

'PARISIAN GOTHIC': INTERPRETATIONS OF GOTHIC IN THREE VICTORIAN BUILDINGS IN PARIS, ONTARIO

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In the history of architecture in Canada, Paris, Ontario, is known chiefly for its nineteenth-century cobblestone buildings and the truly monumental Richardsonian Romanesque First Presbyterian Church (1893) designed by the Chatham-based architect T.J. Rutley.² Yet Paris is also remarkable for three Victorian Gothic buildings which are the focus of this paper. The nave of St. James's Anglican Church (1839) is a fine example of the early phase of the Gothic Revival in which pointed arches pierce the walls of a rectangular box of the eighteenth-century classicising tradition established by the English architect James Gibbs (1682-1754). The chancel of St. James's Anglican (1863-1865) bears witness to the revolution in Gothic church design brought about by the Cambridge Camden Society—Ecclesiological Society after 1846—and The Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture. Most unusually and spectacularly, there is the civic Gothic of the Town Hall (1853-1854), which boasts a magnificent six-bay open-timber roof on the second-floor Assembly Room, at a time when civic Gothic architecture was in its infancy in England. The Town Hall is the work of the little-known local architect John Maxwell (1803-1889), who also designed Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church in the town (1857). Financial constraints at the time meant that Maxwell's church was left unfinished until 1880-1881, when additions and modifications were made by the Brantford architect, John Turner (1806-1887). Turner's work deviates significantly from Maxwell's prescription and therefore the church is a fascinating barometer of the impact and modification of the *True Principles* of Medieval Gothic advocated by Augustus Welby Pugin (1812-1852).



FIG. 1. PARIS (ON), ST. JAMES'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, EXTERIOR FROM SE, NAVE 1839, CHANCEL 1863-1865. | MALCOLM THURLBY



FIG. 2. PARIS (ON), ST. JAMES'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, INTERIOR TO E. | MALCOLM THURLBY



FIG. 3. PARIS (ON), ST. JAMES'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, INTERIOR FROM CHANCEL. | MALCOLM THURLBY

ST. JAMES'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

The church stands at the junction of Grand River Street South and Burwell Street, on land given by Hiram "King" Capron (1796-1872), founder of Paris (1829), and his wife. The nave was built in 1839 by Levi Boughton, a mason who moved to Paris in 1838 from Normandale, New York, and introduced the cobblestone-faced masonry technique to the village of Paris (fig. 1). Cobblestone buildings are extensive in upper New York State and the technique may be traced to the county of Sussex in southern England, as at St. Andrew's, Hove, Brighton (1833).³ The description of St. James's church given in the 1883 *History of the County of Brant, Ontario* is remarkably well informed in architectural terms:

The roof is flat, the windows are of the kind designated by architectural experts "Carpenter's Gothic," and the west end is surmounted by one of those nondescript belfries, terminated by a tin-covered spirelet so often seen in country churches in Canada, and whose real origin is in the renaissance style imported into Lower Canada by the French in the eighteenth century.

[The account continues] In 1865, at a cost of about \$1,000, a chancel was added through the exertions of Dr. Townley, and by the beneficence of Mrs. Dickson of Paris. The chancel presents a marked contrast to the rest of the church, being a genuine Gothic of the "early English," or "first pointed" style. The roof is of open work, of dark-stained timber. The east window is a triplet, each light bordered with stained glass, of which also there are four vesica-shaped medallions bearing the four Evangelistic symbols, and in the centre an Agnus Dei supporting a banner with the cross, "displayed."⁴

It is also recorded that "In the basement a well attended Sunday school is held, numbering 100 pupils."⁵

The description shows an acute awareness of the change in the character of ecclesiastical Gothic architecture in the quarter century that elapsed between the construction of the nave and chancel. The nave is a Gibbsian box with a low-pitched roof and a flat ceiling with a centrally-placed medallion adorned with rich acanthus foliage and a modified Vitruvian-scroll frame (figs. 2-3).⁶ Above the western bay of the nave

there is a square tower, originally with single pointed arches on each side (fig. 4), which is surmounted by an octagonal belfry with a pointed opening on each side, and a spire (figs. 1 and 4). A late nineteenth-century photograph shows a "widow's walk" at the top of the tower (fig. 4), as in St. John's Anglican Church, Ancaster (ON), 1824.⁷ While medieval architectural precedent may be found for the Y tracery of the windows, as in the southwest chapel of Lincoln Cathedral (*circa* 1220), the use of the pronounced wooden frame with Y tracery has rather more in common with the eighteenth-century Gothic tradition of Batty Langley (1696-1751).⁸ It is unlikely that the 1839 church had a separate chancel because in 1860, Reverend Townley started a Chancel and Sunday School Fund with the view to erecting these additions to the church.⁹ In 1863-1865 the present chancel was erected with the Sunday school in the basement and a vestry to the north and organ room to the south (figs. 1-4). The 1863-1865 addition is a fine example of the impact of ecclesiology in Anglican church architecture in Ontario. On the nave and chancel, the Cambridge Camden Society stated that:

This division, essential in the interior, is not always to be traced in the exterior. It is far better indeed, generally speaking, that it should be marked in both; and to this end the breadth of the Chancel should be a little less than that of the Nave; a difference of four or five feet will be quite sufficient. The height of the Chancel is usually less, in the same proportion. [...]

