

# A Long-Term Perspective on Place Ville-Marie

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Inaugurated in 1962, Montreal's Place Ville-Marie clearly marks the affirmation of architectural modernity in Quebec (figure 1). It was undertaken by New York developer William Zeckendorf, who had been called on by Canadian National Railways to study the portion of downtown Montreal ripped open by laying the company's north-south rail lines, and designed by Ieoh Ming Pei's team of Harvard architecture graduates. This huge commercial and office complex, including the landmark 45-storey Royal Bank tower, dominates a vast urban esplanade that covers an intricate layering of below-grade circulation networks. With the creation of this "multi-purpose, multilevel core," Montreal, in the eyes of many critics, jumped to "the forefront of urban design."<sup>1</sup>

This achievement stands as a clear indication of the important role played by American expertise in Montreal's real estate market. The project was not without local and international precedents, however, both from architectural and socioeconomic points of view. Indeed, it had been common practice to hire American architects in Montreal since the late 19th century, when the scale of the city's architecture began to increase. Furthermore, the Place Ville-Marie project was the culmination of a long-term urban renewal effort linked to a modernization of the rail transportation system that had been initiated by the Canadian Northern Railway Company in the 1910s and continued by Canadian National Railways after the former was nationalized in 1922. This article will address the realization of the Place Ville-Marie complex from a longer-term perspective than has been typical of previous analyses,<sup>2</sup> and in so doing will trace certain aspects of the advent of architectural modernity in Montreal, particularly the role played by capitalist corporations and their American architects in the modernization of the urban form.

## MODERNIZATION VERSUS MODERNISM, AMERICANIZATION VERSUS AMERICANISM

A number of historians of art, science, and culture have shown that modernity in Quebec is not a late or sudden phenomenon that emerged during the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s, but

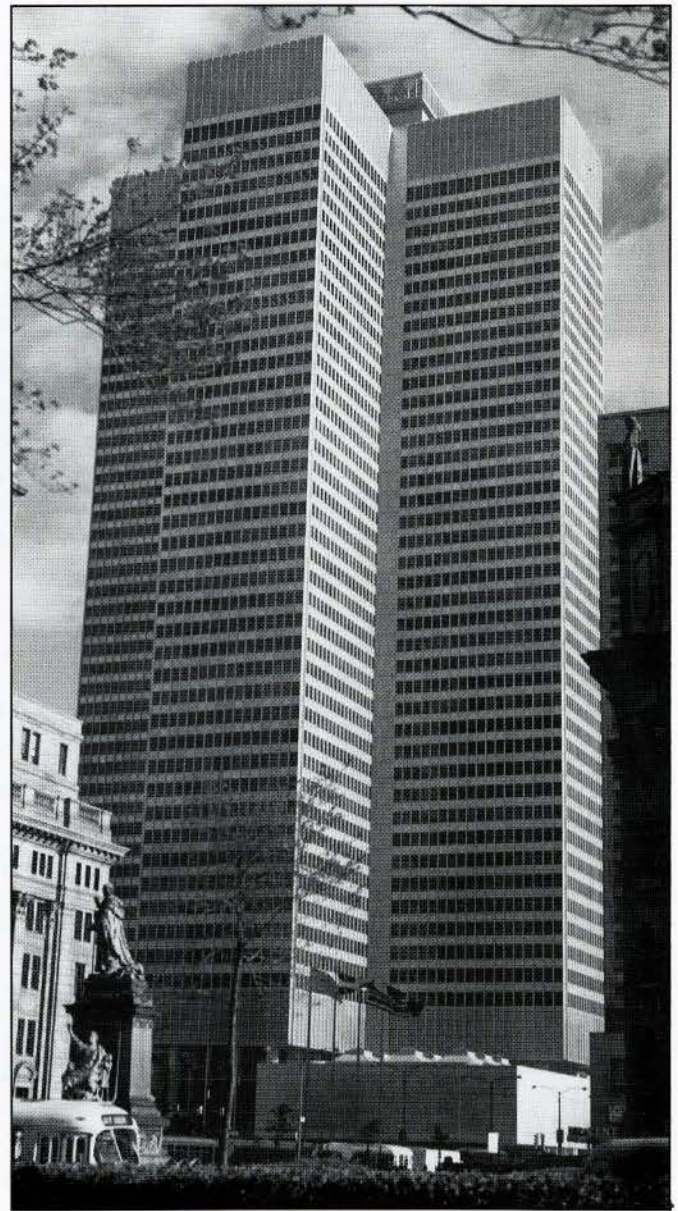


Figure 1. Place Ville-Marie, Montreal, from Dorchester Street, c. 1962; I.M. Pei & Associates, architects, Affleck, Desbarats, Dimakopoulos, Lebensold, Michaud, and Sise, associate architects, 1957-62. (Ville de Montréal, Gestion de documents et archives)

rather can be traced to the 1930s.<sup>3</sup> In the case of architecture, its roots go back even farther, to the last century, when the first manifestations of modernity — which were, by nature, more structural than cultural — can be recognized in the introduction of new techniques and building types, as well as in the professionalization of architectural practice.

By the late 19th century, the introduction of new programs and the use of new materials were contributing to the modernization of production, which was in the process of being transformed by industrialization; at the same time, professionalization of the practice of architecture was contributing to the specialization of labour then underway. Industrialization and division of labour, plus mobilization of the population, are the three principal dimensions of the concept of social modernization. They characterize the profound structural changes that marked Western societies as of the mid 18th century (with certain time discrepancies, depending on the particular country). It was only after Confederation in 1867, however, that Canada encountered these profound transformations, and only by the 1880s that Montreal started its demographic and economic boom, manifested by an intensification of construction activity.<sup>4</sup>

Modernization and the concepts of modernity and modernism can form a heuristic theoretical triad to explain different aspects of these transformations. While modernity focuses on the ideological dimension of the phenomenon, an ideology in which rejection of tradition is accompanied by ardent faith in progress and a tendency toward rationality,<sup>5</sup> modernism recognizes a new form of artistic practice that abandons mimesis in favour of an exploration of the specificity of each of the arts.<sup>6</sup> In architecture, modernism is an exploration of space and tectonics.

