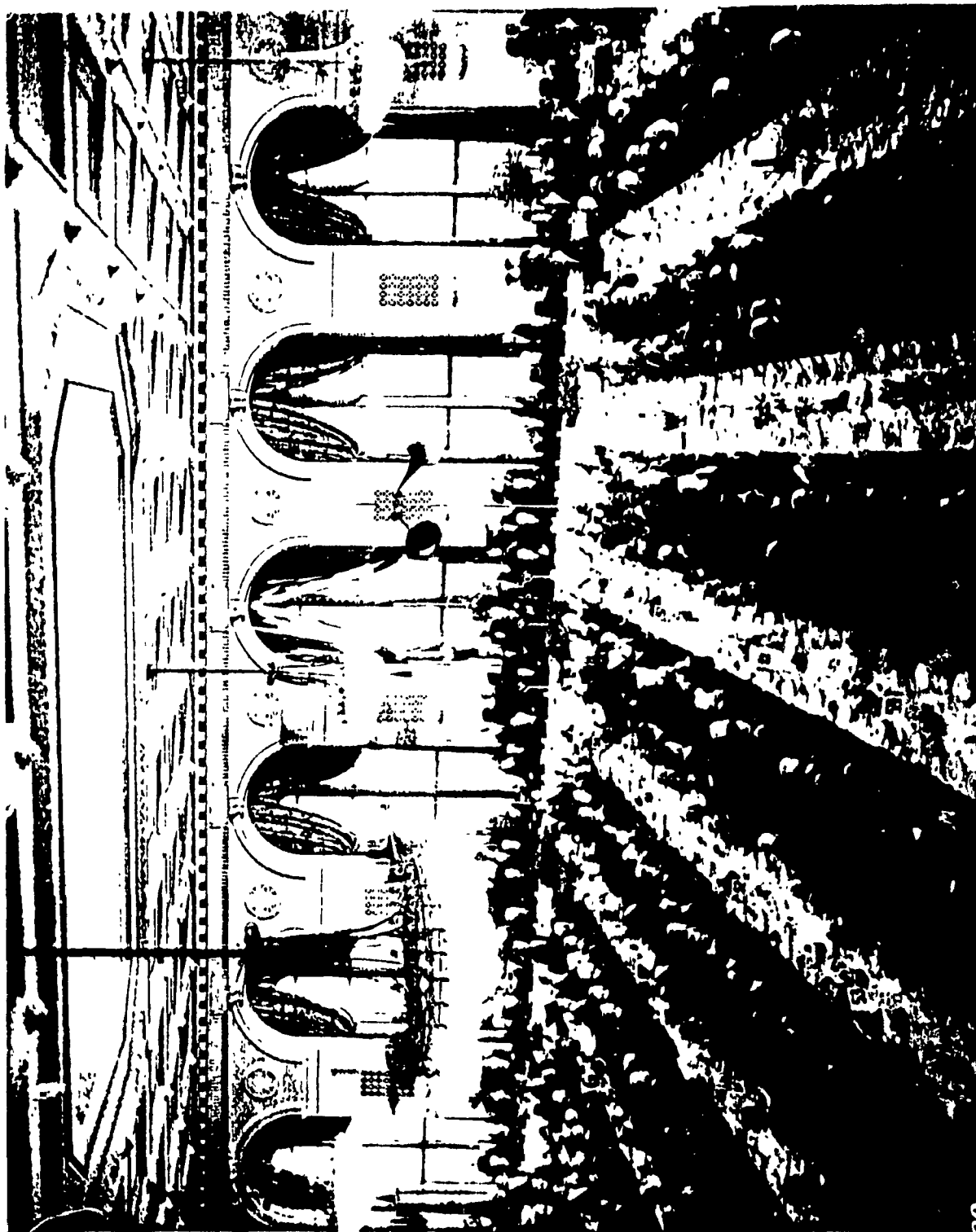


Fig. 49. Royal York Hotel. Interior, banquet room, Toronto Board of Trade Luncheon, 11 June 1929.