The comparative size of Chancel and Nave is a point which, within certain limitations, must be left to taste. Yet, as a general rule, the Chancel should be not less than the third, or more than the half, of the whole length of the church.¹⁰

The new chancel is “correctly” constructed in local fieldstone with a steeply pitched, open timber roof and triple lancet windows in the east wall of the chancel to represent the Trinity: “[t]hree lancets are the most usually adopted; these, it need not be said, symbolise the HOLY TRINITY.”¹¹ Moreover, the chancel is raised three steps above the floor of the nave—the Camden Society prescribed that the chancel “should be raised at least two steps at the Chancel arch”¹²—and the altar against the east wall of the chancel is elevated further two steps.¹³ The Camden Society also recommended that the vestry “may be thrown out, as was often done, on the north or south side of the Chancel.”¹⁴ Be that as it may, the inclusion of the Sunday school in the basement is not part of Camdenian doctrine. Instead, it is inherited from a non-conformist tradition in which it was common to include Sunday school rooms as part of a full basement.¹⁵

Analogous additions of a “correct” chancel in Anglican churches in Ontario may be seen at St. Mary’s, Picton;¹⁶ St. Mark’s, Barriefield; Holy Trinity, Hawkesbury;¹⁷ and Christ Church, Holland Landing, and a similar arrangement is recorded at St. John’s, Ancaster.¹⁸



FIG. 4. PARIS (ON), TOWN HALL AND ST. JAMES'S ANGLICAN CHURCH. | PARIS MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES



FIG. 5. PARIS TOWN HALL, EXTERIOR FROM NW. | MALCOLM THURLBY



FIG. 6. PARIS TOWN HALL, EXTERIOR FROM NW (PARIS MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES POSTCARD). | MALCOLM THURLBY



FIG. 7. PARIS TOWN HALL, BASEMENT, INTERIOR TO E. | MALCOLM THURLBY



FIG. 8. PARIS TOWN HALL, INTERIOR, BLOCKED E DOORWAY. | MALCOLM THURLBY



FIG. 9. PARIS TOWN HALL, GROUND FLOOR, INTERIOR TO E. | MALCOLM THURLBY



FIG. 10. PARIS TOWN HALL, GROUND FLOOR, INTERIOR TO N. | MALCOLM THURLBY

TOWN HALL AND MARKET

Located at 13 Burwell Street across the road and to the southwest of St. James's Anglican Church, the Paris Town Hall is a building of great significance in the history of civic Gothic architecture (figs. 4-6). In sharp contrast to the eighteenth-century Gothic tradition of the Anglican church nave, the Town Hall incorporates details from original medieval exemplars, and shows that the architect, John Maxwell, was up to date with contemporary secular Gothic architecture in Britain.

History

A committee to report upon a suitable site for a Town Hall was formed on February 7,

1853.¹⁹ On February 21, it was announced that there was a proposal for a site suitable for the Town Hall and Market "from the proprietors of Lot No. 7 and half of No. 6."²⁰ John Maxwell is recorded as the architect,²¹ and Gardner and Strickland, contractors, tendered for £1957 "the building to be finished on the first January next."²² At the Council Meeting of June 23, 1853, it was moved: "That By Law to raise by way of loan the sum of Two Thousand Five Hundred Pounds payable in Twelve years for the purpose of purchasing a site and erecting a Town Hall and Market and other Public buildings do now pass."²³ The motion was carried. On December 19, 1853, a by-law was passed "to raise by way of Loan the sum of £900 for the purpose of finishing the Town Hall and Market and for

the purchase of a fire engine."²⁴ According to the *Brant County Gazetteer and Directory*, the cost of the building was about twelve thousand dollars.²⁵