With reference to this theoretical construct and the impact of “American modernism” on Montreal’s urban architecture, the focus given to these concepts by Jean-Louis Cohen in his study of European architecture and the American “temptation” is instructive. He reaffirmed that, in terms of representations, Americanism is one of the constituent traits of modernity, and in terms of economics and technology, Americanization is one of the principal modalities of social modernization in the 20th century.<sup>7</sup> For America’s neighbour to the north, this attraction and domination occurred even earlier and more directly than in Europe. Moreover, the balance of world power in the early 20th century was changing: the dominance of Great Britain in Canada’s economy was weakening as the influence of the United States was gaining strength. Major American seaboard cities, only a few hours by train from Montreal, became important training centres for the latter’s architects. Meanwhile, the Canadian metropolis was an easily accessible construction market for Americans.

#### THE EARLY AMERICAN PRESENCE IN MONTREAL: FROM TALL BUILDING TO SUPERBLOCK

In 1890 Quebec’s architects reacted against the presence of American architects in the province. Hiring foreign architects was nothing new: as early as 1823, the wardens of the Church of Notre-Dame preferred to hire a foreign architect, an Irishman established in New York, when they were unable to afford a French architect.<sup>8</sup> At this early date it was already felt by many decision-makers that architects based in Montreal, a thriving commercial city, did not have enough prestige to build a monument that could outshine all others, both in grandeur and splendour. By the late 1880s, when construction activity reached a new peak, American architects — seemingly less inhibited by tradition, and more receptive to grand ideas — were competing against their Canadian colleagues at an unprecedented level. With the high demand for new urban amenities such as tall buildings, American skills were increasingly valued.

In Canada, the modernization of architectural practice through the professionalization of architects occurred in reaction to competition from their colleagues to the south, not from engineers and contractors. Americans contributed significantly to changing the scale of what was becoming Montreal’s second downtown (next to the future site of Place Ville-Marie) by designing the Windsor Hotel and its annex, the YMCA, and Windsor Station. In 1888, Americans Babb, Cook & Willard built the first tall building in Montreal, for the New York Life Insurance Company. This structure was still largely traditional in terms of its construction, in comparison to the more technically advanced Canada Life Insurance Company Building (1895), designed by Richard Waite, a Buffalo architect much in demand among Canadian corporate clients.<sup>9</sup>

Although Montreal architects gradually succeeded in winning over a large part of the market by the early 20th century, thanks to concerted collective and individual training efforts, the presence of American architects remained pervasive throughout this period. American expertise was still valued for commissions involving not only prestige, but also innovation, economy, and efficiency. While Montreal was asserting itself as Canada’s metropolis, the aspirations of the city’s major commercial patrons became synonymous with modernization of programs, with American skills, and with the “Americanization” of buildings, particularly the tall building.

According to Manfredo Tafuri, the tall building, invented in New York and Chicago in the 1880s, appeared in the context of a redefinition of real estate values, a pressure brought on by technological innovations, and a competitive economy in which real estate became a commodity.<sup>10</sup> Although the first tall buildings were simply extruded versions of the traditional urban monument, their inherent design challenges eventually compelled architects to break with the conventional rules of composition.