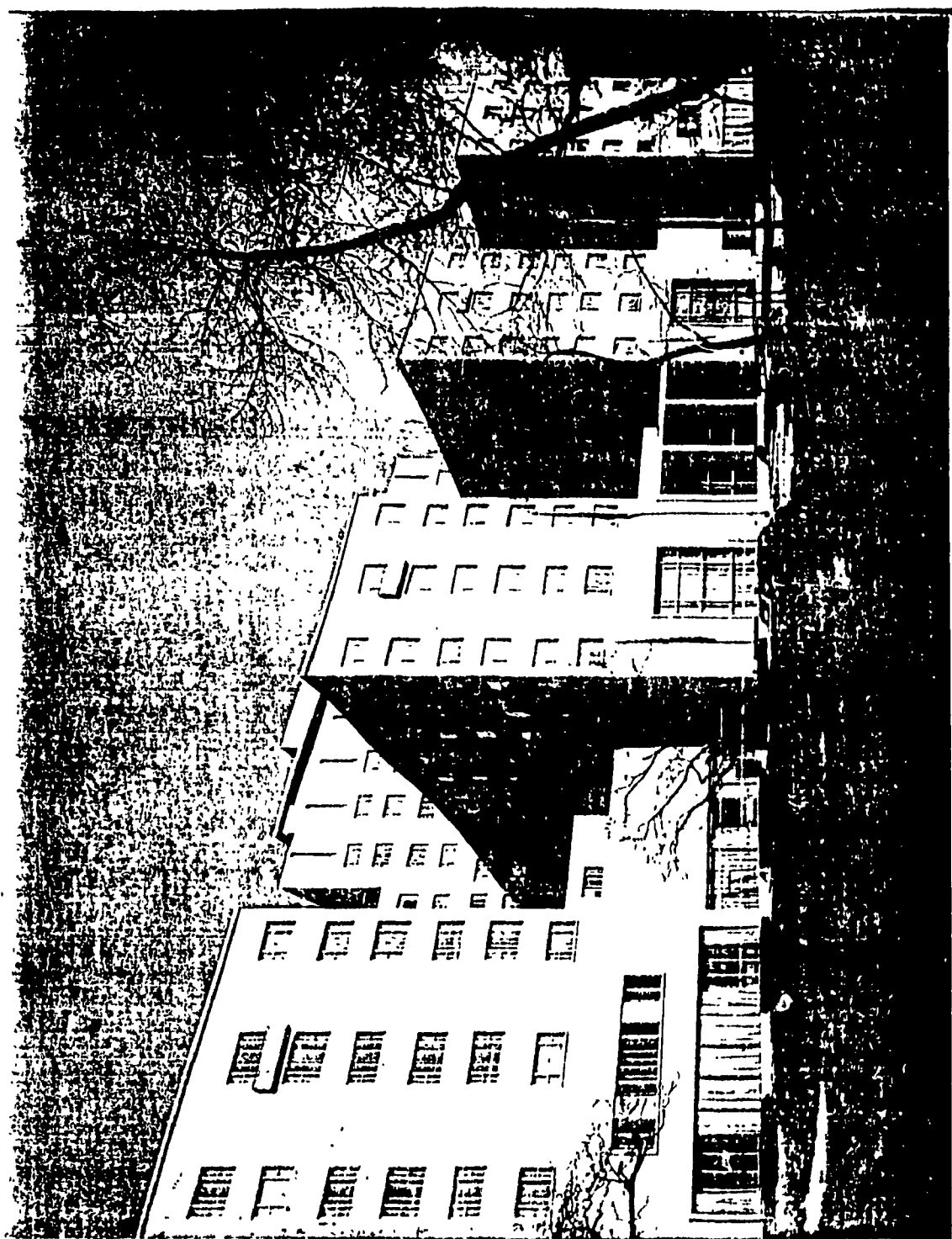


Fig. 50. Holabird & Root. Statler Hotel, main façade,
Washington, D.C. (1942-43).