The Architect

John Maxwell was born on May 24, 1803, at Kilmadock, Perth, Scotland.²⁶ In 1836 he is recorded as a member of the first Brantford Fire Company. His residence (built 1837-1840) is located at 81 Albion Street, Brantford.²⁷ He appears in the first assessment roll of Brantford, September 4, 1847, as a builder and overseer of streets and walks.²⁸ The designation "builder" does not seem to carry a negative connotation, because John Turner, the well-known and prolific Brantford architect

of the nineteenth-century, is also listed as a builder. The 1862 *Business Directory* lists John Maxwell under "Carpenters and Builders." The 1869-1870 *Brant County Gazetteer and Directory* lists him as a joiner with a home on Albion.²⁹ He registers as a "Provincial Land Surveyor" on January 23, 1849, and later advertises himself as a "Surveyor & Architect," in Hamilton (ON).³⁰ He is listed in the 1851 *Census of the Village of Paris* as a civil engineer, born in Scotland, age 37, with a one-and-a-half storey frame office, and of Roman Catholic religion. Also listed are his wife, Canadian born, age thirty-four, and children, Robert age eleven, Francis age eight, May age six, and Joseph age four.³¹ On October 24, 1851, John Maxwell places an advertisement in the *Paris Star and Great Western Advocate* as civil engineer, architect, provincial land surveyor, Upper Village Paris.³² Research to date has revealed nothing of Maxwell's training.

Description

The Market House and Town Hall as it is described in the eighteen-page *Specifications* written by John Maxwell, has a rectangular plan on an east-west axis with north and south wings and a tower in the northwest angle for the north wing and the hall.³³ It has two-and-a-half storeys with a partial basement in which the eastern two thirds are divided into six equal aisles by squared wooden columns (fig. 7). This area served as the "lower market" and was entered through a four-centred brick arch at the east end, which is now blocked (fig. 8). The western third of the basement included prisoners' cells. The ground floor is divided longitudinally into three aisles with wooden columns which served as the market hall, with the council chamber and Magistrate's and Treasurer's offices at the west end (figs. 9-10). The archival photograph shows the original Gothic



FIG. 11. PARIS TOWN HALL, COUNCIL MEETING WITH ANDREW H. BAIRD, MAYOR 1877-1879 AND 1896 (PARIS MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES). | MALCOLM THURLBY



FIG. 12. PARIS TOWN HALL, GROUND FLOOR, VAULT. | MALCOLM THURLBY



FIG. 13. PARIS TOWN HALL, ASSEMBLY ROOM, INTERIOR TO E. | MALCOLM THURLBY

fenestration (fig. 11). The vault adjoined the Treasurer's office immediately to the east of the doorway to the tower (figs. 10 and 12). The stairs from the ground floor to the hall are located in the west wing.

The upper story with its magnificent open timber roof served as the Assembly Room (fig. 13). The lower section of the basement walls are constructed in stone while the superstructure is of brick with stone



FIG. 14. PARIS TOWN HALL, EXTERIOR FACADE, N WING. | MALCOLM THURLBY

dressings. On the ground floor the walls of the council room and offices were plastered but the brickwork of the market was left exposed. Moulded bricks articulate the doorways and windows, while wood is used for the tracery of the pointed windows of the four facades of the building. The corners of the building are articulated with stepped angle buttresses with stone pinnacles and weatherings. A late nineteenth-century photograph shows that the octagonal clasping buttresses of the wings were topped with crenellated turrets (fig. 4).

The Architectural Context

By the 1850s Gothic had become the preferred style for church architecture in Ontario, but this was certainly not the case with secular public architecture. In the civic realm, the classical tradition prevailed with ultimate reference to Ancient Greece and Rome, often filtered through Renaissance, Baroque and/or Neoclassical



FIG. 15. PARIS TOWN HALL, EXTERIOR, W DOORWAY, DETAIL. | MALCOLM THURLBY

intermediaries. Examples abound: George Browne's Kingston City Hall (1841-1844),³⁴ the Dundas Town Hall and Market by Francis Hawkins (1848-1849), St. Catharines Town Hall by Kivas Tully (1848-1851),³⁵ Guelph Town Hall by William Thomas,³⁶ Napanee Town Hall and Market by Edward Horsey of Kingston (1856),³⁷ Bath Town Hall (1866, architect unknown),³⁸ and Victoria Hall in Cobourg by Kivas Tully (1856-1860).³⁹ The unusual choice of the Gothic style for the Paris Town Hall is reported in an 1854 newspaper article:

There is also a very substantial and excellent Market House and Town Hall, but the style is very remarkable being so strongly ecclesiastical that any stranger ill-informed to the contrary would at once pronounce it a church. It seems strange to find the tower of this costly edifice used perchance for hunters' stalls, and its chancel devoted to the dispensing of beef and mutton. But tastes differ, and if the Parisians are satisfied, that is the main thing.⁴⁰

Yet by 1859 Gothic was the chosen style for the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa.⁴¹ While Gothic was never destined to supplant the classical tradition for monumental public buildings in Canada, it is clear that the Paris Town Hall marks a significant moment in the history of Gothic architecture in that country. Indeed, we shall see that John Maxwell was remarkably well informed on contemporary British practice and theory concerning Gothic architecture.