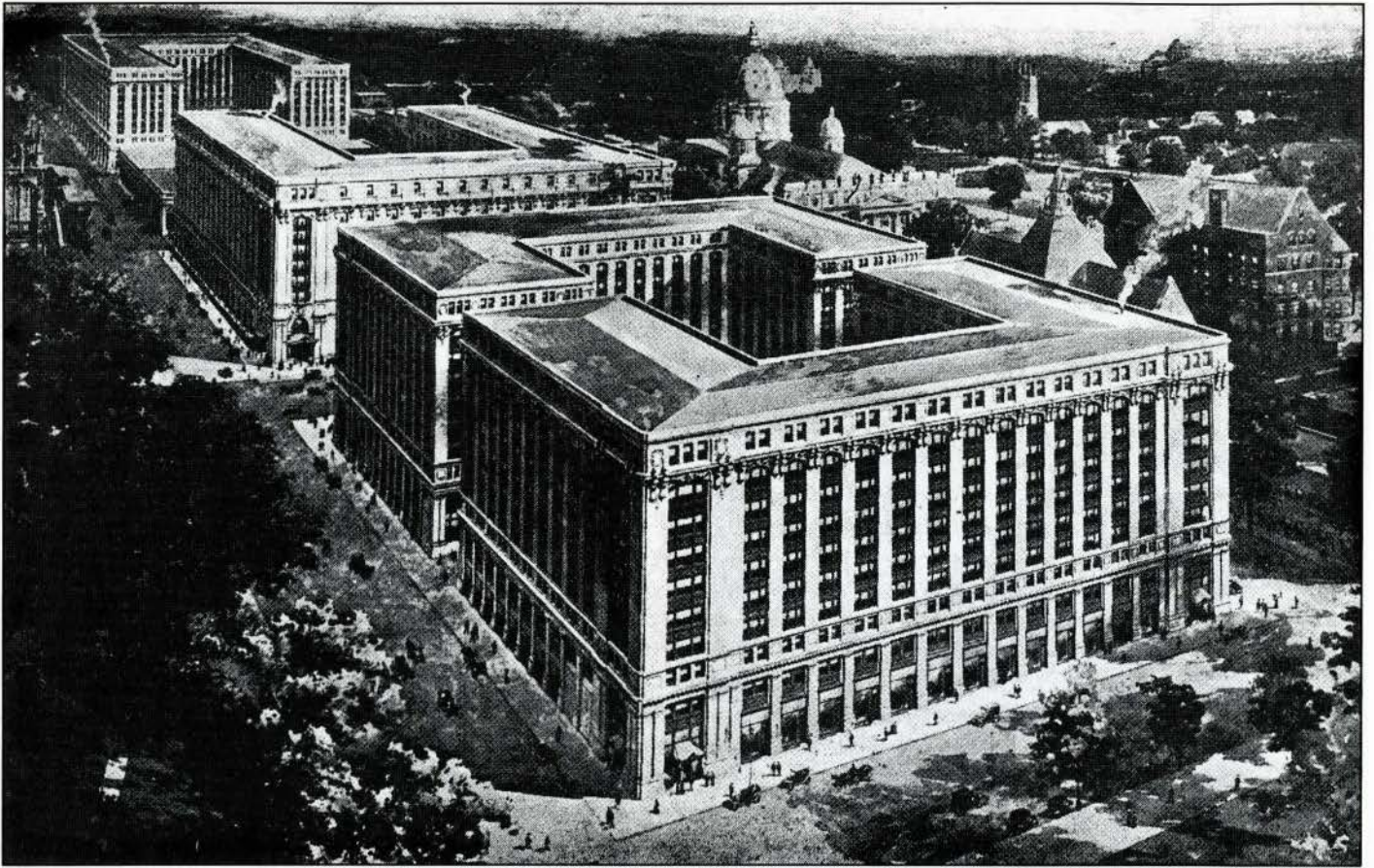


Figure 2. Proposed buildings and station for the Canadian Northern Railway, Montreal; Warren & Wetmore, architects, 1913. (*Mount Royal Tunnel* [Montreal, 1913]. Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture / Canadian Centre for Architecture)

At the turn of the century, the debate surrounding tall buildings was just as keen in Canada as it was in the United States: denounced as being a technical risk and a health hazard, buildings of great height did not instantly assume a positive value. In 1898, in his address to the annual banquet of the Province of Quebec Association of Architects, Stewart Henbest Capper, head of McGill University's school of architecture, noted that tall buildings had the potential to become pleasing free-standing objects.<sup>11</sup> But his position was the exception rather than the rule within his professional community. The 1901 Montreal building code, created with considerable input from the Province of Quebec Association of Architects, limited building height to 10 storeys or 130 feet, and offered no dispensation for "ornaments" above the compulsory cornice line, as was the case in Paris.

The race for the sky was not the only change affecting buildings in the modern metropolis. With the Montreal construction boom around 1910, buildings increased their footprint by way of a cadastral reallocation, resulting in a new distribution of land ownership and internalized functions that had previously been open to the street. Two structures anticipated the modern, vertically stratified, multifunctional building — and fulfilled the yearning of Montreal's business

elite for an elegant and efficient environment in which to work and relax. The Transportation Building (1911-12), described in *Construction* as "the largest office building in the British Empire," with nearly 5 acres of floor space, occupied half a city block right next to Place d'Armes.<sup>12</sup> Led by a syndicate of financiers, it was the first purely speculative real estate venture in Montreal.<sup>13</sup> In order to ensure the success of this risky operation, the syndicate hired a "known entity," Carrère & Hastings, a New York architectural firm already active in Toronto. The Dominion Express Building, designed by Montreal's Maxwell brothers,<sup>14</sup> had the public access to services offered to travellers by Dominion Express and its sister companies clearly segregated from its upper stories. The top floor, which afforded a panoramic view of the city, housed a very select gentlemen's club (as would be the case at Place Ville-Marie). Both buildings featured the "insular" character we still associate with modern office structures, their terra cotta exteriors contrasting with the stone walls of their neighbours on Saint James Street. In both cases, the location of the elevators enabled a flexible layout of large office plateaux, and their bases provided multiple points of access to services located in the basements (restaurant, bar, barber shop), these subterranean levels having a slightly larger footprint than those above ground.

Another important project immediately preceding the First World War — memorable not only for its size, but because it is, in a way, the ancestor of Place Ville-Marie — is the large complex designed by the American architectural firm Warren & Wetmore for the Canadian Northern Railway, which had acquired three blocks near Dominion Square for its downtown station at the terminus of the Mount Royal Tunnel.<sup>15</sup> The surviving perspective drawing of this unrealized Beaux-Arts “superblock” project does not reveal the functional complexity of these buildings rising over the underground rail lines, but it does attest to the high density of the scheme (figure 2). As pointed out by Alan Colquhoun, in a modern economy the widespread application of the superblock concept was made possible by enormous capital reserves, concomitant with the appearance of monopoly capitalism, which aimed to minimize the perverse effects of free enterprise.<sup>16</sup> In Quebec, at the turn of the century, financial and industrial concentration resulted in the creation of large corporations whose actions substantially changed the appearance of the city.<sup>17</sup>

In 1924, as a result of pressures from the market and from the Board of Trade, the City of Montreal revised its regulations and liberalized height restrictions, allowing buildings to

exceed the previous limits as long as the upper levels were set back and the total built surface area did not exceed that of an 11-storey structure occupying the entire lot. Unlike the groundbreaking New York Zoning Resolution of 1916, these measures applied to the entire city, and did not allow buildings to rise virtually unimpeded.

It was under these new regulations that the headquarters for the Royal Bank (1927-28) and the Bell Telephone Company (1927-29) were erected, to designs by New York architects York & Sawyer and Montreal architects Barott & Blackader respectively.<sup>18</sup> The Royal Bank, with a square base for services and a slender, prismatic office shaft, anticipated the *parti* adopted for Place Ville-Marie. Montreal’s height regulations were liberalized again in 1929, allowing for the erection of more modern and “vertical” towers such as the Aldred Building, a speculative venture funded by a brokerage firm that had played a major role in the merger of various electrical companies to form the powerful Shawinigan Water and Power Company.<sup>19</sup>

Occupying an entire city block and superimposing functions as varied as several levels of parking, two floors of retail spaces, and offices, Ross & Macdonald’s Dominion Square Building (1928-30)<sup>20</sup> can be regarded as the earliest prefiguration of Montreal’s 1960s “megastructures,” as Reyner Banham has called them.<sup>21</sup> Two unbuilt railway company projects of 1930, involving not only the conquest of heights but an unprecedented array of underground networks and amenities, were even more prophetic. For Canadian Pacific, American architects Fellheimer & Wagner designed a complex dominated by a giant hotel standing to the south of Dominion Square, with a new station arrival hall at its base (figure 3).<sup>22</sup> Their studies emphasized functional patterns more than architectural detailing, giving the tower a diagrammatic quality close to Modernist sensitivity. Slightly more modest, a commercial development envisioned by Canadian National was to be located on the site of Warren & Wetmore’s Canadian Northern project of 1913,<sup>23</sup> where Central Station, Place Bonaventure, and Place Ville-Marie currently stand. A spectacular drawing of this scheme was rendered by Hugh Jones, an American-born Montreal architect (figure 4).

