



Fig. 1. William R. Souter, Cathedral of Christ the King, Hamilton, Liturgical west (south) façade, 1931-1933. (Photo: Malcolm Thurlby)

Paula Wubbenhorst

America's Influence on the Cathedral of Christ the King in Hamilton¹

The Cathedral of Christ the King (1931-1933) (fig. 1), Hamilton, Ontario, is located on the north side of King Street West, and overlooks the east side of Highway 403. It tells the story of the conflicting motivations of an ambitious "Old World" bishop and a young American-trained architect. The bishop is the Most Reverend John Thomas McNally (1871-1952), Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hamilton from 1924 to 1937, and the architect is William Russell Souter (1894-1971), of the Hamilton firm Hutton and Souter. Commissioning a cathedral, a replacement seat, no less, at the onslaught of the Great Depression, McNally was an enterprising man who was willing to go to great lengths to promote Catholicism in Hamilton, English Catholicism in Canada, and, in the process, himself.² Souter, on the other hand, was a young architect, trained at the University of Pennsylvania, who simply relished the opportunity of designing his first church in accordance with current architectural trends.

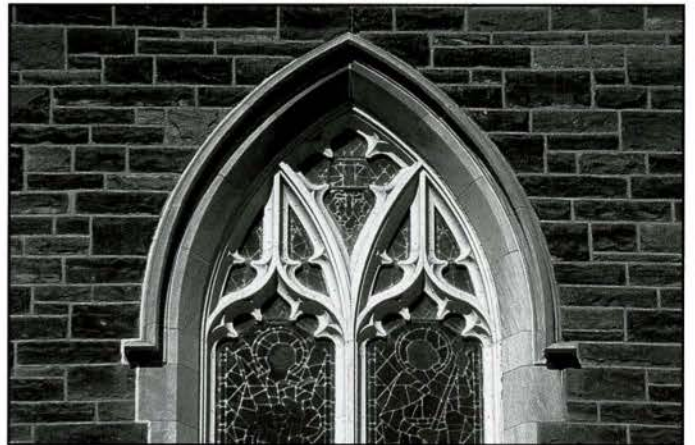
While the cathedral suffers a couple of awkward compromises between the Bishop and the architect, the conflict between the Bishop's grandiose aspirations and Souter's practical and contemporary architectural application is more apparent upon comparing and contrasting the discourse surrounding the cathedral to the structure itself. With little good news fit to print at the time, popular folklore surrounding the construction of the cathedral was profuse. A seemingly authoritative summary of such fanfare is the Pigott Construction Company's monograph on their project entitled *Cathedral of Christ the King, Hamilton, Canada: Being an arrangement of Photographic Views and notes describing the new Cathedral opened at Hamilton, December 19th, 1933*. A compilation of images with short descriptive texts, the publication concludes with the following paragraph:

Such are some of the chief architectural and constructional features of this edifice modeled on the best examples in the Old World and placed in a new world setting. This Cathedral, standing today in a busy manufacturing centre and on one of the principal arteries of traffic, links up with those other structures of a more distant time and place. Though built with modern methods and ingenuity in much less time than could have been dreamed of in the days of the guilds, it breathes the same spirit of craftsmanship and beauty of design.³

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Fig. 2. William R. Souter, Cathedral of Christ the King, Hamilton, Detail of aisle window, 1931-1933. (Photo: Malcolm Thurlby)

Fig. 3. William R. Souter, Cathedral of Christ the King, Hamilton, Detail of clerestory window, 1931-1933. (Photo: Malcolm Thurlby)



There is nothing to suggest that the Bishop authored this copy, nor, of course, the numerous newspaper articles that reiterate the same such sentiments, associating the Hamilton cathedral with European ones. However, as the client, and no less, as a powerful figure, McNally is sure to have approved this text as well as what was publicized to the popular press. Such rhetoric was all part of the Bishop's public relations campaign. He wanted his cathedral to be held in the same high esteem as those in the Old World, the continent where his beloved religion was born.

Though some romanticizing should be allowed for, especially since the cathedral is Gothic in style (in architectural terms), such assertions are problematic. Remarks such as those published by the Pigott Construction Company suggest that European authority governs the design of Hamilton's Catholic cathedral and that—other than the employment of modern methods of construction—the edifice shares few similarities with contemporaneous architecture.

Not only is the architectural style of the cathedral similar to conservative contemporaneous architecture, but also the chief architectural and constructional features are hardly modelled on Old World examples; rather, they are closer to American sources. Though the Cathedral of Christ the King employs a Gothic vocabulary, Souter does not follow true Medieval models, but relies on an American derivation of the style instead. Moreover, even though the church resembles Gothic cathedrals, there are clearer formal connections with American architecture. The body of the church has closer affinities with American edifices than with European sermons in stone. Similarly, the tower and ciborium take after an American model rather than European ones. This essay will reveal that although the Cathedral of Christ the King shares similarities with the Gothic cathedrals of the Middle Ages, in terms of architectural source material, American authority governs it to a greater degree.

The notion of American influence is absent from the little academic research that exists on Hamilton's Cathedral of Christ the King. Besides R.H. Hubbard's dismissive half paragraph, in his article "Modern Gothic in Canada," for the *Bulletin of the National Gallery of Canada*, which erroneously labels the cathedral an "aisleless building," only two academic articles have been published on the architecture of the cathedral.⁴ Written at the conclusion of its construction, those essays include W.M. Shaw's "Basilica of Christ the King," in *Construction* (November-December 1933) and H.E. Murton's short "The Basilica of Christ the King," in the *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada* (April 1934).⁵ Consequently, this paper is primarily based

on archival records, the popular press and the publications of Joseph M. Pigott (1885-1969), owner of the Pigott Construction Company. Utilizing formal analysis and/or comparison, the following pages will undermine the architectural merits of the associative claims made in those documents and uncover closer ties to American sources.