Fig. 51. J. Foster Warner. Ford Hotel, Montreal (1929-30).

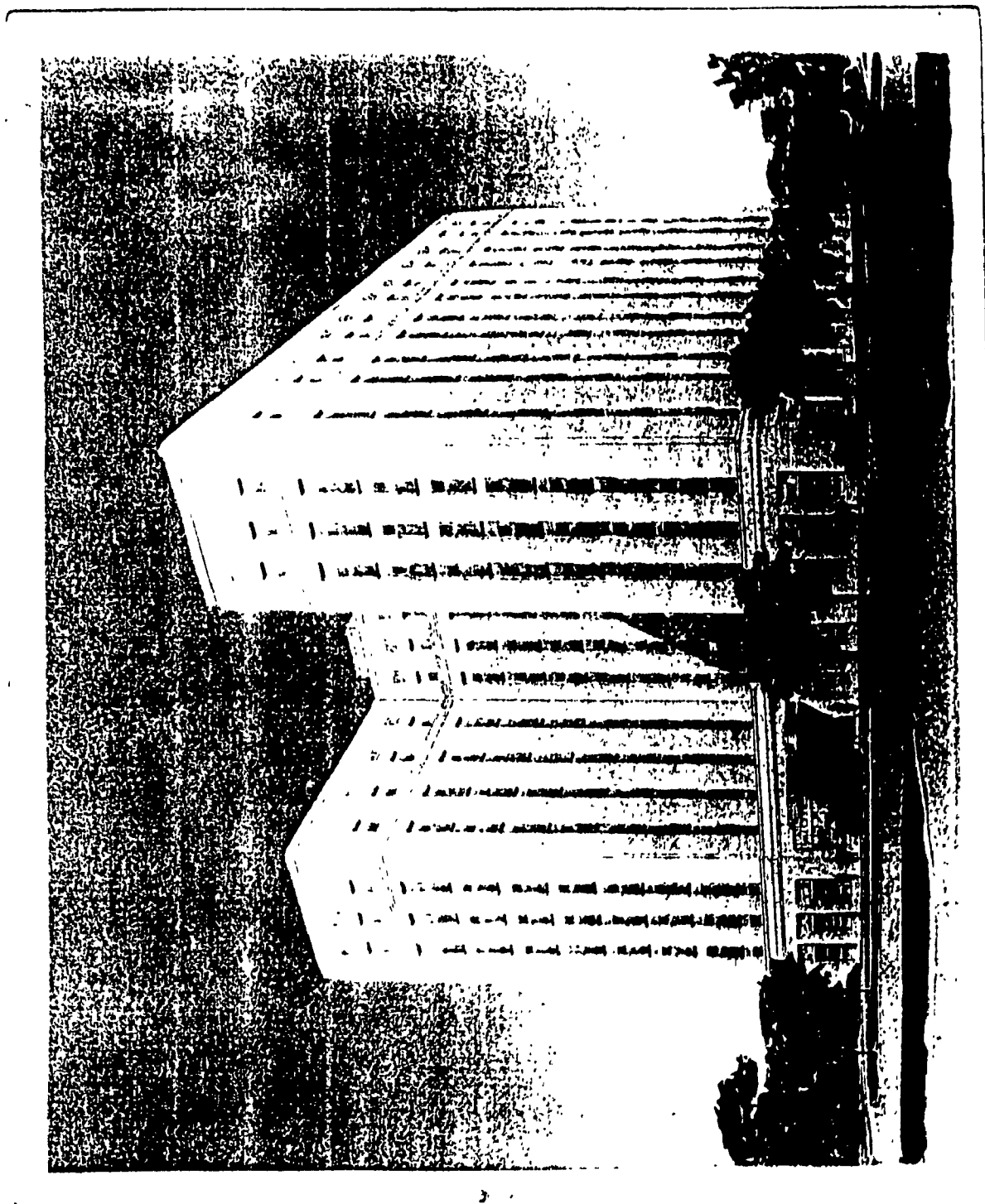


Fig. 52. Architect unknown. Proposal for Ford Hotel, Ottawa (ca. 1940).