While its ascendancy expanded across the continent, the modern building came to be considered a city within a city, and the modern tower, which emerged from the urban fabric, became a three-dimensional object in space rather than a part of the urban continuity.<sup>24</sup> While technological and typological breakthroughs in North America led to the development of efficient and reproducible structures, it must be noted (as pointed out by Manfredo Tafuri) that at the beginning of the century the cultural appropriation of these new giants had only scratched the surface. While skyscrapers were essential elements in the modernization of the city, particularly in the transformation of land occupation and use, their image had not broken entirely from the past.

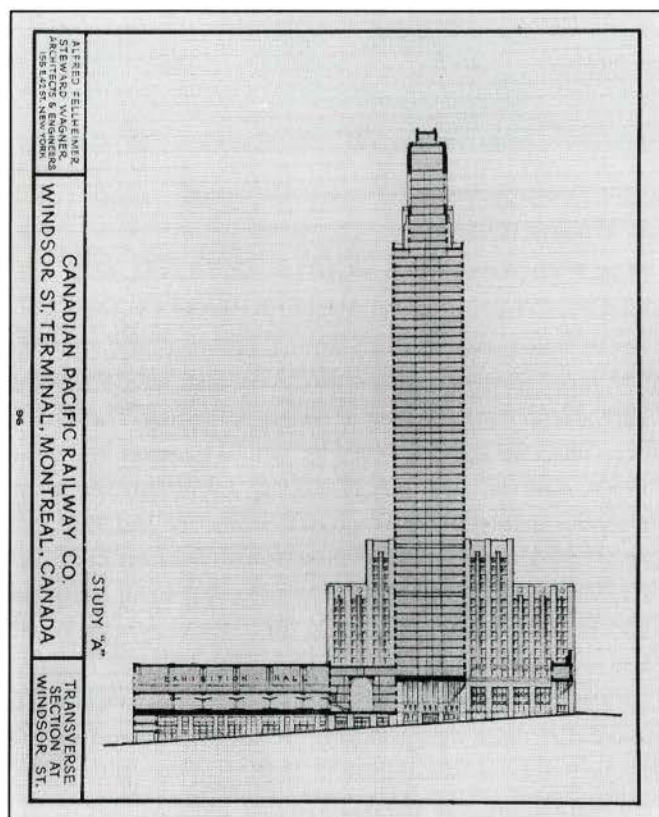


Figure 3. Project for a new Windsor Station; Alfred Fellheimer and Steward Wagner, architects and engineers. (*Studies for the Determination of Basic Principles, Policies and Construction Method for the Future Improvement and Enlargement of the Windsor Street Terminal Facilities of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, Montreal* [New York, 1930]; Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture / Canadian Centre for Architecture)



Figure 4. Proposed Canadian National Railways complex; Hugh Griffith Jones, architect, c. 1929. (Canadian Architecture Collection, McGill University)

It was in Europe, where cultural institutions were more highly developed — and where tradition had been shaken by the avant-garde — that the tall building acquired its modern architectural form. It was there, as part of the *Friedrichstrasse* competition in the early 1920s, that Ludwig Mies van der Rohe conceived of a skyscraper as a crystalline, dematerialized object. The glass tower he envisioned rejected all contextualism and apparent hierarchical differentiation of the storeys, whether it be according to the components of the program or the rules of traditional composition.<sup>25</sup> This was the type of building commissioned by developer Herbert Greenwald and built by Mies after he emigrated to the United States.<sup>26</sup> In 1922, inspired by Auguste Perret, Le Corbusier put forward his project of “A Contemporary City for Three Million People.” Criticizing traditional urban form, with its dark and crowded streets, Le Corbusier introduced the modern space of “infinite” expanse formally structured by the layout of cruciform glass skyscrapers and residential developments, as well as by a hierarchical network of circulation.<sup>27</sup> Of course, the intellectual and artistic progression from these theoretical projects of the 1920s to their materialization in major North American cities after the Second World War was long and complex.

**PLACE VILLE-MARIE: A MULTI-FUNCTIONAL AND MULTI-LEVEL HEART WITHIN THE HEART OF THE CITY**  
 Construction stagnated in Montreal between 1930 and 1950. The architectural profession was decimated; only a few firms were able to survive persistent underemployment. The teaching of architecture was threatened for lack of students. In the early 1940s, however, architectural training was modernized as new teaching methods were imported from Europe and introduced to McGill University, where most of the members of Affleck, Desbarats, Dimakopoulos, Lebensold, Michaud, and Sise, I.M. Pei’s associated architects on the Place Ville-Marie project, had trained.<sup>28</sup> When the war ended, accelerated economic growth and a few new large-scale real estate ventures indicated that times were changing. When the Laurentian Hotel opened on Dominion Square in 1948, it was acclaimed for its exceptional size and “ultramodernism.” Indeed, constructed at a time when materials were in short supply, this 21-storey building made use of some very innovative techniques. Its extruded-aluminum-panel facade was seen as “the first break-away from architectural tradition.”<sup>29</sup> The building was astonishingly spare when compared, for example, to Ernest Cormier’s 1944 tower project for the Windsor Hotel, but its silhouette