The most prevalent erroneous European association concerns the style of architecture. The Pigott Construction Company, Murton, Shaw, and Hubbard all pinpointed a specific period of Medieval English Gothic as the architectural style of the cathedral. The Pigott Construction Company stated that "Gothic architecture of what is known as the middle period and of the English school was selected as the vehicle of design."⁶ Murton concurred, estimating that the cathedral was "designed in the period of English fourteenth-century Gothic with its inherent softness of line."⁷ Shaw deemed that the Basilica was, "generally, of early English Gothic design."⁸ Over thirty years later, Hubbard argued that "its basic design is Perpendicular."⁹ Though Decorated (middle-pointed) details do exist, such as the curvilinear window tracery (fig. 2 and fig. 3), ogee arches (fig. 4), and slender arcade piers (fig. 5), the design of the structure does not adhere to any of those strains of English Gothic. Rather, the cathedral was designed in an American derivation of European Gothic, specifically the Late Gothic style espoused by Boston-based architect-theorist Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1942).

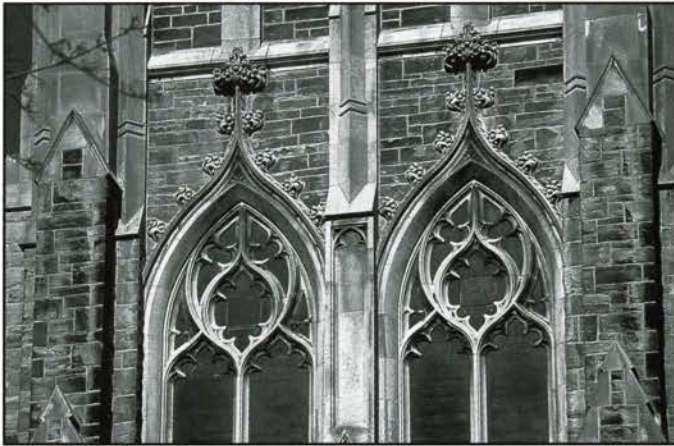


Fig. 4. William R. Souter, Cathedral of Christ the King, Hamilton, Detail of tower, 1931-1933. (Photo: Malcolm Thurlby)

Fig. 5. William R. Souter, Cathedral of Christ the King, Hamilton, Interior pier, 1931-1933. (Photo: Malcolm Thurlby)



It is necessary to understand the style of architecture to which Cram rebelled in order to comprehend his philosophy. Moreover, it is important to note that, by suggesting that Souter's cathedral was designed in a specific English Gothic style, the Pigott Construction Company, Murton, Shaw, and Hubbard did not give him due credit, as they serve to suggest that he was an outmoded nineteenth-century copyist. By creating anew rather than imitating cathedrals of the Middle Ages, Souter and Cram dispensed with the early Victorian archaeological approach to architecture zealously advocated by English architect-theorist Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812-1852). In

an effort to banish the Classicist core from superficial early nineteenth-century Gothic Revival architecture, Pugin led a whole generation of nineteenth-century Gothic Revivalists to study Medieval originals in order that those precedents be precisely studied for the sake of imitation, though adapted to contemporary circumstances. Although Puginian copyism was eclipsed by a more creative and flexible Gothic Revival after the 1850s, its archaeological basis persisted into the twentieth century.

Cram riled against this imitative approach, characterizing nineteenth-century Gothic architecture as "fraudulent."¹⁰ Rather than simply reproduce Medieval architecture, Cram wanted to re-create it as Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886) had with the Romanesque. Cram admired Richardson's churches because they were new, and thus at least partially valuable in the history of American architecture. However, Cram refined Richardson's bold, massive, and dominating forms with the grace of the Gothic style.

Specifically, Cram wanted to take up the English Gothic tradition where it left off when interrupted by the Protestant Reformation. He "discerned murder, not exhaustion" of Gothic motifs in the sixteenth century, and he believed that the Perpendicular style still had force and promise in the nineteenth century.¹¹ However, Cram did not copy Perpendicular models; rather his Gothic adapted Medieval principles to modern necessities. His colleague Henry Vaughan (1846-1917) initiated Cram into the more modern approach of his late Victorian Revivalist mentor, George Frederick Bodley (1827-1907). (The now demolished St. Augustine's Church (1874), Pendlebury, epitomizes Bodley's majestic late Gothic style.¹²) Drawing on the Bodleyan aesthetic, Cram developed an original style that rejected Victorian copyism; his was "architecture, not archaeology."¹³

Adhering to Cram's tenets, Souter's Cathedral of Christ the King is not a replication of an English Gothic cathedral but is "largely an original concept."¹⁴ After visiting the American cities of Boston and New York, unlike the Victorian Revivalists, Souter chose not to travel abroad to tour European churches. He told a *Hamilton Spectator* interviewer: "Heck, I could remember them all from my student days [...] architectural studies included all the old great churches and cathedrals."¹⁵ Instead, Souter claimed: "for about three months I doodled and drew sketches on a pad."¹⁶ Uninterested in archaeological authority, Souter created, in Cram's words, architecture rather than archaeology.