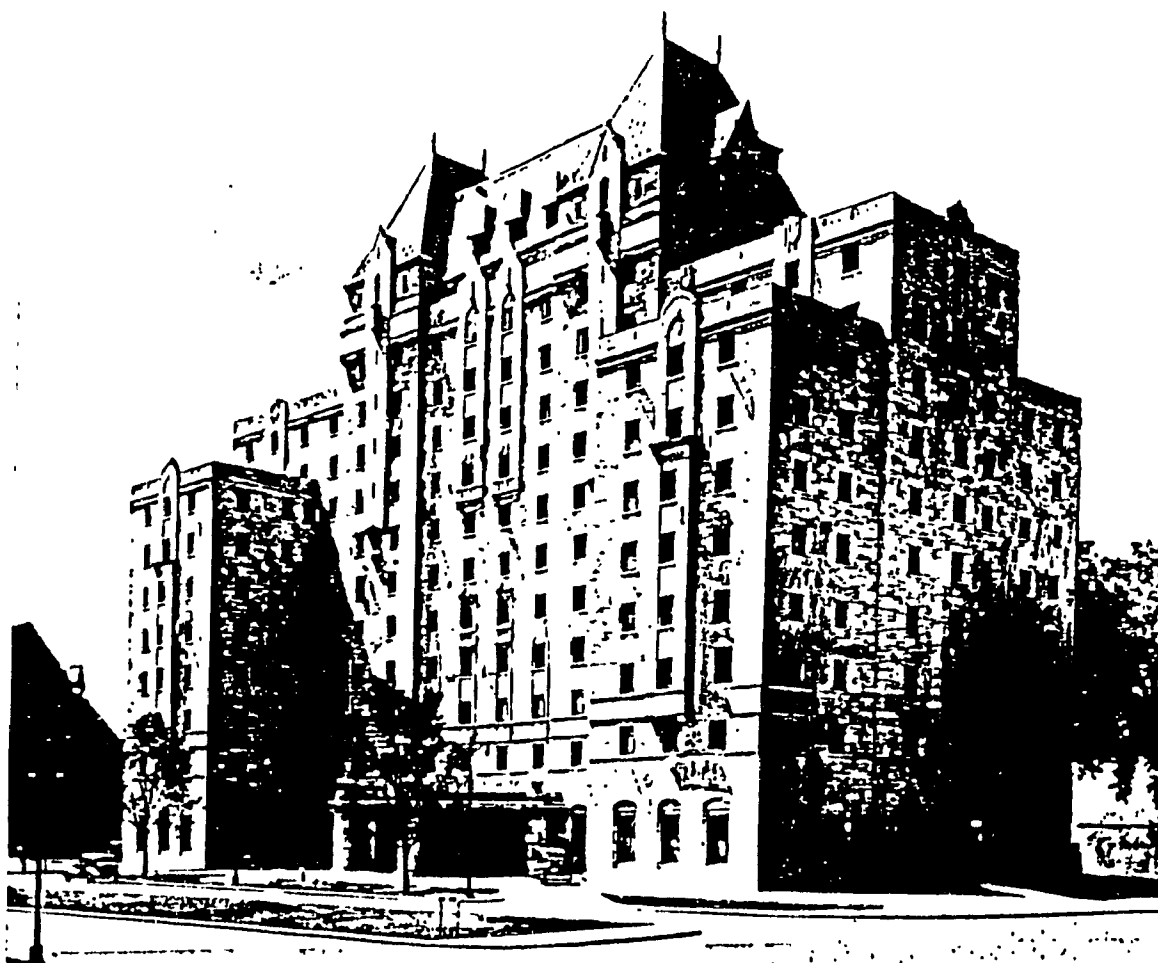


Fig. 53. Ross & Macdonald. Lord Elgin Hotel, Ottawa (1940-41).