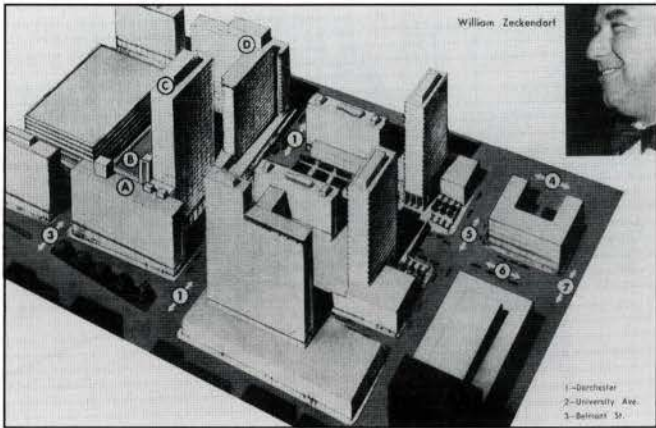
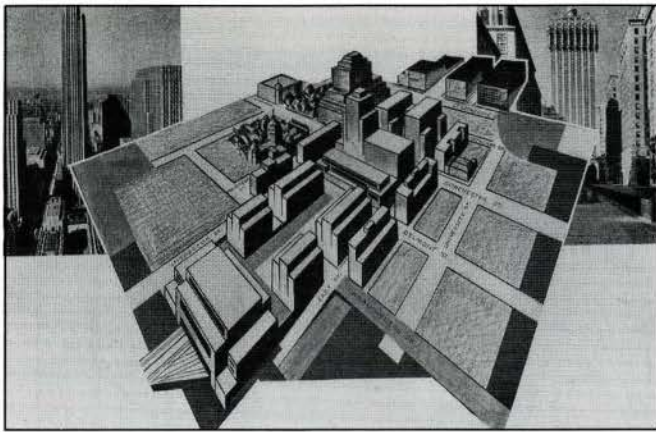


Figure 5. Grand Central building scheme; John Schofield, architect, c. 1940. (*Architectural Record*, December 1949; Bibliothèque d'Aménagement, Université de Montréal)

Figure 6. Central Station Area development project; George Drummond, architect, c. 1953. (*The Canadian Architect* 1, no. 4 [April 1956])

still paid tribute to the set-back aesthetic. Less innovative on a technical level, but exhibiting more formal design purity, was a 13-storey office building designed by Montreal architects Greenspoon, Freedlander, and Dunne and erected in 1955 on the corner of Sherbrooke and Union streets. Rising from a two-storey base aligned with Sherbrooke Street, the office space massing was clearly separated from the circulation system.<sup>30</sup>

The greatest post-Second World War real estate venture in Montreal, however, was undoubtedly the construction of Place Ville-Marie, an undertaking whose unprecedented scope stemmed from a collaborative effort between a private developer and a government agency. In 1955, in a desire to complete the urban renovations started some forty years earlier — and faced with the conservatism of the local business community — the Canadian National Railways' chairman called on William Zeckendorf, president of Webb & Knapp Inc. of New York, North America's most ambitious developer of the period. In 1946, Zeckendorf had helped locate the United Nations headquarters in New York;<sup>31</sup> in Denver, assisted by his architect I.M. Pei and Associates, he engineered two

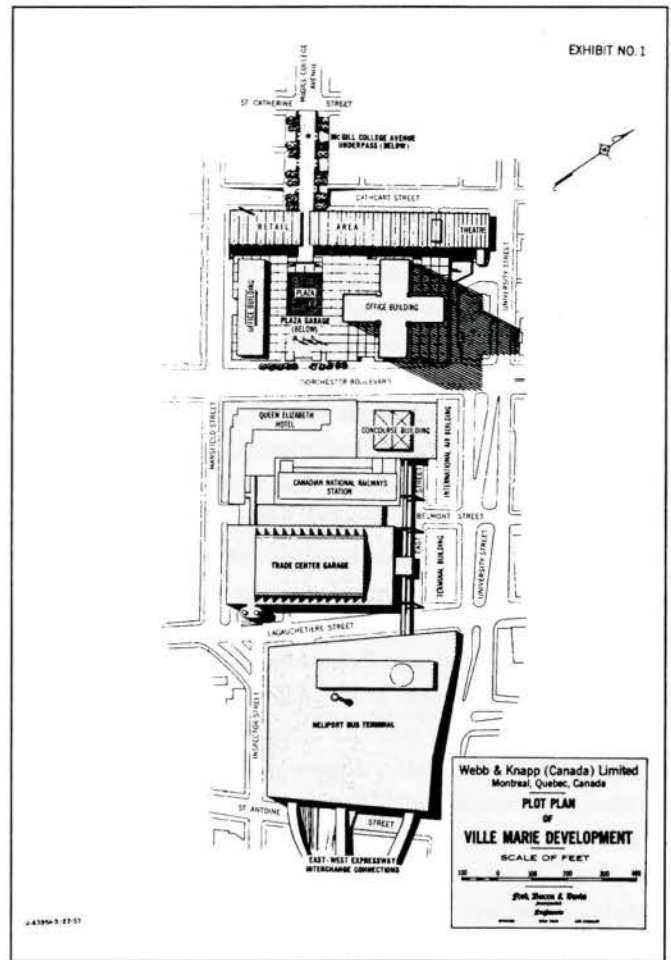


Figure 7. Plot plan of the Ville Marie development, Webb & Knapp (Canada) Ltd., March 1957. (*Place Ville Marie, the Master Plan*; Bibliothèque d'Aménagement, Université de Montréal)

major real estate ventures that were innovative in their treatment of urban spaces, the Mile High Center office building (1952-56) and Court House Square (1954-60), which included a hotel and department store.<sup>32</sup> In Montreal, excited by the site's potential, Zeckendorf set up a Canadian company, Webb & Knapp (Canada) Ltd., to invest in the development of a new master plan, Vincent Ponte being the associate in charge of the urban design.<sup>33</sup> Since the construction of Montreal's Central Station (1938-43), the overall plan had been restudied several times by John Schofield, Canadian National's head architect, and his assistant, George Drummond, who later succeeded him in this position (figures 5, 6). These studies lacked the clarity and ambition of their prototypes, New York's Grand Central Terminal (Warren & Wetmore and Reed & Stem, 1913) and Rockefeller Center (Hood & Fouilhoux, Reinhard & Hofmeister, and Corbett, Harrison & MacMurray, 1931-40). When Zeckendorf arrived on the scene, Canadian National was in the process of building a transportation centre south of Dorchester Boulevard, where the International Civil Aviation headquarters, the Terminal Building, a downtown

terminal for the Dorval airport, the Queen Elizabeth Hotel (the largest convention hotel in Canada), and an office building would all be connected to the railway station.<sup>34</sup>