Cram even acted as "critical advisor" to the project, meeting with Souter and Pigott in Boston to review the drawings.¹⁷ Recounting the day in his diary, Pigott disclosed that "[Cram] liked Souter's design very much. He made a change in front-put

Fig. 6. William R. Souter, Cathedral of Christ the King, Hamilton, Exterior from the east, 1931-1933. (Photo: Malcolm Thurlby)

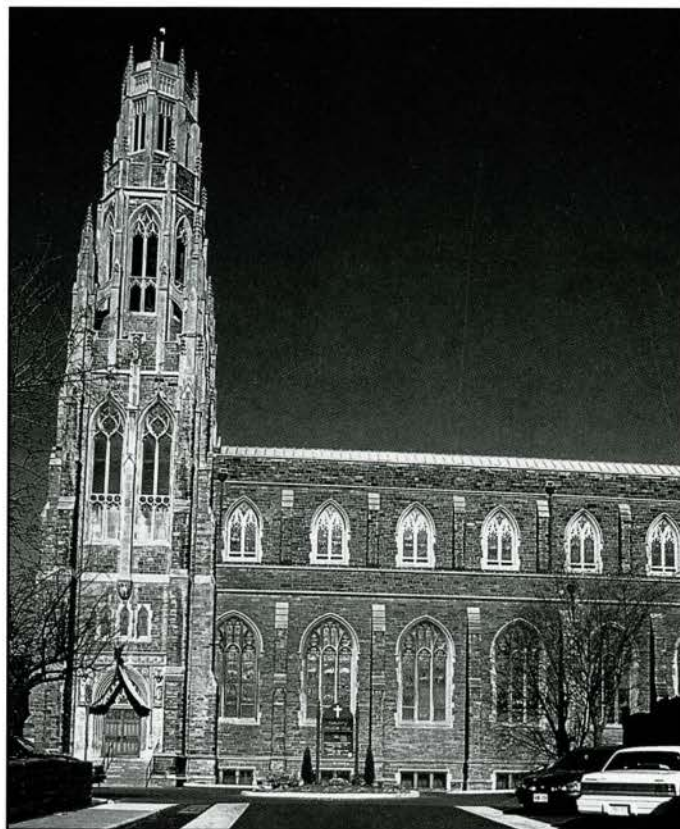
a big niche... in gable over front entrance See—in which to place 'Christ the King' and objected to this figure being in the tower [sic]. He made other minor changes in plan."¹⁸ Just over six months later, Pigott and Souter met Cram again in Boston. Pigott reported that:

Cram made certain changes to our altar design. He cut off the fleche or spire and recommended at the back and sides rich Brocade hangings—lots of crimson and gold. He widened the width to about 12'. The stained glass windows—he praised the designs and color, but said "of course they are not stained glass." He said that he had been prepared to find much fault and was agreeably surprised.¹⁹

Cram's opinion regarding the cathedral's stained glass eventually led to a dispute with the Bishop, which ultimately resulted in a compromise, the windows being composed of Cram's medallions and the Bishop's didactic imagery. Thus, though Cram's changes were few, they were not merely recommendations.

Although the contemporaneous press made mention of Cram's assistance, he was dubbed an "international authority" on Gothic architecture and his nationality was rarely, if ever, revealed; reporters were always quick to add that few modifications were suggested.²⁰ Indeed, Pigott's diary entries seem to substantiate that claim; however, though Cram may have had minimal direct influence on the design of the cathedral, the fact that the American found little fault with the plans reveals that Souter had a well-grounded knowledge of Cram's architectural style. Souter's daughter maintained that he did "six months of research before he put pen to paper."²¹ Judging by the triviality of Cram's suggestions, much of this time was probably spent thoroughly studying Cram's brand of Modern Gothic.

In addition to subscribing to a doctrine of originality over archaeology, the Late Gothic style employs the Beaux-Arts aesthetic. As its name implies, Beaux-Arts is based on the teachings of Paris' École des Beaux-Arts; though a French institution, the late nineteenth-century Revival of its basic building principles began in the United States, spearheaded by McKim, Mead and White. The Chicago World's Columbian Exposition (commonly known as the Chicago World's Fair) popularized this American Academic Renaissance in 1893. Although the style was typically articulated in a classicising fashion, Beaux-Arts fundamentals, including ideals of discipline, order, and monumentalism, were also applied to the Gothic style, which was a preferred symbolic choice for ecclesiastical structures. The modern spirit of the Cathedral of Christ the King, as opposed to the outmoded Victorian approach, can be better understood in the context of Beaux-Arts ideals.



The cathedral's strong horizontal axis is a Beaux-Arts trait, as it favours monumentality over the picturesque. Although, as previously mentioned, the house of worship stands above the highway, it is erected on a low natural plateau, to the west of the downtown core. Accordingly, the regal Cathedral of Christ the King ironically does not reign over its inner city; instead, it recumbently stretches across the earth. The wide windows that run around the entire body of the church, especially those that puncture the raised basement (fig. 6), enhance this impression. Moreover, Souter inscribed horizontal lines on the church by way of the pronounced stringcourses and the blind arcade that circumscribes the pair of portals on the liturgical west (south) side. The low pitch of the roofs and gables do little to counteract that horizontal line effect. Souter strategically placed a 165-foot tower (fig. 7) at the southwest corner, at the apex of the angle of King Street, so that it terminates the urban vista from both the east and west.²² However, the staged transition of the tower, from square to octagon, sobers in comparison to the dramatic upward surge of Medieval and/or Victorian towers.