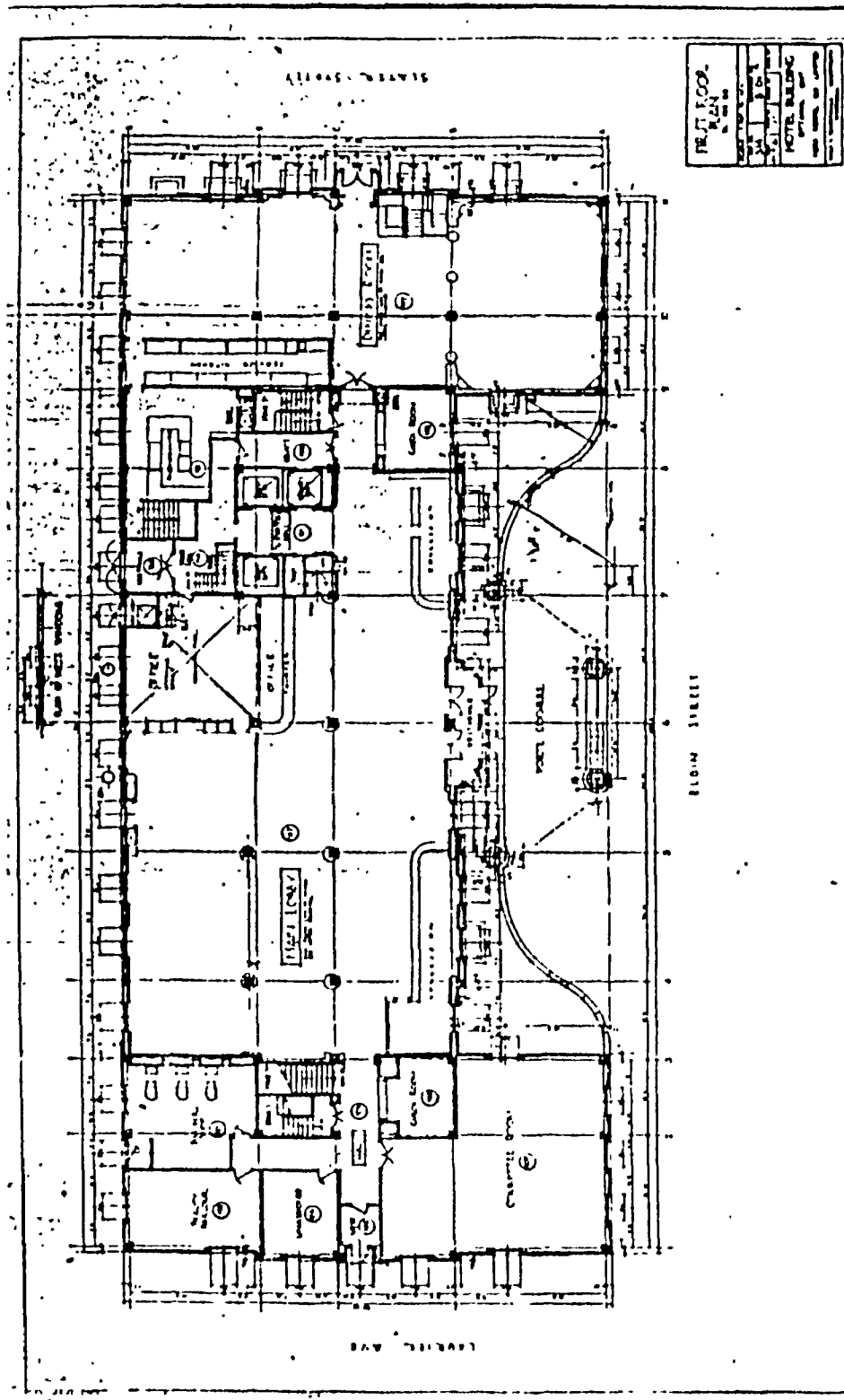


Fig. 54. Lord Elgin Hotel, main floor plan.