Based on a traffic study of central Montreal, the 1957 master plan (figure 7) envisioned the three city blocks owned by Canadian National between St. Antoine and Cathcart streets as a single unit in terms of pedestrian and vehicular traffic and parking, placing great importance on parking for cars.<sup>35</sup> On the southernmost block the plan called for the construction of a bus terminal with a heliport on its roof, while the transportation centre under construction would be completed with a combined trade centre and office building along La Gauchetière Street. The block nearest Ste. Catherine Street would accommodate a business and cultural complex. Named Place Ville-Marie at this point, the complex was conceived as the heart of a new downtown core that had been developing in the St. Antoine area since the turn of the century. Its massing was conceived in relation to the defining elements of the natural and urban landscapes, Mount Royal and the soon-to-be-widened McGill College Avenue. More than half of the property was devoted to a plaza in order to confer the desired magnitude and dignity to the project (figure 8). The idea of having a central plaza visually related to the McGill University campus had been put forward in 1952 by French urban planner Jacques Gréber when he was consulted about Montreal's future. What was new was the clarity and simplicity of the plan. The vast public space, bordered on two sides by buildings of medium height, was seen as a forecourt to the cruciform

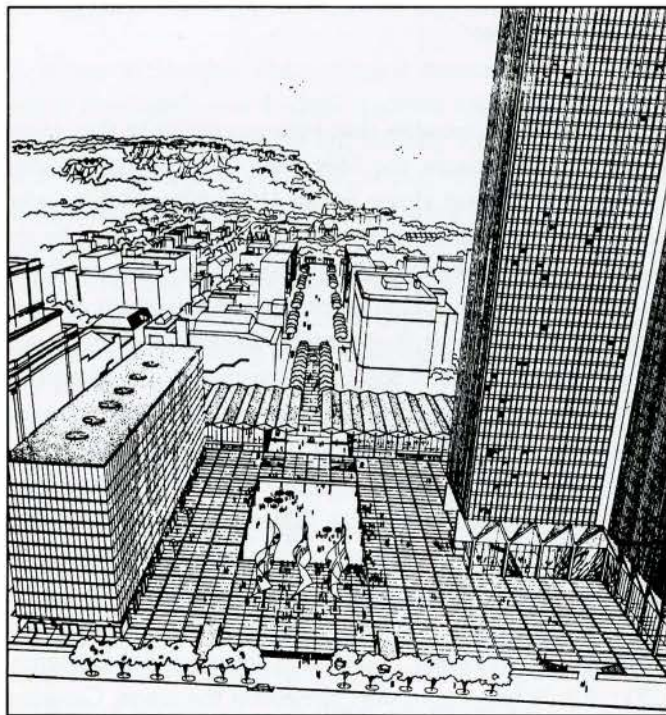


Figure 8. Aerial perspective of the Ville-Marie plaza, n.d. (*Place Ville Marie, the Master Plan*; Bibliothèque d'Aménagement, Université de Montréal)

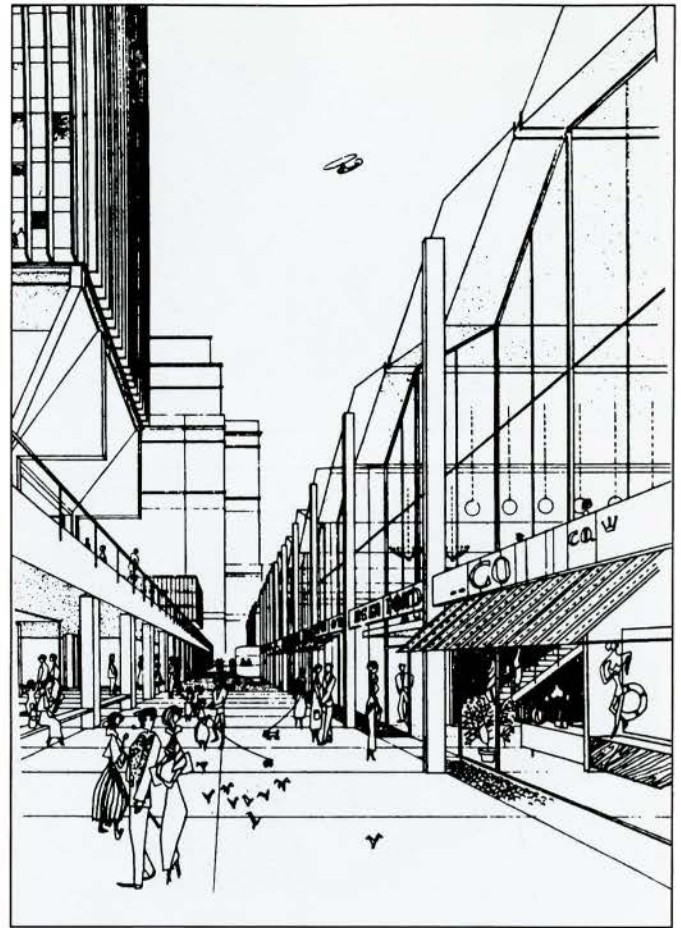


Figure 9. Perspective drawing of the shopping promenade, Place Ville-Marie, n.d. (*Place Ville Marie, the Master Plan*; Bibliothèque d'Aménagement, Université de Montréal)

Royal Bank tower, the plaza's composition referring explicitly to Montreal's Place d'Armes, dominated by The Church of Notre-Dame, and to the Doge's Palace in Venice and Rome's Piazza San Pietro.<sup>36</sup> In this plan, boutiques faced a promenade that was recessed below the plaza and opened to the sky; a pedestrian walkway ran parallel to Cathcart Street (figure 9).