This single carillon tower is the only picturesque element of the design, making the cathedral very composed and thus decidedly un-English. Constructed of Scottish random ashlar masonry, Hamilton's simple exterior lacks the rustic texture of English Medieval cathedrals. According to the Pigott Construction Company, this stonework: "has been kept as flat as possible, the projection of the rock face being not over one-half inch with 5/8" joints pressed to a flat strap like surface."²³ Even though the liturgical west (south) window is heavily recessed, the detail treatment of the liturgical west (south) façade is quite



Fig. 7. William R. Souter, Cathedral of Christ the King, Hamilton, Tower from southeast, 1931-1933. (Photo: Malcolm Thurlby)



Fig. 8. William R. Souter, Cathedral of Christ the King, Hamilton, Interior to liturgical east (north), 1931-1933. (Photo: Malcolm Thurlby)

restrained, as seen in the shallowness of the crenellated blind arcade and the stiff rectilinear shape of the canopied niches. Moreover, the colossal crowned statue of Christ the King culminates the “west” front, but barely emerges from the gable. The temperate trimmings continue around the entire edifice, the plain wall expanses being relieved only by buttresses and stringcourses. The only element that breaks up Hamilton’s roofline is the pinnacle that demarcates the sanctuary. (The chimney is slightly detached from the main body of the church.) Souter streamlined the side porch into the base of the carillon tower, omitted transepts for the sake of utility, and merged the chapels into the sanc-

tuary, making the overall composition very unified and inconsistent with sprawling Medieval English Gothic cathedrals.²⁴

This Beaux-Arts streamlined simplicity endures in the interior (fig. 8), where Souter dispensed with the unnecessary triforium in favour of a simple two-storied elevation. Souter’s omission of transepts results in a long, unbroken view of the lierne-vault[ed ceiling] right down to the liturgical easternmost (northernmost) end. The differentiation between the sanctuary and the nave is subtle, the sanctuary being elevated, but, in Mutton’s words, is “essentially a continuation of the nave, adding to its length.”²⁵ Merely a more elaborate rib and an engaged five-fold cluster column, in place of the three-fold cluster, of the nave proper, distinguish the sanctuary from the nave. Thus, Souter minimizes Medieval English variety and sculptural effects, allowing simplicity and unity to prevail.

Whereas Decorated cathedrals were originally richly polychromed, the Cathedral of Christ the King is generally monochromatic.²⁶ Such lack of polychrome is consistent with

the purifying penchant of the Beaux-Arts aesthetic. Colour is confined to the floor and the stained glass windows. Although the saints in the clerestory windows are polychromatic, those windows are largely clear, as the figures are kept small in order to admit as much clear light as possible.²⁷ Similarly, the panels of the Stations of the Cross are kept neutral, colour being limited to the mild rose of the frames, “so as not to conflict with the windows and in particular to avoid giving a band of dark colour around the wall of the church.”²⁸ As does its horizontal emphasis and disciplined restraint, the pureness of the cathedral’s monochromatic colour scheme reveals its closer allegiance to American-revived academic architecture than Medieval Gothic.

In addition to employing an American architectural vocabulary, Souter relied more directly on American models than European ones. However, it seems that even Souter’s elder partner, Gordon Johnston Hutton (1881-1942), with whom he apprenticed before being named partner in 1921, felt it necessary to make exaggerated associations with European cathedrals.²⁹ Hutton reported to the *Hamilton Spectator* that:

The new basilica will be modeled, generally, after one of the oldest, largest and architecturally impressive buildings ever erected—the cathedral of Notre Dame, in Paris. Nothing, perhaps in all the world, has ever been so universally admired as Notre Dame, and when Hamilton’s basilica rises tall and commandingly beautiful, it too, will be a “vast symphony in stone.”³⁰

The Canadian church shares little with the legendary French cathedral (fig. 9). As previously mentioned, Souter dispensed with a triforium and transepts; furthermore, unlike Notre-Dame de Paris, the Cathedral of Christ the King lacks flying buttresses, a flèche, gargoyles, two foreboding rectilinear towers, and a tripartite façade. Other than their Gothic vocabulary, the two cathedrals share almost nothing in common.

However, the same *Hamilton Spectator* article refined Hutton’s associative claims. The reporter revealed that “the general shape of the plan of the church is similar to Notre-Dame church in Paris.”³¹ Indeed, the layout of Hamilton’s cathedral adapts a scaled-down version of Paris’ famous simplified, hairpin ground plan (fig. 10), though Souter’s apse is narrower than the remainder of the church and he omits the ambulatory.³² By dispensing with those components, and adapting the principles of the Parisian plan to suit his own design, Souter adhered to Cram’s notion of adapting Medieval principles rather than specific motifs. Nevertheless, the association with Notre-Dame de Paris is hardly worth mentioning as, owing to its modern

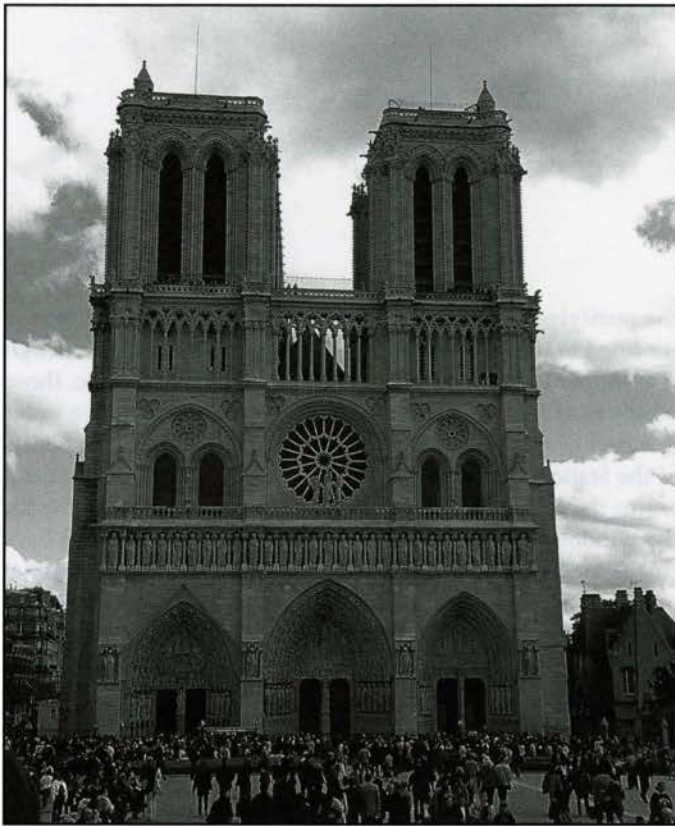
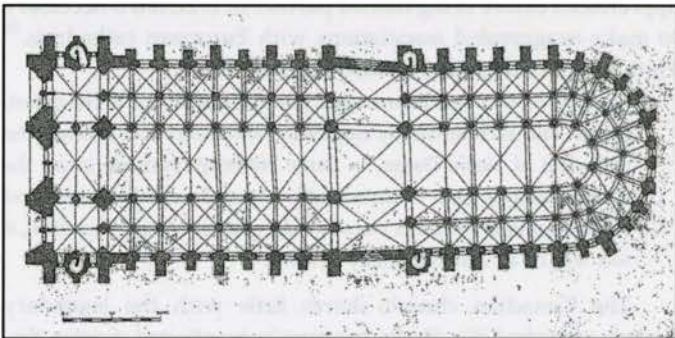