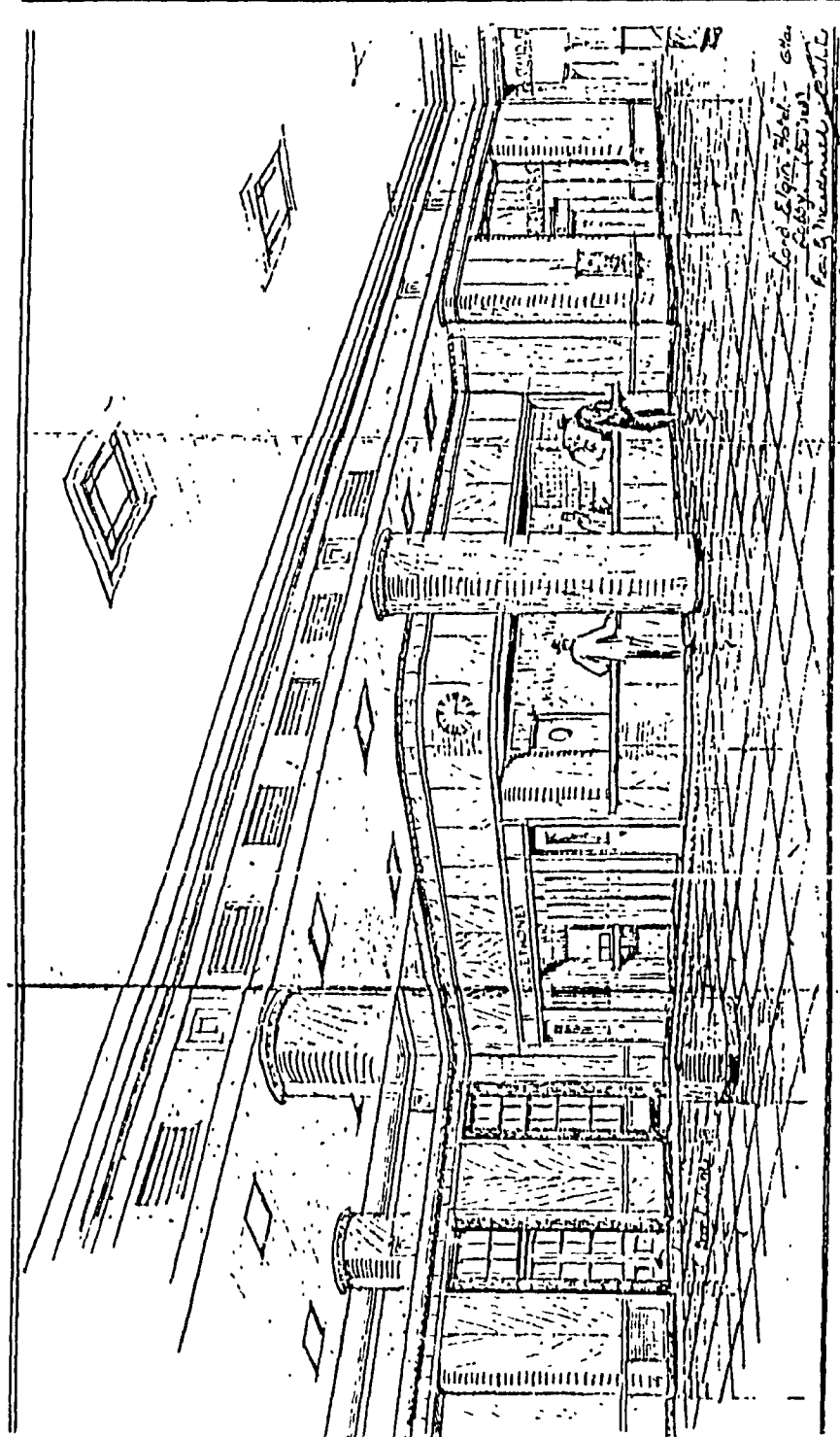


Fig. 55. Lord Elgin Hotel. Preliminary drawing of main lobby by Ross & Macdonald.