Gothic was not without precedent for public buildings in Ontario. In the first place there is the Middlesex County Building, London (ON) (1827-1831), built to the design of John Ewart, with additions.⁴² Something similar is seen in Thomas Young's Wellington District Courthouse, Guelph (1837-1844 with additions).⁴³ Both buildings belong to an eighteenth-century Castellated Gothic tradition, which paid little or no attention to the study of Medieval Gothic architecture. John

Maxwell's approach to the design of the Paris Town Hall was quite different. He abandoned romantic eighteenth-century Gothicism in favour of precise reference to medieval architectural precedent through the medium of illustrations of details in the architectural press.

The choice of the Gothic style for the Paris Town Hall has been seen as a way of distinguishing it from the Greek Revival mansions of the town's mill owners.⁴⁴ This may have been a factor and it also sets apart the Paris Town Hall from earlier and near-contemporary town and city halls in Ontario and government buildings elsewhere in Canada. Gothic may also have been perceived as quintessentially English. Hiram Capron, founder of Paris, was born in Leicester, Vermont, but renounced his American citizenship in 1823 and swore allegiance to the Crown.⁴⁵ There was also a strong desire amongst the "upper crust" of Paris to adopt the etiquette of British society.⁴⁶ In light of this it seems appropriate to seek British associations for the Paris Town Hall and what better precedent could there be for a Gothic public building than the Houses of Parliament in London? In 1834 fire gutted the Houses of Parliament. Rebuilding started in 1840 with Sir Charles Barry as the architect and Augustus Welby Pugin providing the Gothic detailing.⁴⁷ Surprisingly this did not give rise to a glut of Gothic government architecture. In *Remarks On Secular And Domestic Architecture: Present And Future* published in 1857, George Gilbert Scott wrote:

Few things surprise me more than the neglect which pointed architecture has met with among the builders of town-halls. Next to churches, the finest of medieval structures existing are, perhaps, some of the town-halls of Flanders, Germany, France, and some of the free cities of Italy;



FIG. 16. OXFORD, MERTON COLLEGE, DOORWAY, AFTER JOHN HENRY PARKER. | MALCOLM THURLBY



FIG. 17. PARIS TOWN HALL, ASSEMBLY ROOM ROOF. | MALCOLM THURLBY

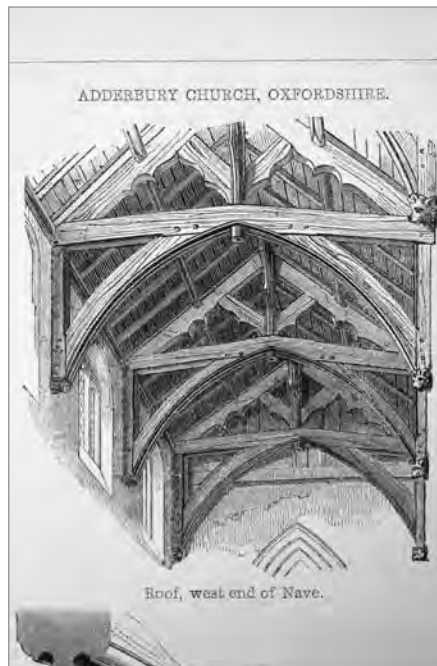


FIG. 18. ADDERBURY (OXFORDSHIRE), ST. MARY, NAVE ROOF, AFTER MATTHEW HOLBECH BLOXAM. | MALCOLM THURLBY

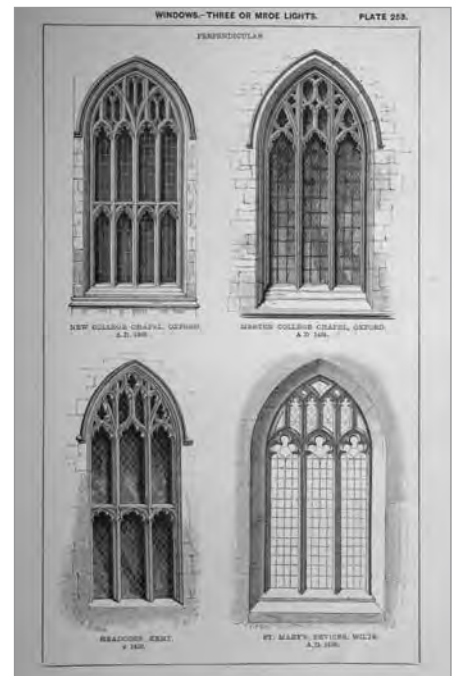


FIG. 19. DEVIZES (WILTSHIRE), ST. MARY, AND OTHER PERPENDICULAR WINDOWS, AFTER JOHN HENRY PARKER. | MALCOLM THURLBY

yet scarcely an attempt has been made to revive these noble buildings in England, and town-halls are continually being erected in our provincial towns in styles as thoroughly unsuitable as can be conceived, and at a cost which would, in good hands and in a right style, have enabled them to vie with the glories of Brussels, Louvain or Ypres.⁴⁸