Fig. 9. Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Paris, West façade, begun 1150-1155, lower story c. 1200, window 1220, towers 1225-1250. (Photo: Luc Noppen)

Fig. 10. Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Paris, plan, begun 1150-1155. (Photo: Luc Noppen)



economical design, the continuous streamlined ground plan has become generic since Paris initiated it almost one thousand years before Souter designed the Cathedral of Christ the King. Thus, the connection with Notre-Dame de Paris is insubstantial at best.

A closer link exists between the Cathedral of Christ the King and New York City's Church of St. Vincent Ferrer (1916) (see www.fordham.edu/halsall/medny/mchale.html), designed by Cram's associate, Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue (1869-1924). St. Vincent Ferrer is notable not only because it is one of Goodhue's ecclesiastical masterpieces, but also because it marks the first time that the iconography of the crucifixion embellished a church exterior. In fact, Goodhue made it the focal point of the entire liturgical west front composition, by placing the Christ crucified figure at the centre of the lintel that rises from the entrance porch. Moreover, increasing its prominence, Goodhue elevated the actual crucifixion so that it pokes up above the top of the lintel.

In his daily diary, Pigott noted that he, with McNally and Souter, visited that Dominican church during their trip to New York City.³³ In his condensed daily diaries, Pigott recounted: "For several days—March 8th, 9th, and 10th—Bishop McNally, Bill Souter and I were in New York looking at churches, in preparation for the design of the Basilica."³⁴ However, the architect had to have seen the edifice at least four years earlier, either in person or second-hand, because he included a crucifixion on the main entrance of his Cathedral High School (1927-1928), Hamilton, another project done for McNally in conjunction with Pigott.³⁵ Not only did Souter include the crucifixion, he positioned it just as Goodhue had. Although Souter simplified the design by dispensing with the figures that people Goodhue's façade, the iconographical link remains.

Since Souter patterned the entrance of Cathedral High on St. Vincent Ferrer, it is possible that he used the same source for the liturgical west (south) façade of the Cathedral of Christ the King. Both "west" fronts have the same general layout. However, whereas Souter mimicked the iconography of the American church's "west" front in his design of the school, he appropriated the layout of the recessed window in his design of the church. Souter's design imitates the overall form of the recessed pointed arch, as well as the tracery of the window that comprises it. Both windows include a sexpartite rose, elevated by five lancets, with trefoils aiding the transition.

The windows might have been identical had it not been for the Bishop's iconographical demands. Whereas curvilinear tracery comprises Goodhue's rose motif, six large and small lobes comprise that of Souter's in order to accommodate the Bishop's required iconography. Pigott's monograph on the cathedral reported that:

His Excellency expressed a wish for a fairly large central panel to house the representation of Christ the King, also for six other fairly large panels to take care of representations of the Holy Family and our Lord's intimates during His life here on earth. This forced the rose into a rather novel and interesting form, namely six large lights and six small lights, surrounding the centre rondel [sic].³⁶

Thus, because the Bishop demanded that there be adequate space to include twelve figures around the central rondel, which was to and does depict the motif of Christ crowned, Souter could not replicate Goodhue's window in as much detail as he may have intended.

American influence on the liturgical west (south) façade may not end with St. Vincent Ferrer. The Cathedral of Christ the King's odd double porch suggests that there may have

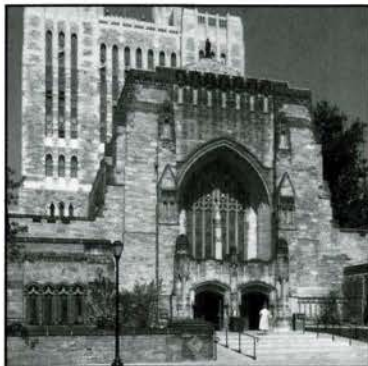
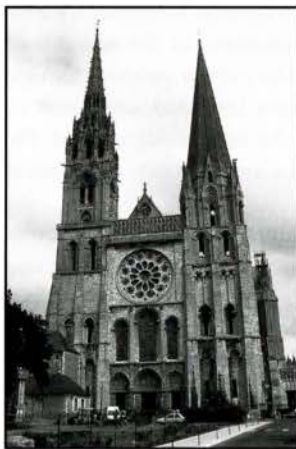
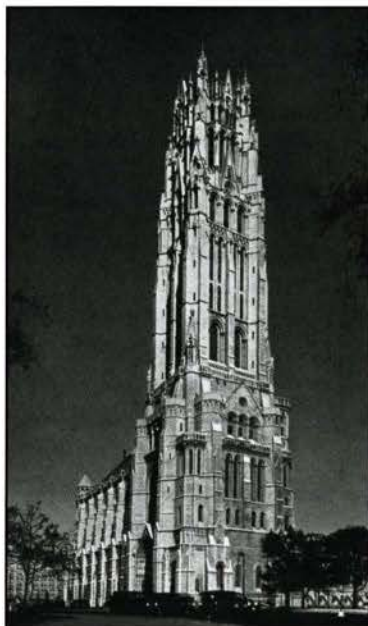