The Royal Bank's decision to move its head office from Saint James Street to the new downtown was crucial: the bank made the real estate venture economically feasible by leasing more than 20 percent of the available floor area in the tower.<sup>37</sup> This commitment led to a revision of the master plan in May 1958, the principal change being the addition of a structure at the base of the tower to accommodate the bank's lobby.<sup>38</sup> Once the master plan was approved, Webb & Knapp (Canada) Ltd. acquired a 99-year emphyteutic lease for the northernmost block, and the final plans for Place Ville-Marie were made under the direction of Henry Cobb, one of Pei's associates. To carry the project through, Pei was associated with a team of young professionals, Affleck, Desbarats, Dimakopoulos, Lebensold, Michaud, and Sise, as resident architects; since 1929, all foreign architects practising in

Quebec were required to form an association with a member of the PQAA. The first construction phase ended in 1962, and the whole complex was completed in 1966, when the IBM Building on Mansfield Street was inaugurated.

The significance of Place Ville-Marie has not yet been asserted in the historiography of modern architecture,<sup>39</sup> though it deserves to be compared to its illustrious predecessors. While certainly less ambitious than Rockefeller Center in terms of its size, it has greater functional complexity, towering as it does over a railway network, a 1,500-place parking lot, and a gallery of boutiques connected to Central Station. The complex also boasts an esplanade that unifies the redeveloped land and introduces “modern” space into the traditional urban morphology — which it does not completely disavow, the buildings along Cathcart and Mansfield framing the street (figure 10).

Place Ville-Marie is indebted to the new forms of architecture developed in Europe in the 1920s, the realization of which was made possible by strong post-war economic growth in American cities. Its scope and functional diversity,

however, exceeded its predecessors such as the Equitable Life Assurance Building in Portland, Oregon (Pietro Belluschi, 1944-47), the Lake Shore Drive Apartments in Chicago (Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1948-51) and Lever House in New York (Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1951-53), not to mention the first generation of Canadian glass curtain-wall skyscrapers such as the Burrard Building (C.B.K. Van Norman, 1955-56) and the B.C. Electric Building (Thompson, Berwick and Pratt, 1955-57), both in Vancouver. Place Ville-Marie is both indebted to and an important link between the long tradition of real estate venture and office design in Montreal and the heroic icons of the Modern Movement whose innovative nature has already been recognized.<sup>40</sup> It is also a harbinger of the subsequent massive urban renewal movement that transformed the traditional urban fabric of downtown Montreal. Seen from a long-term perspective, the construction of Place Ville-Marie also clearly illustrates the complex role played by the United States in the coming of age of architectural modernity in Quebec.

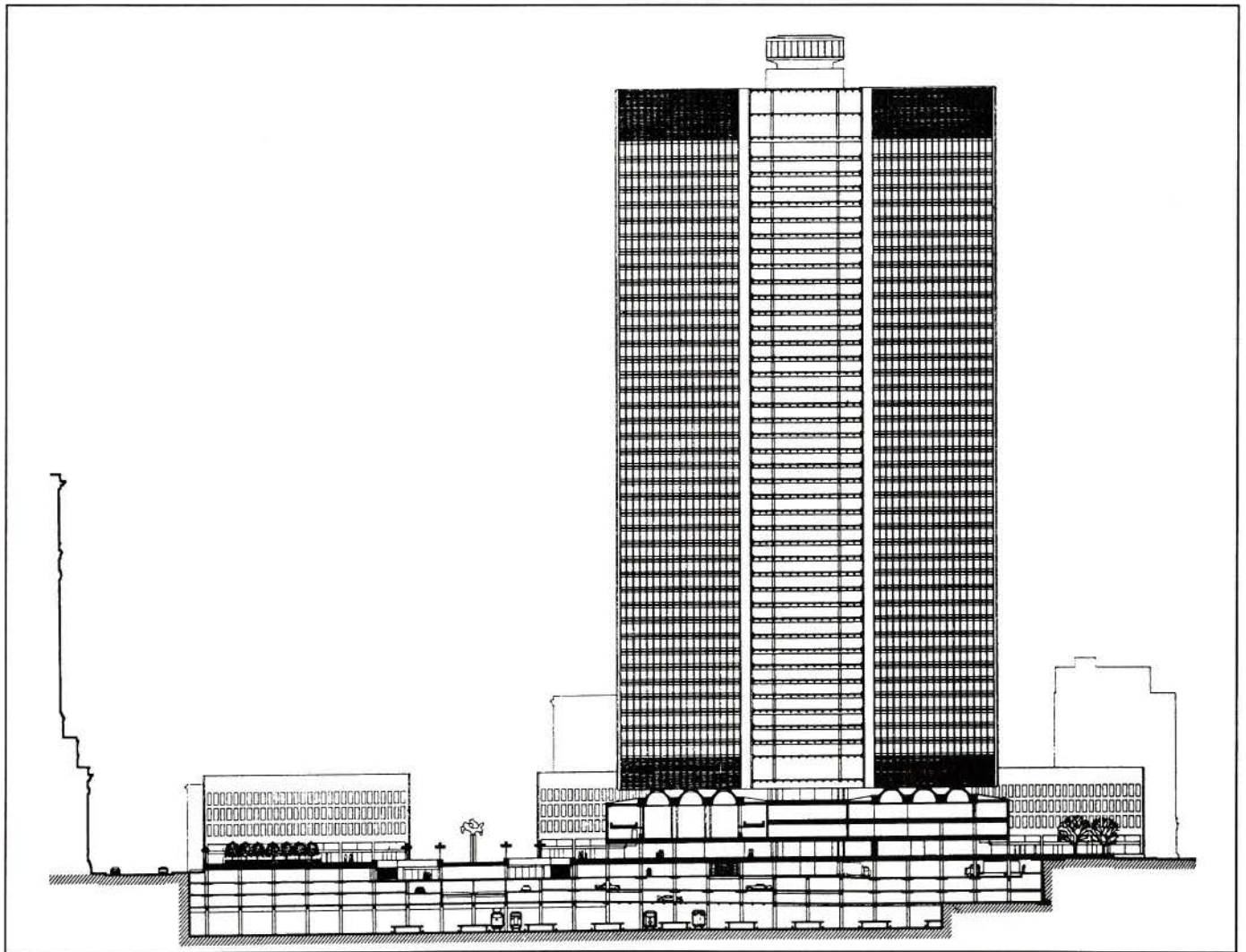


Figure 10. East-west section through Place Ville-Marie. (Webb & Knapp [Canada] Ltd., *Place Ville Marie*, February 1960; Bibliothèque d'Aménagement, Université de Montréal)