There is a tradition of Medieval Gothic guildhalls in England as at St. Mary's Guildhall, Coventry (1340-1342, enlarged

1394-1414).⁴⁹ The original masonry of the hall of the London Guildhall is the work of John Croxton (circa 1411-circa 1440), which formerly had an elaborate wooden roof over the hall as at the Paris Town Hall.⁵⁰ The Gothic tradition continued in the 1788 south façade of the London Guildhall by George Dance the Younger, albeit spiced with some Indian references.⁵¹ Then of the Bristol Guildhall, 1844, H.S. Goodhart-Rendell remarked that,



FIG. 20. PARIS TOWN HALL, W WINDOW. | MALCOLM THURLBY



FIG. 22. PARIS, SACRED HEART ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, INTERIOR TO E, JOHN MAXWELL (1857), CLERESTORY BY JOHN TURNER (1881).



FIG. 21. NORWICH CATHEDRAL, PRESBYTERY WINDOW, AFTER JOHN HENRY PARKER. | MALCOLM THURLBY



FIG. 23. PARIS, SACRED HEART, N (S) AISLE WINDOW. | MALCOLM THURLBY

although far clumsier in detail and arrangement, [it] resembles essentially the Houses of Parliament in the manner of its compromise between Gothic and Classic. This is the earliest neo-Gothic town hall of which I have found any record, and, if any others were built before the sixties of the century they were inconspicuous and unimportant. I should be very much surprised to learn of any in whose design Pugin's *True Principles* had been regarded, although in matters of detail they might mimic his practice.⁵²

Aside from guildhalls, the large rectangular hall with an elaborate open-timber roof finds a great pedigree in English medieval halls. Most famous is the Great Hall of Westminster Palace, roof for Richard II (1394-1402), and another fine example is Edward IV's Great Hall at Eltham Palace of the 1470s. John Maxwell's Paris Town Hall does not presage George Gilbert Scott's references to Belgian Gothic with centrally placed façade towers, as in Scott's Hamburg Town Hall, 1856.⁵³ The

tower of the Paris Town Hall is a monumental beacon of government just as in the London Houses of Parliament. It provides greater height than any classicising dome or puny tower like St. Catharine's Town Hall. Monumental towers are not part of an English medieval guildhall tradition; there is one centrally placed above the façade at Bristol (1844), but it rises just one storey above the walls of the hall. The height at Paris Town Hall reads more like a reflection of Italian Gothic architecture. The famous English Victorian art and architecture critic, John Ruskin (1819-1900), eulogized on Giotto's campanile of Florence Cathedral and was enamoured with the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence of which the tower is of mighty height.⁵⁴ Be that as it may, other than the clasping octagonal buttress on the campanile of Florence Cathedral, the details of the Paris Town Hall tower do not depend on Italian exemplars, yet the inclusion of such a monumental tower may well owe something to Ruskin's love of this feature. The connection is difficult to prove but at least we may associate Maxwell's use of Gothic with Ruskin's view of the Nature of Gothic for the architecture of Northern nations. Ruskin proposed that "Gothic is not only the best, but the *only rational* architecture, as being that which can fit itself most easily to all services, vulgar or noble."⁵⁵ Following Augustus Welby Pugin's *True Principles*, albeit without credit, John Ruskin explained: "there is in cold countries exposed to rain and snow, only one advisable form for the roof-mask, and that is the gable, for this alone will throw off both rain and snow from all parts of its surface as speedily as possible. Snow can lodge on the top of a dome, not on the ridge of a gable."⁵⁶ It would be hard to imagine anything more appropriate for the climate of Upper Canada. Moreover, Ruskin's pointed-arch-and-gable definition of Gothic fulfilled with the roof of the Paris Town Hall.⁵⁷