Fig. 11. James Gamble Rogers, Sterling Memorial Library, detail, Yale University, New Haven, 1930. (Photo: Patrick L. Pinnell. Reproduced from Patrick L. Pinnell, *The Campus Guide: Yale University*, New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 1999, detail of cover)

Fig. 12. Henry C. Pelton and Charles Collens, The Riverside Church in the City of New York, www.riversidechurchny.org, completed in 1931. (Photo: reproduced from *The Riverside Church, in the City of New York: A Handbook of the Institution and its Building*, Philadelphia, Franklin Print Company, 1931, p. 29)

Fig. 13. Chartres Cathedral, West façade, 1134-1220, portals ca. 1145, rose window ca. 1216, north spire 1507. (Photo: Luc Noppen)



also been a secular source since churches typically bear single or triple porches. In a 1967 interview for the *Hamilton Spectator*, Souter acknowledged that he threw a “bit of Yale [...] in” to the design.³⁷ Since James Gamble Rogers’ long-awaited Sterling Memorial Library (fig. 11), completed in 1930, is one of the cornerstones of Yale architecture, it is possible that Souter may have been referring to it. Thus, he may have patterned the cathedral’s double door arrangement on that source. Although arched headers, rather than a lintel, surmount Gamble’s doors, three pronounced posts strongly vertically delineate the entranceways of both buildings. Moreover, Souter may have also been inspired by the extent of the recession of Sterling Memorial Library’s front window as that degree of depth is absent from the window of St. Vincent Ferrer’s liturgical west façade. Therefore, the Cathedral of Christ the King exhibits more specific connections with American structures,

least of all St. Vincent Ferrer, than with Notre-Dame de Paris.

In addition to the church body being feebly likened to Notre-Dame de Paris, the Cathedral of Christ the King’s tower has been erroneously paralleled with other European sources. The highlight of the structure, Hamilton’s tower, is of a *couronne* (crown) type. Thus, just as the central roundel of the liturgical west (south) façade’s window does, the tower appropriately evokes the cathedral’s theme of Christ crowned.

McNally, Pigott, and Souter were probably inspired to include a *couronne* tower during their trip to New York City. Besides the Church of St. Vincent Ferrer, the three men visited St. Patrick’s, Brooklyn’s Chapel of Cardinal Mundelein, St. Bartholomew’s, St. Thomas, the Church of the Heavenly Rest, St. John the Divine, and Riverside Church.³⁸ Completed in the year of the Hamilton trio’s visit (though the first service was held in October 1930), Riverside Church (fig. 12), designed by Henry C. Pelton and Charles Collens, includes the famous Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Tower.³⁹ The summit of the tower forms the *couronne* motif. Pigott complimented it in his diary, writing:

“The Church of Rockefeller’s with the tower he has erected in memory of his mother is a wonderful piece of work.”⁴⁰

Pigott seems to have had a penchant for lacy towers. Upon visiting Chartres during his European vacation, he recorded in his travel diary that “the lines [of the south tower] are undoubtedly very good and the spire very graceful, but I must confess I like the spire of the north tower the best.”⁴¹ Though the less famous of the two towers, Pigott preferred the late Gothic north tower (fig. 13, on the left), which, with its filigreed summit, is aesthetically closer to the *couronne*. Additionally, the sight of Rouen Cathedral provoked Pigott to write: “The beauty spot is, of course, the Tour de Beurre. This tower is the inspiration to the Boston Stump [the tower of St. Botolph’s Church in Boston, Lincolnshire] and our own Cathedral Tower in Hamilton.”⁴² With a special affection for the Tour de Beurre (fig. 14), Pigott was certainly partial to filigreed towers.

While Pigott’s interest in the design may have influenced the decision to construct a *couronne* tower, his adoration of the Tour de Beurre did not govern the specific source upon which Hamilton’s tower was modelled. However, Pigott was not alone in making this erroneous association; the papers variously reported that Souter patterned the tower on the Tour de Beurre and “Boston Stump” (fig. 15). The *Herald* announced that the tower “has been designed to follow, broadly, the lines of the famous old church in Boston Lincolnshire, England, known as ‘Boston Stump.’”⁴³ The *Hamilton Spectator* reported that “The tower design will be reminiscent of a church called Boston Stu[mp], in Boston, England. It will be similar, also, to a tower in the cathedral at Rouen France.”⁴⁴

Comparisons with those towers reveal that neither association is warranted. Both European towers rise in successive stages from a square base, and only at the highest stage does each dissolve into an octagonal crown motif. Conversely, although Hamilton’s tower also rises in successive stages from a



Fig. 14. Guillaume Pontis and Jacques Le Roux, Tour de Beurre, Rouen Cathedral, begun 1485. (Photo: Linda Elaine Neagley. Reproduced from Linda Elaine Neagley, *Disciplined Exuberance: The Parish Church of Saint-Maclou and Late Gothic Architecture in Rouen*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998, fig. 11)



Fig. 15. St. Botolph's, Boston, Lincolnshire, begun 1309, tower begun c. 1425-1430. (Photo: A.F. Kersting. Reproduced from Nikolaus Pevsner and John Harris, *Lincolnshire. The Buildings of England* (revised by Nicholas Antram, 1st edition, 1964), London, Penguin Books, 1989, pl. 45)