## Endnotes

- 1 This article derives from research conducted for the exhibition "Montréal Métropole 1880-1930" held at the Canadian Centre for Architecture and the National Gallery of Canada in 1998, and its eponymous publication edited by Isabelle Gournay and France Vanlaethem, *Montreal Metropolis 1880-1930* (Montreal and Toronto: Canadian Centre for Architecture and Stoddart Publishing, 1998), as well as research on behalf of DOCCOMOMO, an international non-governmental organization dedicated to the documentation and conservation of the architecture of the modern movement. In 1994, *Bulletin DOCCOMOMO Québec* began publishing an inventory established under the supervision of France Vanlaethem of modernist landmarks built between 1930 and 1970 in the province of Quebec. See also Jean-Claude Marsan, *Montreal in Evolution: Historical Analysis of the Development of Montreal's Architecture and Urban Environment* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981), 343.
- 2 Claude Bergeron, *Architectures du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle au Québec* (Montreal: Éditions du Méridien, 1990), 194-95, and Gilles Prud'homme, "La Place Ville-Marie: un prototype urbain à Montréal," *Silo*, winter 1996, 65-71.
- 3 Esther Trépanier and Yvan Lamonde, "La modernité au Québec: pour une histoire des brèches (1895-1950)," in *L'avènement de la modernité culturelle au Québec* (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1986), 299-311.
- 4 Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher and Jean-Claude Robert, *Histoire du Québec contemporain: De la Confédération à la crise (1867-1929)* (Montreal: Boréal Express, 1979), 138-61.
- 5 Jean Baudrillard, "La modernité," in *Corpus* (Paris: Encyclopedia Universalis, 1995), 15:552-54.
- 6 Clément Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," *Art and Literature* 4 (1965).
- 7 Jean-Louis Cohen, *Scenes of the World to Come: European Architecture and the American Challenge, 1893-1960* (Paris and Montreal: Flammarion and the Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1995), 15.
- 8 Franklin K.B.S. Toker, *The Church of Notre-Dame in Montreal: An Architectural History* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 28-50.
- 9 The New York Life Building tower was not only a new kind of symbolic marker for commercial architecture in Montreal, it provided a special service to tenants, according to the rental brochure, by holding a library for legal documents.
- 10 Manfredo Tafuri, "La dialectique de l'absurde. Europe-USA: les avatars de l'idéologie du gratte-ciel (1918-1974)," *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* 178 (March-April 1975); and "The New Babylon: The 'Yellow Giants' and the Myth of Americanism," in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987), 171-89.
- 11 Stewart Henbest Capper, "The American Tall Building," *The Canadian Architect and Builder* 11, no. 11 (November 1898): 5-7.
- 12 "The Transportation Building, Montreal, Canada," *Construction* 5 (December 1912): 45-56. It was demolished in the 1960s to make way for an even larger structure.
- 13 Madeleine Forget, *Les gratte-ciel de Montréal* (Montreal: Éditions du Méridien, 1990), 93.
- 14 This building is illustrated in *Montreal Metropolis*, 159.
- 15 See David Hanna, "The Importance of Transportation Infrastructure," in *Montreal Metropolis*, 50-51.
- 16 Alan Colquhoun, "The Superblock," in *Essays in Architectural Criticism: Modern Architecture and Historical Change* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), 83-103.
- 17 A case in point is the Canada Cement Company, which in the early 1920s commissioned its head office on Phillips Square from Barott & Blackader, a Montreal architectural firm with a solid American background. This building is illustrated in *Montreal Metropolis*, 101.
- 18 These buildings are illustrated in *Montreal Metropolis*, 174-75.
- 19 This building is illustrated in *Montreal Metropolis*, 107.
- 20 This building is illustrated in *Montreal Metropolis*, 172-73.
- 21 Reyner Banham, *Megastructures: Urban Futures of the Recent Past* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 120.
- 22 Alfred Fellheimer and Steward Wagner, *Studies for the Determination of Basic Principles, Policies and Construction Method for the Future Improvement and Enlargement of the Windsor Street Terminal Facilities of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, Montreal* (New York, 1930). This project is illustrated in *Montreal Metropolis*, 124. Around 1930, American contributors to the Canadian trade journal *The Contract Record and Engineering Review* [hereafter CRER] were promoting skyscrapers; see, for instance, W.C. Clark and J.L. Kingston, "Efficiency of the Skyscraper as an Economic Device," CRER, 18 June 1930, 736-38, and Geo. E.J. Pistor, "Why the Skyscraper has Become an Economic Necessity," CRER, 10 September 1930, 1093-95. For echoes of the American debate on optimal economic height, see Anon., "What is the Limit of Building Height," CRER, 23 October 1929, 1263-65. The greater acceptance of the skyscraper by Montreal architects is transmitted in the note "Buildings of 70 Storeys Possible, Says Prof. Turner of McGill," CRER, 21 May 1930, 581, and in proposals for a high-rise city hall by Raphael Boilard and a court house topped by a tower by Jean-Omer Marchand, which is illustrated in Pierre-Richard Bisson, "Des architectes 'Beaux-Arts'," *Continuité* 31 (spring 1986): 16.
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We would like to thank Helena Scheffer, who undertook the translation of this article from French to English.

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