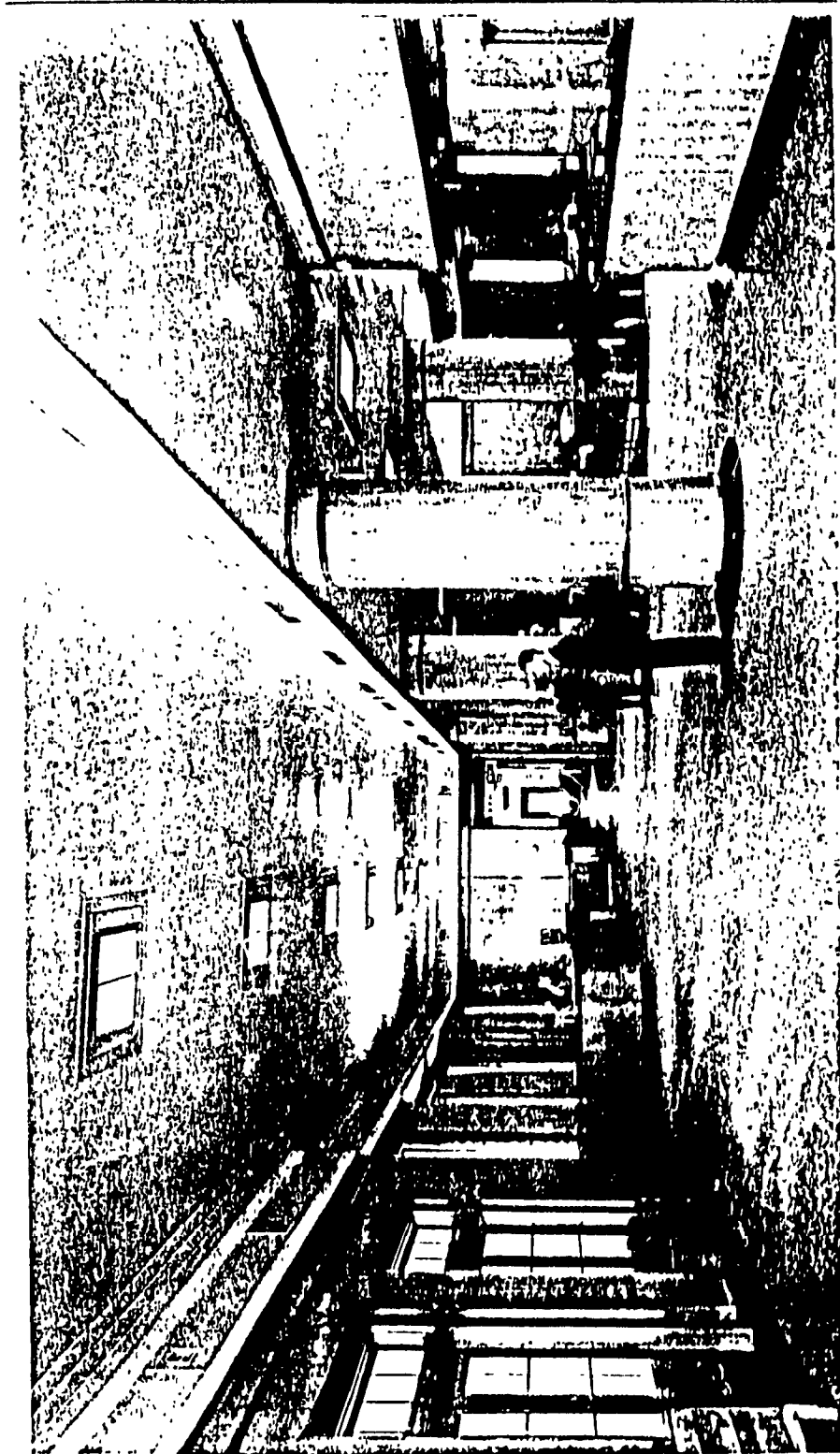


Fig. 56. Lord Elgin Hotel. Interior, main lobby.