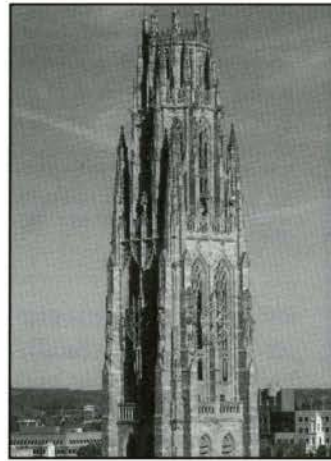


Fig. 16. James Gamble Rogers, Harkness Memorial Tower, Yale University, New Haven, completed in 1921. (Photo: Patrick L. Pinnell. Reproduced from Patrick L. Pinnell, *The Campus Guide: Yale University*, New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 1999, p. 60)

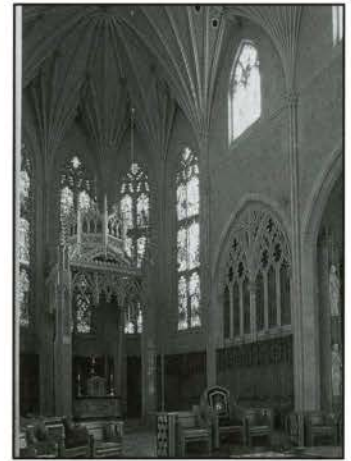


Fig. 17. William R. Souter, Cathedral of Christ the King, Hamilton, Sanctuary, 1931-1933. (Photo: Malcolm Thurlby)

square base, it dissolves into a *double* octagonal crown. Moreover, though Souter may have mimicked Boston's paired ogee arch windows, the wide windows that pierce the other square stages of "Boston Stump" are absent from "Hamilton Stump." Actually, the term "stump" is completely ill-suited to Hamilton's tower and revealing of the two towers' divergent expressions of verticality. Hamilton's tower, by virtue of its more plentiful openwork, seems to reach higher into the sky than the grounded "Boston Stump." However, in terms of interlace, Hamilton's tower sobers in comparison with the Tour de Beurre, rendering them formally incomparable.

Souter's tower is actually at least one bit of "Yale thrown in," as it bears a striking resemblance to Rogers' Harkness Memorial Tower (fig. 16). Bordering on Puginian copyism, Souter smoothed out Harkness' rough lines, but practically duplicated every inch of the entire tower. In addition to the general aesthetic similarities, like Rogers' tower, Souter's rises in successive stages from a square base, to a four-sided belfry, to double filigreed octagonal crowns. Souter even attempted to emulate Harkness' famous sculpted faces since originally, as previously mentioned, he had included the Christ the King figure on the tower until Cram transferred it to the front gable.⁴⁵ Since, according to Stanley T. Williams' 1921 pamphlet on the subject, "So far as known, it [was] the only 'crown' tower in America and the only one built in modern times," Harkness Tower must have sparked a lot of interest, including Souter's.⁴⁶ Likely following in the footsteps of Collens and Pelton, Souter was inspired by that masterpiece.

Hamilton's tower is not its only crown that is feebly attributed to European authority. Another crown resides in the church, at the liturgical east (north) end, in the form of the ciborium (fig. 17). McNally requested that this ciborium "should take the form of a crown in a cathedral dedicated to Christ the King [since the] Sacramental Presence is actually in the tabernacle [below it]."⁴⁷ Inaccurately referring to it as a baldachino, a common mistake discussed in his construction company's

monograph, Pigott reported that Souter found authority for the crown-spire at St. Giles at Edinburgh (fig. 18):

When the Bishop expressed the desire to have his high Altar in the Basilica at Hamilton built so that the covering of the Baldacino [sic] would be in the form of a "Crown"—Souter made quite a search for a precedent and this tower of St. Giles at Edinburgh was the only thing he could find.⁴⁸

The fact that Souter was so hard-pressed to find authority makes the association all the less convincing, especially since the tower crowning St. Giles shares little with that topping the tabernacle at the Cathedral of Christ the King. Although inward-facing flyers that meet at the centre comprise both crown-spires, this is where their similarities end. Whereas Edinburgh's buttresses support a small finial that functions as the summit of the crown, Souter's flyers support the crown proper (though Souter's original conception must have included some sort of pinnacle since Cram removed it).⁴⁹ As both designs treat the motif of the crown quite distinctly, the architectural association seems somewhat forced.

However, associating the ciborium with an exterior tower is rather intriguing since Souter's crown actually echoes the one that surmounts his own exterior tower (fig. 19). An octagonal drum delineated by corner pinnacles comprises each crown. Because Yale's Harkness Memorial Tower inspired the exterior tower, there is a more concrete American link, yet again, than a European one.

Formal analysis reveals that Rogers' Harkness Memorial Tower is a more definitive source than St. Giles, "Boston Stump," or Rouen for both Souter's ciborium and tower. Additionally, the Church of St. Vincent Ferrer and Sterling Memorial Library share more specific similarities with the body of Hamilton's Catholic cathedral than does Notre-Dame de Paris. Finally, stylistically speaking, Souter articulated Hamilton's house of worship in the American-derived Modern Gothic style rather than in a true European Medieval vocabulary. Therefore, though sources