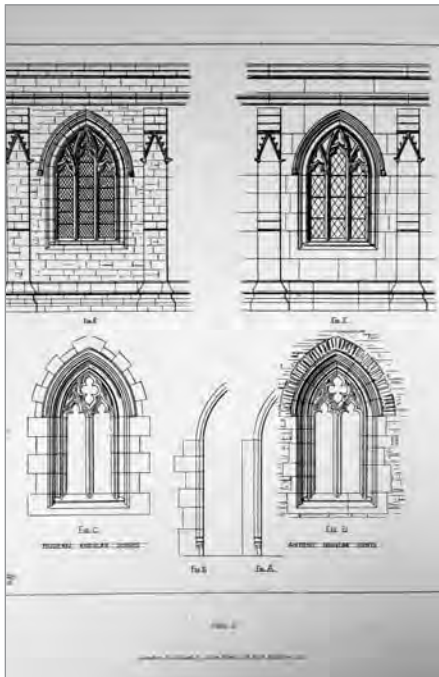


FIG. 24. PUGIN, *TRUE PRINCIPLES, MASONRY AND WINDOW JOINTS*. | MALCOLM THURLBY



FIG. 25. KINGSTHORPE (NORTHAMPTONSHIRE), WINDOW, AFTER JOHN HENRY PARKER. | MALCOLM THURLBY



FIG. 26. FILBY (NORFOLK), INTERIOR TO E, AFTER JOHN HENRY PARKER. | MALCOLM THURLBY

On matters of detail, the octagonal clasp-ing buttresses at the angles of the wings and the tower of the Paris Town Hall find parallel on the tower of the London Houses of Parliament and on countless English Perpendicular church towers. The octagonal plan is also used for the angle turrets of the gatehouse of St. James's Palace, London, constructed between 1532 and 1540 for King Henry VIII, which building also provides a source for the brick masonry and square-headed windows of the Paris Town Hall (figs. 5 and 14).

Many of the details of the Paris Town Hall can be traced to English medieval sources published in the architectural press from the late 1820s through the early 1850s. The rectangular moulded frame for the doorway derives from Perpendicular and Tudor Gothic precedent and may be paralleled with the north doorway to Merton College Chapel, Oxford, illustrated in John Henry Parker's *Glossary* and his *Introduc-*

tion to the Study of Gothic Architecture, in which there are also trefoil cusps in the spandrels (figs. 15-16).⁵⁸ The roof design with the combination of braces to form a pointed arch beneath a tie beam with a king post, principal rafters and diagonal struts with tracery on the principal rafters and struts, is closely allied to the nave roof of St. Mary's Church, Adderbury (Oxfordshire), illustrated in Bloxam's *Principles of Gothic Ecclesiastical Architecture* (figs. 17-18).⁵⁹ The three-light Perpendicular windows of the north and south fronts are a simplified version of one in St. Mary's, Devizes, Wiltshire, illustrated in Parker's *Glossary* (figs. 14 and 19).⁶⁰ For the east and west windows of the assembly hall, Parker's *Glossary* does not provide a precise model, but the fusion of the dagger with the mullions and supermullions may be seen as a combination of the Devizes window with a clerestory window from the presbytery of Norwich Cathedral (figs. 19-21).⁶¹

Comparison with Scott's Civic Gothic may suggest that Maxwell was old-fashioned in the use of Tudor Gothic. Yet, it should be emphasized that Scott's row of eight terraced houses in the Broad Sanctuary, next to Westminster Abbey, illustrated in *The Builder*, 1854,⁶² has both pointed and square-headed windows and stepped buttresses as in the Paris Town Hall. Moreover, the articulation of the central pavilion with octagonal turrets capped with crenellations is similar to the facades of the north and south wings of the Paris Town Hall. Thus, at the very time Maxwell designed the Paris Town Hall, so Gilbert Scott used the very same Tudor Gothic motifs in his Broad Sanctuary design.

The Paris Town Hall was constructed at a time of outstanding growth and ambition in the community. The Great Western Railway Station in Paris opened on December 15, 1853.⁶³ On March 4, 1854, the Brantford to Paris section of the Buf-



FIG. 27. PARIS, SACRED HEART, N (S) AISLE WINDOW. | MALCOLM THURLBY



FIG. 28. PARIS, SACRED HEART, N (S) AISLE WINDOW, DETAIL. | MALCOLM THURLBY

falo, Brantford and Goderich Railway was opened and the following month the two railway lines connected at Paris Junction.⁶⁴ The grand scale and soaring tower of the Town Hall are a monument to the great civic pride of Paris in the 1850s.

SACRED HEART ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH,

Sacred Heart Roman Catholic church stands at the southeast corner of Main and Washington Streets, and mass was celebrated for the first time in the church on Christmas Day 1857. The fabric was then incomplete and remained so until 1881, when various additions and modifications were finished to the design of John Turner, architect of Brantford (fig. 22). The sanctuary was subsequently modified in 1912. Fortunately, we have a detailed description of the church, both in its original and in its 1881 forms. Comparison between the two accounts is most instructive. The account of the 1857 church tells us that:

[The church] is after a design by Mr. John Maxwell, of Paris, and is calculated to contain about 500 persons. It is a substantial stone structure without any of the sham embellishment and showy deceptions so common in American churches. It has been fashioned after the model of the ancient, modest country churches of England, though still much wanting, no doubt, in the best of these edifices. Reality has however been aimed at throughout. The Design is in the late Decorated style, and comprises chancel, nave clerestory, and aisles, steeple and porch, together with cellar apartments and flues suitable for hot air apparatus. The nave piers are of cut stone, with bases and moulded capitals; the window mullions and side-mouldings, their tracery and internal finishings, are of the same material, as are also seven doorways of the building, and some other minor parts. The nave and chancel arches have, for the sake of economy, been constructed of moulded bricks, for the manufacture of which some clays in this district are peculiarly well

adapted. These bricks are of an excellent and enduring color, are of solid texture, and easily cut when necessary. They will not be exposed to wet, and constitute a finish nearly as cheap, and much superior in beauty and durability, to stucco sham-work. The small cruciform windows of the clerestory have not yet been put in, but may be inserted for small cost, at some future day. The roof is thoroughly open throughout, with moulded rafters, principals, wall-plates, too.

It is not contemplated to finish the steeple at the present time, although about £150 has already been expended on its basement apartment and the part of the steeple built above ground—some 25 feet in height.

The expense as yet incurred upon the building is about £1250, a price which is generally considered by competent judges to be exceedingly low, and no contractors have been ruined by the job, as the work has been almost entirely done by piece-work and days' wages.⁶⁵



FIG. 29. PARIS, SACRED HEART, INTERIOR TO E, PRE-1912 (PARIS MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES). | MALCOLM THURLBY

The description of the church is remarkably well informed on the architectural theory of the time as witnessed by such remarks as none of “the sham embellishment and showy deceptions so common in American churches,” and “[i]t has been fashioned after the model of the ancient, modest country churches of England,” plus references to reality aimed at throughout, late Decorated design, nave piers of cut stone, window tracery and side mouldings of stone, brick for the nave and chancel arches “much superior in beauty and durability, to stucco sham-work”; and the open timber roof. It is tempting to suggest that the description was written by John Maxwell himself in that it reflects Augustus Welby Pugin’s *True Principles* as advocated by William Hay in an article in the *Anglo-American Magazine*, published in Toronto.⁶⁶ Hay further praised the “ancient village churches of England” and pronounced that “[t]here is a beauty about those venerable fabrics, not easily described, but which is recognised as well

by the untutored as the most learned in architectural science.”⁶⁷ Frank Wills (1822-1857), another strong proponent of Pugin, was a forceful advocate of reality in architecture.⁶⁸ He maintained that “[t]he great secret of beauty of the ancient churches is their *reality*,” and warned against “the pernicious influence of *sham*.”⁶⁹

Just as the Paris Town Hall, Maxwell’s church of the Sacred Heart makes precise reference to medieval architectural sources and displays a profound understanding of Pugin’s *True Principles*.⁷⁰ Pugin’s influence was strangely lacking in the Roman Catholic churches in Ontario before the arrival of Joseph Connolly (1840-1904) in Toronto in 1873.⁷¹ We may contrast John Turner’s Roman Catholic churches of St. Basil in Brantford (1867) and St. Joseph in Stratford (1867), both of which conform to the standard three-aisle lath-and-plaster vaulted interior like Santa Maria-sopra-Minerva, Rome, which was the norm throughout Ontario.

The aisle windows of Sacred Heart are excellent examples of Pugin’s advocacy of “Ancient Irregular Joints,” as opposed to “Modern Regular Joints,” as illustrated in *True Principles* (figs. 23-24). They also have Decorated two-light flowing tracery, based on real medieval models as at Kingsthorpe (Northamptonshire), illustrated in Parker’s *Glossary* (figs. 23 and 25).⁷² The majority of windows in Ontario churches at this time have wooden frames and tracery, and therefore the “reality” of Maxwell’s use of stone is quite exceptional. Similarly, the stone columns may be contrasted with the wooden columns in imitation of stone in the nearby Roman Catholic church of St. Basil in Brantford. The octagonal columns with moulded capitals and two-order chamfered arches for the nave arcades at Sacred Heart are common in English parish churches of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and exemplars would have been available to Maxwell in books like Brandon’s *Parish Churches*.⁷³ Filby (Norfolk) nave has octagonal columns and two-light aisle windows with flowing tracery (figs. 22 and 26). Also at Filby, the small quatrefoil clerestory windows may have inspired the proposed “cruciform” clerestory windows in Sacred Heart.

The description praises the durability and colour of the brick used for the chancel arch and nave arcade and adds that this is “much superior in beauty and durability, to stucco sham-work.” This suggests that the brickwork was exposed, a feature that conforms to a High Victorian aesthetic as advocated by George Edmund Street for “town churches.”⁷⁴

In the easternmost window of the north nave aisle, the stained glass was a “Gift of J. Maxwell” (figs. 27-28). Like Maxwell’s architectural details, the design of the glass follows medieval precedent in incorporating stiff-leaf and vine scrolls from Early English and Decorated sources respectively.