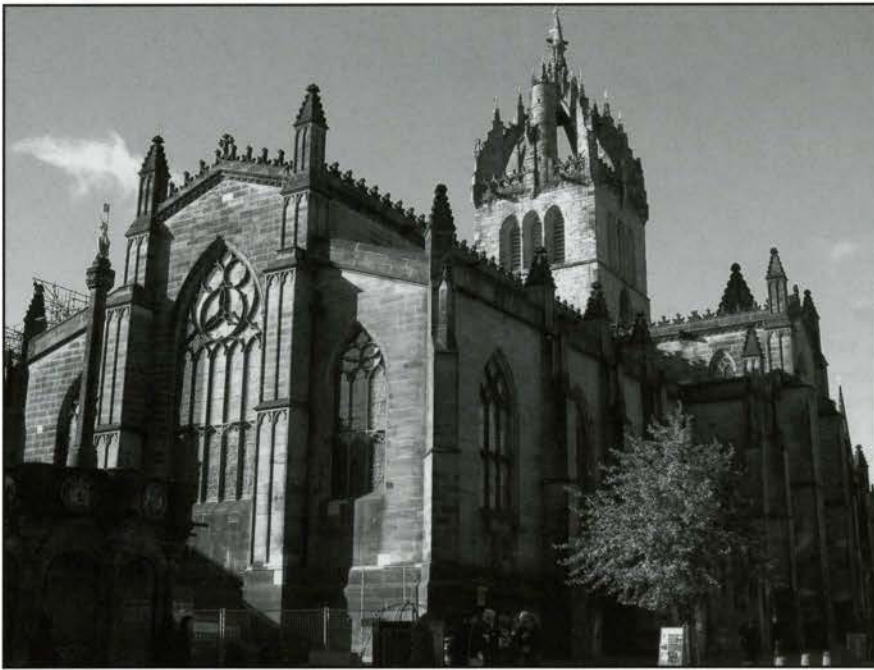


Fig. 18. St. Giles, Edinburgh. 1495.
(Photo: www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk)

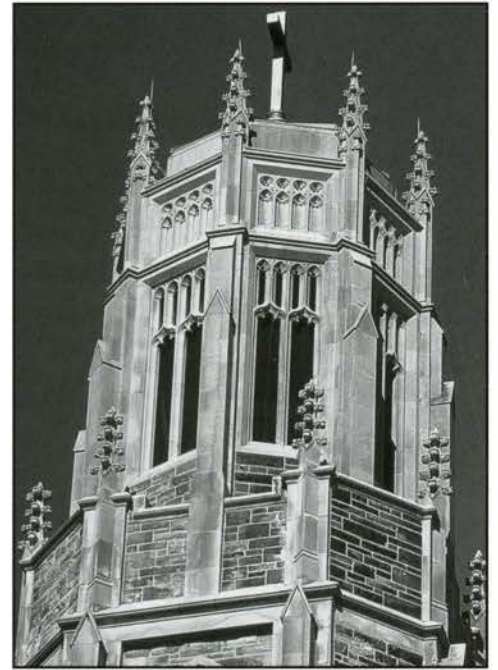


Fig. 19. William R. Souter, Cathedral of Christ the King, Hamilton, Summit of tower. 1931-1933.
(Photo: Malcolm Thurlby)

on the subject report and suggest a strong European influence, American authority governs the design of Cathedral of Christ the King to a greater degree.

The Cathedral of Christ the King's American authority may not have been fully comprehended at the time of construction, simply because the architect himself seems not to have spoken to the press. While reporters interviewed McNally, Pigott, and even Hutton, Souter's voice on the subject was not published until 1967. Souter kept any hint of his true sources to himself until long after the dust had settled, probably because they were not necessarily in tune with what the Bishop wanted emphasized publicly.

The conflict over sources of authority is made all the more apparent by the fact that Souter was reluctant to settle on a so-called precedent for his crown-spire, as it suggested that he was required to find certain types of authority. While complaining of Souter's poor work ethic, Pigott noted in his diary that "Authorities must be found for everything."⁵⁰ Such a statement is not surprising given Pigott's traditionalist ways. His publications and diaries suggest that he identified strongly with the Medieval master stonemason, esteeming the permanence and familiarity of stone construction.⁵¹

The Europe-schooled Bishop was also extremely traditional with "definite tastes in ecclesiastical architecture."⁵² Not only did Souter have to contend with such conservatism, but he also had to demonstrate that he was capable of church design. Though McNally likely reluctantly approved of Pigott's choice, due to the fact that the threesome had worked together on Cathedral High, it was the constructor who actually hired the architect. At the 1933 opening of the cathedral the Bishop remarked: "We had not the same implicit confidence in him because, while he had

long cherished the desire of building a church, had never before had the opportunity of proving his worth."⁵³

By rebelling somewhat against this "Old World" Bishop, Souter not only proved his worth, but also showed himself to be a rather innovative church architect.⁵⁴ Just a few years before Souter started to work on the Cathedral of Christ the King, the Toronto Catholic Diocese's darling architect, Arthur W. Holmes (1863-1944), travelled abroad to measure St. Mary the Virgin of St. Neot's, Huntingdonshire (fifteenth century-early sixteenth century). Holmes reproduced it in the form of the Basilian church of Holy Rosary (1925) in cosmopolitan downtown Toronto.⁵⁵ By not relying on such strict European authority, conversely, in the Cathedral of Christ the King, Souter designed something much more modern in the industrial city of Hamilton.

Modernist architecture had taken the world by storm by the 1930s, making the Cathedral of Christ the King actually quite conservative in style as well (by universal architectural standards). Despite Modernism, it seems that it was still important for ecclesiastical structures to have the prestige of "Old World" European associations. The contemporaneous folklore surrounding Hamilton's Cathedral of Christ the King accomplishes just that. However, in actual fact, Souter designed a largely American structure that is leaps and bounds beyond the Medievalism to which its Bishop aspired.

Notes

1. This paper derives from a major research paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, Graduate Programme in Art History, York University. I am deeply indebted to Malcolm Thurlby for inspiring this paper, photographing the edifice, and for his ongoing guidance and support.
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