Sacred Heart church was completed by Brantford architect, John Turner, and was dedicated on Sunday, February 6, 1881.⁷⁵ The report of the dedication includes a description of the building:

The R.C. Church at Paris has, during the past season, undergone many changes. A spire 110 feet has been erected. The roof has been raised 8 feet, and 4 handsome gothic windows placed in each side of the clear story. The whole of the roofs and spire are slated, the walls on the inside are newly plastered and blocked, in imitation of well bonded masonry. The chancel and vestry to the rear, 18 x 40, are built to correspond with the stonework of the church. The chancel on the inside is very handsomely finished—gothic dudoing—grained ceiling, coloured blue, with large stucco mouldings on each angle. The altar is of excellent design, about 11 feet wide by 24 feet high. The whole of the work is well executed. Cost about \$7,000.⁷⁶

The *History of the County of Brant, Ontario* (1883) reports:

The Catholic Church was the pioneer church of Paris, and can boast of an edifice which far surpasses all the ecclesiastical buildings, and is in truth the architectural glory of this part of the town. It is located on the corner of Washington and Main Streets, and was first used for Divine service in 1857.⁷⁷

[The 1883 account continues:] The church is a fine specimen of decorated [*sic*] Gothic; the tower is lofty, with a very beautiful spire, surmounted by a cross of gold. The building is constructed of a very rich field stone, to which time is likely to add fresh beauty and depth of colour. The coping and caps for buttresses are of the best cut stone from Ohio. The interior of this church is very striking. The spirit of true Gothic art is carried out in the minutest detail; everything is real; there are no

trashy ornaments, no painted woodwork to resemble stone. On each side are transepts separated from the body of the nave by five massive pillars of cut stone surmounted by arches, which give the effect of distance to this beautifully proportional church and sanctuary. The roof of the nave is open work, on each side, the light falls through the stained glass of the clerestory windows [...] The nave and transepts are seated with oakwood; the windows all of stained glass, are for the most part gifts. The mullions and tracings, which are modified, are chastened examples of the decorative [*sic*] style, and all of cut stone.

The tower of this church is fifteen feet square, and the spire a hundred and ten feet high. The nave is ninety feet by forty-five, the chancel and sanctuary twenty-four feet by twenty, and beyond this, communicating with the priest's house, a vestry eighteen feet by fifteen. The roof is of slate. The altar is on festive occasions decorated with handsome gilt candlesticks. It is surmounted with an elaborately-carved Gothic reredos, containing in the centre a tabernacle or pyx for the Holy Sacrament, before which the perpetual lamp is burning; also above this a gilt crucifix of singular beauty, and four niches containing figures of the four Evangelists, each with the appropriate symbol—the Sacrificial Ox of St. Luke, the Human Figure which marks the Evangelist of the Incarnation, the Lion of St. Mark, The Eagle of St. John. At the north or "Gospel" side is an oil painting, the work of a French artist, representing the baptism of Our Saviour. There are two side chapels; that to the south, of St. Joseph, that to the north, of the Blessed Virgin, whose image represents a face and figure of ideal purity and benignity. The transept walls are decorated with a cheap but not inert series of pictures of the Stations of the Cross. The baptismal font is of white marble, carved in imitation of an ancient font at Oxford. The entire cost of the

building was \$20,000, mainly raised by the energy of Father Dowling. It was dedicated to the Sacred Heart of the Redeemer, in February, 1881, by Bishop Crinnon, who then appointed Father Dowling to be Vicar-General of the Diocese.

While the masonry of Turner's additions to the fabric conform to Maxwell's standards, it is clear that Pugin's principles are diminished with Turner. The plaster was blocked in imitation of masonry, the very sort of sham abhorred by Maxwell the "realist." The clerestory windows have wooden tracery rather than stone used for the aisle windows. The chancel arch is enriched with plaster capitals and mouldings and an old photograph preserved in the Paris Museum and Archives, taken before the 1912 remodelling of the chancel, shows that John Turner opted for a quadripartite rib vault in imitation of stone and round clerestory windows (fig. 29). The High Gothic reredos, as described in 1883, is also seen in the pre-1912 photograph. It was removed after the Second Vatican Council (1965).

CONCLUSION

St. James's Anglican Church, the Town Hall, and Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church in Paris serve as excellent barometers of changing attitudes towards Gothic Revival architecture in Victorian Ontario. The Town Hall and Sacred Heart introduce the previously unpublished work of the architect John Maxwell and amply demonstrate the great impact of current British architectural theory in the work of this local practitioner in the 1850s.

NOTES

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